Customer Satisfaction Survey

Case: Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X

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The objective of the research was to determine the degree of satisfaction perceived by the customers of Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X. In addition, the aim was to receive improvement ideas that could benefit the agency in increasing the satisfaction among the customers. Moreover, the research aimed to find out if there is something the customers are especially satisfied or dissatisfied with during their relationship with the agency in question.

The thesis discusses the theoretical framework of customer satisfaction defining the concepts of customer satisfaction, customer expectations and needs – and takes a peek to the history of customer satisfaction studies, their advantages and disadvantages in brief. The research methodology is introduced in general by elaborating the key concepts of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods – and comparing them as well as their use.

In this thesis quantitative research method was chosen to be able to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that could be transformed into useable statistics. The questionnaire-based survey was chosen as it would allow the customer to fill the questionnaire according to her/his own timetable. In addition to close-ended, coded questions which could be analyzed numerically, there were open-ended questions where the customer could broaden the reply more in detail. So, the research method could be called mixed.

When analyzing the results, two important factors could immediately be seen. Firstly, the disproportion of women and men respondents: the customers were mostly women – and secondly, there was not significant difference between the degree of satisfaction: the customers were either very or fairly satisfied. For this reason the comparison had to be found in other variables like position, age, ownership, B2B or B2C etc.

When satisfaction with the quality of the work was compared with professional skills, both replies were within very/fairly satisfied. However, when asked whether the customer was ready to recommend the agency, one quarter of the respondents had not this intention. One reason was found when studying the price/quality ratio: the agency was considered relatively expensive by these respondents. Also some respondents hoped the agency would take the feedback better into account. The conclusions in detail will be reported to the agency for information as well as for necessary action for future activities concerning customer satisfaction.

The agency had never before conducted a customer satisfaction survey. On the recommendation of the writer, the agency has decided to conduct followups on a regular basis.

Keywords: **Customer Satisfaction 1, Customer Expectation 2, Quantitative Method 3**

Contents

1 Introduction

"Customer satisfaction is a marketing term that measures how products or services supplied by a company meet a customer's expectation. It is important because it provides marketers and business owners with information that they can use to manage and improve their businesses." (Ross Beard 2014). Satisfaction plays a significant role in how much revenue a customer generates for your business. "Business is the leading indicator to measure customer loyalty, identify unhappy customers, reduce churn and increase revenue; but also a key point of differentiation that helps you to attract new customers in competitive business environments." (Beard 2014).

"What often gets forgotten is how customer satisfaction negatively impacts your business. It's one thing to lose a customer because they were unhappy, but yet another thing completely to lose 20 customers because of some bad word of mouth." (Beard 2014). Successful businesses understand the importance of customer lifetime value (CLV). If you increase CLV, you increase the returns on your marketing dollar." (Beard 2014).

"Customers cost a lot of money to acquire: it costs six to seven times more to acquire new customers than it does to retain existing customers getting the attention of prospects, nurturing them into leads and closing them into sales. It's cheaper to retain customers than acquire new ones." (Beard 2014).

Customer satisfaction helps a company "keep a finger on the pulse of its existing customers, but it also acts as a point of differentiation for new customers. By measuring customer satisfaction you can find new ways to increase the quality of your customer service." (Beard 2014).

So it is only fair to ask why companies then spend little or no money on customer retention when acquiring new customers costs so much? Why not make it 'a habit' to frequently ask what makes customers happy or or even so unhappy that they consider to leave a company and why? These questions in mind – this customer satisfaction research was decided to carry out in cooperation and for Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X (the party commissioning this thesis).

2   Purpose of the Research

The aim of the research is to determine the degree of satisfaction perceived by the customers of Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X. In addition, the aim is to receive improvement ideas that could benefit the agency in increasing the satisfaction among the customers.

Moreover the research aims to find out if there is something the customers are especially satisfied or dissatisfied during their relationship with the agency in question.

2.1   Project Justification

Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X appreciates long relationships with its customers. It is, however, a well-known fact that marketing and advertising are the first to suffer when times get rough and money is scarce in economy. This has, during the 23 years, brought losses in the clientele.

In the latest Advertising Barometer (Mainosbarometri 2016) of January 2016 the figure showing the advertising intents of customers was –4, while in October 2016 it was 36. (Example: If 40% of the companies have told to increase advertising, 50% to keep it as it was and 10% advertise less, the figure would be 40). So, in the light of the last autumn figure 36, the advertising branch can expect better days to come. – Not that the competition isn't less fierce than before.

As mentioned in the introduction of this thesis the old customer is the best customer. To inquire if the customers feels appreciated and satisfied, is a very important question to ask – which justifies this research project.

2.2   Structure of the Thesis

In the chapter below the party commissioning will briefly be introduced. Chapter 2 defines the purpose of this research. Chapter 3 of this thesis discusses the theoretical framework of customer satisfaction defining the concepts of customer satisfaction, customer expectations and needs – and takes a peek to the history of customer satisfaction studies, their advantages and disadvantages in brief. Chapter 4 introduces the research methodology: elaborates in general the key concepts of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, compares them as

well as their use. Chapter 5 introduces the customer satisfaction research of this thesis: target group, validity and reliability, restorations as well as the methods applied and their justification. Chapter 6 shows the results in graphs as well as in writing. Chapter 7 summarizes and concludes the thesis with development suggestions.

2.2.1   Case Company: Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X

Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X, founded in 1994, is a Finnish-owned boutique agency with long-term, one-to-one relationships with its customers – having an excellent network of partner companies providing post-production, printing, media placement, translation and photography.

The customers of the agency in question come both from public and private sector varying from the biggest companies and instances to the smallest of startups. During its 23 years of existence the agency has experienced some ups and downs, however, never losing the touch and frequently developing its professional competence, product variety while keeping up the high quality and standards of its services.

The agency has never before conducted a customer satisfaction research, merely received direct feedback from the customers. To be able measure the level of customer satisfaction, the agency has, on the recommendation of the writer of this thesis, decided to conduct followups on a regular basis in the future.

2.3   Restrictions of the Research

It is good to understand that this research, being not very extensive – including only 17 customers from 16 different companies – and having limited resources as far as time and funding are concerned, there is some risk as far as the validity and reliability of the results are concerned. However, the fact that the questionnaire is sent to the customers who have worked with the agency and who in person have participated in the projects – and not to someone else perhaps above these persons, will increase the validity and reliability of the research.

The formulation of the questions is important in order to enable the clear understanding and thus increasing the validity and reliability of the results. In addition there always is a possibility that the respondents may for one reason or another not respond honestly or respond at all to every questions.

Also the fact that I have not conducted customer satisfaction research before means that there is a risk that the questionnaire does not include all the questions relevant to the survey.

3   Theoretical Framework of Customer satisfaction

This section explains what customer service is – and defines the key concepts around it. This is necessary to understand the topic of this thesis. Also factors affecting customer satisfaction such as customers' expectations, customers' needs as far as quality and value of the service are concerned – and how these expectations and needs develop throughout the customer relationship – will be explained and discussed.

And as with everything, it is hard to understand the concepts and evolution without history. For this reason, the history, the development and the need to measure customer satisfaction will be discussed in the latter part of this section more in detail.

3.1   Definition of Customer Satisfaction

Obviously there is a broad range of definitions when it comes to customer satisfaction but in a nutshell customer satisfaction can be defined as follows:

"Customer satisfaction is a measure of how products and services supplied by a company meet or surpass customer expectation." (Beard 2014). "But that seems off when you look at the separate definitions of the two words that comprise the term." (Farris, Bendle, Pfeifer, Reibstein 2010).

Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman and Hansen (2009, 253) further emphasize the importance of prior expectations and its relation to customer satisfaction as follows:

"Satisfaction is a function of the closeness between expectations and the product's perceived performance. If performance falls short of expectations, the consumer is disappointed; if it meets expectations, the consumer is satisfied; if it exceeds expectations, the consumer is delighted." (Kotler et al. 2009, 253).

3.2   Customer Expectations

Customer satisfaction reflects the expectations and experiences that the customer has with a product or service. Expectations reflect both past and current product evaluation and use experiences. Customers hold both explicit and implicit performance expectations for attributes, features, and benefits of products and services. The nature of these expectations will dictate the form and even the wording of customer satisfaction survey questions (Smith 2012).

3.3   Customer Needs

Needs are defined as personal requirements. There are three types of needs: *primary, secondary* and *social needs*. Primary needs are the ones that people cannot live without, for instance food and water. The secondary needs are learnt, for example everyone has their own specific tastes for food. The social needs are relative in social nature, which are created under the influence of other people such as, friends and family. For instance, if a friend has a new iPhone, it may create the need to purchase the same product. *Wants,* however, are not closely connected to the needs. They are matters or experiences that are desired and have only little or nothing to do with what people must have (Bergman & Klefsjö 2010, 26-27).

Also Peppers and Rogers (2011, 160-161) refer to personal requirements when discussing customer needs. These are the requirements from an enterprise, which consist of *needs, wants* and *preferences*. This theory differs from Harris' in that way that according to this one all these terms have a correlation to each other, as each of these terms might result to some nuance of need. They all are referred to as *"needs"* that function as the driving force behind the customers' behavior. The needs answer to questions *"why"* and *"how"*, for instance why the customers want to purchase a certain type of product or service, and how they want to buy it. It is fundamental for the enterprises to understand the customers' basic needs, as whenever they manage to satisfy their needs, it creates value. It is necessary to consider what the businesses can do for the customers and what the customers can do for them.

3.4   History of Customer Satisfaction

According to ESOMAR's 2013 Global Market Research report, customer/stakeholder research currently accounts for about 7% of all market research (by value). This makes customer satisfaction one of the largest single categories of research – but it wasn't always so.

Some companies have always done some form of customer satisfaction monitoring; however, the customer satisfaction industry that we know today has its origins in the 1980s.

Origins: Before the 1980s, customer satisfaction tended to be measured informally (for example by front line staff asking people if they were happy), or via annual surveys of customers. Before the 1980s, most large brands and organizations were not customer focused; they were product focused and logistics focused. The key questions they asked were: could they make the best product and could they ship it to the right location faster, cheaper, and more efficiently than their competitors?

The 80s: The 1980s saw several changes in how businesses operated. The ability of brands and services to have clear product differences started to diminish. New cars, jars of coffee, and retailers were increasingly able to match each other's products. As companies became larger and increasingly multinational, they turned to management consultants to create complete/integrated strategies; these strategies often included boosting customer satisfaction. Having adopted a strategy, they needed to audit their performance against it. Also, there was a rise in management gurus – people such as Tom Peters, who advocated customer-focused solutions.

Customer satisfaction tends to rely on large samples because organizations want to be able to look at their performance by unit. However, in the pre-internet days, this was expensive. The early masters of modern customer satisfaction programs tended to be organizations who mastered paper-based research such as postal and face-to-face. These companies excelled at producing and distributing questionnaires cheaply and efficiently, and developing scanner-based solutions for inputting data.

1990s: As the 1980s and the early 1990s progressed, the data collection tended to shift to Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). However, there were some interesting but short-lived experiments in B2B research such as faxed surveys and disk-by-mail surveys. As the 1990s unwound, the move to the internet started. The first step was for B2B research, which saw a growing number of studies migrate to email, followed by consumer, web-based, customer satisfaction studies as the millennium turned.

Another strand of customer satisfaction that developed in the 90s was the growth of CRM (customer relationship management), which was the start of a move towards a single view of the customer and something that has taken on a new lease of life with the growth of interest in big data.

2000s: In the developed markets, there has been a large shift to online research (and now mobile research). However, there is still a large amount of customer satisfaction conducted via paper, face-to-face, and telephone, and this is even more the case in less developed markets. The traditional modes of data collection are also adapting, with automated processing of paper, mCAPI for the face-to-face work, and interviewer-free phone calls for the CATI options.

In the last few years, customer satisfaction research has, itself, been showing decreased satisfaction amongst the companies commissioning it. Research buyers are saying it is too slow, misses too much, and too expensive. Customers often report that surveys are intrusive and frustrating. Many brands would like to evolve but often find themselves trapped by having linked executives' pay to customer satisfaction scores, and by linking the implementation of business strategies to their customer satisfaction feedback.

Over the last couple of years, companies have been looking at alternatives to the big customer satisfaction tracking studies. At the same time, experiments using social media listening, text analytics, and shorter, more mobile surveys have become increasingly common. There has been a growth in integrated customer feedback and attempts to link satisfaction and experience to big data. Customer satisfaction research appears to be at an inflection point, with the future quite possibly different from the past (Poynter 2013).

4   Research Methodology

In this section of the thesis the qualitative and quantitative research methods are introduced. The advantages and disadvantages of both qualitative and quantitative research are discussed in the form of Table A (Page 16). In the end the mixed research method is discussed.

4.1 Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Research Methods

4.1.1 Qualitative Research

The term 'qualitative' is used to describe research methods and techniques which use, and give rise to, qualitative rather than quantitative information. In general the qualitative approach tends to collect a great deal of 'rich' information about relatively few number of cases rather than the more limited information about each of a large number of cases which is typical of quantitative research (Veal 2006, 193).

Qualitative research is a broad methodological approach that encompasses many research methods. "The aim of qualitative research may vary with the disciplinary background, such as a psychologist seeking to gather an in-depth understanding of human behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. Qualitative methods examine the why and how of decision making, not just what, where, when, or who, and have a strong basis in the field of sociology to understand government and social programs." (Qualitative Methodology Journals in the Social Sciences 2017).

Qualitative and quantitative approaches should not be viewed as polar opposites or dichotomies; instead, they represent different ends on a continuum. A study *tends* to be more qualitative than quantitative or vice versa. Mixed methods research resides in the middle of this continuum because it incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Newman & Benz 1998).

"The three most common qualitative methods, explained in detail in their respective modules, are participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus groups. Each method is particularly suited for obtaining a specific type of data." (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, Namey 2011).

John Creswell (2007, 137) says that analyzing the qualitative data is like peeling an onion, layer by layer: it involves preparing the data for analysis, conducting different analyses, moving deeper and deeper into understanding the data, representing the data, and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data.

Creswell (2007, 184) also writes about qualitative research analysis: "It is an ongoing process involving continual reflection about the data asking analytic questions, and writing memos throughout the study". Creswell says that qualitative data analysis is conducted concurrently with gathering data, making interpretations, and writing reports. While interviews are going on, for example, the researcher may be analyzing an interview collected earlier, writing

memos that may ultimately be included as a narrative in the final report, and organizing the structure of the final report.

4.1.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research relies on numerical evidence that leads to statistical analysis. Based on the analysis, conclusions can be drawn or the hypotheses tested. The research often requires studying a large numbers of people and the use of computers to analyze the data in order to obtain reliable results. The data can be derived, for instance, from questionnaire surveys, from secondary sources or from observations including counts (Veal 1997, 34).

Quantitative research is described as numerical representation and manipulation of observations for the purpose of describing and explaining the phenomena that those observations reflect. Quantitative analysis involves the techniques by which researchers convert data to a numerical form and subject it to statistical analyses (Babbie 2007, 405, 427).

4.1.3 Mixed Method

Mixed methods research is an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms. It involves philosophical assumptions, the use of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the mixing of both approaches in a study. Thus, it is more than simply collecting and analyzing both kinds of data; it also involves the use of both approaches in tandem so that the overall strength of a study is greater than either qualitative or quantitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

To some extent all questions may be approached either quantitatively or qualitatively. It all depends on the chief goal: are you interested in a systematic approach, in order to produce comparable, generalizable data, or do you want to produce a "thick" description of a particular case/group/situation/context? Each option involves different kinds of planning, which may best be followed by a particular research design. Nevertheless, combination or mixed methods approaches prove to be very useful in many situations, and seem to solve many of the problems that arise from adopting a single methodological approach (Mack et. al. 2011).

Surveys are highly formal and standardized (researchers should be able to anticipate all pertinent questions), while fieldwork/ethnographic methods are informal and open to unexpected data (indicating little control over events). (Mack et. al. 2011).

4.1.4   Comparison of methods

”*Quantitative methods* are best for comparing data in a systematic way, making generalizations to the whole population, or testing theories with a hypothesis. This is particularly so when comparing or generalizing information extensively within and from a specific population or between different populations (some of them configured within particular geographical or socio-spatial units, such as countries, regions, etc.)” (Creswell 2008).

”A qualitative approach is best for exploring a subject about which you don't know much in advance, or, for the opposite reason, when you want to grasp the meanings, motives, reasons, patterns, etc., usually unnoticed in standardized approaches, such as those you would get with a survey. In short, to find e.g. quantitative differences in children's behavior, beliefs, and attitudes, quantitative methods are employed, but to find and illuminate meanings related to these differences, qualitative methods are used.” (Creswell 2008).

”What is the difference between qualitative research and quantitative research? Qualitative research is primarily exploratory research. It is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions and motivations.” (Mack et. al. 2011).

It provides insights into the problem or helps to develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. Qualitative research is also used to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and dive deeper into the problem. Qualitative date collection methods vary using un structured or semi-structured techniques. Some common methods include focus groups (group discussions), individual interviews and participation/observations. The sample size is typically small, and respondents are selected to fulfill a given quota. (Mack et. al. 2011).

Quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by way of generating numerical data or data that can be transformed into useable statistics. It is used to quantify attitudes, opinions, behaviors and other defined variables – and generalize results from a larger sample population. Quantitative research uses measurable data to formulate facts and uncover patterns in research. Quantitative data collection methods are much more structured than qualitative data collection methods. Quantitative data collection methods include various forms of surveys – online surveys, paper surveys, longitudinal studies, website interceptors, online polls and systematic observations (Wise 2011).

4.1.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity is the extent which the information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied. Validity refers to the degree to which a research accurately measures what it is supposed to measure. Reliability refers to the accuracy of the measurement instrument or procedure (Veil 1997, 35).

Table 1. Comparison of quantitative and qualitative research approaches

	Quantitative	Qualitative
General framework	Seek to confirm hypotheses about phenomena	Seek to explore phenomena
	Instruments use more rigid style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions	Instruments use more flexible, iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions
	Use highly structured methods such as questionnaires, surveys, and structured observation	Use semi-structured methods such as in-depth interviews, focus groups, and participant observation
Analytical objectives	To quantify variation	To describe variation
	To predict causal relationships	To describe and explain relationships
	To describe characteristics of a population	To describe individual experiences
		To describe group norms
Question format	Closed-ended	Open-ended
Data format	Numerical (obtained by assigning numerical values to responses)	Textual (obtained from audiotapes, videotapes, and field notes)
Flexibility in study design	Study design is stable from beginning to end	Some aspects of the study are flexible (for example, the addition, exclusion, or wording of particular interview questions)
	Participant responses do not influence or determine how and which questions researchers ask next	Participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next
	Study design is subject to statistical assumptions and conditions	Study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned

(Mack et. al. 2011)

5   Customer Satisfaction Research of the Thesis

5.1   Applied Research Methods and their Justification

Quantitative research method was chosen to be able to quantify the problem by generating numerical data into useable statistics. The questionnaire-based survey was chosen because it would allow the customer to fill the questionnaire according to her/his own timetable. The questions (10) were close-ended (coded from 5–1, 5 being the most positive, 3 no opinion and 1 the most negative) and could thus be analyzed numerically. However, after every section, the target group had an open-ended question where the reply could be broadened to comments more in detail. So the research method could be called mixed.

The research focused on issues that define the level of contentment among the selected customers of the agency. The customers had thus a chance to evaluate e.g. the level of professional skills of the designers, quality of service, project timetables, price vs. quality, but also express their opinion whether to use the agency for their future assignments and/or potentially recommend the agency for others.

The timetable of the survey: questionnaires sent during April, analyzed during May 2017

5.2   Demography of the Target Group

The amount of the delivered customer satisfaction research questionnaires is 17 (16 different companies) which is the amount of the active customers of Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X at the moment. The target group included persons who are or have been in direct contact with the agency during the projects. About 30 percent of the target group is from the public sector, 70 percent from the private sector. All of them are from the Metropolitan area with the exception of one customer from the Eastern Finland.

5.3   Validity and Reliability of the Research

The customers were requested for research permission by phone in advance. The target group was also informed about the anonymous nature of the research (to let them reply without having to consider if they have to please the agency). For this purpose an addres-

sed envelope with a stamp was attached in the questionnaire. Honest replies were welcomed in order to find out the real opinions to enable the future improvement of the services, products and overall customer satisfaction of the agency in question.

Still, validity and reliability comes to question in this thesis because of chosen questionnaire-based survey method. That is because it relies on information from respondents. Not e.g. in monitored behavior. So the answers could perhaps be exaggerated.

Before sending the research questionnaire, it was verified and accepted with the agency.

6   Survey results (quantitative survey)

The data from the survey and related diagrams are presented below. After that a summary of the open-ended answers. Then analyzed separately and finally concluded and summarized together.

13 of the respondents were women, one was a man.

Gender	
MAN/WOMAN	AMOUNT
Man	1
Woman	13
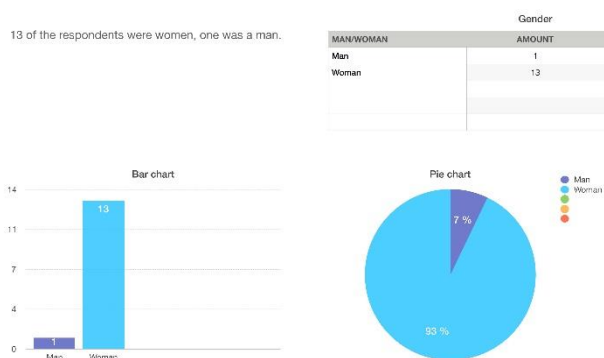
13 of the respondents were women, one was a man.

23% belonged to the age group of 26-35. The same percentage, 23% were 36-45 years old. Respondents aged 46-55 were 31% and 55+ year old people 23%. None of the target group were younger than 26 years old.

Respondents age

| AGE	AMOUNT
18-25	0
26-35	3
36-45	3
46-55	4
55+	3

Bar chart

Pie chart
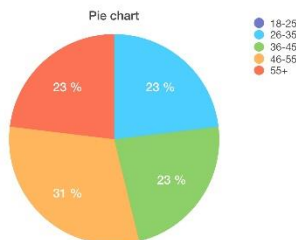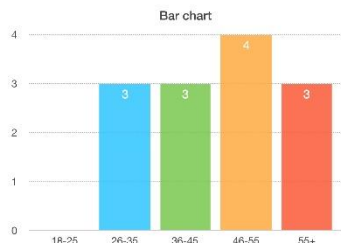
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23% belonged to the age group of 26-35. The same percentage, 23% were 36-45 years old. Respondents aged 46-55 were 31% and 55+ year old people 23%. None of the target group were younger than 26 years old.

29% of the survey respondents belonged to the senior management, 14 % to the middle management, marketing and public information 36% and owners 21%.

Position in the company

| POSITION	AMOUNT
Senior manag.	4
Middle manag.	2
Mark. and pub. inform.	5
Owner	3

Bar chart

Pie chart
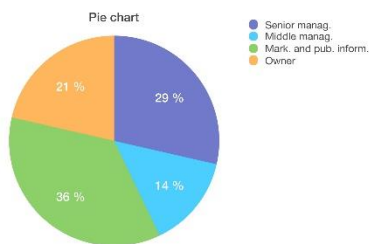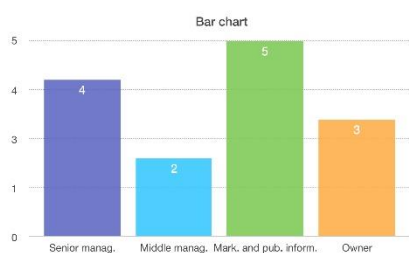
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29% of the survey respondents belonged to the senior management, 14% to the middle management, to marketing and public information 36% and owners 21%.

50% of the respondents had worked for the company in their present position max 5 years, 21% from 6 to 10 years, 14% from 11-15 years and 14% more than 16 years.

Years in current position

| YEARS	AMOUNT
0-5	7
6-10	3
11-15	2
16+	2
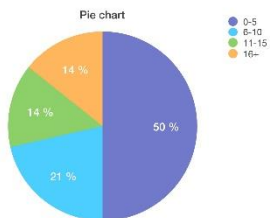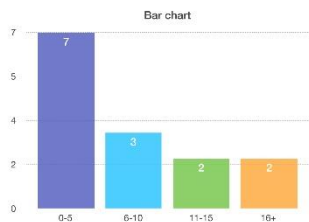
50% of the respondents had worked for the company in their present position max 5 years, 21% from 6 to 10 years, 14% from 11 to 15 years and 14% more than 16 years.

25% of the companies have 1-5 employees, 42% have 6-60, none has 51-100 employees. 17% has 101-250 employees and 17% more than 250 employees. (One of the respondents did not reply this question).

Number of employees

| NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES	NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS
1-5	4
6-50	5
51-100	0
101-250	2
251+	2
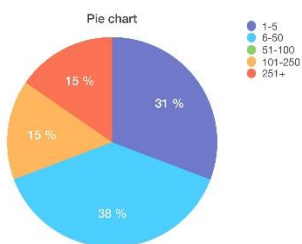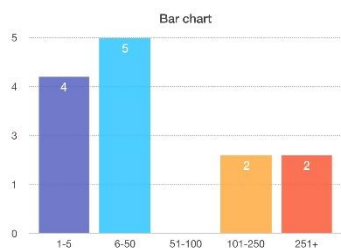
25% of the companies have 1-5 employees, 42% have 6-60, none has 51-100 employees. 17% has 101-250 employees and 17% more than 250 employees. (One of the respondents did not reply in this question).

71% of the respondents were **very safisfied** with the
service, 29% fairly satisfied.

Satisfaction with service

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	10
Fairly satisfied	4
DNA	0
Unsatisfied	0
Very unsatisfied	0

Bar chart

Pie chart

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- DNA
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

1
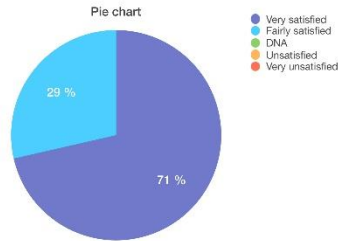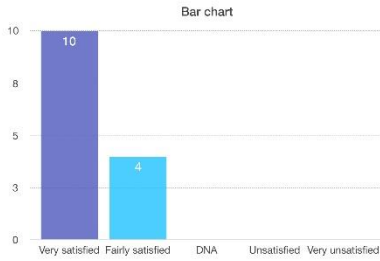
71% of the respondents were **very satisfied** with the **service**, 29% fairly satisfied.

71% of the respondents were **very safisfied** with the
level of professional skills, fairly satisfied.

Level of professional skills

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	10
Fairly satisfied	4
DNA	0
Unsatisfied	0
Very unsatisfied	0

Bar chart

Pie chart

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- DNA
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

1
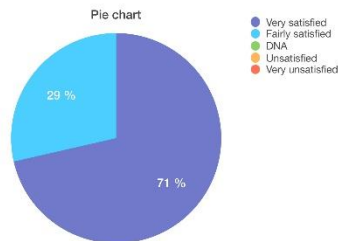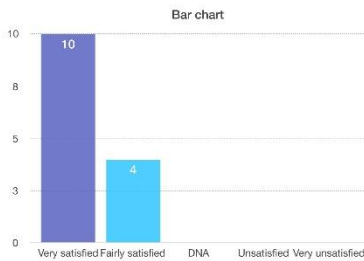
71% of the respondents were **very satisfied** with the **level of professional skills,** fairly satis-
fied.

86% of the respondents were **very safisfied** with the **communication during the project,** 14 fairly satisfied.

Satisfaction with communication during the a project

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	12
Fairly satisfied	2
DNA	0
Unsatisfied	0
Very unsatisfied	0

Bar chart

Pie chart

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- DNA
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

1

86% of the respondents were **very satisfied** with the **communication during the project,** 14% fairly satisfied.

93% of the respondents were **very safisfied** with the **quality of the work,** 7% fairly satisfied.

Satisfaction with quality of work

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	13
Fairly satisfied	1
DNA	0
Unsatisfied	0
Very unsatisfied	0

Bar chart

Pie chart

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
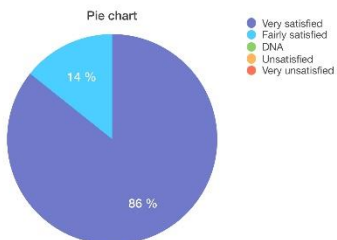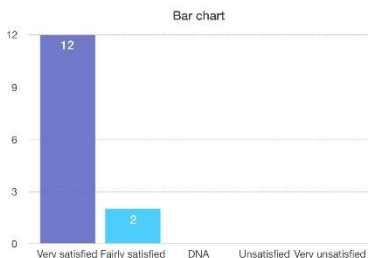- DNA
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied
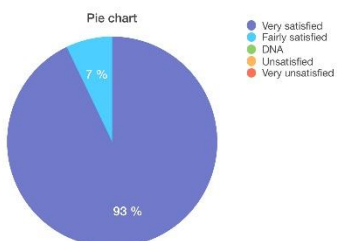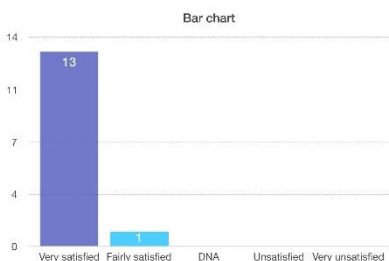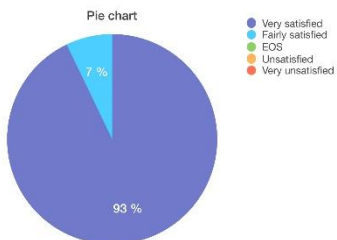
1

93% of the respondents were **very satisfied** with the **quality of the work**, 7% fairly satisfied.

93% of the respondents were **very safisfied** with the
timetable/deadline stability, 7% fairly satisfied.

Satisfaction to timetable/deadline stability

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	13
Fairly satisfied	1
EOS	0
Unsatisfied	0
Very unsatisfied	0
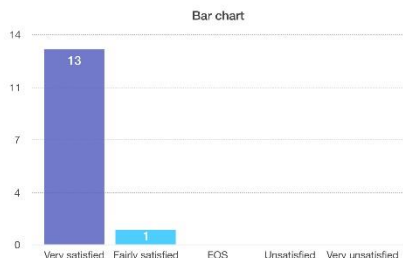
93% of the respondents were **very satisfied** with the **timetable/deadline stability,** 7% fairly satisfied.

77% of the respondents were **very safisfied** with
solving of the problems without delay, 15% fairly
satisfied. 8% of the respondents could not tell. One
person did not answer.

Satisfaction with solving a problem

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	10
Fairly satisfied	2
DNA	1
Unsatisfied	0
Very Satisfied	0
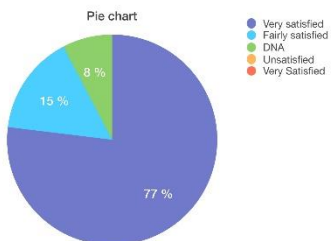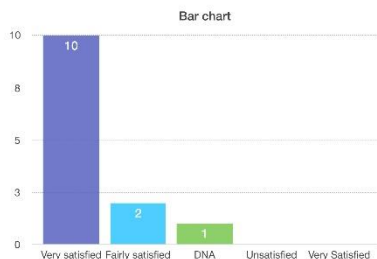
77% of the respondents were **very satisfied** with s**olving of the problems without delay**, 15% fairly satisfied. 8% of the respondents could not tell. One person did not answer.

50% of the respondents **were very satisfied** with the **price/quality ratio**, 50% fairly satisfied.

Price/quality satisfaction

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION	AMOUNT
Very satisfied	7
Fairly satisfied	7
DNA	0
Unsatisfied	0
Very unsatisfied	0
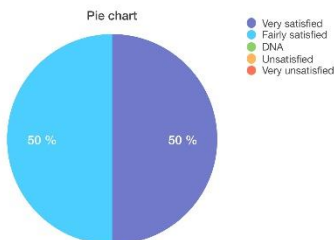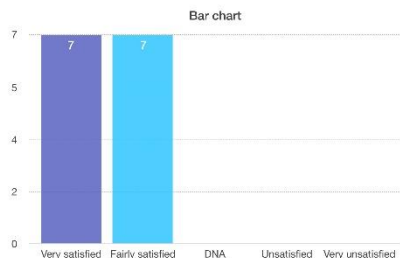
Bar chart

Pie chart

- Very satisfied
- Fairly satisfied
- DNA
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

50 %   50 %

1

50% of the respondents **were very satisfied** with the **price/quality ratio**, 50% fairly satisfied.

42% of the respondents could **very likely** consider **giving their next projects to the agency**, 33 % quite likely 8% perhaps, 17% could not tell. (Two respondent did not reply).

Could you consider giving your next project to the agency

LIKELIHOOD	AMOUNT
Very likely	5
Fairly likely	4
DNA	2
Perhaps	1
No	0

Bar chart

Pie chart

- Very likely
- Fairly likely
- DNA
- Perhaps
- No

8 %   42 %   17 %   33 %
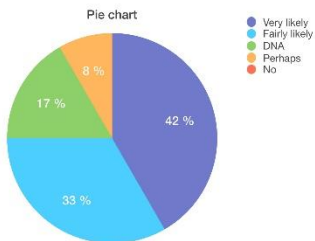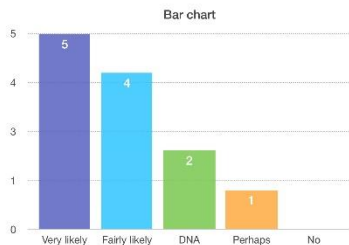
1

42% of the respondents could **very likely** consider **giving their next projects to the agency**, 33 % quite likely 8% perhaps, 17% could not tell. (Two respondents did not reply).

71% of the respondents could **very likely** consider to recommend the agency to another company or person, 29% most likely.

Could you consider recommending

LIKELIHOOD	AMOUNT
Very likely	10
Fairly likely	4
DNA	0
Perhaps	0
No	0
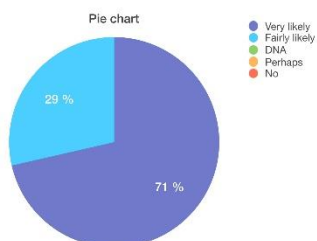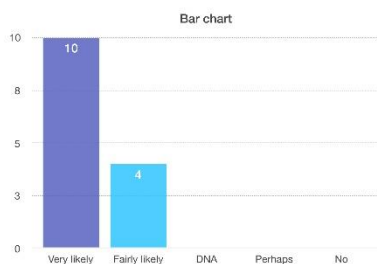
Bar chart

Pie chart

71% of the respondents could **very likely** consider to **recommend the agency** to another company or person, 29% most likely.

6.1 Open-ended question result (qualitative)

In your opinion, how could we improve our service?

Good already

+ Works like clockwork already.

+ Flexible, cozy, professional service.

+ I have always been very satisfied with the service.

+ **Graphic design a full dozen!**

Could be better

− Attitude towards wished changes or alterations could be more receiving.

− Sometimes the wishes for changes remain unattended − which on the other hand, is easy to understand as the lists can be long.

For what reason you could recommend/not recommend Company X?

Good already

+ **The layout is spectacular and colorful if that is what the client wants. The layout is rather 'feminine' and goes well with publications for private sector, perhaps not so well with municipal sector.**

+ **The service is excellent.**

+ Skill to visualize the values of a community.

+ Human-centric, professional touch. Listens what the client has in mind.

+ Cooperation very smooth, work quality excellent.

+ I can recommend as the service is professional and warmhearted. The client is treated and welcomed as an individual, not as conveyor belt goods. The business awakens one's confidence.

+ Esthetically beautiful work quality.

+ Willingness to serve, price/quality ratio, reliability.

+ Implementation of the work customer-oriented, service smooth, communication good.

How do you find Company X's quality of work?

Good already

+Quality guaranteed.

+ I was satisfied with the fact that you gave your own, clear view.

+ I trusted that you were professionals which was the actual reason for giving you the project in the first place.

+ I was happy with the overall appearance, colors as well as illustration.

About improving the service

Could be better

— I hoped that my wishes/suggestions/requests would be taken better into account.

About improving professional skills

Good already

+ I have always been able to trust your professional skills and will do so in the future.

+ The personnel/team is helpful and service-minded.

± Even bolder ideas!

− I am extremely satisfied with the advertising skills, rather satisfied with the IT-skills.

Could be better

— Because we make organization journal, I would hope that the number of pages were not unnecessarily enlarged as it is not essential for understanding the point.

— Defining the project was not clear.

About communication during the project

Good already

+ Active, friendly and warmhearted through the project.

+ Good and sufficient.

+ Very good and sufficient communication from The Agency during the project.

+ Extremely smooth and customer-oriented communication and (even) concerns keeping.

Could be better

– Because we make organization journal with minimum resources, I would hope that the number of pages were not unnecessarily enlarged as it is not essential for understanding the point.

Satisfied/not satisfied with the quality of work

Good already

+ We have received lots of good feedback of the layout of the journal. Some of the feedback estimates the layout even too fancy for an organization journal for members.

+ Values of the community are shown in a fine way in the visualization.

+ High-quality, professional work which, at the same time, perfectly suits the customer's style.

Could be better

– We were not happy with the Agency's logo proposals. In this project The Agency could have asked us to choose among the suggested logos the ones that we liked best and design even more alternatives. As result of this the new logo would have been more satisfactory.

Dealing with problem cases

Good already

+ Every problem has been solved. The only problem is the number of pages in the journal.

+ Every wish, request and suggestion for development were dealt with in a friendly way.

+ The incorrect graphics were fixed without delay.

Satisfaction with the price/quality relation

Good already

+ Layout showy,

– but perhaps too expensive in the future.

+ Being an entrepreneur myself, I understand professional and skillful work costs. I, however, prefer to pay for good quality than get something worse for cheaper price.

+ The total billing was completely in line with the cost estimate although the process was much longer and there were many corrections.

+ The pricing is fair and different alternatives are offered.

Could be better

+ Layout showy,

– but perhaps too expensive in the future.

Managing the schedules of the projects

Good already

+ The project was ready before the due date.

+ Always in due time.

+ In time.

+ The Agency **has always kept the due dates. Ourselves not so much.**

*Could you name something you are especially satisfied with **agency's** services?*

Good already

+ Good and quick customer service.

+ Works as a whole.

+ Easy to communicate.

+ The colorfulness and well-considered details.

+ Service and quality of the work.

+ Creative touch and skills both visually and in writing.

+ Good communication and quality of work.

+ Good cooperation.

+ Professional skills, reliability, warmth.

+ Speed.

+ Service orientation, great graphic design.

+ Price/quality ratio, reliability.

+ Service.

Is there anything we could do even better?

Good already

+ Stay as you are!

Could be better

– Customer service and flexibility.

– A bit more accuracy.

– Giving new marketing ideas for the clients.

6.2 Analyzing the survey result (quantitative)

When survey results were analyzed, two important factors could immediately be seen. The first one was the disproportion of women and men respondents. The second one was that the clients/respondents are either very or fairly satisfied.

This made the analyzing quite difficult. One had to start to study if there were potential differences in very satisfied vs. fairly satisfied between different groups.

When dividing into traditional women/men groups could not be used, one had to consider what other dividing factors could be found. One of the research factors was the position of the respondent in his/her company. Therefore it must be compared whether the position of the respondent has an effect on how he/she considers e.g. the service of the agency.

The comparison was made about *how satisfied of the respondents in various positions* (senior management, middle management, marketing and public information, owner) *were with price/quality ratio* of the target agency – and if there were any substantial differences between these groups.

5 of the respondents belonged to the senior management, 2 to middle management, 5 to marketing and public information and 2 to owners. Everyone of the respondents expressed their opinion as either *very or fairly satisfied* with the price/quality ratio of the agency.

The graph shows no significant differences between the opinions of the groups. As an example: 2 of the senior management were very satisfied, 3 fairly satisfied, whereas both owner respondents were very satisfied.

The numbers cannot, however, be compared as such. So the percentage distribution for each variable has to be calculated. As one can see from the percentage distribution, the opinions are divided very evenly. For this reason, one must study the matter even more specifically.

6.3   Chi-Square test

To study the matter more specifically a Chi-square test was done.

6.3.1   Price-quality ratio vs. age

This Chi-squared test (appendix 3, 1A) shows how important the price-quality ratio is seen in various age groups. The clients were divided into two groups according to their age: younger ones (age 26-45) and older ones (46-55+).

Chi-test shows whether there are actual differences between these groups or is the potential difference due to random/coincidental factors. In the research there are five different age groups but the groups were bundled in two in order to enable the chi-analysis.

In case the result of the chi-test would have been below 0,05, it could have been generalized into the general population. However, if the result is above 0,05 - in this case 0,1575 - one could say that there is not enough evidence showing any difference between the two groups.

More than 0.05 = Not enough evidence to conclude that there is significant deviation between target groups.

6.3.2   B2B/B2C vs. level of professionalism

This test (Appndix 3, 1 B) shows how the respondent sees the professional level and quality of the agency if the respondents clientele is more or less than 50 % companies / consumers. Chi test shows if there is significant variation between these groups of respondents or is the potential difference due to random factors. In the original questionnaire the respondents were asked to inform the percentage of B2B or B2C.

In case the chi-test shows a result less than 0.05, the result could have been generalized to general population. However, when the result exceeds 0.05 in this case 0.303… which means that there is not enough evidence to say that there is difference between the groups. According to this research that more B2B or more B2C oriented clients would appreciate the professional level of the agency in a different way.
More than 0.05 = Not enough evidence to conclude that there is significant deviation between target groups.

6.4   Analyzing the open-ended question (qualitative)

The Customer Satisfaction Survey made for the agency's clientele offered (in addition to questions which one could cross), a possibility to write a few lines about the topic in question. Here is a short conclusion of it:

In general the customers were satisfied with almost everything they were asked. As you can see from the enclosed battery of 'Good already' remarks, the amount was considerably larger than the 'Could be better' remarks.

When the customers were asked how the agency could improve its services, they said it works like clockwork already, the service is flexible and professional, they have always been satisfied and the graphic design is a full dozen! –Great.

But there also were some complaints about the attitude when changes or alterations were asked to make. –So some dissatisfaction there.

If the customer was asked to recommend the agency, would he/she? Indeed most of them would. And there were many positive reasons mentioned: e.g. excellent service, professional touch, customer-orientation, smooth cooperation, great skills to visualize things. –Nothing negative there.

Remarks on quality of work were as good: quality guaranteed, happy with the overall appearance of the work, colors, illustrations plus giving own, clear view of the work. –Everything positive.

When potential improvements of the service was asked, one client hoped her/his wishes/suggestions were taken better into account. –Important point to be taken care of.

About improving professional skills the remarks indicated satisfaction. There were, however, a few remarks which showed that there is something to be done even better: one was IT-skills and the other was expecting about even bolder ideas. –Good points!

The questionnaire gave the client an opportunity to comment on communication during the project.

On the positive side active, friendly and warmhearted, good, sufficient and smooth were mentioned. When asked "What could be better" there was an individual remark of using too

many pages in a journal. –Nice comments, but also the negative ones are important to take into account.

Quality of the work was estimated very good and visualization insightful. One customer gave negative feedback about a certain logo project.

How did the agency deal with the problems occurred during the project? –Fine. Every problem was solved without delay.

Were the customers satisfied with the price/quality ratio? Yes, they were. The total billing was completely in line with the cost estimate. The customers even found that there is no such thing as cheap and good which means that they would prefer to pay a bit more when the result is guaranteed than to pay less for something worse. The pricing was also found fair. One customer, however, even when she/he found the layout showy, thought the price could exceed her/his budget in the future.

Did the Agency manage the schedules in due time? Yes. Always. Sometimes even ahead the schedule.

The clients were asked if they were especially satisfied with something in the agency? The clients gave a bunch of replies to this question in writing: good and quick customer service, easy to communicate, speed, colorful work with well-considered details, creative touch both visually and in writing, easy to communicate etc.

When asked what the agency could do better the answer was: 'Stay as you are!' But there were some wishes for improvement as well like more flexibility and accuracy plus giving potential new marketing ideas for the clients. –Must be taken into account.

7   Summary and Conclusions

Because overwhelmingly everyone was very or fairly satisfied In their answers the evaluation of the responds must be taken to an extremely accurate level. One must compare the respondents who replied 'very satisfied' and 'very satisfied/good' and 'fairly satisfied/good'.

When satisfaction with quality of the work is compared with satisfaction with professional skills, one can overall see that both replies are within very/fairly satisfied.

However, when seen more accurately, one can notice that the number of very satisfied is 13 and fairly satisfied 1 whereas very satisfied with professional skills were 9 and fairly satisfied 4.

This gives some hint, although narrow one, to begin to study why the professional skills are not seen as excellent as the quality of the work.

Also, in general one can notice that although the respondents are, for the most part, very satisfied with the quality, service etc., "only" 9 are ready to recommend the Agency very probably.

Therefore one must speculate why the good quality and level of service do not fully correlate with the recommendation in almost every section. One reason can be found when looking at responds concerning the price/quality ratio. This is the only reply where the respondents are even in very/fairly satisfied responds. One can say that clients consider the Agency relatively expensive.

As a conclusion the quality of work, the quality of the service is considered to be excellent. What could be seen as a clear deficiency in the questionnaire is that there is no question: "how would you compare the price level of this Agency to the other agencies". This piece of information lacking, one must read the price level from the price/quality ratio part of the questionnaire.

As every qualitative measure in the questionnaire is on the level 'mostly very good/satisfied', one can interpret that the Agency is considered 'pricey'.

After each question the respondent has been asked to give some argumentation, after some questions more specifics. There was also a chance to give answers in writing. In those answers warm hearted customer service, insightful graphic design and ability to keep on schedule were repeated for the most part. In addition, among them, one negative theme, was found.

In a few of the responds, the respondents hoped the Agency would take the feedback and ideas to make changes, better into account. This was the one thing that did not get any good remarks either.

But more good feedback was given to the graphic designer for what and how she proceeded boldly by herself. One can see from the replies that the cooperation is best when the client and the designer agree upon the graphic and visual line. On the other hand, if this is not the case, some respondents saw that their opinion was not enough taken into account.

This is almost the one and only negative fact that could be found in the research. At the same time it must be considered as the target for development.

I will report the matter to the Agency to consider. It can be handled in two manners: either go with the changes the client suggests or give better reasoning why something is better like it was designed.

The agency has never before conducted a customer satisfaction research, merely received direct feedback from the customers. To be able measure the level of customer satisfaction, the agency has, on the recommendation of the writer of this thesis, decided to conduct followups on a regular basis in the future.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: The cover letter for the questionnaire sent in Finnish language to the target group (English translation)

Appendix 2: The questionnaire sent to the target group

Appendix 3: Chi-squared tests Excel sheets

Appendix 1: The cover letter for the questionnaire sent in Finnish language to the target group (English translation)

Dear Customer,

Referring to our phone call earlier this week, we would like to thank you in advance for your time and effort in replying to the questions. We are pleased to have you as our customer and are happy to improve our services and products by receiving information and suggestions for better service directly from you as our customer. The questionnaires will be handled with utmost discretion. For this reason you can send the questionnaires anonymously in the enclosed envelope.

Kindest regads,
XX, Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X

Appendix 2: The questionnaire sent to the target group

Please reply to the following questions:

I am a woman   0
I am a man   0

Agegroup 18-25   26-35   36-45   46-55   55+

How long has your company been in business?
0–5 yrs   6–10 yrs   11–15 yrs   +16 yrs

In which industry is your business?
0 Agriculture, forestry and fishing
0 Mining and quarrying
0 Manufacturing
0 Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply
0 Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities
0 Construction
0 Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
0 Transportation and storage
0 Accommodation and food service activities
0 Information and communication
0 Financial and insurance activities
0 Real estate activities
0 Professional, scientific and technical activities
0 Administrative and support service activities
0 Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
0 Education
0 Human health and social work activities
0 Arts, entertainment and recreation
0 Other service activities
0 Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use
0 Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies
0 Industry unknown

What is your title at your company?
0 Senior management

0 Middle management

0 Marketing

0 Owner

How long have you been in your current position?

0-5 yrs   6-10 yrs   11-15 yrs   +16 yrs

How many people does your company employ?

1-5   6-50   51-100   100-250   251+

How many percentage of your clients are consumers how many businesses?

consumers ___ % businesses ___ %

What are the key factor(s) that would motivate you when selecting advertising agency (
Select three most important: rank them 1, 2, 3)

__quality   __price __location __service __personal characteristics __keeping the deadlines
something else _____

What channels do you use when searching for an advertising agency?

(rank them 1, 2, 3)

__Google search   __social media   __by recommendation   something else, what?
_____

Please express your opinion on the *service* of Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X

O   I am very satisfied

O   I am quite satisfied

O   Do not know / No opinion

O   I am not so satisfied

O   I am very unsatisfied

Additional comments:

Please tell us how we could improve our service?

Do you have any complaints concerning our service?

Please express your opinion on the *professional skills* of Advertising & Graphic Design Agency
X

O   I am very satisfied

O I am quite satisfied

O Do not know / No opinion

O I am not so satisfied

O I am very unsatisfied

Additional comments:

Please tell us how we could improve our professional skills?

Do you have any complaints concerning our skills or lack of skills?

Were you satisfied with the *received information during the project*?

O I am very satisfied

O I am quite satisfied

O Do not know / No opinion

O I am not so satisfied

O I am very unsatisfied

Additional comments:

Please tell us if and how we could inform you better at various stages of the project?

Do you have any complaints concerning this?

Were you satisfied with the *result* of the assigned project?

O I am very satisfied

O I am quite satisfied

O Do not know / No opinion

O I am not so satisfied

O I am very unsatisfied

Additional comments:

Please tell us what you were especially satisfied with concerning the result?

Please tell us what what we could improve?

Were you satisfied with the *timetable/deadlines* of the project?

O I am very satisfied

O I am quite satisfied

O Do not know / No opinion

O I am not so satisfied

O   I am very unsatisfied

Additional comments:

Please tell us if the deadlines were met?

Please let us know about the possible delays in the time?

Were you satisfied with how the *potential problems were solved* during the project ?

O   I am very satisfied

O   I am quite satisfied

O   Do not know / No opinion

O   I am not so satisfied

O   I am very unsatisfied

Additional comments:

Please tell us how the potential problems we dealt?

Please tell us if the problems were not dealt in due course?

Were you satisfied with the *price vs. quality* of the project?

O   I am very satisfied

O   I am quite satisfied

O   Do not know / No opinion

O   I am not so satisfied

O   I am very unsatisfied

Could you consider *a new project* with Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X in the future?

O   Yes

O   Probably

O   I am not sure

O   Probably not

O   No

Additional comments:

Please tell us if you why you could consider a new project with us?

Please let us know why you couldn't consider cooperation anymore?

Could you consider *recommending* Advertising & Graphic Design Agency X ?

O Yes

O Probably

O I am not sure

O Probably not

O No

Additional comments:

Please tell us why you could recommend our agency?

Please tell us why you couldn't recommend our agency?

Finally, *please list* what kind of new services you would hope us to have to serve you even better?

———————————

Thank you for your time and effort. Please send this in the attached envelope. The question-naires will be analyzed with utmost discretion and anonymously.

Appendix 3: Chi-squared tests Excel sheets

Chitest_quality/price-ratio_vs_age

		Chitest_qulity/ price-ratio_vs_age			
		26-45	46-55	Yhteensä	
	Erittäin todennäk.	2	7	9	0,642857142857143
	Melko tod.	3	2	5	0,357142857142857
	Yhteensä	5	9	14	
		3,21428571428571	5,78571428571429		
		1,78571428571429	3,21428571428571		
	Chitesti	**0,157504350344189**			
		More than 0.05 = Not enough evidence to conclude that there is significant deviation between target groups.			

1 A

Number of employees in the company vs satisfaction to level of professionalism

	Number of employees in the company vs satisfaction to level of professionalism			
	1-50	100-251+	Yhteensä	
Erittäin tyytyväinen	7	2	9	0,692307692307692
Melko tyytyväinen	2	2	4	0,307692307692308
Yhteensä	9	4	13	
	6,23076923076923	2,76923076923077		
	2,76923076923077	1,23076923076923		
	Chitesti	0,316564835368703		
	Chi square test more than 0.05 = Not enough evidence to conclude that there is significant deviation between target groups.			

1 B