
SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Case: Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service



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ABSTRACT

This thesis is commissioned by the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service. The topic was chosen because of the need for the service in society today and in the future as a bigger portion of the population will be elderly and the public funds and services as well are limited. Also the commissioning organization needed a customer satisfaction survey in order to find out the state of customer satisfaction within their customers. Another reason for the selection of the topic was the involvement of the researcher as a "Red Crosser".

The objectives of the thesis were to make the customer satisfaction survey - in the end two were done, one in winter 2006-2007 and other in autumn 2009 - to find out and define the customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, to find out the customer satisfaction level at the moment, to outline the most important facts and to do a development suggestion based on the survey and general requirements. In order to reach the objectives, exploratory research methods on secondary data sources were used to find out of the background information, customer satisfaction, customer loyalty and general requirements, and quantitative and qualitative research methods on primary data collection meaning the customer satisfaction surveys both with in-home interview and mail survey depending on the customer's abilities to answer the questionnaire.

Through the customer satisfaction surveys it was discovered that the customer satisfaction within the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service is at a good level. There are points to pay more attention to and to develop, but in general customers are satisfied. The development suggestions include maintaining the Red Cross principles and values as emphasized and strong as now in the work and to keep on treating customers humanely.

Keywords Home care, home care service, customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction questionnaire.

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TIIVISTELMÄ

Opinnäytetyö on tehty Suomen Punaisen Ristin Tampereen osaston kotihoitopalvelulle sen toimeksiannosta. Työn aihe valittiin tarpeen mukaan sillä yhteiskunnassamme vanhuksien osuus väestöstä kasvaa eikä kuntien varat enää riitä kaikkia palvelemaan. Tampereen osaston kotihoitopalvelulla oli myöskin tarve selvittää asiakkaidensa asiakastytyväisyys. Osana aiheen valintaan vaikutti myöskin tekijän oma mielenkiinto aiheeseen "Punaisen Ristin ihmisenä".

Työn tavoitteena oli selvittää asiakastytyväisyyskyselyllä Tampereen osaston kotihoitopalvelun asiakkaiden tyytyväisyyden taso - lopulta kyselyitä tehtiin kaksi, ensimmäinen talvella 2006-2007 ja toinen syksyllä 2009. Lisäksi tavoitteena oli selvittää asiakastytyväisyyttä ja asiakasuskollisuutta, nostaa tärkeimmät kohdat kyselyiden vastauksista esille ja tehdä kehityssuunnitelmaa kyselyyn ja yleisiin kotihoidon vaatimuksiin liittyen. Jotta tavoitteet olisi voitu saavuttaa käytettiin työssä kahta eri tiedonhankintamenetelmää – kirjoista ja netistä löytyvää tietoa taustaksi kotihoidon tarpeesta, asiakastytyväisyydestä ja -uskollisuudesta sekä yleisistä vaatimuksista, ja asiakastytyväisyyskyselyitä ensisijaisen tiedon keräämiseksi Tampereen osaston kotihoidon asiakkailta joko postitse tai haastatellen, asiakkaan kunnosta riippuen.

Asiakastytyväisyyskyselyllä saatiin selville, että asiakastytyväisyyden taso Tampereen osaston kotihoidon asiakkaiden keskuudessa on hyvä. Tiettyjä kohtia on nostettu esiin kehittämissuunnitelmassa, joihin tulisi kiinnittää vastaisuudessa enemmän huomiota ja kehittää, mutta yleensä ottaen asiakkaat ovat tyytyväisiä. Yksi tärkeimmistä kehityssuunnitelmissa olevista kohdista on Tampereen osaston kotihoitopalvelussa Punaisen Ristin arvojen ja periaatteiden säilyttäminen osana työnkuvaa ja jatkaa asiakkaiden kohtelua inhimillisesti.

Avainsanat Kotihoito, kotihoitopalvelu, asiakastytyväisyys, asiakastytyväisyyskysely.

Sivut 32 s. + liitteet 4 s.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Services are the right of every inhabitant in Finland. The meaning of services in society has increased within all fields as well as the meaning of the consumer aspect. People are more demanding and often expect better service. The consumer orientation within a service is valued by the customers more. Also the understanding of different cultures has become more important for the service providers as countries become more multicultural. As the population grows older, the elderly will no longer be as heterogenic as today inside one country. The service providers must take this into consideration when doing the service plans and as training their employees.

The need of services varies by the age and living situation, but all should receive the services suitable and needed at the time. The services for elderly need to be increased, as the amount of elderly compared to the whole population is growing, and will be most disadvantageous by 2030. Many of the municipalities are struggling to fulfil requirements and promises of care for the elderly. The private service providers may offer their services either to substitute the services offered by the municipalities or to complement those services.

In all services it is important to have satisfied and loyal customers. As thinking of customer satisfaction and loyalty, it is important to notice that people with different backgrounds respect and value different aspects and things. Thus different issues make the customers happy.

On different fields different issues must be considered, due to the expectations of the field and also due to the variety in the clientele. The need and importance of customer satisfaction surveys increases as companies and organisations need to find out what is it that their customers really want and expect. Having truthful answers from the customers will help the service provider improve the service to better meet the needs and demands. This will also result in increased customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which are important for all companies and organisations.

1.1 Thesis work background information

This thesis is commissioned by the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch. In this thesis the home care service is discussed through the question “How to develop the service to meet better the demands and to reach better customer satisfaction?”

Two customer satisfaction surveys have been conducted, and based on the results as well as requirements for the home care service a development plan has been introduced in this thesis. The reader will also become familiar with the Tampere Branch home care service history and present situation.

1.2 Need for the home care services

In Europe about nine out of ten 75 year-olds wish to live at home as long as possible (Kinos & Salonen 17.11.2009). For instance, in Finland the Finnish law does not require children to look after their parents, and elderly mostly do not want to be a burden on their children and thus seek required assistance from municipalities or private operators (Kinos & Salonen 17.6.2009). This also creates more demand for home care in supporting the living at home. In Finland the home care services mostly have a good reputation because of high demands on personnel qualifications, and this also contributes to using the services more (Kinos & Salonen 17.6.2009).

The population in the area of European Union (EU) is getting older rapidly, especially in older member countries like Finland as stated in the European Framework for Qualification in Home Care services for Older People (EQUIP) Project, which is a project trying to develop the comparability of home care education and quality. According to EQUIP and Eurostat-statistics in Finland the population maintenance relation, the relation between carers [the workers] and dependants [non-workers] in the population, is predicted to be most disadvantageous by 2030. While looking at the whole area of the EU, by Eurostat 65 year-olds will account for over a quarter of the whole population in 2030 and over a third in 2050. (Kinos & Salonen 17.6.2009)

In Tampere there lives over 210 000 people, of which about 30 000 are over 65 years old. In the service strategy for elderly services of the city of Tampere (2009) it is targeted that 13-14% of over 75 year-olds would be within home care service in 2012, at the end of 2008 it was 11.3%. According to the strategy, Tampere has a challenge to decrease places in care outside of the home and to increase home care. The right kind of help at the right time given within home care service for elderly would enable this. At the moment financial resources will not change unless they are re-targeted to home care instead of care outside the home. The strategy also states that it is predicted that the amount of elderly will increase till 2030, and after that the amount will slowly decrease. Thus there will be a need for more services for the elderly during the coming years, but the need of growth for services will be temporary. If we look at the age groups, at the moment in over 65-year-olds there is a growth of 3.6% from 2009 to 2010 and will be 35.2% from 2009 to 2020 of all citizens of Tampere. So, in 2020 there would be about 45 000 over 65 years old in Tampere according to the service strategy for elderly services of the city of Tampere (2009).

The service strategy for elderly services of the city of Tampere (2009) also outlines the vision of Tampere in 2020. Then the customer-oriented services should be equally available and of high quality, and even more people would have the possibility to live at home or in a home-like environment. To answer the growing need of home care service and the strategy, vision in 2020, the emphasis is on supporting living at home and finding services that respond equally and cost effectively to the needs of the elderly. This would also mean that the services provided would be developed

with customers and different service providers. And outsourcing would be more of a need.

1.3 Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch

The Finnish Red Cross is one of the National Societies of the Red Cross and Red Crescent International Movement. The International Movement is worldwide and at the moment there are 186 National Societies of either Red Crosses or Red Crescents. In one country there can only be one Red Cross or Red Crescent. All of the National Societies operate according to the seven Fundamental Principles – humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. The work is divided between the International Committee of Red Cross, which works mainly during wars and conflicts, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies which works with the National Societies and in natural catastrophes and development work.

The Finnish Red Cross was founded in 1877. There are about 90 000 members and about 45 000 active volunteers. The Finnish Red Cross is one of the biggest non-governmental organisations (NGO) in Finland and it operates nationwide. It is divided into National, District and Branch levels, having 12 districts and 500 branches. The National and District levels mainly support the branches in the local Red Cross work. The branches operate mainly with volunteer work power. The National level also coordinates the international work of Finnish Red Cross.

The Tampere Branch operates also by the seven Fundamental Principles and other values of the Red Cross being part of the Häme District. The branch was founded in 1950, for the third time as it is said as Tampere Branch was first founded in 1914 when Finland was still under Russian rule and the Finnish Civil War started the second active season within Tampere Branch as many temporary hospitals were run under the Red Cross, after the Civil War work concentrated on training and education until the Tampere Branch work ended due to changes made in the Finnish Red Cross organisation on the national level at the end of 1937 (Koi-vumäki 2000), starting again in 1950.

The Tampere Branch is one of the biggest branches in Finland. A difference from many branches is that it has a full time executive director. Also the home care service employs the manager and the care takers. In addition the branch has an activity centre Tampuri and a flea market Veeran Vanha Vintti, which are open during weekdays employing one fulltime manager and other employees. The Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch has voluntary work in the areas of first aid, youth work, and work with senior citizens and immigrants, and business activities offering home care service, cleaning service and morning check-up calls for senior citizens, as well as first aid training for the public and companies, and first aid services to different kinds of event.

1.3.1 The home care service of Tampere Branch

The base for the home care service was set up in the 1951 spring meeting. It was noticed that the city of Tampere needed a home care service from organisations, especially for the care /help work taking place at the home of the person in need. In 1955 a suggestion to begin home care service came from the Headquarters of the Finnish Red Cross. Thus, the work began officially on April 6, 1956, even though it had existed in some form since 1952. The Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch was the first to enter this sector (Koivumäki 2000). As the need and clientele grew bigger, the necessity for the work was recognized even more.

At the beginning of the 1960's the city of Tampere increased their home care service. In spring 1966 a committee of the Tampere Branch gave a clarification that even though the city of Tampere can themselves serve a bigger clientele, there is still need for the home care service provided by the Tampere Branch, especially amongst the elderly with a better ability to pay for their services. Thus, the work was continued and the need was clearly stated when in 1966 the branch provided home care service for 325 persons but 50 in need were still left without the service. In the 1980's the city of Tampere decreased outsourcing their home care service and Tampere Branch started to slowly privatise their home care service. In 2000 the need for care and help given at home was increasing in the Tampere Branch home care service private side. (Koivumäki 2000)

Before, the city of Tampere was a noticeable employer with the outsourced customers. At the most Tampere Branch home care service had over twenty employees. Before, there were, in addition to home care service, cleaning service, morning check-up calls for senior citizens, senior medical alert phone service, assistance service for the disabled, and interpreter service.

Due to tendering and changes in the social services, the senior medical alert phone service, the disabled assistance service, and the interpreter service has been discontinued in the Tampere Branch. Also due to Kotitori, an outsourced service seeker for people whom the City of Tampere cannot offer home care service has the previous customers from the City of Tampere to the Tampere Branch home care service been more outsourced so that now the branch has no customers from the City. Today the Tampere Branch operates solely as a private service provider, even though there is still a skeletal agreement with Kotitori.

Most of the customers requiring regular care and help at home are directed to larger providers of the service by Kotitori. Smaller actors in the field get the private customers, who are to some extent also served by the bigger actors in the field. There are also more service providers accessing the field all the time, so competition exists.

Competitiveness of Tampere Branch is the time used with the customer of the home care service and variety of services provided. Even though the time agreed is followed, duties are done within the timeframe. The visits are recorded in the customer's notebook for future reference. Depending

on the time and agreement with the customer, during the visit food is warmed and served, medications are taken care of, washing, shopping, cooking, organizing cupboards, sweeping the floor, changing linen, and washing clothes are done. Also cleaning service customers are a big part of Tampere Branch home care service customers as the City of Tampere cannot provide the service, as there is no time allocated for cleaning work. Mostly the tasks done are based on the agreement with the customer and agreed time and duration of the visit, as well as the personal needs and requirements of the customer. The meaning of the home care service provided by Tampere Branch is to help the customer in the daily activities when they cannot help themselves. Sometimes the customer may be pleased if there is some time left after tasks have been done and the home care giver has a moment to enjoy a cup of coffee with him /her and have a chat. Part of the practice in Tampere Branch home care service is also to take into consideration the customer as a whole, talk and ask how he /she is doing, meet the person as a human not a target! The home care service is often required either regularly for the day-to-day activities or occasionally both for short- and long-term need and there is the possibility to allow the customer to enjoy living at home longer. During the past years the clientele has become older and is in weaker condition, requiring more assistance to be able to live at home.

The need for care and help given in the home has grown larger, and at the moment, even though there are no customers from the city of Tampere appointed, the number of private customers has remained at the same level for the past few years. There are about a hundred customers at the moment and customer visits purely within home care are done 350 to 400 times in a month and within cleaning about 100 visits per month. The duration of a visit is from 30 minutes to a few hours. About 80% of the visits are regular and the rest are based on temporary need.

In 2009 about €350 000 were calculated as costs as well as income for the Tampere Branch home care service. The home care service has been in deficit for the past years, but for year 2010 is budgeted as expenditure €401 880 and as income €402 000. To reach a balance and to start to make a profit in the future is a goal as excess strains have been removed.

In 2010 more attention is paid to continuous development of the home care service quality and efficient work habits; also the service is actively marketed according to the Action plan for 2010 of Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch (2009). In the Action plan for 2010 (2009) it is stated that due to customer satisfaction survey results more attention will be paid in 2010 on arrival times and stability in the customer having the same home care taker from time to time. It has also been decided that the customer satisfaction will be surveyed once a year and long-term customers quitting the service will be interviewed by phone.

The Tampere Branch home care service has employees based on the need. At the moment there are three employees on a monthly salary and three permanent employees with hourly wage as well as three short-term employees to substitute during busy times and holiday seasons. Also students

from different vocational schools in suitable study areas are part of the working community as interns, and keen cooperation is done with the schools. According to the Action plan for 2010 (2009) new employees will have written an orientation plan as well as a named person responsible for the orientation. As well the students doing their internship within the Tampere Branch, home care service have their own "teacher", one of the employees, whom they will work with.

The employees all have valid certificates for drug treatment and first aid - course one. Within the employees, the private social services collective agreement is followed from the spring 2010. With the employees development discussions are held twice a year and meetings are organized to create a team feeling and to train employees according to the Action plan for 2010 (2009).

For the employees, customer contact is important and they mostly enjoy helping the same customers. This is also an important part of the customer service and continuity. In case there are problems in the employee - customer -relationship, the necessary actions and changes will be made to maintain customer satisfaction and employee endurance.

The Tampere Branch home care service is provided on each day from 07.00 to 22.00 by the principles and values of Red Cross, real caring, customer oriented approach, flexibility, reliability and responsibility. The cleanings are made on weekdays from 7 to 18 o'clock.

The basic price for home-help is €30 per hour, for cleaning €32 per hour (min. visit 1.5 hours) and for morning check-up calls €23 per month as stated in Tampere Branch web pages. The basic price is used on weekdays at 7-18, other times are priced as follows: weekdays at 18-22 €34.50 /h, Saturdays 7-18 €38.50 /h, and Saturday at 18 to Sunday at 22 €54 /h. In the prices travel expenses are added.

The services are eligible for the tax credit for household help and domestic costs. At the end of the year Tampere Branch home care service provides the customer with a pre-filled form of purchases. The customers may attach the form into their own tax declaration for tax credit. The tax credit is a maximum €3000 per year and a person is responsible for paying €100 (Rimmi 2010). According to Finnish Taxation Administration (2010), the amount is creditable by 60% of the compensation, including Value Added Tax (VAT), which has been paid if the party performing the work was a business company, registered for prepayment of income tax, or a prepayment-registered small entrepreneur. The tax credit is not eligible if the home care service is paid with a service voucher or promissory note.

The Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch Home care service is an Association based on special legislation according to the Joint business information system of the National Board of Patents and Registration and the Tax Administration and is VAT-liable for any business activity and registered for the Tax Administration, Prepayment register and Employer register with the main line of business on other services without accommoda-

tion for the elderly and disabled. For the customers of Tampere Branch home care, the service is VAT-free. For a private service provider to be able to offer services VAT-free, they must be registered and under control according to Rimmi (2010). She also states that to qualify, the provider must make a service agreement and service or care plan with the customer. A senior inspector from Finnish Taxation Administration Soili Sinisalo says that the plan must state that the customer needs the specific social services for example due to aging. (Rimmi 2010).

Mostly the customer agreements end as the customer gets in weaker condition and /or his /her need for services increases and the private customer gets into the area of the service provided by the city of Tampere, or living at home, even though supported, is no longer an option and the customer is moved into a care facility. Sometimes the service agreement is also terminated by the relatives as they are concerned about the charges, even though the customer him- /herself would have been satisfied with the service.

1.4 Requirements for the home care service

Kari Salonen states in home care for older people: Good practices and education in six European countries, EQUIP Project 2007-2009 (2009) that " a common feature in the European policies for the elderly is that nine out of ten people aged 75 years or over should live in their own homes for as long as possible".

The municipalities are obligated to organise social services for those in need. If the municipality lacks resources and possibilities to organize them on their own, they may organize them in cooperation with other municipalities, within the federation of municipalities, outsourcing the services, or by giving a service voucher (Rimmi 2010) (with a service voucher the customer gets societal support and can pay the needed service to a private provider, may be assigned to a certain service i.e. cleaning).

In the Social Welfare Act 710/1982 it is stated as follows (FINLEX 1999):

- Chapter 3 of Municipal social welfare:
 - Section 20
“Home-help services' means performance of or assistance with functions and activities related to housing, personal care and attendance, child care and upbringing, and other conventional functions and activities in normal daily life.”
 - Section 21
“Home-help services are provided on the grounds of impaired functional capacity, family circumstances, overexertion, illness, childbirth, injury or other similar reasons, to persons in need of assistance in coping with the functions and activities referred to in section 20.”
- Chapter 3a (30.12.2003/1310) of Service voucher:
 - Section 29a (30.12.2003/1310)
“(1) A municipality approves the service providers within social welfare whose services can be purchased by a service

voucher granted by the municipality under section 4 (1)(5) of the Act on Planning and Government Grants for Social Welfare and Health Care.

(2) A municipality can approve only such private service providers that have been recorded in the prepayment register.”

- Chapter 4 of Procedures for implementation of social welfare:
 - Section 39
 - “(1) Social welfare shall primarily be implemented through measures which promote independence and create the financial means and other potential needed to cope independently in day-to-day life.”

The approval to offer the service has been received from the Social Welfare and Health Care of the city of Tampere and the county of Western Finland for the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service.

The Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service must be provided according to the principles and values of Red Cross in all work. In home care service also sustainable development is taken into consideration, in all work at the customer's home, and in the commuting which is done with the public transportation, by bike or by walking.

1.5 Purpose and objectives of the thesis

The topic was chosen due to the need of the commissioning organisation and need for this kind of service as a bigger portion of population will be elderly in the future, limitations of public funds and competition, as well as the researcher’s own interest in the subject.

The commissioning organisation, Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch had a need to find out the state of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty at the moment in their home care service provided for elderly people. It was then agreed that according to the results and general requirements for the home care service a development plan for the home care service would be done as a suggestion. This development plan would, at best, help in improving the service provided and thus to better meet the needs of customers and requirements set.

The purpose of the thesis was to do a development plan and the objectives were:

1. To describe the customer satisfaction and the customer loyalty;
2. To describe and analyse services abroad;
3. To find out the level of customer satisfaction in the commissioning organisation;
4. To present development suggestion based on the previous points.

1.6 Research methods

The research methods used are desk research - an exploratory research method - and Survey - quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The researcher has analysed secondary data mainly from internet sources, but also from some books and magazine articles on background information, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty as well as general requirements for the home care service set by the Finnish law and the European Union.

The two surveys were done with structured questions. Background information was asked with nominal scaled questions. Research on the customer service and satisfaction was asked both with interval scaled and open-ended questions. The surveys were population surveys as they both were sent to all customers of Tampere Branch home care service, and they were carried through mainly as mail survey - a self-administered survey - but for those in need of assistance to answer the questionnaire as in-home interview - a person-administered survey. In both cases full confidentiality of the answerers remained, which in my opinion was an important factor to receive truthful answers and to find out the true level of customer satisfaction in the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service as well as to receive information on development issues from the customers.

2 HOME CARE SERVICES ABROAD

"In Europe the organisation of social and health care services varies" according to Salonen (2009) of EQUIP Project. He clarifies that "in Nordic countries the state together with the municipalities are mainly responsible for the services, while in southern parts of Europe the family and religious organisations are more involved. In the UK, delivery is more based on private and independent enterprise; there is greater use of competition and (quasi-) market mechanisms. In central Europe the services are provided often by organisations linked to employment."

According to Kinos and Salonen (17.11.2009) of EQUIP Project closest to the Finnish standards on home care services are Denmark and the Netherlands as there are wide job descriptions and requirement for high level skills and education similar to Finland. In these countries also independence and responsibility are valued in the work.

2.1 The United Kingdom (UK)

The home care services are provided by contracts between local authorities and independent care agencies. Most of the older people are paid for by local authority but provided by an independent agency. In the UK a push towards an independent budgets exists (in usage of independent budgets the local authorities allocate budget for the user and he /she uses it according own needs and priorities). Barbara Walmsley explains that the services may be delivered by public, charity (non-profit), or private (profit) agencies, and that all the home care agencies are regulated in accordance of the minimum standards by the Care Quality Commission. (Salonen 2009)

In the UK the home care workers are not usually trained in basic nursing due to the divide in welfare services to health and social care, tells Barbara Walmsley. The service culture is based on 15 minute time slots - seen as degrading and inappropriate though. (Salonen 2009)

2.2 The Netherlands

Domestic help is the responsibility of municipalities. The health care is given by a central indication organ. The elderly can choose between personal budget (an option for customers to have more control and choice - enabling them to hire the care they want, even relatives as care takers) or help by a care organisation. The bigger organisation may have divided tasks to specialized staff /nurses, whom only do the special task i.e. clean wounds or give medicine. The smaller organisations are paying attention to whole care by one professional care taker per customer. (Salonen 2009)

In the Netherlands the home care service providers and customers both evaluate the quality of care and experiences and the results are open to the public on "Quality Cards". This is a national system of measurement of quality of care. This allows customers and their relatives to choose their own service provider according to quality judgements. In addition to quality cards, the home care service organisations may get a hallmark (ISO, Perspekt etc.). (Salonen 2009)

2.3 Denmark

In Denmark state and the municipalities are in charge. There is more of privatisation and corporatism and stronger centralisation taking place. Personal care budgets are emphasized. There is a demand for higher quality and increased efficiency. Another issue is how to have similar service throughout the country. (Salonen 2009)

2.4 Spain

In Spain the elderly are much taken care by the relatives, even though changes are taking place slowly towards professional care takers. Of the home care services the municipalities are in charge. Small municipalities engage workers directly and the bigger through agencies. The workers may be unqualified or professionals. (Salonen 2009)

2.5 Estonia

In Estonia the Family Law (Perekonnaseadus §64) is in force, and the local government will intervene only after the family does not cope. The law states that "A child who has become an adult is required to maintain his or her parent who needs assistance and is incapacitated for work". The municipalities organize home care for elderly without relatives. (Salonen 2009)

3 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY

3.1 Definition and different aspects of customer service

According to Camilla Reinboth (2008), the base for good customer service is the personnel with adequate skills and talent to manage customer service situations. The foundations for good customer service may be acquired by studying and by practical work experience. Good customer service skills also develop positive attitude towards the customers and customer service work as the employee experiences success in his /her work. (Reinboth 2008)

The development of customer service is valued increasingly as the customers are more demanding and the competition has increased, states Camilla Reinboth (2008). It is also important to notice that the internet offers customers a quick and easy way to tell of the negative feedback publicly. She also states that even though most of the people working in the customer service are friendly and want to do the best in their work, the customer is left cold. To improve customer service is a long process requiring total and long-term development and leadership (Reinboth 2008).

Customer service exists at all levels of the company. The employees understanding the company policies and customer service plans do serve customers better and also feel more confident at their work. The customer service is interaction between the customer and the employee, as Camilla Reinboth states (2008). The customer service experience is not only affected by the employee serving the customer but as well by the service itself and the whole company policy. The company image should be positive and truthful towards the customers. If the customer has a positive opinion of the company, a possible unsuccessful customer service situation is seen as an individual occasion and a new opportunity will be granted to the company by the customer. But in case the customer has a negative opinion of the company to start with, he /she might experience that the disappointments are due to low level of customer service in the company and no good service will be available in the future either. This would result in the customer not using the service again. Negative opinions are created by own experiences before of the company, word-of-mouth, and by information received via public information. It is important to collect and use all received feedback to develop the customer service to better meet the needs of the customers as the customer experiences have an effect on the company image, and customers tell of their experiences to others. (Reinboth 2008)

3.1.1 Different categories of customer service

Camilla Reinboth (2008) has divided customer service into different categories by the service work habits.

The conveyor belt customer service is a service where the customer is not seen as a human, but the problem on hand as an interesting case. In conveyor belt service the customer is not greeted, at least not by shaking hands. The customer is expected to reveal much of him- /herself and the situation, but the meaning and importance to build trust between the employee and the customer in the situation has been forgotten. Of this, more developed version is when the friendliness of the employee has been paid some attention to, but the customer orientation of the service has in no other way been thought of. To move from the conveyor belt customer service the customer must be set as the base of the service, organizational structure made clearer, reporting requirements checked, service lines straightened, openness and communication developed, for customers a named contact person, employee customer service skills developed and seeing the whole organization as a bringer of value for the customer. (Reinboth 2008)

The piper customer service is a service where never the correct person is available and reachable. There are too few personnel and the customers have long waiting times for the service. Even during times of change in the company, good customer service should be offered for the customers. The customers should be informed of the changes coming and of possible problems by all possible communication channels. Especially in times of change, emphasis should be but on informing and advising the customers. In case the change requires action from the customer, reward the customers for quick action. Remember also to reserve enough time for the change, give employees necessary training to go through the change with the customers, reward and support employees, and heighten the division of work within the customer service. (Reinboth 2008)

The customer service may be taken care of either expense- or reputation-centred or as a competitive advantage. Important factors to consider are trust, long-term customers, customer-centred working habits, and different, more variety or higher quality in the service work. The company or organisation has a competitive advantage if the customer feels he /she is gaining something more valuable from the customer service as what he /she does not receive from the competitor. Figure 1 will clarify the customer service as part of a competitive advantage and it as a part of the company /organisation working strategy and brand. In order to have customer service as a competitive advantage, the different parts portrayed in the picture must work together and suit together. It is also important to remember that customer service may work as a competitive advantage only when it brings the customers good feeling and satisfaction. (Reinboth 2008)

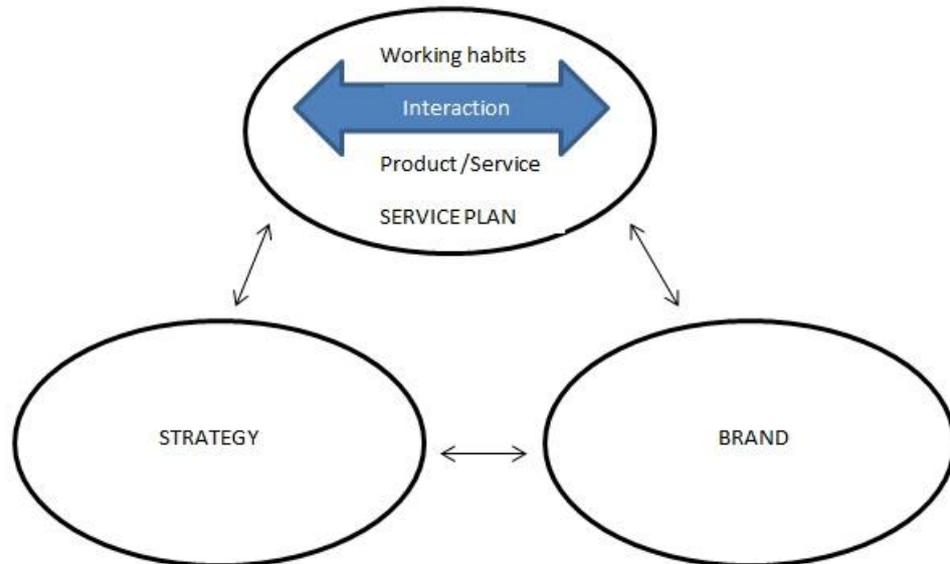


Figure 1 Customer service as competitiveness advantage requires compatibility of all factors displayed in the picture. (Reinboth 2008)

3.1.2 Styles of customer service

Camilla Reinboth (2008) has divided customer service into three different styles according to the behaviour of the employees and of the consideration of the customers as individuals.

“Friend Service” is a customer service style in which the service is always given from person to person. For the customer it is easier to build trust as they experience knowing the employee. To reach this, the meeting with the customer includes talking of also other issues than purely related to the problem or service at hand. Often the customer shares parts of his /her personal life as well, but the employee does not. The meaning is to create relaxed and direct contact between the customer and the employee. The “friend service” is especially well-suited for services related to the daily life. (Reinboth 2008)

“King Service” is a style of customer service in which the customer is compared to a king and his /her expectations and demands will be fulfilled in the best possible way, never saying “no”. The service may also be modified in order to better meet the needs of the customer. The customer is greeted formally but naturally. The “King Service” is about serving the customer, not helping the customer as in “Friend Service”. The customer is above the employee, but the employee is the one guiding the service situation. Camilla Reinboth (2008) states: “In fact, the skill to guide the customer to the direction desired is central part of the professionalism.” The risk in this is that as hierarchy is emphasized, also the employees will develop a hierarchy amongst themselves. There will be a division between better and worse employee and tasks. After time, this will have an effect on the customer service and will make the cooperation difficult. This cus-

customer service style is an option for example for private companies providing alternative for the public services. (Reinboth 2008)

“Novelty Service” is divided into three different categories depending on the purpose of the customer service, the common factor within “Novelty Services” is that the customer service may be somewhat be compared to acting in all situations. The “entertaining customer service” adds entertainment to increase the pleasantness of using the service. In “role customer service” the employees take a totally different role or character at work. It is important that the role or character is credible and that the employee acts according to his /her role /character. It is also important to notice that even the stars /celebrities are in customer service. In “admirer customer service” the stars /celebrities must adjust their behaviour and act upon their style supporting the desired public figure towards the admirers. (Reinboth 2008)

3.1.3 Selection of customer service style

The cultural factors guide the customer experience and opinions on what is good customer service. Thus it is important to acknowledge the culture of the customer and adjust customer service accordingly. The customer service style also supports the brand helps to differentiate of the other companies /organisations operating on the same field. (Reinboth 2008)

As selecting and deciding the customer service style, the company /organisation must find out:

- What kind is our customer? The expectations and needs of the customer?
- What do we want to give to the customer?
- As what kind of company /organisation we want the customer to see and experience?

There should be no conflicts between the expectations created and services provided for the customers. The service plan is built of one dominant style with perhaps some influences of the other styles. It may also vary according to the situation. (Reinboth 2008)

The customer service should aim to reach customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. By selecting and planning the best possible customer service plans for the company /organisations in response and reflection to the customers it is possible.

3.2 Definition and issues affecting customer satisfaction and loyalty

"Satisfaction is an overall psychological state that reflects the evaluation of a relationship between the customer/consumer and a company-environment-product-service. Satisfaction involves the following three psychological elements: cognitive (thinking/evaluation), affective (emotional/feeling), and behavioral" as is stated in Customer Satisfaction Theory in Qualtrics University (2010). As looking at this, the customer satisfac-

tion consists of many different issues, of which not all are possible to control by the service provider.

Customer satisfaction is defined as an extent to which customers are happy with the service provided by a business in *The Times 100* (2010). It is also stated that the service with a customer focus and provision of high level of value for the money and customer service giving personal attention to the needs of an individual customer are factors leading to high level of customer satisfaction. It also affects that if the customer feels the service is special and specially produced to him /her or people like him /her, they more appreciate the service and higher customer satisfaction will be reached. Also the customer satisfaction may thus be affected by the state of mind of the customer, does he /she have a good or bad day and how he /she experiences the whole situation (Kokkonen 2010).

It is also important to notice that the whole personnel affect the experiences of the customer and thus have an effect on the customer satisfaction (Kokkonen 2010). Personnel may increase the customer satisfaction often by small acts of taking the customer better into attention and responding to his /her needs, by not insulting the customer and by good communication is stated by Tiger Productions (2007). Within communication it is important to check that the customer has understood what was meant, to avoid problems and possibly causing dissatisfaction. After all, the customers and customers' needs should be the base for the service.

In general it is acknowledged in many sources that it is important to reach a good level of customer satisfaction and customer loyalty to stay on the market. The knowledge of the customer satisfaction state gives the service provider information on development needs to maintain customers and competitiveness (Kokkonen 2010).

Often customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty. The customer loyalty may be determined by three factors: relationship strength, perceived alternatives and critical episodes, as stated in ICLP (2006). It also states that the customer loyalty is the degree of a customer staying with a specific service provider and it will be affected for example in case the customer does not need service anymore or has moved out of the service area. The long-term customers do not switch provider easily and are less price sensitive than others and they may also introduce new customers via word of mouth.

The customer oriented work means working by the customer's condition and needs, trust, and respect of the customer and listening the feedback given by the customer on the service (Andersson et. al. 2004). One of the development points for an organization might be that the customers are served in a way more appreciated by them in the future (Reinboth 2008).

The customer orientation is realised by the daily activities. The personnel who have adapted the customer oriented working habits take personal responsibility on the service of the customers and in fulfilling the needs and requirements of the customers'. In order to be able to work in a customer

oriented way there must be understanding of the customers in general, skills and professionalism to reach solutions, be able to react quickly, and to work in flexible and innovative ways. (Efecteam Oy 2010) The customer oriented work will be a success just when there are enough of satisfied customers to make the service work financially beneficial (Reinboth 2008).

4 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY IN THE COMMISSIONING ORGANISATION

The customer satisfaction surveys were done in Finnish, as taking into consideration the target group, in winter 2006-2007 (Appendix 1) and autumn 2009 (Appendix 2). In general the satisfaction level for the home care service is good. The customers of the home care service were asked about the service as a product and of its availability, price and service satisfaction. In winter 2006-2007 there were 89 customers to whom the questionnaire was sent to; answers were received with an answering percentage of 48.3. The answers were gone through and analyzed for the home care service usage. A new survey was done in autumn 2009 to figure out the present state of customer satisfaction within the home care service. The questionnaire was sent out to about one hundred customers; answers were received by answering per cent of about 45.

The customers of the Finnish Red Cross home care service whom answered the surveys are between the ages of 50 to over 80. They have been as customers between less than one year and over five years. The information of the service has been received from family, friends, and advertisement or through other channels like the nurse or the City of Tampere.

The customers welcome the care taker into their own home and value the friendliness and professionalism of the care taker as may be seen from the figure 2 below. In winter 2006-2007, 22 customers totally agreed to have the service friendly, and 23 customers agreed totally that the workers are welcome to their homes. Fifteen customers totally find the home care takers, the employees, suitable and professional and 16 think, by agreeing totally, that the quality of work is good. As 17 customers totally agree and 6 agree that the home care takers may do wide-range tasks during their visits, 4 totally disagreed with this. Of course the variety of tasks done depends on the time allocated for the visit and the service plan and agreement done, but as thinking how many variable tasks the home care takers within Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service may do, it is surprising.

In autumn 2009 the customers were asked how they would evaluate the friendliness and respect of the care takers towards the customer, 23 answered very good and 20 good, resulting to approximate of 3.43, maximum being 4, as seen in the figure 3. The satisfaction on friendliness has thus remained on a good level between the questionnaires.

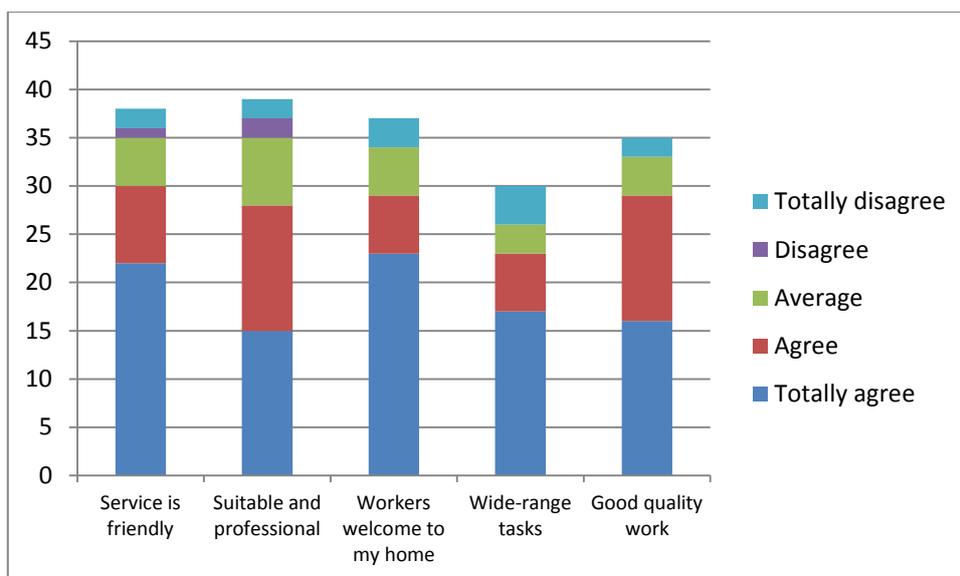


Figure 2 Satisfaction on the service in winter 2006-2007 as asking how well these statements are actualised in the home care service.

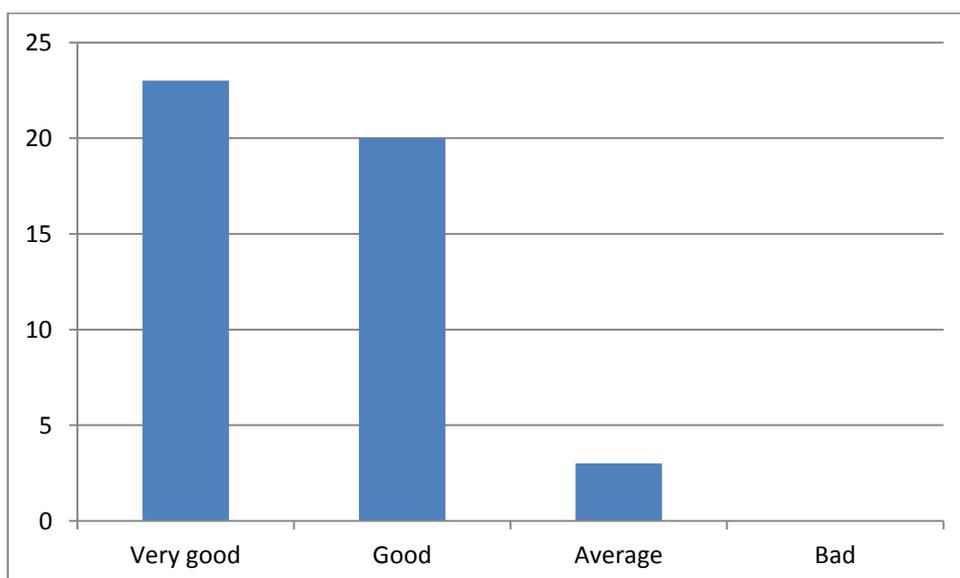


Figure 3 The friendliness and respect of the care taker towards customer in autumn 2009.

Most of the customers prefer and value having the same care taker every time, and feel they have confidentiality with their care taker. In the figure 3 below is the situation from winter 2006-2007, in which it is clearly visible that for the home care service customers it is not suitable and desired to have different home care takers from time to time as 6 customers totally disagree with the argument that different care taker would be ok, only 2 customers totally agree with the argument. In answers to open-ended questions, the customers have answered that having different home care taker from time to time slows the work to be done and also increases pressure for the customer to explain tasks for the care taker – all customers have their own habits and as work takes place in the customer’s own home, are needed facilities etc. in different places. In autumn 2009, 14 customers

evaluated safety and confidentiality good, resulting to approximate of 3, maximum being 4, as seen in the figure 5.

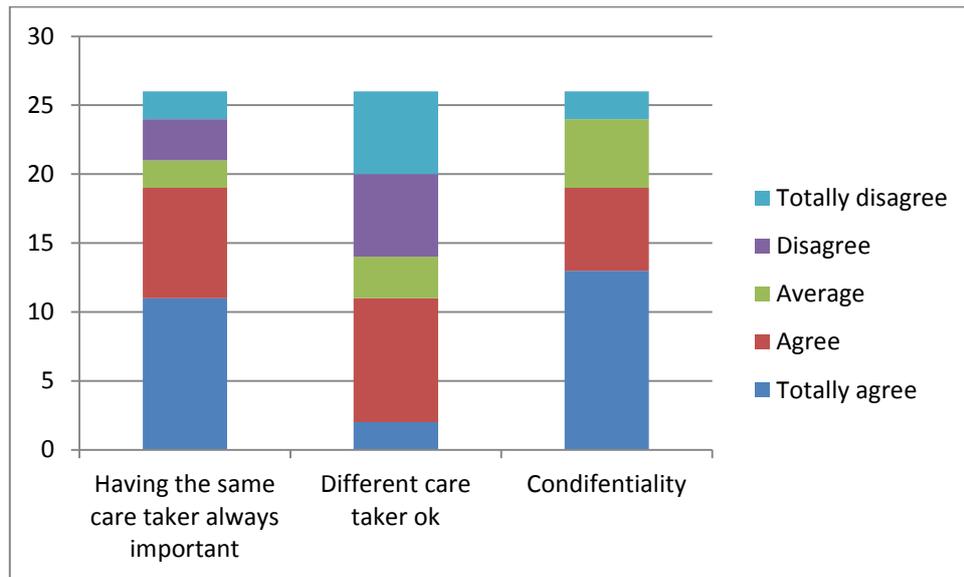


Figure 4 The importance and value of the care taker in winter 2006-2007.

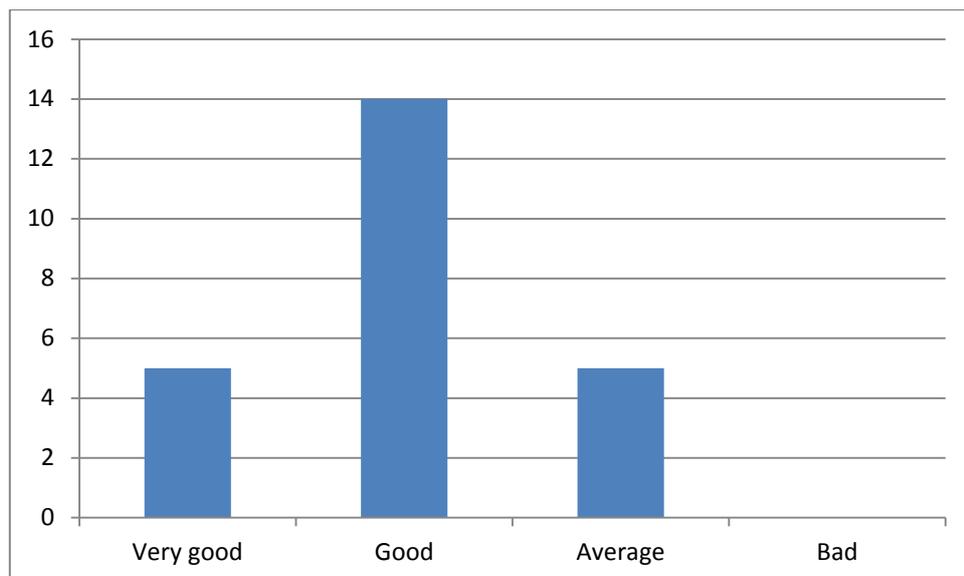


Figure 5 The impression of the customers on the safety and confidentiality of the care given, autumn 2009.

The availability of the service is mainly good and most customers feel that they get the home care service visit as they have the need for it and that the duration of the visit is long enough to get all tasks done as 14 customers totally agree and 8 agree to argument that the visit is available when needed, 17 and 7 to length of a visit is long enough to get all the tasks done and 20 totally agree that the visit is wanted and necessary. Also the time in between the visits is suitable for most of the customers as 18 totally agree and 8 agree to this argument. Of course it is important to notice

that there are two to three customers whom totally disagree to the above arguments as may also be seen from the figure 6 below.

In figure 7 the situation in opinions of the customers on duration of the visits and getting all tasks done in autumn 2009 may be seen.

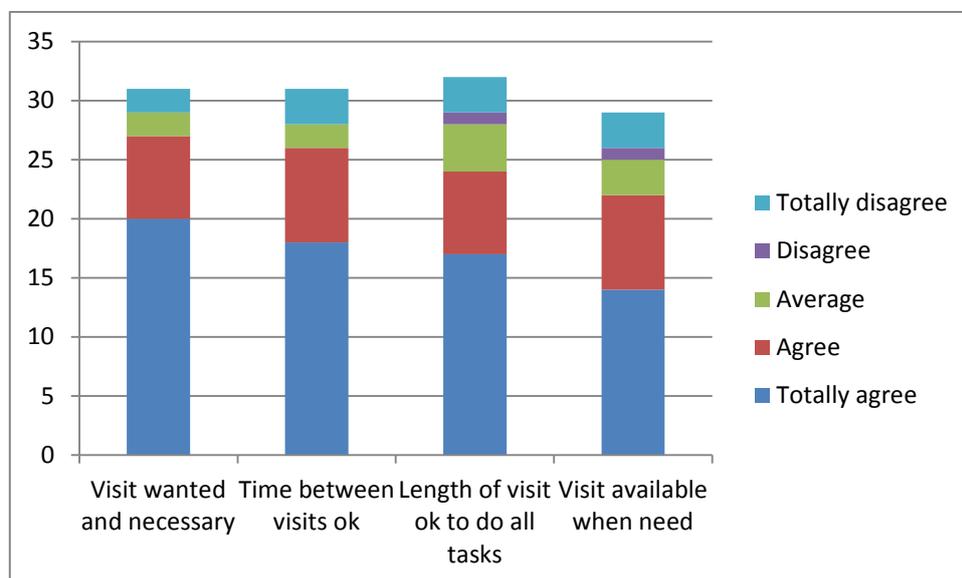


Figure 6 Availability of the service in winter 2006-2007.

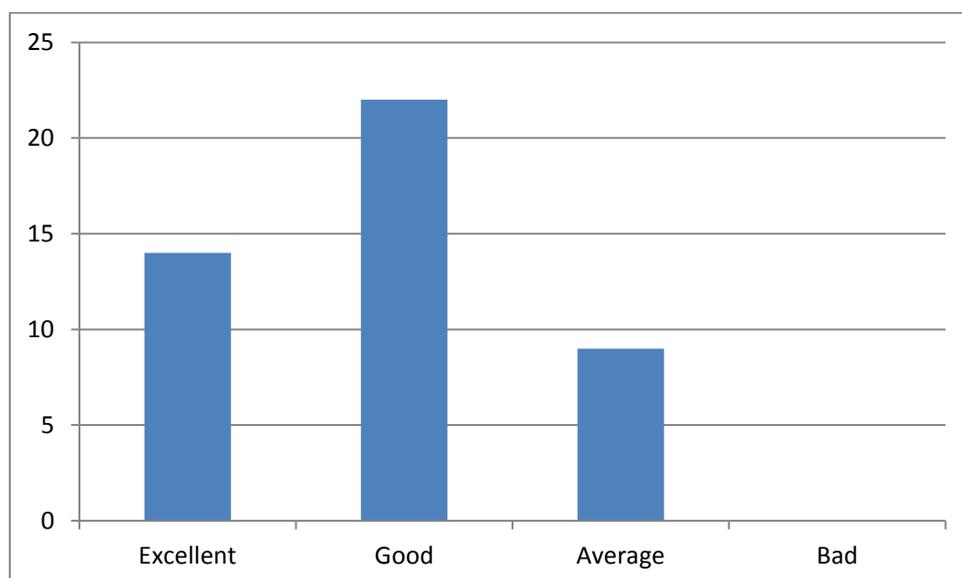


Figure 7 Duration of the visit is enough to get tasks done, autumn 2009.

The price of the service divides more of the opinion as may be seen in figure 8 below. In general customers are satisfied with the price related to the quality of the home care service as was found out both in winter 2006-2007 and autumn 2009. In winter 2006-2007 9 totally agreed and 13 agreed with the argument that the price-quality-ratio is good, as in autumn 2009 the customers were asked if they are in general satisfied with the service price and quality. 36 customers answered that the satisfaction on

Service development plan

service price and quality is good, 4 average and 1 bad, resulting in approximate of 2.85, maximum being 4, as pictured in figure 9.

The general expression is that the upper limit of the price has quite well been reached; most of the customers would not be willing to pay more for the service.

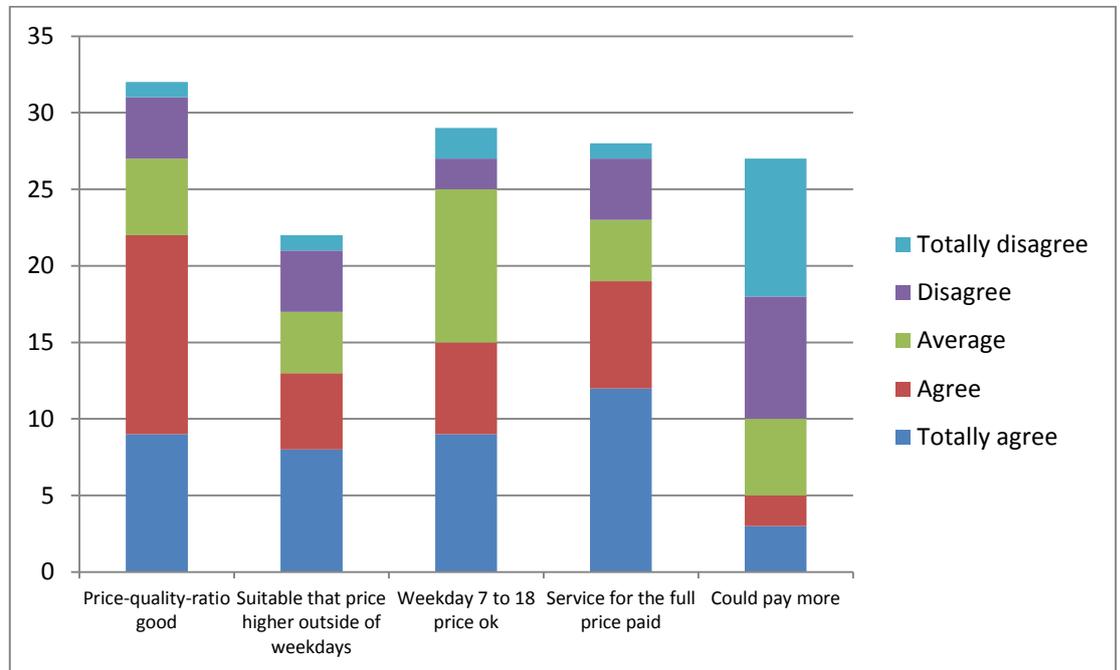


Figure 8 Price of the service in winter 2006-2007.

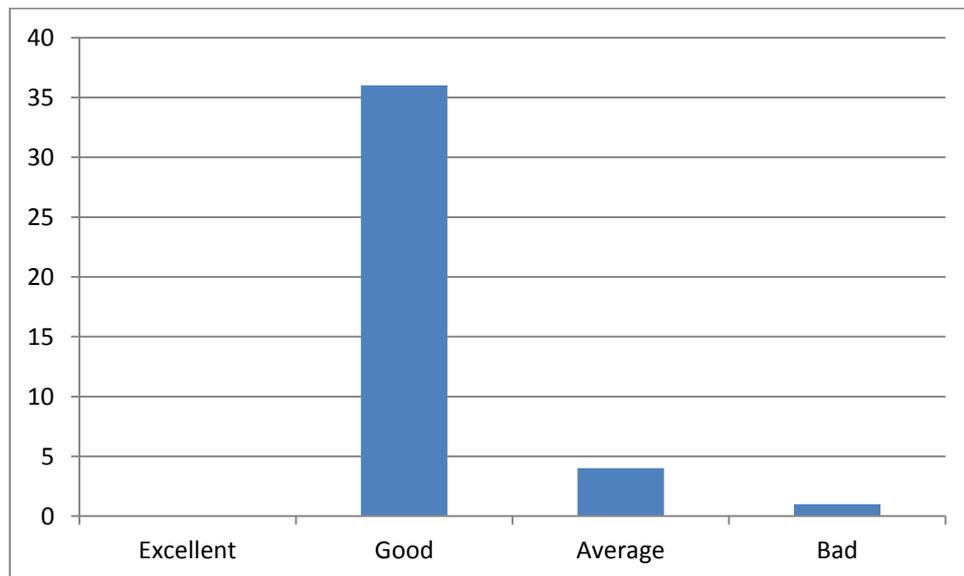


Figure 9 General satisfaction with the price and quality of the service, autumn 2009.

Also the information provided of the home care service divides opinion as may be seen below in figure 10.

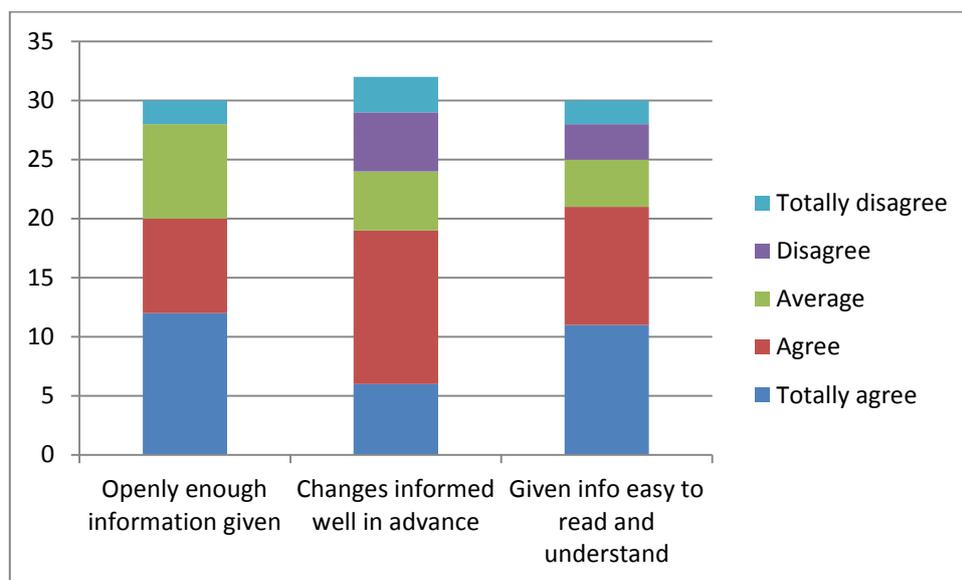


Figure 10 Delivering information related to the service in winter 2006-2007.

There are improvements to be made as only six totally agree and 13 agree with an argument that changes are informed well in advance. The customers feel that the changes are not informed well in advance and as looking at the written notes, it may be clarified that often the visiting times are not accurate but may alternate from time to time. And in case the regular care taker is unable to come, this is not informed prior to the visit. The given information was criticised for font being too small or having a background making the text less visible and readable. Otherwise the information given was commented to be understandable. In autumn 2009 the customers were asked how well they get connection to the home care service when needed. Fifteen answered very well, 25 well, 4 average and 1 badly as pictured in the figure 11 below.

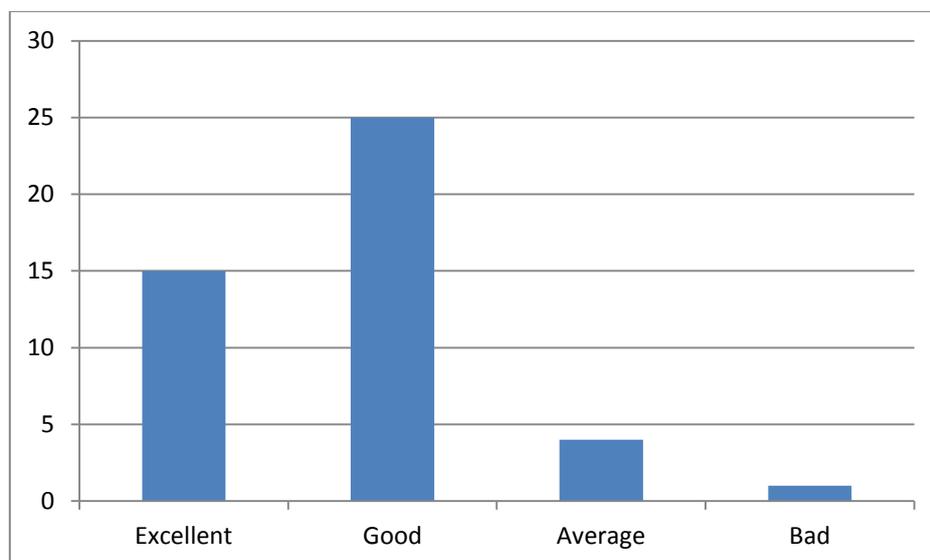


Figure 11 Getting into connection with the home care service in autumn 2009.

It was also asked how the care giver takes into consideration customer's own or her /his relatives' opinions and wishes of the work and in the same question how well the care giver adapts and takes into consideration possible needs for change in the working habits and working ways. Mostly this was answered "good" as visible below in figure 12.

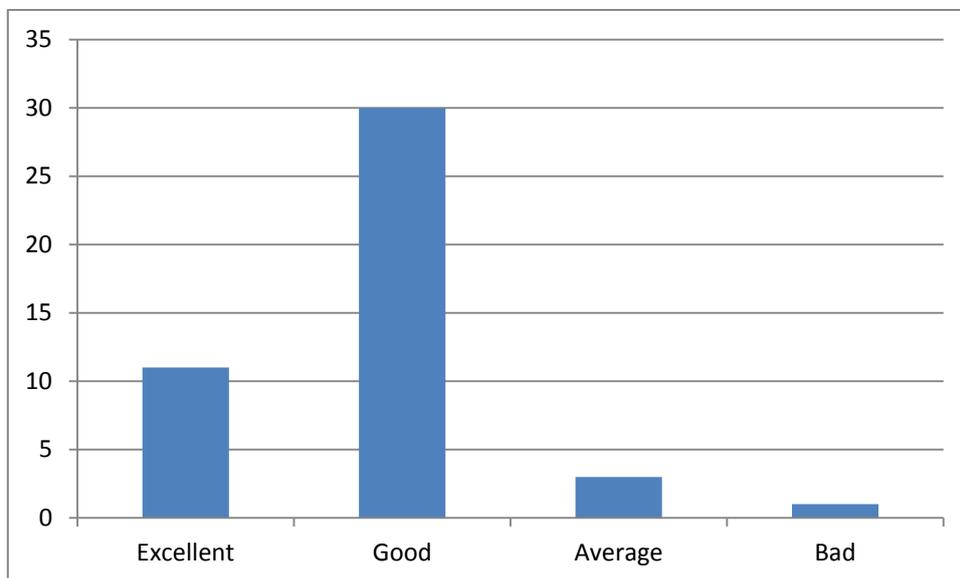


Figure 12 Home care service personnel taking into account opinions and needs, especially changes needed, in autumn 2009.

In general home care service customers evaluate the home care service personnel good and professional as seen in figure 13 below and that the care takers react well and at the moment to the changes in the customer's health as may be seen in figure 14. The customers of the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service also feel that the agreed issues on the care and service plan are good in the work as pictured in figure 15.

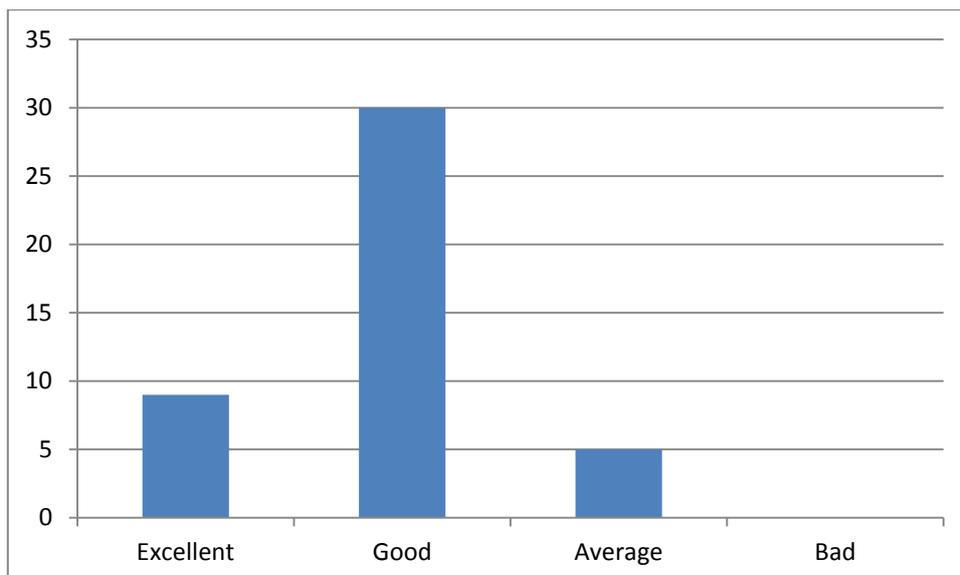


Figure 13 Customers' evaluation on the care takers' professional skills in autumn 2009.

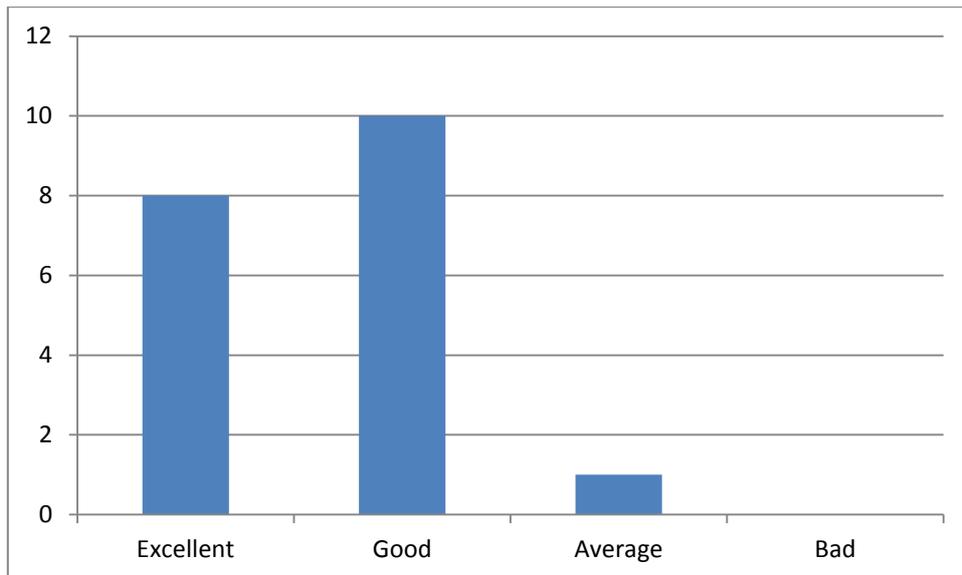


Figure 14 Evaluation on how well the care takers react to changes in the health of the customer, autumn 2009.

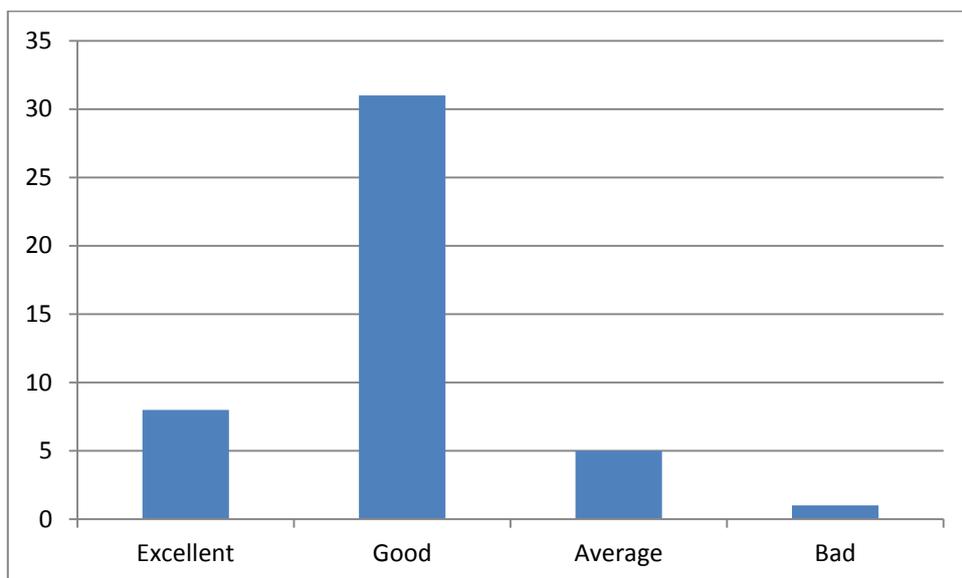


Figure 15 Realisation of agreed issues in the care and service plan in autumn 2009.

It is important to notice that not all questions were answered by all responders. But in general the questions in the questionnaires were well answered and having good response rates benefits in understanding the opinions of the home care service customers.

5 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The following issues and development suggestions are based on the facts explained and introduced before in this thesis, researcher's own observation, theory and experiences from abroad.

5.1 Suggestions to pay attention to

Barbara Walmsley describes important themes to address by Herbert from 2008 when evaluating home care service from elderly perspective:

- Qualitative information
 - Changes for the individual over time
 - Quality of life, social inclusion and choice, and other outcomes and costs
 - Compare the expected (pathways, protocol, standards) and the experienced (perceptions and outcomes)
 - Compared with other approaches like befriending or day care
 - Sustainability of achievements and improvements important
 - Small cohorts can inform bigger picture.
- (Salonen 2009)

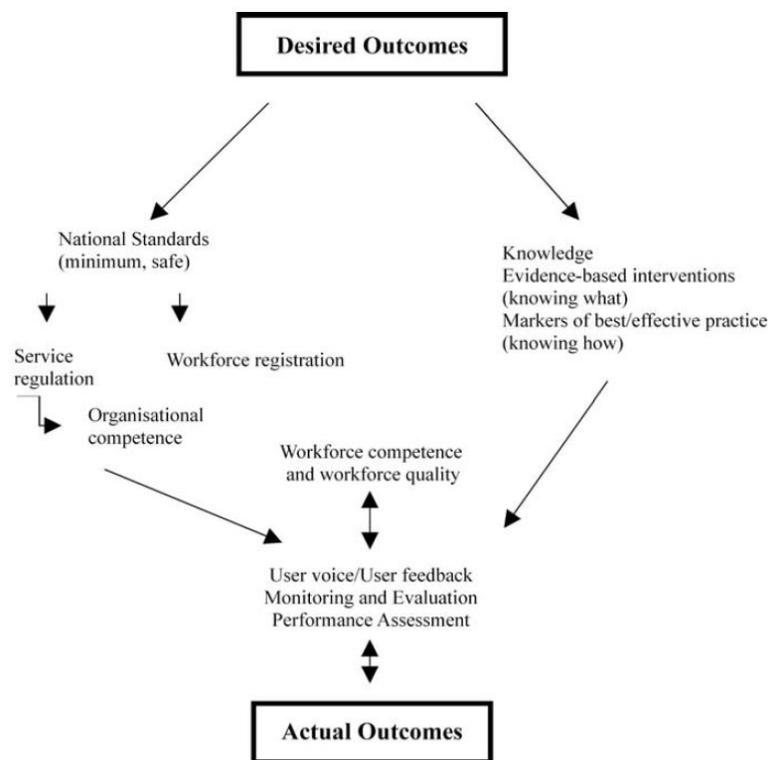


Figure 16 Desired and Actual Outcomes after Edwards from 2006 (Salonen 2009).

The employees of home care service, the care takers, need variety of knowledge and skills to perform as good care takers. The table below describes the knowledge on which the home care is based on (Salonen 2009):

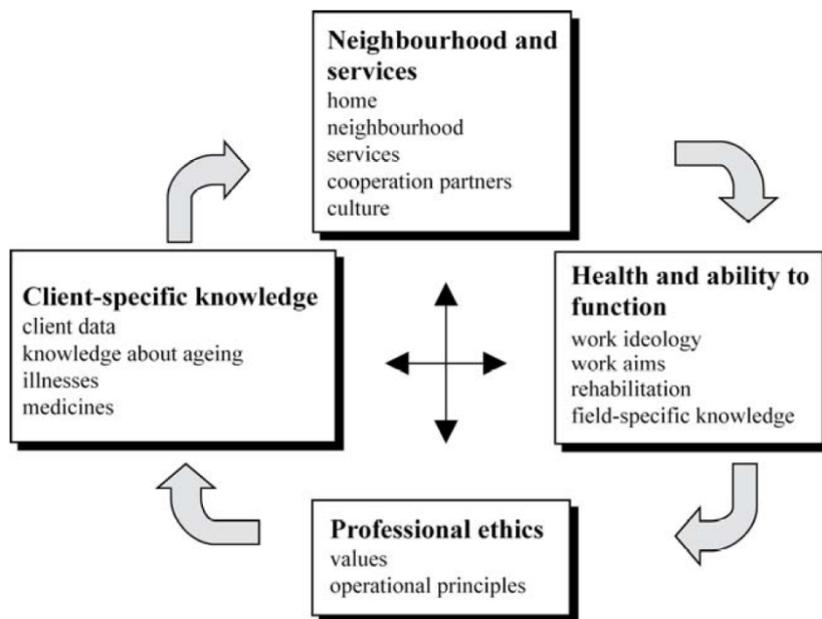


Figure 17 Knowledge on which home care is based on.

On top of the knowledge the home care workers need skills, learned in school and also by life. The most important in my opinion are empathy and listening skills. As the work happens in the customers own home, certain discretion, tolerance, understanding of different cultures and knowledge of Finnish culture is needed also.

5.2 Development suggestions

The answers of the first questionnaire in winter 2006-2007 were evaluated, and provided for the usage of the home care service by the end of year 2007. The answers to the autumn 2009 questionnaire have also been in use of the home care service. Thus the home care service has had the opportunity to adjust the working methods to the needs of own customers benefit. The results of the surveys have also been taken into consideration as doing the Action plan for 2010, the on-going year, as explained earlier. Also, as far as seen before in this thesis, the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service follows well and applies by the given rules and regulations. For this reason a detailed plan for the home care service development has not been done, but some important points raised up according to the research as development suggestions for the usage of the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service.

The customers are mainly satisfied with the service as it has been on the moment of both customer satisfaction surveys. The customers are elderly who need help to able their daily life in their own homes and they would preferably stay at own home for as long as possible. It is important to understand the customers, who they are and what do they expect, in order to be able to develop the service.

The need for the home care service will increase as people get older and higher per cent of the population will be elderly. Also as stated before, the resources of the City of Tampere are restricted and outsourcing is required to provide the elderly with services according to the strategy and vision 2020. In response to the need, the third sector organisations, like Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch, will become more important in providing home care services for the elderly. At the moment it would be important to get new work force in to the home care area as the area is not amongst the most popular to enter and at least by the knowledge and experience of the researcher there are care takers in the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service also whom are closing retirement age themselves. Those, whom have been working with the home care service for long, should and could train new-comers to the area – to introduce them to the working habits and especially to the special requirements of Red Cross due to the principles and values. This is done to some extent already, but perhaps more attention should be paid on this, especially as looking at the home care service work as part of the Red Cross work. Qualified, friendly, professional care takers will be needed in the coming years more. And even more in case Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch can compete as an outsourced service provider of the city of Tampere through Kotitori.

As taking into consideration the principles and values of Red Cross the Tampere Branch home care service should always emphasize and value taking into consideration on their work the possible loneliness of the elderly. For many customers the care taker might be the only human contact during the day, even the week. If the care taker is busy and on “stopwatch care” – a short visit, maximum of 15 minutes as discussed before – having no time to talk with the customer, it is not according to the Red Cross work principles and values. The customer should always feel he /she still is someone! In my opinion this could also be part of the competition strength of Tampere Branch home care service, as well as variety of tasks done during the visits.

It could also be looked into if there would be possibilities to offer volunteer friend for the lonely customers as part of the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch work with senior citizens. In this way the Red Cross principles and values would be more emphasized and also actualised in the work done. This is a matter of having volunteers to become friends for the elderly and of the need and want of the home care service customer also, of course. Often just the friend could have time to truly sit down and have a chat with the customer, and thus perhaps lessen the loneliness of the elderly.

While looking at the law text of Social Welfare Act mentioned earlier in this thesis, the Tampere Branch home care service is competent according to the statements. The home care service is given to elderly people in need of assistance on grounds of impaired functional capacity in their own homes for performance or assistance with functions related to housing, personal care and attendance, and activities in daily life. In the home care service promoted assistance would enable the customer to use their potential to cope independently in day-to-day activities. The Tampere Branch

home care service is also a registered and legal business in Finland, having necessary permits and acting ethically as looking the principles and values and sustainable development.

As thinking of the customer oriented work habit, introduced earlier in this thesis, in the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service it is important in reaching better customer satisfaction and customer loyalty. The home care takers, the employees of the home care service, are in direct and immediate contact with the customers daily. The employees must be able to make decisions and react quickly to possible changes in servicing the customers. The employees are also the ones receiving the direct feedback from the customers and they should have the skills to listen for the feedback given, response to it and deliver the message also to administration level if necessary.

But considering the whole customer satisfaction and customer loyalty picture, also the administration of the Tampere Branch home care service, the manager, plays an important role. The service and communication given for the customers from the office should be clear and understandable as well. The responsibility in reaching better state of customer satisfaction is on all personnel within the Tampere Branch home care service.

More attention should be paid to differences in gender, ethnicity, religion, social class and sexual orientation, both within the customers but also within the employees. These are issues that will play a bigger role in the future. It is important for the employees to know the Finnish language, culture and history, regardless of their own background, as most customers will most probably be Finns still, but it is also important to understand and to accept different cultures and backgrounds as there will be elderly immigrants etc. among the customers as well. For the employees it is also important to understand that the elderly might not be open and tolerant towards different backgrounds as well as the younger generation. One should not be insulted by comments, but understand the environment in which one is working in. This will require emphasis from the work introduction and support from the employer during the employment.

The recommended customer service model would be the “Friend Service”, with a hint of “King Service” in the beginning and as needed, depending a bit of the customer him- /herself also.

- Motto: Helping /serving the customer.
 - Means: More personalisation.
 - Model: Friendship.
 - Goal: To satisfy the need /to pamper the self-esteem and cosines of the customer.
 - Satisfaction by: Feeling of safety, and trust.
 - Employees’ attitude: Empathy.
 - Behaviour: trustworthy, friendly and casual /polite and formal.
 - Creating the relationship: Customers trust.
- (Reinboth 2008)

It should be also taken into consideration that the desired outcomes become filtered through regulatory standards and actual outcomes are the ones reaching the customer after Edwards from 2006 as pictured by Barbara Walmsley (Salonen 2009) above in figure 16. Even though certain outcomes would be desired within the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service will the desired outcomes be filtered through standards and actual outcomes and thus pre-planning is required to check out best ways to reach them.

A short and concise customer service agreement should be done. The agreement should be concrete, telling what will be done and how in the I or We form. The agreement must be realistic and doable for all of the staff, but also give some freedom of work.

The EQUIP Project online Self-assessment of competence -form (<http://www.equip-project.com/query.php?>) could be used to figure out the personal skills and possible points to develop within the employees in order for them to become better care takers. The self-assessment also gives suggestions on possible training points. These points could be collected and training or briefing on the issue(s) organised for the employees. Continuous development of employee skills is important, not to forget learning of different and ergonomic ways to do the work in increasing durability at work. Being appreciated and feeling connected at the work community – as the home care work is mainly done alone in the field – will increase satisfaction on work. These have been already taken into consideration as in the Tampere Branch Action plan for 2010 on home care it is stated of the development discussions and meetings to also create a team feeling as mentioned before, but this is part of continuous development and something attention should be paid to all the time, as the well-being of employees often mirrors the satisfaction of customers also and is thus important in order to reach better customer satisfaction.

Training and increasing knowledge and skills at the work is important as well as using common sense. It should be discussed clearly on which situations the employee must rely solely on given guidelines and job description and agreements and when he /she may use his /her own sense as well. Support and "hot line" to manager or other home care taker during work hours could be provided in case of an emergency or a problem requiring immediate solution.

The client cards, which have been introduced in the Netherlands to help organisations to work more in client-oriented approach (Salonen 2009) might increase understanding of the real needs of the customer. The cards have pictures of four domains of the care plan: body, life circumstances, participation and mental wellbeing, and showing the cards to elderly makes conversations on the topics easier (Salonen 2009). Better understanding helps making the care and service plan for the customer to better meet the true needs and wishes of the future customer. This will also result most probably in better customer satisfaction.

6 CONCLUSION

The need for care services for elderly will increase. The municipalities are unable to provide all required services on own and assistance from private care service providers is needed. The municipalities have the obligation to organise the care services for elderly and they may organise them in cooperation with other providers. The general will amongst the elderly is that they wish to stay and live at own home for as long as possible. The home care service is a way to enable this, as it assists in the daily activities and able living in own home for longer.

In Tampere the service strategy for elderly services outlines the vision of Tampere in 2020 stating ability for more elderly to live at own home longer and that customer oriented services should be equally available and of high quality. Cost effectiveness and outsourcing are part of the means to reach this vision.

The Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service is one of the private home care service providers. The Tampere Branch was founded in 1950 and home care work started officially as early as in 1956. The home care work is done according to the rules and regulations as well as the seven Fundamental Principles and other values of Red Cross. Tampere Branch home care service offers a variety of services i.e. warming up the food, taking care of medications, washing, shopping, cooking, changing linen, and cleaning done based on the personal need of the customer. The variety of tasks is one of the competitive points of Tampere Branch home care service. The employees also talk with the customer and take him /her into notice as a human not a target.

There are different kinds of ways to take care of the elderly as in different European Union (EU) countries. In most of the researched six countries some form of home care system is working. Estonia and Spain have responsibility on the family also, as in others the municipalities or the state take care of the elderly.

The customer service and thus creating customer satisfaction and customer loyalty is important to all companies and organisations. In care work taking place in the customers own home, the meaning of good customer service and having the same care takers from time to time increases. Personal relationship is created between the customer and the employee and the employee must be discrete in his /her actions in the customers' home and full confidentiality should be reached.

There are different kinds of customer service models and styles, which are all affected by the customers – what kind they are and what do they really expect – and by the company /organisation itself – what do we want to offer for our customers. It is important to notice that the expectations of the customers should be met and false expectations should not be raised. The customers compare the customer service experience with their expectations and if they are met and everything went well also otherwise, they

will be satisfied. Satisfied customers are happy customers and they will come back again and again to use the service, creating customer loyalty.

Two different customer satisfaction surveys were done in the commissioning organisation and in general the results and the state of customer satisfaction was good. The customers are mainly satisfied with welcoming the care taker into their own home and receiving the needed help at needed times. The price of the service was the one to most divide the opinions. In general the customers feel that the maximum price for the service has been reached. Also given information should be improved. A good point is that mostly the customers feel that their opinions and wishes are taken into consideration by the care takers whom are mostly evaluated as professional.

The development suggestions presented are based on the results of the surveys and also on the facts and other observations. The customer service of the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service has already been developed according to the results of the surveys as the results and findings have been allocated for their usage after analysis, but more emphasis could be put on having continuity and better customer service and thus customer satisfaction. The employees should be trained more based on their individual needs and a short and concise customer service agreement should be done. The agreement would help all staff to serve the customers better according to the Red Cross principles and values as well as work ethic. The improvements and developments made will hopefully result in even better customer satisfaction.

7 AFTERWORDS

This thesis project has taken time and having two different questionnaires done it has in the opinion of the researcher resulted in good knowledge of the state of customer satisfaction in the Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service. The development suggestions as well as other information provided in this thesis will hopefully be beneficial for the Tampere Branch home care service and result even in higher customer satisfaction.

Writing the thesis was challenging as limited amount of information was available from the commissioning organisation's side, even though having worked some hours as a care taker in the home care service, gave the researcher a clearer picture of the field and the diversity of the customers. After all, thanks to Paula Kortensniemi from Finnish Red Cross Tampere Branch home care service should be given for information and all others for the support in this project – your support and guidance has been valuable and assisted in achieving targets, the result: this thesis - thank you.

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE, WINTER 2006-2007

ASIAKASTYYTYVÄISYYSKYSELY

SPR TAMPEREEN OSASTON KOTIHOITOPALVELUN ASIAKKAILLE

TAU STATIEDOT						
SUKUPUOLI:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mies	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nainen	<input type="checkbox"/>	
IKÄ:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alle 65v.	<input type="checkbox"/>	65-74v.	<input type="checkbox"/>	75-84v.
PALVELUN ASIAKKUUSAIKA:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alle 1 v.	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 v.	<input type="checkbox"/>	3-5 v.
PALVELUN KÄYTTÖ: Kertaa viikossa:	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	<input type="checkbox"/>	2-4	<input type="checkbox"/>	5-7
YHDEN PALVELUKÄYNNIN PITUUS: Tuntia:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Alle 1 h	<input type="checkbox"/>	1-2 h	<input type="checkbox"/>	Yli 2 h
PALVELUNI MAKSUTAPA:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Itse	<input type="checkbox"/>	Omaiseni maksavat	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joku muu, Mikä? _____
KÄYTTÄMÄNI PALVELUT:						
Kotihoidossa:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kaupassa käynti	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruoanlaitto	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vaatehuolto
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Siistiminen
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Hoivatyö
Muut:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aamusoitot	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turvapuhelin- palvelu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Siivouspalvelu
MUIDEN PALVELUIDEN TARVE:						
Kotihoidossa:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kaupassa käynti	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ruoanlaitto	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vaatehuolto
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Siistiminen
	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>	Hoivatyö
Muut:	<input type="checkbox"/>	Aamusoitot	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turvapuhelin- palvelu	<input type="checkbox"/>	Siivouspalvelu

• Mistä saitte tiedon palvelusta? _____

• Miksi valitsitte juuri Punaisen Ristin tuottaman palvelun?

Service development plan

Arvioikaa asteikolla 1 – 5 (1 = täysin samaa mieltä, 5 = täysin eri mieltä) seuraavia SPR:n Tampereen osaston Kotihoitopalveluun liittyviä väitteitä.

		1	2	3	4	5
1	PALVELU					
1.1	Palvelu on aina ystävällistä.	☺	○	○	○	☹
1.2	Palvelu on aina asiantuntevaa ja asiallista.	☺	○	○	○	☹
1.3	Työntekijät ovat aina tervetulleita kotini.	☺	○	○	○	☹
1.4	Palvelu on monipuolista - saan tarvitsemäni avun ilman tarvetta ostaa lisäpalveluita.	☺	○	○	○	☹
1.5	Tehty työ on hyvää ja laadukasta.	☺	○	○	○	☹
2	HOITAJA					
2.1	On tärkeää että aina käy sama hoitaja.	☺	○	○	○	☹
2.2	Hoitajien vaihtelu kerrasta toiseen sopii minulle hyvin.	☺	○	○	○	☹
2.3	Välit hoitajien kanssa ovat luottamuksellisia.	☺	○	○	○	☹
3	SAATAVUUS					
3.1	Käynti on aina tarpeellinen ja haluttu.	☺	○	○	○	☹
3.2	Käyntien väli on hyvä.	☺	○	○	○	☹
3.3	Yhden käynnin pituus riittää kaikkien töiden tekemiseen.	☺	○	○	○	☹
3.4	Käynnin saa aina kun on tarve.	☺	○	○	○	☹
4	HINTA					
4.1	Palvelun hinta ja laatu vastaavat toisiaan täysin.	☺	○	○	○	☹
4.2	On sopivaa, että palvelusta veloitetaan enemmän lauantai-iltaisina ja sunnuntaisin sekä arkipyhäisin (40 euroa /tunti) kuin arkipäivinä.	☺	○	○	○	☹
4.3	Arkiveloitus klo 7-18 (25 euroa /tunti) on hyvä.	☺	○	○	○	☹
4.4	Palvelusta maksetulla hinnalla saan täyden rahan edestä palvelua.	☺	○	○	○	☹
4.5	Palvelusta voisin maksaa nykyistä enemmänkin.	☺	○	○	○	☹
5	TIEDOTTAMINEN					
5.1	Palvelusta kerrotaan avoimesti ja annetaan riittävästi tietoa.	☺	○	○	○	☹
5.2	Palveluun ja hoitajaan liittyvistä muutoksista ilmoitetaan ajoissa.	☺	○	○	○	☹
5.3	Palvelusta annettu tieto on helposti luettavaa ja ymmärrettävää.	☺	○	○	○	☹

Kehittämistä koskevat kysymykset ovat avoimia, eli vastaatte niihin kirjoittamalla omia mielipiteitänne annettuun tilaan. Tarvittaessa voitte jatkaa vastauksianne erilliselle paperille.

- Mitä ja millä tavalla SPR:n Tampereen osaston Kotihoitopalvelussa tulisi kehittää?

- Mikä SPR:n Tampereen osaston Kotihoitopalvelussa nykyisellään on erityisen hyvää?

- Mikä SPR:n Tampereen osaston Kotihoitopalvelussa nykyisellään on huonoa?

Kiitos vastauksestanne!!!

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE, AUTUMN 2009

ASIAKASTYYTYVÄISYYSKYSELY
ELOKUU 2009

1. Kuinka kauan olette olleet asiakkaamme?

- alle vuoden
- yli vuoden
- yli viisi vuotta
- kauemmin

2. Minkä ikäinen olette?

- alle 50-vuotias
- 51 – 60-vuotias
- 61 – 70-vuotias
- 71 – 80-vuotias
- yli 80-vuotias

3. Kuinka saitte tiedon palveluistamme ja tulitte asiakkaaksemme?

- omaisten kautta
- tuttavien kautta
- lehti-ilmoituksesta tai muusta mainoksesta
- muualta, mistä _____

4. Miten hyvin saatte yhteyden siivouspalveluun tarvittaessa?

- erittäin hyvin
- hyvin
- kohtalaisesti
- huonosti

5. Miten henkilökunta ottaa huomioon teidän/omaistenne mielipiteet ja mahdolliset muutostarpeet työskentelyssään?

- erittäin hyvin
- hyvin
- kohtalaisesti
- huonosti

6. Miten hoito- ja palvelusuunnitelmassa sovitut asiat toteutuvat?

- erittäin hyvin
- hyvin
- kohtalaisesti
- huonosti

