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UNIT OF BUSINESS AND ADMINISTRATION, KUOPIO

CLARITY OF MARKETING MESSAGE
CASE: T-BALANCE

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Abstract <p>Small enterprises typically have limitations in marketing. Nevertheless, successful marketing is a necessity to succeed, especially in international markets, as competition diversifies. TelesPro, a small enterprise from Kuopio, has a successful history of exporting. However, before commencing the internationalization of the company's newest product, the T-Balance, TelesPro noticed problems in its communication, within the domestic market. The problems lied in the conceptualizing of the marketing message in its customers' minds. The aim of this thesis was to investigate the misunderstandings of the message, in order to create suggestions on the development of marketing communication of T-Balance, to ensure that the message stays clear among its customers. Furthermore, the purpose of the study was to research the internal communication of the customer organizations, the hospitals, and its effect on the marketing communication aimed at them. Moreover, practical tips and aspects to take into consideration when the company aims the marketing communication to foreign markets were also researched.</p> <p>Qualitative research was performed at T-Balance's first and major customer organization, Kuopio University Hospital. Primary data was gathered by one-on-one interviews with hospital staff members, who are the decision makers and users of the product. The interview questions inquired on how the product's marketing message is understood, how the marketing communication is received, and what kind of internal communication happens inside the hospital. Personal and email interviews were also performed on TelesPro employees to see how the communication is sent.</p> <p>The results showed that the understanding of T-Balance is good, as was expected. The biggest misunderstanding that occurs is that the competitive advantage of the product is not conceptualized by the staff in the message. Further drawbacks included that the contact person letter is seen as useless, and that there is minimal internal communication. From the results, conclusions and suggestions on how to develop marketing communication can be made. The most important include the adaptation of marketing message and integrating marketing communication for each target group, improving the contact person letter system, asking feedback on marketing communication, and making sure that foreign retailers know how to communicate the message properly.</p>		
Keywords marketing communication(s), internal communication, internationalization, healthcare		
Note		

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Small and medium enterprises (SME) comprise of several distinctive characteristics that separate them from large organizations, in terms of marketing. These marketing characteristics are determined by the characteristics of the entrepreneur, and by the size and development stage of the enterprise. In other words, SME's have limitations as a result of inadequate resources, including time, money, knowledge, specialist expertise, and by having a small impact on the marketplace. These limitations determine the marketing characteristics of the SME's. Thus, marketing is not done "by the book," as SME marketing is generally less informal and less structured. (Gilmore & Carson & Grant 2001.) Limitations or not, every company needs to have a concise way of communicating with its customers, in order to have profitable relationships with them. In the past, it used to be about mass-marketing to get the message out; however, in today's world, companies are starting to integrate all of their marketing communications to deliver their concise message. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 398-401.)

The same barriers which affect an SME's marketing, in addition affect the company's internationalization process. The essential obstacles for entrepreneurs entering foreign markets are lack of resources and knowledge. Nevertheless, it does not matter if it is a large or a small company, if the manager believes that the company has a competitive edge, and that the company is ready for the associated risks which are involved, the company will probably try to expand its operations internationally. The main reasons for exporting are the desire for growth, exploitation of a unique product, reduction of domestic market dependence, and answering to unsolicited orders from foreign countries. When this happens, the marketing activities need to be aligned with the company's objectives and resources of going international. It is not enough just to meet the needs of the new customers; they need to be met better than by the new competitors, as well. The basic goal of international marketing is to plan and execute marketing programs that develop a long-term competitive advantage for the company. Planning is about adapting the company to the new changing environment, and

execution is about meeting the customer needs better than the competitors. (Rundh 2007; Leonidou & Katsikeas & Paliawadana & Spyropoulou 2007.)

1.2 Objectives and main concepts

TelesPro, a small enterprise from Kuopio, was on the verge of introducing its new product, the T-Balance, on to the international markets. However, TelesPro felt that the product's marketing in its domestic market needed to be researched before the introduction was to be implemented successfully abroad. TelesPro is a company which specializes in the development of products and services for emergency care and rescue services. During the past few years, it has developed a product, the T-Balance, which does not belong to their familiar market. It is a product which is used in hospitals to keep patients warm during surgery. TelesPro has successfully marketed its earlier products and taken them international; however, this new product had problems with its marketing communication during its introduction in the domestic market.

Objectives and research questions

TelesPro wanted to find out what were causing the problems in the clarity of the product's marketing message, before it would completely implement the product's internationalization process. The aim of this research was to investigate the different members inside the product's customer organization, to reveal where and what problems occur in the understanding of its marketing message. Such members include hospital personnel who make decisions on the use of the product and personnel who use the product. These aims and objectives can be rearranged to a series of research questions. The main research question, or topic, is:

How should TelesPro develop its marketing communication to ensure the marketing message stays clear within the members of the product's communication process chain?

The research aimed at answering also more specific questions:

How the members have understood the product? What kind of misunderstandings has happened and where have they happened?

Further research questions were targeted on TelesPro's assumption of the internal communication of the hospital as being a factor on the reception of the marketing communication, along with international marketing:

How does internal communication inside the product's utilization chain affect TelesPro's marketing communication? What should be taken into account when planning the international marketing communication strategy of T-Balance?

The T-Balance is a ground-breaking product in the field of body temperature maintenance in surgical operations. It has become successful in Finland. In order for it to be successful in other countries, TelesPro wanted to find out its communication problems. TelesPro has not conducted prior research on the marketing communication of T-Balance. As a matter of fact, TelesPro has not conducted research on marketing communication on any of its products. The author's motivation for this research was to be part of the success, and at the same time gather precious practical knowledge on marketing and marketing communication.

Theory and main concepts

The company background information, included in this thesis, is based on TelesPro's web pages, interviews and meetings with the company, and past assignments that the author has done on the company. The theoretical background of the thesis was researched from books concerning marketing and marketing communication, academic articles concentrating on specific topics of marketing, and credible internet sources. The theory is largely based on the theory of marketing communication, or as it is sometimes spelled, marketing communications. The main concepts focus more precisely on the important parts of the communication process, including the theory of marketing message, e.g. what kind the message should be, in order for it to be understood unmistakably. The most relevant and important promotion, or marketing communication, tools are reported, and their integration, in order to create a concise marketing message. Moreover, relationship marketing and communication, which is required to have long lasting relationships with customers, is explored. Also, theory will be based on communication strategies and supply chain management. In addition to marketing communication, this thesis also discusses organizational communication in more general. One of the main concepts includes internal communication, and more

specifically, the internal communication inside hospitals. The suggestions on marketing communication development, presented in the end, are established around Kotler and Armstrong's views on the steps in developing effective communication.

1.3 Methodology and its limitations

The members of T-Balance's communication process chain are mostly made out of different departments inside hospitals. Instead of selecting several people from these departments to be researched, only few were selected. These selected people represented the view of the departments from a managerial and a practical level. This allowed the use of qualitative research methods, as the main research method for the research. As this research was about a single product for a single company, the approach for the research was a case study. The data collection method was interviews. These were performed on one-to-one basis, excluding one email interview.

The research had limitations, generally due to the fact that only one hospital, or health care organization, was used for the data collection of the research. The use of this one particular Finnish hospital also affected negatively the research problem, as the problem was not that current anymore at the hospital, and the practicality of applying the conclusions at hospitals in foreign countries.

The results of this research are to give TelesPro suggestions on how to develop their marketing communication. The research and writing of thesis occurred simultaneously with the product's first steps of internationalization. Before the results of the research had been presented to TelesPro, the company had already launched the product in its first foreign market. Therefore, the marketing communication strategy of the company is not based on the work of this research; it is only a suggestion on how to develop it, in order to be more successful as the company expands its operation internationally and in the domestic market.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis will begin by introducing the company in question, TelesPro. After going through the basic company information, more concentration is put on the general marketing practices of this small enterprise. The ways of communicating to the

customer are described, when it comes to the more familiar products that TelesPro has developed in the past. This will be compared to the marketing of the new product, T-Balance, therefore leading to the purpose of the research and its objectives. The theoretical background and framework of the research will be elaborated more in-depth, after the company background. The main theoretical concepts of the research, marketing communication and internal communication, will be connected with practical examples from TelesPro and the marketing of the T-Balance, to explain the uniqueness of the company's problems. Following the theory is the research methodology, by first describing the data collection methods of the research, and then the way the results were analyzed. After the presentation of the results, the thesis is concluded with the discussion of the conclusions, and by giving some suggestions on the way TelesPro should develop its marketing communication, as T-Balance's presence in international markets expand.

2 COMPANY BACKGROUND

2.1 Company introduction

TelesPro Finland Ltd. is a small enterprise headquartered in Kuopio, Finland. It specializes in the development of products and services for emergency care and rescue services. Along with developing high quality innovative products and providing services, TelesPro is responsible for their marketing and distribution. The business is based on cooperation with professionals from universities, research centers, hospitals, and rescue service professionals. TelesPro emphasizes on continuous research and development to improve quality and usability of their products, which aim at improving safety and effectiveness of rescue work operations and the protection and comfort of patients. TelesPro considers the fulfilling of the needs and requirements of their customers vitally important. At this point, TelesPro has an extensive distribution network in several areas, with the aim of expanding this network further to even more locations.

TelesPro's customers range from rescue professionals to any employer who takes the safety of employee's seriously. Primarily, TelesPro supplies private and public rescue services, hospitals, police departments, the Red Cross, and other rescue operators. Furthermore, TelesPro's products are used by national defense organizations, such as the military and frontier and coast guard. Not every customer is a professional in rescue operations. Also included are ski resorts and hotels, oil rigs, and other companies where employees and customers may be in an accident where rescue service products are needed. These locations have TelesPro products at the ready, in the unfortunate event that an accident might occur.

As already mentioned, TelesPro is a developer of high quality products for emergency care and rescue services. The more conventional products included in the TelesPro's product selection are the Rescue Covering, Vacuum Mattress, Cloak, and Accident Covering. These are all products designed for rescue operations to be put on patients to protect them from the environment and to make them easier to transport. The products are developed with the help of research institutions, medical experts, and rescue professionals. Also, the material used in the products is rigorously tested, in

order to make sure that it is the most appropriate. An example of co-operation in research and development is the Rescue Covering. It was developed by the Department of Physiology at the University of Kuopio. The project needed knowledge from the fields of clothing and human thermal physiology, as well as, pre-hospital emergency care.

Along with the products, the customers are entitled to the service which TelesPro offers. TelesPro has developed a practical maintenance chain for one of its products, the Rescue Covering. Simply, if a patient is delivered to a hospital wearing the Rescue Covering, the rescue company leaves the patient there with the covering, and they take a new cleaned and prepared covering with them from the hospital. The hospital then sends the old covering to the laundry for washing, and they send it back to the hospital prepared. There it waits until a rescue service company comes back to the hospital with another patient, and again is in a need of a new covering. This maintenance concept has had success in Finland, as it provides safety, efficiency, and continuous protection, to its customers.

The customers for these products and services can be found in growing number of countries. TelesPro has distributors in Europe and in North America. Majority of exporting goes to European countries including Sweden, Germany, Norway, Denmark, Italy, and Switzerland. (TelesPro 2005a.)

TelesPro was founded in April of 2004. However, cooperation with professionals, on textiles for the field of healthcare, already started earlier on in the decade. From 2004 until 2007, through networking and financing, TelesPro developed itself into a market leader. In 2008, development and clinical testing started for TelesPro's most recent product: the T-Balance. Instead of being used in rescue operations like all of the other products, the T-Balance is used in hospitals to protect patients from decreasing of body temperature during surgical operations. The T-Balance is in use in hospitals all over Finland, where it is utilized in almost every kind of surgical procedure. This is possible due to the numerous amount of zippers placed in areas of the body where surgery's might need to be conducted. Whenever surgery is performed on a patient, there is a risk that the patient's core temperature decreases. Before hand, this was treated with different types of heaters to keep the patient warm during the surgery. It is critical to keep the core temperature of the patient at normal because if it is allowed to

drop, serious complications and risks may occur. The problem with earlier heating products used by hospitals was the fact that they only kept the temperature at a normal level during the actual surgical procedure, when in fact, the lowering of the body temperature started already before the actual procedure. Already when the pre-medication is given to the patient at the ward, the temperature starts going down. Also after the surgery, the body temperature does not return to normal before the vital functions start working properly after the anesthesia has worn out. TelesPro developed the T-Balance to keep the temperature at normal level for the whole process, as the suit is put on the patient already at the ward and it is taken off after the recovery. See from APPENDIX 1, an illustration of the product. (Hakkarainen 2010b; TelesPro 2005b.)

2.2 Marketing background

As already mentioned, TelesPro is a small, or a micro, enterprise. It consists of 5 employees. Due to its size, TelesPro does not have a marketing department, thus responsibility of the marketing is spread throughout the employees, with the CEO holding the official responsibility in the company's marketing and communication. Great deal of TelesPro's marketing is based on personal selling. Possible customers are either visited or met at trade fairs, during which TelesPro presents their products and services. After successful negotiations, further marketing and communication is performed through a contact person at the customer organization. This marketing material includes campaign letters on new products and offers, and sales aids, which are for example, instructions on how to use the products, which are placed in visible places at the customer's property. Marketing communication does not have big role in the company's long-term strategy planning, as it is planned more on the operative level. Each product of the company has its own marketing model, and since the marketing is mostly done at customer contact points, marketing is planned just before the contact happens with the customer, in order to make sure the marketing message comes out clear. (Rinta-Panttila 2010.)

Marketing of T-Balance

The marketing of the new T-Balance product follows the same basic marketing model which the other products also utilize. However, due to T-Balance's complexity

compared to the other products, the marketing of the T-Balance is more thorough and time consuming. The selling of the product is performed through personal selling, which is most of the times done by the CEO, who visits hospitals and meets with different personnel inside the hospital. Because the product is used at more than one department inside hospitals, the selling process needs to be done at all of the departments included in the products utilization chain. As can be seen in figure 1, first TelesPro visits the surgery and recovery departments. The product is presented to the decision makers in those departments, which usually include the head nurse of the department accompanied by some other nurses. After the staff at the surgery and recovery are convinced about the hospital's need for the product, the decision makers at the ward are also contacted and the product is presented to them. After all the staff that work with the product are convinced about the product's benefits to the hospital, then the hospital administration is contacted. The final decision on the use of the product is made in two different steps by the hospital. First, the medical decision is made by head doctors and medical management. This is followed by the purchase decision made by the textile work group, which includes members from the hospital and the laundry company. The role of the laundry company is explained further on. During this selling process, the basic marketing message of the product is the same to all of the staff. However, some qualities of the product are emphasized to different people depending on their profession at the hospital. When everybody is in an agreement on the need of the product, the hospital starts using them. (Hakkarainen 2010a; Hakkarainen 2010b.)

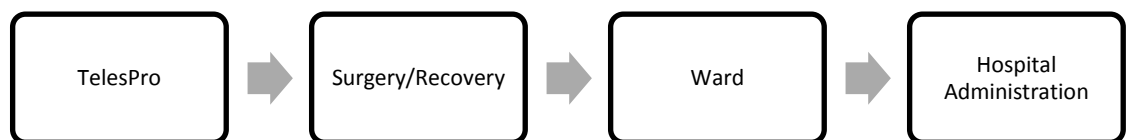


Figure 1. *Selling process of T-Balance.*

After the selling process, the marketing of the product shifts to the orientation of the product. This happens as the T-Balance product specialist and the CEO of the company visit the hospitals another time. The personnel from different departments of the hospital are instructed on the product, separately. The orientation is emphasized in

the ward, due to the fact that they are responsible for dressing and taking the suit off the patients. The use of different zippers on the product is taught, and the material of the product is introduced to the nurses. This orientation happens also in the other departments, surgery and recovery; however, not as much time is used for them. As some staff cannot attend the orientation events, some instructive material is left for them to learn by themselves how to use the suits on the patients. (Väänänen 2010.)

After this, the marketing of the T-Balance continues through a selected contact person, or persons, for all of the different departments of the hospital, and through the supervising nurses. These contact persons are responsible for instructing and helping the other staff on questions concerning the product. TelesPro keeps contact with the hospitals through these people by sending them the contact person letter, which has news and other information concerning the product.

Another part of the chain in the marketing of the T-Balance is the laundry company. They are responsible for washing and delivering the suits. In reality, the T-Balance products are not bought by the hospital, instead they are bought by the company who is in charge of the laundry of the hospital. As the hospitals agree to use the product, TelesPro supplies the laundry company with the suits, and the hospital then rents as many of the suits they need from the laundry company. (Hakkarainen 2010a.)

2.3 Purpose for research

After the introduction of the T-Balance, TelesPro started to notice that different people inside the hospital had a different array of views and opinions towards the product. They realized that as they had introduced the product to the market, different people inside the product's utilization chain, in hospital administration, and at the laundry company had not received or understood the product's marketing message in the same way. (Hakkarainen 2009.) TelesPro was in an unfamiliar position because the T-Balance had to be marketed to different departments and different levels of decision making at the hospitals, which was more complicated compared TelesPro's earlier products. TelesPro wanted to investigate the different parts of the utilization chain inside the hospital, in order to develop the company's marketing communication to insure that the product's marketing message stays clear within all the members who come in contact with it.

As can be seen in figure 2, the communication that happens about T-Balance is not just marketing communication from TelesPro to the different departments of the hospital. There is also internal communication inside the hospital, possibly about the product. The product is put on the patient at the ward, then the patient goes to surgery, after which it goes to recovery. After the patient has recovered, he or she is returned to the ward where the suit is taken off. From the ward, the suit is sent to the laundry company to be washed, who then returns clean suits back to the ward. (Hakkarainen 2009.) Through this chain of utilization, TelesPro wanted to know what is communicated inside the different departments, and what are they communicating with each other. TelesPro had an assumption that this might affect the understanding of the marketing message they are giving to the different departments of the hospital. As also can be seen from figure 2, there is communication with the laundry company as well. TelesPro does not really market its product to the laundry company, as the decision of using the product comes from the hospital; however, there is communication on a more operative level. The wards of the hospital are responsible for the communication between the hospital and the laundry company, since they are the ones that order the product. All of this communication, including communication to and by the hospital administration, is known in this thesis as the communication process chain of T-Balance.

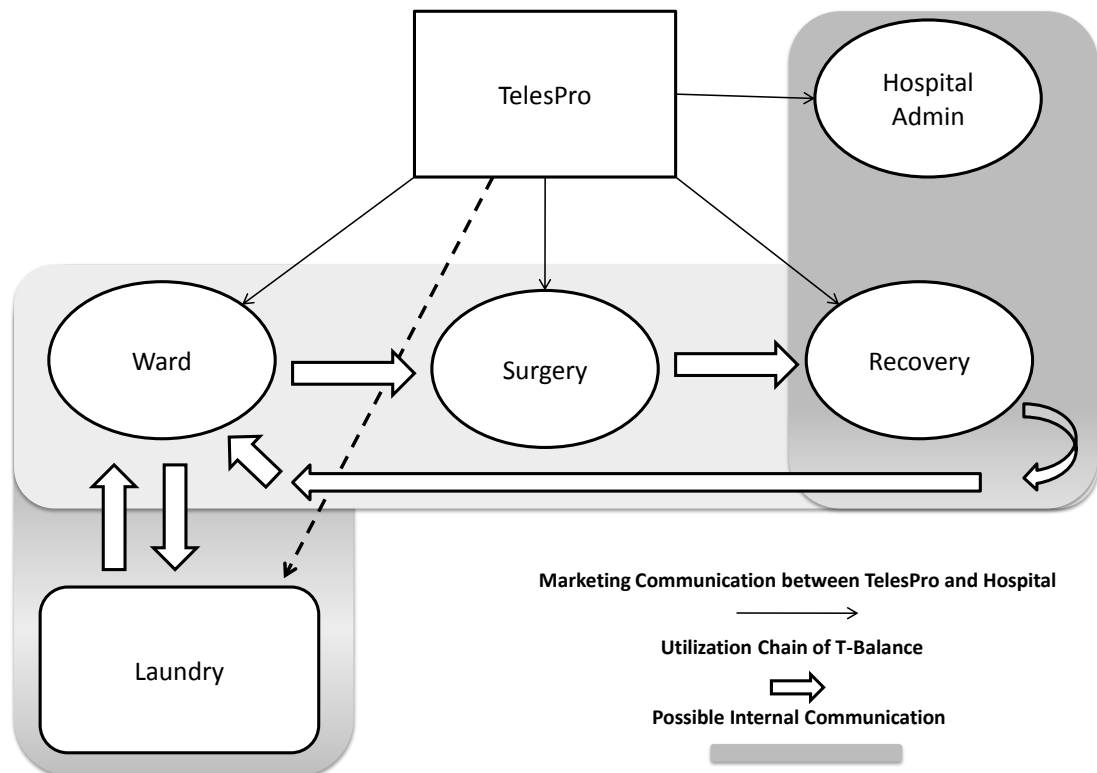


Figure 2. *The Communication process chain of T-Balance.*

Like with all of TelesPro's earlier products, the T-Balance was also planned to be taken to international markets. TelesPro knew that the product's problems concerning marketing should be investigated before, in order for the product to be successfully introduced abroad. Because in internationalization, as marketing communication becomes combined with supply chain management when more players become involved in a product's chain of communication, that chain becomes harder to manage (Min & Mentzer 2000). Solving the problems in the domestic market does not automatically solve the problems in foreign markets, because of new retailers and middlemen in the mix, and because of, for example, differences in decision making hierarchies in different cultures. However, it gives a firm foundation to start developing the product's international marketing.

3 MARKETING COMMUNICATION

3.1 Definition of marketing communication

TelesPro's issue with the T-Balance's marketing message clarity culminates to the marketing communication of the company. Marketing communication is all the elements in an organization's marketing that ease the transfer of value by creating shared meaning with the customers. It is not just the intended promotion that companies have, as marketing communication is a more encompassing term because it involves communication through all of the marketing mix decisions, including product, price, and distribution. Communication through these other elements is usually unintentional. (Shimp 1993, 7-8.) Sometimes the terms promotion and marketing communication are used as synonyms. Kotler and Armstrong (2008, 398) define promotion mix and marketing communication mix as a specific blend of advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling, and direct marketing tools that communicate customer value and build customer relationships. In this thesis, the term marketing communication will be used to describe any form of communication that TelesPro uses to convey the T-Balance's marketing message to its customers.

In a simplified way, marketing communication process can be perceived as to having five different parts or steps. As can be seen in figure 3, the process starts with the source of the communication, or the "Who" part, and ends in the reaction of the communication's recipient, described in the figure as "With what effect." Firstly, the end result is received through the message, the "Says what" part, or in this case, the marketing message that TelesPro wants to deliver. Secondly, through the channel, or "How," which is mostly done by personal selling at TelesPro. And thirdly, through the audience, described as "To whom," which in the case of T-Balance is the several target groups placed inside the hospitals. (Kitchen 1999, 22.)

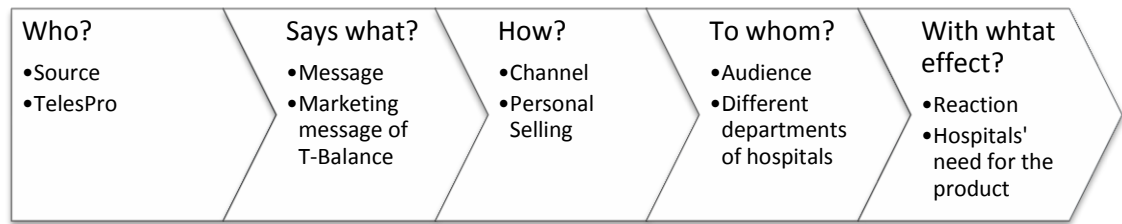


Figure 3. *How communication works (modified) (Kitchen 1999, 22).*

3.2 Message, channel, and audience

Marketing message

Kotler and Armstrong (2008, 404-407) feel that developing effective communication happens backwards from the process of communication presented in figure 3. After having defined the audience and their respective reaction, comes the developing, or designing, of the actual message. Every marketing message should follow the AIDA model, even though in practice, only few messages take the customer through the whole process at once. The message should get Attention, hold Interest, arouse Desire, and obtain Action. When designing a message, the marketer needs to think of the content and how the message is said. Furthermore, one of the most important aspects the marketer needs to take into consideration is that individuals interpret messages differently. It is vital for the marketing communication that the messages that are sent out, reflect the whole audience. This is also one of the most difficult parts of marketing communication, therefore leading to misunderstandings of the message inside the members of the audience. (Dermody 1999, 162.) The basic marketing message of TelesPro is that T-Balance is a medical instrument which keeps the body temperature of a patient at a constant level, throughout the whole process of having a surgery; meaning at no point does the body temperature drop. Keeping the body temperature constant is beneficial for the hospital, the patient, and the staff. (Hakkarainen 2009.)

Personal selling

TelesPro does most of its communication through personal selling. Inside its domestic market, TelesPro visits its customers and gives presentations on its products, in order

to sell them. (Hakkarainen 2009.) Personal selling is communication in which the sales person works with the prospective buyer and tries to influence the buyer's needs towards the company's products. Personal selling differentiates itself from the other forms of marketing communication, due to the fact that it is done person-to-person, instead of being presented to a wider audience. The advantages of personal selling are that it makes the customer pay more attention to the message that is being said because of the face to face contact. The salesperson can also customize the message to specific customer needs and interest, and get instant feedback from the customers to see if the presentation is working. Furthermore, a sales person can describe a larger amount of the technical information of the products and demonstrate how the products' functions operate and perform. Traditionally, the sales person, or force, has been the vital link between a company and its customers. They are the major platform for communication of the marketing message. Successful personal selling can lead to long-term relationships with the customers. (Shimp 1993, 609-611; Donaldson 1999, 327.)

Target Groups

As mentioned earlier, companies are moving away from mass marketing towards to being more specific with their marketing operations. Target marketing means identifying different market segments, choosing to concentrate on one or more, and developing products and marketing operations for each of them. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 184.) With earlier products, TelesPro targeted different rescue organizations and other organizations that require rescue products and services. With T-Balance, targeting is solely concentrated on hospitals, as the development of the product arose from the need of hospitals for an efficient solution to body temperature maintenance in surgical operations. Instead, the different targeted segments are inside one customer organization. The T-Balance is targeted to different departments inside the customer organization, with the utilization of the product connecting each department. (Hakkarainen 2009.)

The targeting strategy of TelesPro can be considered as product specialization, according to De Pelsmacker, Geuens, and Van den Bergh (2001, 106). This means that the company concentrates on one product and sells it to different market segments. However, even though TelesPro has the ability to market the product

differently to every segment; it does not tailor the product, as it has to be the same for everybody. Another possible strategy is undifferentiated marketing. This is when a company ignores the differences of the segments and targets everybody the same way. In differentiated marketing, the segments' differences are noticed and marketing happens according to the differences. Other targeting strategies include concentrated and micromarketing. Companies choose the strategies according to their own resources, the product's variability and life-cycle, along with the market's variability, and competitors' marketing strategy. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 195-201.) The uniqueness of the case of T-Balance creates the problems which TelesPro is facing. Every target group, or segment, need to understand the marketing message clearly, in order for the T-Balance to be successful. This has proved to be difficult.

3.3 Relationship marketing

Relationship marketing and marketing communication are intertwined, as it is the purpose of marketing communication to create relationships between the company and the customer. The basis of a relationship is trust, and every marketing communication tool is designed to build trust. In spite of that, for many years personal selling has been the personification of relationship marketing. (Cownie 1999, 404.) As TelesPro has successfully sold its product, it moves on to building long lasting relationships with its customers. This is done in two phases. First is the orientation, where the customer is taught about the product and its use in-depth, and the customer gives feedback on the product. The second is the communication done through the contact persons, in order to furthermore inform the customer about the product, and to give the customer still the opportunity to give feedback on development ideas. (Hakkarainen 2009.) This is done because marketing is not just about attaining more customers, but it is more and more about building and maintaining desirable relationships. In today's marketing world, retaining old customers and building strong relationships with them, through constant delivering of superior customer value, is the goal. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 17.)

As mentioned earlier, marketing communication process can be described in a simple five step process. However, that only takes into account the sender as the only one that communicates. In reality, the audience, or the receiver, is also an active participant in the communication. As can be seen in figure 4, the reaction of the receiver is coming

back to the sender in the form of a response, which is interpreted by the sender as feedback. Also included in this model is the encoding and decoding of the marketing message, which have to be in accordance with each other, in order for the receiver to understand the message in the way the sender wanted to present it. All of this is also affected by noise, which is unplanned distortion during the communication process. To communicate effectively, marketers like TelesPro, need to know how all of these elements in the communication work. (Kitchen 1999, 22-23; Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 402-404.)

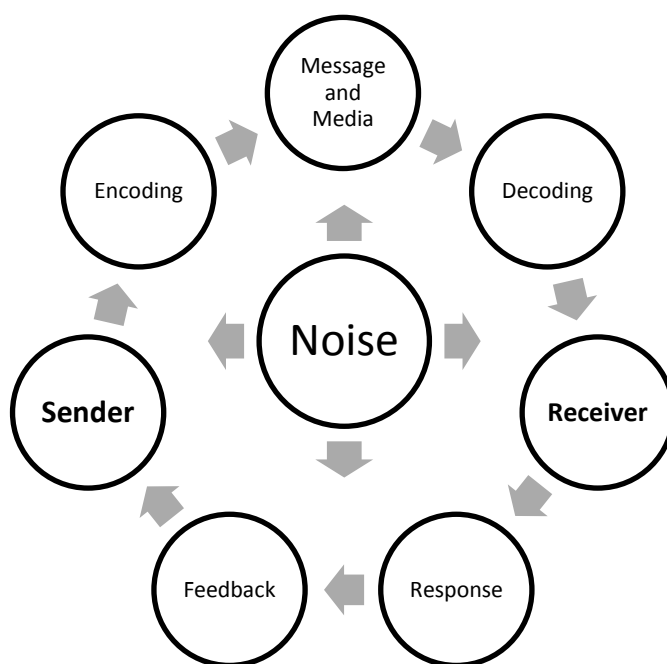


Figure 4. *Elements in the communication process* (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 403).

3.4 Integrated marketing communication

To build strong customer relationships, companies typically adopt a total marketing communication strategy which is the result of integrated marketing communication (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 401). Integrated marketing communication, or IMC, is made up of seven levels. Vertical objectives integration means that an organization's communication is in line with its marketing and corporate objectives. Horizontal/functional integration means that the communication activities are in line with the other functions of the organization. Marketing mix integration implies that the decisions concerning price, place, and product are consistent with promotion decisions. Communication mix integration is about the different communication tools

giving out the same consistent message. Creative design integration means that the creative design fits the positioning of the product. Internal/external integration signifies that every department, even externally employed agencies, work towards the planned outcome with the same strategy. The last of the levels is financial integration. This is about making sure that the budget is the most efficient, also in the long run. (Holm 2006.)

Out of the mentioned seven, communication mix integration is the most reported and is sometimes used as a synonym for IMC. As the number of communication channels increase for a company, it needs to make sure that all of those channels, and customer contact points, are creating the same concise message. The process of integrated marketing communication is about integrating those channels to create that clear and compelling message. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 401.) For TelesPro, this means that the message that was given to the hospital staff needs to be consistent from the sales process to the orientation, the contact letters, and to every other piece of material on the T-Balance, for example the instructions that are put on the walls of lavatories in hospitals, so patients know how to take off the suit and put it back on. IMC connects all of these together. Larger companies regularly have someone in charge of doing this integration; however, larger companies, of course, also have many more channels to be integrated. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 401-402.) As already mentioned, in reality TelesPro does not have one person in charge of marketing.

3.5 Supply chain management and communication strategy

Marketing and supply chain management (SCM) are also associated with each other. Min and Mentzer (2000) feel that the implementation of SCM is very much affected by the marketing of the companies inside the supply chain. Every company in the chain strives for customer satisfaction at a profit, by coordinating their activities inside and outside their premises. To do this, they have to be aware of and respond to the market information. Since there are multiple learning resources inside the supply chain, it is only reasonable that relationships are formed with each other to share that information. This leads to every member being efficient and to meeting the demands of the customers in a more effective way. In the domestic market, TelesPro does not have ordinary downstream members in the supply chain of T-Balance. The laundry companies are in the physical supply chain, as the supply of the product flows through

them; however, from a marketing point of view, they have no position. There are neither retailers nor wholesalers in the chain, as TelesPro sells the product straight to the consumer. In the foreign markets, there is a middleman for retail of T-Balance. (Hakkarainen 2009.) With this foreign retailer, marketing and supply chain management need to be taken into consideration together, as the supply chain becomes a marketing channel.

When it comes to marketing communication, companies mainly choose from two basic promotion mix, or marketing communication, strategies. Either, the push strategy or the pull strategy. A push strategy is about “pushing” your product through the channel members toward the final consumer. In other words, the marketing communication is directed at the channel members to encourage them to pick up the product and promote it themselves to the customer. The most common tool of communication is personal selling in this case. In the pull strategy, the marketing communication is directed straight at the customer by the producing company, persuading them to buy the product. Successful communication results in consumer demand for the product from the channel members, which results in the fact that the channel members demand it from the producing company. The tool used in this case is most commonly advertising, which creates the consumer demand which “pulls” the product through the channel members. Usually companies producing industrial goods prefer the push strategy over the pull and the opposite for direct-marketing companies. Large enough companies apply both strategies. However, companies have to take into account several factors when planning the marketing communication strategies, for instance what kind of a product is in question, in what kind of markets, and in what kind of life-cycle stage the product is in. For example, business-to-business companies usually use push strategies, as they concentrate more on the personal selling. Moreover, when it comes to product life cycle stages, for example in the introduction stage, companies usually tend to advertise and use public relations to create awareness, along with personal selling to influence the channel members to carry your product. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 415-416.)

4 INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

4.1 Organizational communication

Marketing communication is an important factor in this research; however, not all of an organization's communication is directed outwards. Åberg (1992, 61-67) defines organizational communication as "communication between the different parts of the organization, which makes the reaching of goals possible for the organization and its members in different situations. Communication is therefore a tool which connects the parts of the organization to each other, and the whole organization to its environment." There are four reasons why there is communication in an organization. The most important is that it supports the production. In other words, communication is needed for the production of products and services. The other reasons include that communication profiles the organization, it conveys information for the organization, and that it secures the members of the organization through introducing them to the organization and to their position in it. Åberg defines these reasons as "performance communication" as they directly affect the performance of the organization. Figure 5 shows the organizational communication in its entirety. As can be seen, it includes external marketing, i.e. marketing communication; however, it also includes various forms of communication occurring inside the organization. The reason for this is that organizational communication is made up of two dimensions. One of the dimensions is the focus of the communication's content; the other is the direction of the communication, which can be directed either outwards or inwards.

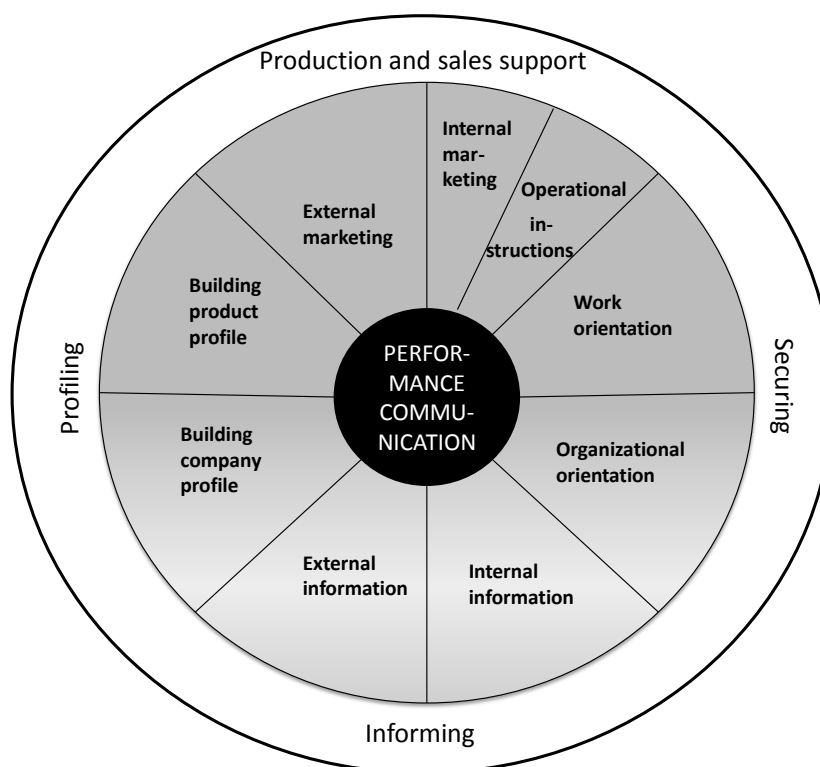


Figure 5. *Field of organizational communication* (Åberg 1992, 66).

4.2 Definition of internal communication

Internal communication is the communication that happens inside the organization between the employer and the employees, and between the employees themselves. It is a dialogic and dual listening process. There are many ways to internally communicate. A basic formal way of communicating is one-to-one or group meetings with the employer and the employees. During the years, this has evolved to printed material, for example newsletters, and now more recently to digital material, such as the email. (Hopkins 2006.)

Internal communication aids in companies being successful, as it benefits the company in many ways. Improved productivity, reduction in absenteeism, higher level of innovation, less strikes by the personnel, higher quality in products and services, and less expenses are some examples of benefits created by successful internal communication. The more levels of the organization communicate clearly with each other, the more there is involvement in the achieving of the organization's goals. (Robson & Tourish 2005.) An employee that feels that he, or she, is informed about

his, or her, organization is more personally involved with the company, which leads to higher quality of work. As can be seen in figure 6, the more aware the employee is, the more action the employee will take. This increase is the result of an increase in communication in general, and also due to the fact that the communication is done using more personal channels of communication. (44 Communications 2004.) A usual problem in organizations is that the manager, or management, does not recognize that there is a problem in communication. Furthermore, the management is usually reluctant in doing anything to fix the internal communication because it ties up the organization's resources and time. (Robson & Tourish 2005.)

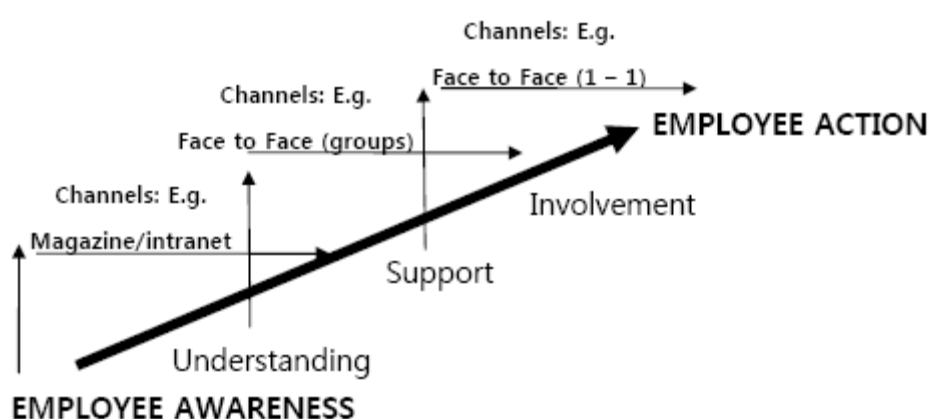


Figure 6. *The communication escalator* (44 Communications 2004).

It has become an indication of a modern organization, if an organization has acknowledged the increase in efficiency of having proper internal communication. Meaning, internal communication should be practiced at any company, ranging from SME's to large multinational corporations (MNC's). Since today's communication is mostly done digitally, companies are investing money in new communication solutions. In the United States, it is the larger companies which are investing more on communication. In Europe, it is the smaller companies. Furthermore, country or regional legislation also encourage companies on internal communication. In the European Union, larger companies with more than 150 employees are required by law to consult with their employees and inform them on business and organizational topics. (44 Communications 2004.)

Communication between employees, so called side-to-side communication, is often more powerful than communication between the employer and the employees, i.e.

up/down communication (Hopkins 2006). As mentioned already, communication in an organization has four reasons. These reasons can be controlled by the organization itself. The fifth reason for communication is the interaction of humans, which cannot be controlled. Human being is a social creature, which needs social communication to fulfill its social needs. This social interaction, also known as word-of-mouth communication, is also an important form of communication, which needs to be taken into consideration, when companies, for example, evaluate the communication inside their own premises. (Åberg 1992, 63-64.)

4.3 Internal communication inside hospitals

Robson and Tourish (2005) conducted a research on a European healthcare organization (HCO). It was a comprehensive and thorough study on the internal communication, including its philosophy, concepts, structure, and other aspects. The results revealed that the HCO was dealing with major problems in internal communication. The respondents, that were interviewed in focus groups for the research, felt that there was a lack of communication, not only from the top to the bottom, but also that the flow of communication from the bottom to the top needed to be improved. They felt that this could be improved with rather simplistic methods. The main reason believed to be the problem is the workload of the senior managers. With so many things to do, increasing resources on internal communication becomes an inferior option. Another finding was that the fact that there is poor communication means that the senior management is not aware that there is a problem relating to the internal communication of the organization. Robson and Tourish note that to generalize these findings for every organization, research on other types of organizations would be needed.

TelesPro wanted to know about the hospital's up/down communication, due to the fact that people in management roles at the hospitals are responsible for communicating, in some degree, the information of T-Balance to the staff. What was more interesting for TelesPro was what the staff was talking with each other about the product, i.e. the side-to-side internal communication. As mentioned before, side-to-side internal communication can be more powerful than communication between managers and their subordinates. The reason for this is that the peer-to-peer communication actually affects the up/down communication's tone of the response from the subordinates back

to the manager. What is talked informally between the employees tends to be the truth compared to what exactly is told straight to the “boss.” (Hopkins 2006.) Theory on this communication and its effect on the efficiency of the company are well reported; however, TelesPro wanted to know the effect of this communication on their marketing communication. This, on the other hand, is a subject that lacks theoretical background.

5 RESEARCH METHODS

5.1 Course of action

TelesPro revealed the researched problem to the author in the fall of 2009. Before that, the author had worked for TelesPro on couple of translation projects, including translating the instruction manual for T-Balance. Because of past experiences of working for TelesPro, the author felt that TelesPro would be an excellent choice for a client organization for the thesis. The author did not complete his degree mandatory internship for TelesPro. After the meeting on possible thesis topics in early fall 2009, the rest of that fall was used for preliminary work on the chosen topic. This included thinking about the different research strategies and data gathering methods for the thesis. Also, an initial research plan was created for the topic, which was later put into use as the basis for the actual research.

Official start of the research process happened in December of 2009. A meeting was set up with TelesPro to update the research problem and to identify the concrete aims of the research. The research methods were also defined and the data gathering process planned. In January 2010, the thesis topic was presented in a seminar at the University of Applied Sciences (UAS), and supervisors were appointed for the thesis. In February, another meeting with TelesPro was held to clearly define the people that were going to be researched and the questions that were going to be asked from them. In the beginning of March, the thesis plan was presented at the UAS, and discussions were held with the supervisor to plan the theoretical part of the research. From the end of March until the end of April, the practical data gathering was performed in and around Kuopio. In May, a meeting was held again with TelesPro to discuss the results of the research and the possibility of further research to be done. Further research was possible; however, not necessary for the thesis. The analysis of the results and the writing of this thesis happened over the summer, until the fall of 2010.

5.2 Qualitative data collection and analysis

The problem that the company is facing occurs in the communication process chain of the T-Balance. The members of this process are generally placed inside hospitals where the product is being used, excluding the laundry company. The departments, in

which the product is used, employ numerous amounts of nursing staff, ranging from about 15 to around 35, depending on the department and the size of the hospital. However, each of these departments have people responsible for informing rest of the staff about the product. These people are either the head nurses of the departments or the appointed T-Balance contact persons. For the research, the facilities of the Kuopio University Hospital (KUH) were available to be investigated. This resulted in only few people to be researched. This led to the decision that qualitative data collection was to be used. The limited number of possible observations did not cause problems for the research because the observations were going to be in-depth. The main reason for doing qualitative research is the objective of the research project, in other words, the research problem and the focus and purpose of the study. Since, the objective of this research demanded in-depth insight on a particular phenomenon, qualitative research was therefore more suitable, compared to quantitative research. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, 90-91.) The approach for the qualitative research was a case study, and interviews were selected as the data collection method.

Case Study

The selection of the case study approach was mainly due to the reason that the research concerned one phenomenon, the communication of the T-Balance, of a single organization, TelesPro. Case studies are typically conducted with descriptive or exploratory researches. In business studies, a case study is used when the problem to be researched is difficult to take out of its natural setting and when the concepts and variables are difficult to quantify. A case study often uses multiple data collection methods, such as verbal reports, personal interviews, and observations. A case study cannot be used for every type of research. It is determined by the research problem and its objectives. In addition, the amount of control over the behavioral events and whether the focus is on a current phenomenon compared to a historical phenomenon. When the research questions ask “how” or “why,” the case study method as a research strategy is the most appropriate. Most of the time, when a single organization is studied and emphasis is put into to smaller unit or some aspect of the organization, such as marketing, the case study method is used. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, 171-173.)

As a result of the particular dilemma of which TelesPro had, the case study method

seemed the most obvious way to proceed with the research. T-Balance is a unique product. Of course, TelesPro has competitors; however, the competing products are not used for the whole process of the surgical procedure. This results in the fact that their marketing is difficult to compare to the marketing of the T-Balance, because it affects many more different departments of hospital staff resulting in many more decision makers.

Interviews

Qualitative researches and case studies generally use personal interviews as the data collection method (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, 171-173). Personal interviews were used for this research because it allowed the in-depth study of the different members of the communication process chain. Also, the close relations of the members with TelesPro made it easy to set up the interviews. To fill some of the gaps left by the personal interviews, an email interview was used to collect all the essential information.

As case studies frequently use qualitative research, the interviews should be non-standardized. Non-standardized interviews are often referred to as qualitative research interviews. For this research, semi-structured interviews were performed. With this type of interviews, the researcher has a list of themes and questions; however, these can vary between different interviews. Meaning, the questions that are asked may differ between respondents due to the organizational context in relation to the research topic. Also, semi-structured interviews give an opportunity for the respondents to explain and build on their responses. The use of open questions in the interview allows the respondents to define and describe even further the situation. This gives the interviewer more extensive and developmental answers to be analyzed for the research. The interviews were done on one-to-one basis, and the data recorded in the interviews was done by note taking. (Saunders & Lewis & Thornhill 2007, 312-329.)

The selection of people to be interviewed, or the sampling, for the research was done together with the CEO, Heikki Hakkarainen, and the product specialist, Marjaleena Väänänen, of TelesPro. For the selection, purposive non-probability sampling was used. This allowed the use of the author's and TelesPro's own judgment on the selection of respondents that would yield the best responses to answer the research

questions. Purposive sampling is often used when the aim is to have a small sample with the respondents being exceedingly informative, for instance in the event of case study research. (Saunders et al. 2007, 230.) Original plan was to select five people to be interviewed. The product specialist was to be interviewed first, as she is mostly responsible for the communication of the T-Balance to the hospitals. She was chosen to represent TelesPro itself in the chain. The next person that was supposed to be interviewed was the head nurse of the day surgery at KUH. With TelesPro, it was believed that a representative from day surgery was an important person to be interviewed, as the product itself has been developed with the help of the day surgery, and since it was the original place of introduction of the product. Furthermore, Marjaleena Väänänen is a former nurse of the day surgery. Along with the product specialist and day surgery's head nurse, the head nurses of a ward and a recovery, along with a head nurse from another surgery department were selected to be interviewed.

As the research process commenced, the original plan for the interviews had to be changed. The head nurse at day surgery was replaced by her assistant, as she was on vacation when the interviews were underway. Also, another interview was performed at the day surgery with a T-Balance contact person. This gave the research another point of view on the communication of the product, as she worked as a regular nurse instead of a head nurse, at the hospital. The head nurse of a ward was interviewed as a representative of the ward's part of the chain. The same was done for recovery, as a head nurse was interviewed there, as well. The viewpoint of another surgery department was gotten from Tarina Hospital at Siilinjärvi, which belongs to KUH organization. This gave the research a viewpoint from another hospital. Also, the head nurse was not able to conduct the interview, thus it was conducted with a T-Balance contact person, which is a regular nurse. As some questions asked from the product specialist could not be answered, an additional email interview was performed with the CEO of TelesPro. This resulted in total of seven interviews: two representing TelesPro and five representing the different parts of the chain inside the hospitals.

For the data gathering, representatives from the hospital administration and the laundry company were not interviewed. TelesPro wanted to put the emphasis of the data gathering on the utilization chain members, as these are the members that receive all components of TelesPro's marketing communication. TelesPro and the author felt

that the administration and laundry company could be omitted from the data gathering, as their role in T-Balance's communication process chain are not as important.

The interview questions were created by the author with guidance from TelesPro. The questions were divided into four different categories. First set of questions were to test the product knowledge of the interviewee. The questions were not meant to judge how well the interviewees know the product, instead what are the first things that come into mind about the product and to see the interviewee's opinion concerning the product. This was emphasized for the interviewee in the beginning of each interview. The second set of questions was to investigate how well the hospital staff received and understood the product during its selling process. It inquired on the communication made by TelesPro at this stage and what kind of message was received by the staff. The third set of questions was on the orientation of the product and the after sales communication. The last set of questions was targeted on the internal communication inside the hospital. TelesPro wanted to know what the hospital staff communicates with each other, to see if miscommunication happens within the members of the chain. See from APPENDIX 2, an example of the interview questions.

The interview questions evolved throughout the research. Some questions were taken out or rearranged for some of the interviews. This was done to make them more fitting for the positions which the interviewees held at the hospitals. The first interviewee was not part of the hospital, instead an employee of TelesPro, thus the questions had to be adapted for that interview, as well. Product knowledge was asked from the product specialist, which was to be used as a comparison, or a control, against the hospital staff responses. The questions on the selling, orientation, and after sales communication process were posed in a way to investigate how the communication was done, compared to how it was received by the hospital staff. Like already mentioned, some of the questions asked from the product specialist could not be answered by her, thus they were presented to the CEO as an email interview. These questions concerned more on the selling process and the international communication process of the product. See from APPENDIX 3, the set of questions presented to the product specialist from TelesPro.

Questionnaire

After the selection of the interviewees, TelesPro materialized a plan to conduct further research on the topic. The aim of this research was to give further insight on the understanding of the product, on a more practical level within the regular nurses that are in contact with the product. The further research was to be in a form of a questionnaire. TelesPro wanted this questionnaire to be given to about 30 nurses. Originally, it was supposed to be a self-administrated delivery and collection questionnaire. During the interviews, questions were asked about the amount of staff within the departments and a possibility where the questionnaire could be held. In the end, it was decided that the questionnaire was to be done at the day surgery of KUH, and instead of a paper version of a questionnaire, it was to be done electronically via email. The questions presented in the questionnaire were based on the questions presented at the interviews. However, the questions were arranged in a more simplified way, in order to facilitate the responding. See APPENDICES 4 and 5 for the email and the questionnaire format. The respondents were to answer using open answers, thus making their responses possible to analyze using qualitative methods.

Since the questionnaire's importance for the research was secondary, great attention was not put into making it, unfortunately. This resulted in it being a failure. The second question was worded improperly making the question hard to answer, resulting in that all of the other questions could not be answered. The rate of response for the questionnaire was extremely low thus the information gathered from it could not be used for this research.

Data analysis

Quantitative data is data which is usually expressed and measured in numbers. This sort of data is analyzed statistically. Data which cannot be analyzed statistically is often called qualitative data. The problem in analyzing qualitative data is that even if the number of observations is low, the information in it is in-depth, resulting in a large amount information for the researcher to analyze. It is difficult to discard the useless information before the actual analysis; however, it is still necessary. In order for the researcher to analyze the essential data, the data needs to be coded, in order for it to be broken down, conceptualized, and rearranged in a manner for it to be understandable.

Qualitative studies build theories, thus the coding is needed to be done cautiously. Also, the problem with doing qualitative analysis is that sometimes the data collection happens simultaneously. Furthermore, the research questions are sometimes changed during the analysis. Even at times, the actual research questions originate from the analysis of the data for the research. A way to analyze the collected data received from a case study is to compare the different cases, in order to find commonalities and differences. From the comparison can be found the answers to the research questions, as searching for systematic patterns from the data leads to making conclusions. The data does not need to be statistically tested, there just needs to be sufficiently systematic patterns. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, 179-181.)

As a result of the research questions being so specific, the theoretical framework behind the research was much more general compared to the actual specific problems that TelesPro was facing. This led to the fact that the data was analyzed more inductively, rather than deductively. In other words, the analysis was not based so much on the theory; however, the analysis itself produced the more specific theory for the research. (Saunders et al. 2007, 492-496.) The data analysis process for this research already started during the interviews. The interviewer was analyzing the answers of the interviewees as they came out of their mouths. The analysis affected the way some questions were asked or not asked at all. The interviews inspired the interviewer to ask different questions that he thought beneficial for the research. This in turn led to minor changes in some of the research questions. Immediately after conducting every interview, a summary was written from several pages of notes concentrating on the most important parts of what the respondents answered and how they answered the questions. This is one component of the inductively-based analytical procedure called data display and analysis. Along with data reduction, the process is composed of displaying data and drawing conclusions, as can be seen in figure 7. Data reduction is about summarizing the large amount of data gathered during the data collection process, and putting it in a more simple form and focusing on the most relevant parts of it. The second part of the process is data display. This is about organizing the data which is left after the data reduction part. They are organized into diagrammatic or visual displays, for instance matrices or networks. (Saunders et al. 2007, 492-496.) For this research, the interview summaries were compared and contrasted with each other. Through a simple network data display, the respondent's answers and attitudes were compared and commonalities and differences

were highlighted. The networks helped to find relationships, patterns, key themes, and trends which were used to draw and verify the conclusions of the results.

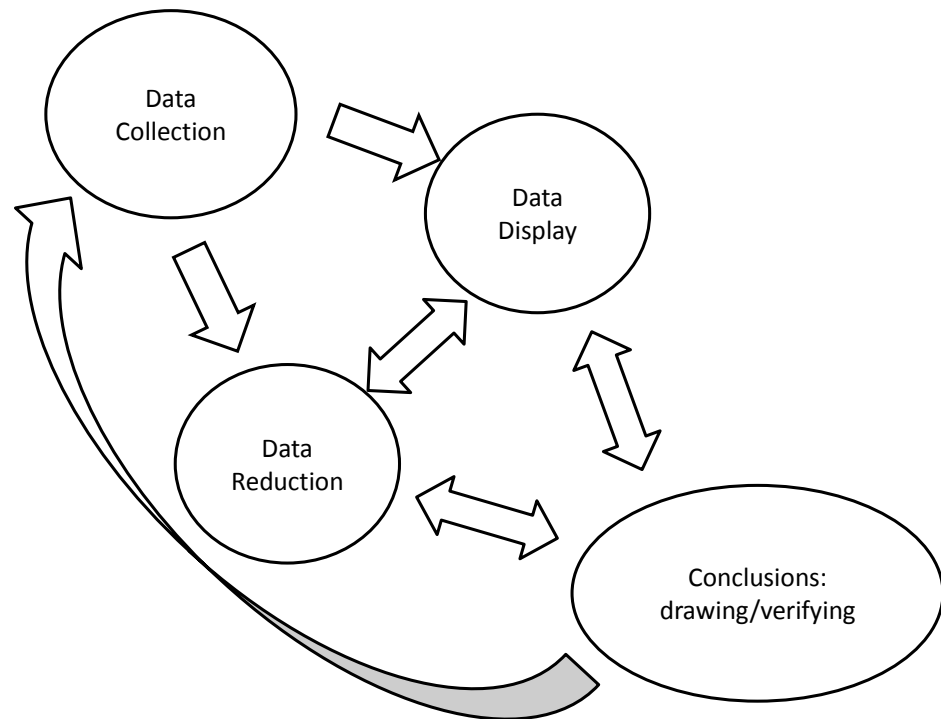


Figure 7. *Components of data analysis (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, 180).*

5.3 Research limitations

This research has limitations. First of all, the research was performed at KUH, which only gives one hospital organization's view point on the matter. The reason for using only KUH was the lack of resources and time to travel around Finland visiting other hospitals where the T-Balance is used. In addition, the T-Balance has been developed with the aid of KUH, resulting in the fact that the product is very well known in the hospital, which eliminates the research problem to some effect. Along with KUH's proximity to the researcher, it was also easiest to set up interviews with, because of TelesPro's relationship with KUH. Some of the interviewees were past co-workers of product specialist Marjaleena Väänänen. This friendship and connection that was shared between the hospital staff and TelesPro can also act as sort bias in the answers they gave. Furthermore, KUH is a Finnish hospital. The research does not investigate how the system works at hospitals in foreign countries. The research does not show if the system inside the foreign hospitals is totally different, thus affecting their internal

communication, thus affecting the reception of TelesPro's marketing communication. Nevertheless, this research's aim is only to give guidance and not the actual marketing plan itself. The selection of KUH can be considered as convenience sampling; even though, the selected sample only includes one case. Convenience sampling is the selection of cases that are the easiest to obtain. This sort of sampling is prone to bias and influences beyond the control of the researcher. Generalization on the basis of convenience sampling is very hard. (Saunders et al. 2007, 234.)

Furthermore, the data collecting method can also be considered as a limitation. The data was recorded by note taking, meaning every word of the interview could not have been captured by the researcher. This may cause a loss of integral information. The author and researcher of this research wanted the interviews to be less formal and more of a discussion than an interview. The researcher did not want the interviewee to feel like she, or he, was being interrogated, thus leaving out intimidating objects like an audio recorder. Saunders et al. (2007, 333-335) confirm that if an audio recorder is likely to have a detrimental effect on the interview, it should be left out.

6 RESEARCH RESULTS

After the interviews were accomplished, analysis was conducted on the data collected and a short presentation was given to TelesPro on the results and findings of the interviews. Furthermore, an evaluation on the success of the methods was done together with TelesPro, to discuss the possibilities of further research.

As a result of the fact that the T-Balance has been in use at the Kuopio University Hospital for some while now, the understanding of the marketing message of the product was expected to be relatively good, at the point when the interviews took place. When the thesis topic was chosen in early fall of 2009, the T-Balance was in the introduction phase in its domestic market. At this point, TelesPro had noticed that there were problems with the product's marketing message, and they wanted that the communication process chain inside the hospital was to be researched and developed. Already in December of 2009, when the thesis process officially commenced, TelesPro had noted that the understanding of the marketing message had improved within the hospitals in the domestic market. Even though there was not a significant problem anymore in the domestic market, TelesPro wanted still to find out, what were the issues causing the misunderstandings. The reason for this was that TelesPro was on the verge of introducing the product internationally, and they wanted to avoid the same problems in the foreign markets. Therefore in April of 2010, when the interviews took place, major current problems were not expected to be found. The results of the interviews proved this. The product was developed with the help of KUH and it was originally introduced at that hospital, thus the result that the understanding was good was not a surprise. All of the interviewees understood what the product was, for what purpose it is used for, and why is it important for the patient.

However, everything that TelesPro has intended to convey in T-Balance's marketing message has not been received. An important part of the message, dealing with the fact that the product is beneficial because it keeps the patient warm throughout the whole process, was rarely remembered by the interviewees. Some of the respondents understood the economical aspects of the product for the hospitals; however, there was also someone who felt that the product itself only causes expenses for the hospitals, instead of saving them money. Furthermore, the reason why the T-Balance keeps the patients warm is because only the part of the body where the surgical

operation is taking place is revealed. This is done with the use of the special zippers of the product. The respondents felt that this technical part of the suit was seen more as a problem, than an opportunity to perform multiple surgeries.

The second set of interview questions concerned the first presentation of the product, also known as the selling process. The results of the interviews revealed that all of the interviewees were convinced about the need of the hospital for the product, when they saw and heard about the product for the first time. However, many were suspicious about the products ability to be the answer to every question when it comes to keeping patients warm during surgery.

The third set of questions inquired about the product's orientation and the rest of the after sales communication. All of the respondents agreed that the orientation and given information on the product has been adequate and of high quality, comparing to the fact that we are talking about a relatively simple product. The orientation and information in the beginning was needed; however, the rest that have followed were thought of somewhat unnecessary, for example the contact person letter, by some of the interviewees. The respondents wanted the information to concentrate on the zippers, due to the fact that it has been the biggest cause of problems.

The answers to the interview questions also gave some results concerning the internal communication between the staff members inside the hospitals. Major result found was that internal communication is minimal within the personnel. This little communication was typically on the user experiences of the product. Head nurses of the different departments believe that the hospital staff shares a common understanding concerning the product and its benefits for the hospital. However, this understanding is not so united at the more practical level, according to a regular nurse. For example, doctors do not know as much about the product, thus they have differing opinions on whether they are useful or not. TelesPro was aware that the wards of hospitals are inclined to cause problems in the use of the product. The reason for this is because they are responsible for dressing up the patient before surgery and disrobing them after they have come back from recovery. In other words, they are doing most of the extra work caused by the product. Thus, it came as no surprise that in the beginning stages of the product's introduction phases, some communication happened inside the hospital towards the ward, due to the fact that some patients had

not been wearing the suit. The ward staff defended this with the reason that the patients did not want to wear the suit. Another important result found was that the common understanding of the product seems to be better at Tarina hospital in Siilinjärvi, which is a smaller facility compared to main facility of KUH, the Puijo hospital in Kuopio.

Even though the questionnaire executed by the staff of day surgery was a failure and its contents could not be used in analysis, it did reassure one result gotten from the interviews. It is that most of the staff members do not know the official name of the product: T-Balance. Different wards have their own nicknames which they use. This also did not come as a surprise to TelesPro. The product has been known at the hospital for a while, due to its development, but the name T-Balance was conceptualized much later on. However, the latest marketing communication of the product has been using the name T-Balance, thus all of the staff should have been in contact with the new name. This clearly was not the case.

Evaluation

The author, along with TelesPro, felt that the chosen methodology was sufficient for the aims of the research. The received results were satisfying for TelesPro and the author. The interviews produced useful material, not only to give TelesPro practical improvement ideas, but also for the author to create conclusions on how marketing communication can be improved. The failure of the questionnaire was seen as unfortunate; however, not crucial in meeting the objectives of the research and the thesis. The author created possible further research suggestions, but these were not seen as necessary by TelesPro. Furthermore, time and resources of the author would not have been adequate to prolong the research to great extent.

7 DISCUSSION

7.1 Suggestions on how to develop marketing communication

After the results were presented to TelesPro, further analysis of the results and collected data was performed. The analyzed results were then formed into suggestions on possible development ideas for TelesPro's marketing and marketing communication of T-Balance, keeping in mind that the product is being introduced into foreign markets. The suggestions are based on Kotler and Armstrong's (2008, 404-412) view on the steps in developing effective integrated communication and on the important theory that was presented in this thesis earlier on. As can be seen in figure 8, there are six steps, including identifying the target audience, determining the communication objectives, designing a message, choosing media, selecting the message source, and collecting feedback.

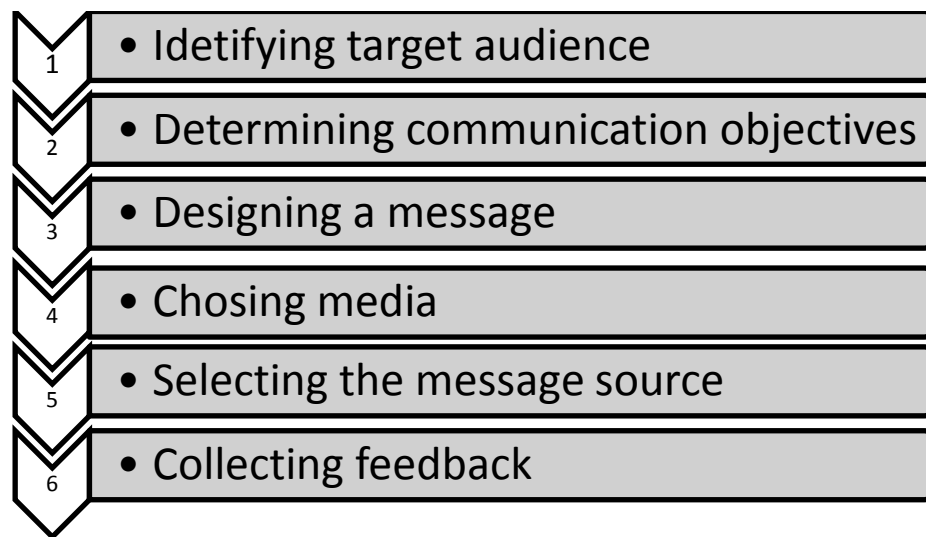


Figure 8. *Steps in developing effective communication (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 404-412).*

Target groups and objectives

Marketing communication starts by selecting the audience or the different target groups (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 404). In TelesPro's case, these are the decision makers and users of the product inside the hospitals and the laundry company. More concentration is put on the target groups which use the product, meaning the ward, surgery, and recovery departments. The results showed that the opinion of the actual

end user, the patient, also needs to be taken into account. They are another key influencer on the hospital's demand for the product. TelesPro needs to make sure that the staff in the ward is aware of every benefit the product brings to the patient, since they are the ones who are trying to "sell" the suit to the patient. Another possibility is that the patient is somehow communicated to directly by TelesPro, thus ensuring that a clear consistent message is given to the end user. Another result concerning the audience was that the smaller the audience, the easier it is to get the message across to everybody. Everyone sees the world differently, thus everyone's interpretation of communication is personal and different (Dermody 1999, 162). TelesPro needs to take into account the size of the different target groups and their difference in interpretation, when planning marketing communication.

In accordance with common sense, the objective of marketing communication is to have a purchase response by the audience. Yet, this is not that clear cut. A purchase response is a result of a long consumer decision making process. The audience may be in one of the six buyer-readiness stages: awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 404.) When going to international markets, TelesPro needs to know in which of those six stages are the different target groups in. Probably in the beginning, there is little awareness of T-Balance, by any of the hospitals. However, as the product is introduced in a certain market, the "word" will spread around, either by TelesPro's own planned marketing, or just for example by the word-of-mouth influence. This means that the next hospital might already be in the next readiness stage. Furthermore, it has to be remembered that maybe not every part of the hospital has heard about it. Conversely, it may be that foreign hospitals are aware of the product more than expected. As mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, one of the most common reasons for exporting is that there is demand specifically for a company's product, which has come to their attention by e.g. the internet and the company web pages (Leonidou et al. 2007). TelesPro has to distinguish which of the target groups are in which stage before implementing their marketing communication. TelesPro has probably come across different readiness stages in its domestic market, as well, but it has to be remembered that the size of e.g. some of the European markets are also much larger.

Marketing message

Marketing message is made up of the content, structure, and format. The content of TelesPro's message has a rational appeal. Rational appeals show that the product has desired benefits to please the interest of the audience. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 405.) The results showed that important people in T-Balance's communication process chain understand the product. However, it seems that they are missing the "big picture." One of the highlighted parts of T-Balance's marketing message is that it "maintains" the body temperature for the "whole process." People in the chain do not think about the whole process; they only think about their own place in that process. The fact that the T-Balance maintains the body temperature for the whole process is the product's competitive advantage over its competitors. If this goes unnoticed by its users, then the product becomes no more than just one of the products used to warm surgery patients. This "whole process" needs to be emphasized more in the marketing message.

This emphasis should be heard especially in the communication towards the ward, as they feel that their part of the process is the one that does all the work. This leads to another suggestion about the marketing message. TelesPro does emphasize different aspects of the product to different departments and to people in different levels of staff. What should be emphasized to the different target groups are the different benefit groups of the product, either the hospital, patient, and/or staff. The ward's staff need to understand that the product is very beneficial for the patient. The treatment process of the patient is shorter, there are fewer complications, and the patient will feel more comfortable (TelesPro 2005b). These need to be emphasized to the ward staff because they are the ones who emphasize them to the patient, when they ask if the patient wants to wear the suit or not. Also, TelesPro needs to emphasize that this eases the work of the nursing staff. Quicker treatment process and happy patients, means less work for the staff. These benefits need to outweigh the detriments of having to work with the product.

TelesPro has not faced as many problems with the other departments. Nevertheless, emphasis should be put on the right benefit groups. Since the marketing is happening towards the staff, the most important benefits for them are the ones that affect them directly. For the staff in surgery, the important benefit is the benefit to the staff itself.

The less amount of work should overweight the possible complications caused by the use of the zippers. The interesting result that a staff member felt that the suit is not economical for the hospital, came from a surgery department. This would imply that she has not received the message of T-Balance being economical for hospitals. Even though the hospital's financial matters do not directly affect her, it still creates a negative connotation of the product for her. Emphasis of the message should therefore also concentrate on the benefits to the hospital; furthermore, due to the fact that the surgery nurse staff are in contact with the doctors that are in contact with the product. The recovery department only plays a small part in the whole process, thus emphasis only needs to be put on the benefit to the staff. One of the benefits of T-Balance is that it cuts down on the time of recovery, which directly means less work for them (TelesPro 2005b). All of the benefits go, in a way, "hand-in-hand". Quicker treatment time for the patient means less work for the staff, which means fewer costs for the hospital. Nevertheless, the target groups' desired benefits are different, so the content of the message needs to be adapted to emphasize the benefits that affect the target groups the most.

After the content of the message is established, marketer needs to think about its structure. The message structure is made up of three issues. The first is whether to draw a conclusion in the message or leave it to the audience. For TelesPro, because of the use of personal selling, drawing a conclusion seems more appropriate. The second issue is whether to leave the strongest arguments in the presentation last or tell them first. Again, as communication is done by personal selling, this does not really matter because the presentation is more of discussion than a one-way communication. The third issue in the structure is whether to have a one-sided argument, meaning only presenting T-Balance's strengths, or a two-sided argument, where the strengths are compared against the product's weaknesses. In this case, TelesPro has to know the knowledge level, or buyer-readiness level, of the customer. One-sided arguments are good when the problems of the product are not known to the audience, but if they are known, it increases the seller's creditability if he, or she, admits the shortcomings but still emphasizes the product's benefits. This has to be taken into consideration when, for example, TelesPro talks about the benefits of the product's zippers.

Marketer needs to have a strong format for the message. In personal selling, the wording and body language are the ones that need attention. (Kotler & Armstrong

2008, 406-407.) With TelesPro's history of personal selling, the author feels that this format probably has already been perfected throughout the years; thus, no developmental ideas are suggested for it.

Selling and orientation

After the right messages have been selected, the communication channels must be assigned for those messages. There are two broad types of channels, either personal or non-personal. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 407.) TelesPro does most of its communication personally. The results showed that TelesPro has had clear and effective presentations on the product when they have tried to sell them to hospitals. All of the decision makers were convinced about the product and that the hospital should at least try it out. Furthermore, the fact that the T-Balance is in use in many Finnish hospitals, does tell something about how TelesPro is able to get their message through initially in the selling process. Still, the results also show that some miscommunication has happened in the selling process. Some of the hospital staff has gotten the picture that TelesPro is the answer to all questions, when it comes to maintaining the body temperature of surgery patients. TelesPro has never meant that "being the answer to all questions" is part of their marketing message. TelesPro has to make sure that such "empty promises" are not made during the selling of the product. Like mentioned before, the key ingredient in long lasting customer relationships is trust between the buyer and seller.

One aspect of the communication process chain this research has not touched on as much is the communication of TelesPro towards the hospital management. When it comes to selling to hospitals, the hospital senior management should be taken into account. The administration is not typically considered a target group when it comes to marketing towards hospitals. Purchase decisions are usually made by the doctors, nurses, and other staff members. However, the management does care about the costs and revenues of the hospital. Thus, they are perhaps part of committees which are responsible for hospital efficiency, budget reduction, and analysis of cost/benefit of new products and contracts. They might not be the final decision maker, but they are a key influencer. (Louden 1990.) As mentioned before, the hospital's decision on using the product from a medical point of view is made by hospital management. When approaching the hospital administration with the product, emphasis of the message

should be therefore on the benefits for the hospital, in a financial point of view. The fact that the use of T-Balance reduces costs for hospitals should be appealing for senior management.

The orientation is also personal marketing communication. The results showed that the orientation given by TelesPro has been sufficient for the hospital staff. At the request of the staff, the orientation should concentrate on the technical part of the suit, meaning the use of the zippers. From a marketing point of view, emphasis should be put on the benefits of the zippers when they are used properly.

Furthermore from a marketing point of view, the orientation becomes important in creating successful integrated marketing communication. The message given in the orientation is to be consistent with the message given in the selling process. Even though giving an orientation, or otherwise instructing on the use of something, is not conventionally considered as being marketing communication, in reality it is. Instructing on the use of T-Balance is part of creating long lasting customer relationships. Firstly, the orientation is customer service, which gives the customer a positive picture on the company, if done properly. Secondly, the more comfortable the staff is with the product, the longer they want to keep the relationship going. Therefore, it is crucial that the message they get during the orientation is the same that they received when the product was first presented.

Message source and after sales communication

Another aspect that needs to be taken into consideration is the way the audience views the marketer. In other words, are there highly credible sources behind the message of the marketer, in order to make the message persuasive? (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 409.) TelesPro uses credible sources in their marketing material, when they are, for example, discussing the effects of decrease in temperature of a surgery patient and the complications resulting from that. Furthermore, TelesPro has conducted a medical study at KUH on the effects of the suit. (TelesPro 2005b.) TelesPro has to take into account the credibility of these sources in the foreign markets, because the attitudes towards these probably will vary from country to country.

As already mentioned, TelesPro uses personal communication when it comes to marketing, in most cases. Still, TelesPro also uses some non-personal communication. Most of the after sales communication done by TelesPro is the contact letter sent to the contact persons. Rest of the after sales communication is done by other emails, feedback sessions, and by telephone. The contact letter is sent every couple of months, and it includes news and information concerning the product. The results show that these have been seen as informative and of high quality; however, also as futile. Some respondents said that they do not read them because they do not find them interesting. This is further proved by the fact that information, e.g. the name of the product, which have been reported in the contact letter, is not getting to the staff members. Such contact letter cannot be described as an efficient way of communicating. TelesPro should change this contact letter to such which is more appealing to the contact persons, or they should send them less frequently. Anyway or the other, TelesPro cannot use this form of communication for important information if it does not improve it. Important also is to keep the basic message of the product the same as in the communication during the selling and orientation. For an integrated marketing communication system it is essential that every channel is consistent.

The contact letter is also used for collecting feedback. This is the last step in developing effective marketing communication (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 411). Conversely, the feedback which TelesPro asks is mostly on the product itself, and not on the communication which is being researched in this case. The results showed that there has not been any feedback on the marketing of T-Balance. In reality, the author noticed that the research that was done for this thesis was the first time feedback was asked and received on the communication of T-Balance. In the future, TelesPro should inquire about the communication of the product more, if not with the contact person letter because it has shown weaknesses in its interest level, then in the feedback sessions on the product, that are being held with the hospital staff. Because the selling and orientation is done personally, they have the opportunity to collect immediate feedback. This is something that TelesPro should take advantage of, as well. The collection of feedback will ensure that in the future, the marketing communication of T-Balance will stay updated in order to keep the message clear all the time.

Internal communication

Internal communication is not part of Kotler and Armstrong's steps to effective communication; however, it was an integral for TelesPro in the aims of this research. The results showed that there is minimal internal communication inside the hospital concerning T-Balance. Therefore, the assumption would be that it has no effect on the marketing communication of TelesPro. However, due to the contact person system set up by TelesPro and the hospital, the fact that there is no communication is actually harmful. The results showed that the name T-Balance is not known inside most of the wards. When the interviews took place in April, the name T-Balance had been in use already from the beginning of the year 2010. In the first contact letter of year 2010, one of the news was that the product has a new logo and name (TelesPro 2005b). Apparently, the T-Balance contact persons or the head nurses are not carrying on the message to the other employees. The reason for this is probably because they do not find the information so important, as noted earlier; they have too much work, as Robson and Tourish (2005) noted; or because they feel that the staff already know it, as the head nurses have the impression that there is a common understanding on the product. TelesPro needs to take this into account when planning their marketing communication. If they want to deliver a clear message to every employee of the hospital, and if they want to do this with a messenger, like the contact person, they need to make sure that messenger is doing his or her job.

Adapt and integrate

In its simplicity, the dilemma that TelesPro faces is how is it possible to adapt the marketing communication to each of the target groups and at the same time integrate the marketing communication? In other words, how do you create a clear and consistent message for one product, if you tell the message differently to different people? The results showed that the problem that TelesPro is facing in the clarity of the marketing message is more in the marketing communication of TelesPro, rather than in the internal communication of the hospital. Thus, it would be advantageous for TelesPro to adapt, or differentiate, its marketing communication to the different customer groups within the hospital. The targeting strategy, so far, has been too undifferentiated between the target groups. The basic marketing message of T-Balance should always stay the same: T-Balance maintains the body temperature of

the patient throughout the whole surgical process. Also, the benefit created by the numerous amounts of zippers compared to their disadvantages needs to be emphasized to everyone. What should be different within the target groups is the emphasis that is put on the right benefit groups, either the hospital, the patient, or the nurse. It is also advantageous that the marketing communication is integrated within each target group. All of the communication tools, that are being used, have to portray a consistent message. Meaning, the selling, the orientation, and every type of communication happening that affects that particular target group's demand for T-Balance, needs all to have the same message. IMC aides the consumer through the various stages of the buying process; thus, it leaves the target groups inside the hospital wanting to continue the use of the T-Balance after they have decided to use it (MMC Learning 2009). The target groups' different perceptions of the benefits should not cause problems in understanding of the product inside the hospital, due to the lack of internal communication between the departments.

International Communication Strategy

As already emphasized in this thesis, the aim of this research was not to provide TelesPro with a specific marketing plan or strategy, as they venture into new opportunities outside of their domestic market. Before this research happened, TelesPro had already planned their marketing for international markets. For the first international introduction of T-Balance, the people from TelesPro went to a "pilot" hospital in Germany, where they gave the orientation to the foreign retailer and the staff of the hospital. After this first hospital, the foreign retailer is responsible for the communication towards the hospitals of that country. (Hakkarainen 2010b.) TelesPro's international communication strategy is to "push" their product through the retailer to the end user. The results from the research showed that having middlemen in the communication, does affect the way the message gets through. In order for TelesPro to be successful internationally, they have to make sure that everybody responsible for communication in the downstream of T-Balance's supply chain, have understood the marketing message correctly and that they are moving it forward in the agreed way. As can be seen from figure 9, the communication chain becomes enormous, as the product starts to internationalize even more. Through direct exporting and use of foreign based distributors and agents, TelesPro passes on the load of marketing communication to its supply chain members, which decreases their

amount of work, but increases the chance of miscommunication. As mentioned beforehand, the marketing communication process includes “noise.” The chance of this noise affecting the interpretation of the message by the final consumer increases, when the path of the message gets longer. To some extent, TelesPro has acknowledged this. The time spent on training and informing the foreign retailers about the T-Balance is much more extensive compared to TelesPro’s earlier products (Hakkarainen 2010b).

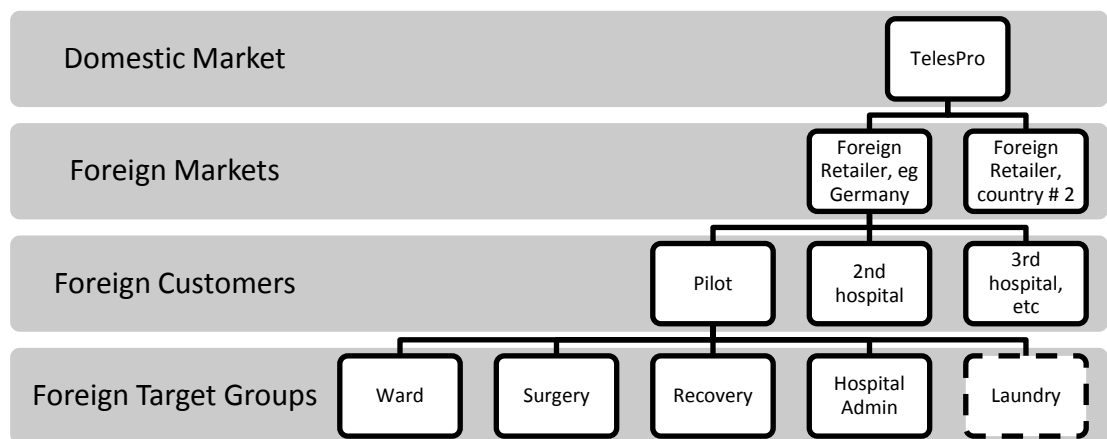


Figure 9. *T-Balance’s international marketing communication/supply chain.*

7.2 Validity, reliability and suggestions for further research

Validity is required in qualitative research. Typically, the validity of a study can be scrutinized by the descriptive, interpretative, theoretical validity, and the ability to generalize. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, 139.) The description of the concluded suggestions is only the view of the author on how theoretical concepts can be applied in real-life cases. The author knows that these suggestions might not be possible for TelesPro to perform in practice. Furthermore, the description is based on the interpretation of the author, who has never performed research in such scale before. Thus, interpretation of the author might not be the correct one. The suggested theory, or explanations, given in the study by the author was derived from the limited amount of resources and time that were available for the author. Meaning, more research effort would have created explanations where the theory would have been more truthful. Little amount of the study can be generalized for any other product, or

another firm. The reason for this was the approach of the research being a case study, due to the uniqueness of the product and the nature of the researched phenomenon.

As listed earlier on, the research performed on the marketing communication of T-Balance has some limitations; thus, hindering the reliability of the study. Reliability is the extent to which the data gathering and analyzing techniques would give consistent findings (Saunders et al. 2007, 149). A way to reduce the number of these limitations, and increase the research reliability, is to perform further research on the topic. TelesPro itself, or someone else for TelesPro, can research the same topic in other hospitals, preferably in hospitals where the product has not been used for so long. These hospitals might still have concrete problems in the understanding, unlike KUH where the product was well known. Also, the research can be done on a larger sample, like the failed questionnaire that was performed for this research. A successful questionnaire gives a much wider, and more accurate, view on the understanding of the product inside hospitals. Furthermore, the roles of the hospital administration and the laundry company were left almost completely out of this research. By researching these aspects, more information would be gathered on the internal communication of the product.

The results of this research cannot be generalized because of the topic in concern is very specific. A suggestion for a more general research, that does not have to do with TelesPro, is research on further internal communication inside hospitals. This research only gave views on just a single product, but to get a whole picture on internal communication, more research would be needed. Also, the author noticed that there lacked theoretical information on the effect of internal communication on the marketing communication directed at that organization. This would be another interesting topic of research.

7.3 Conclusion

For an SME, limitations in marketing are expected, especially when that marketing progresses to international marketing. These limitations shape the way marketing is done in a particular organization. (Gilmore et al. 2001; Rundh 2007.) For TelesPro, an SME from Kuopio, limitations in resources, for example in the number of personnel, has forced marketing planning to be done more on an operative level, compared to

doing marketing strategically on a long-term level. Marketing strategy is a long-term activity which describes crucial and fundamental means, schemes, and designs for achieving aims in marketing for the organization. International marketing strategies are the plans for achieving objectives in different countries based on the market conditions of that country. These strategies are typically based on the elements of the marketing mix, with emphasis on the product and communication. (Greenley 1989.) In other words, along with having an appropriate product, marketing communication needs to be working properly, in order for an organization to succeed abroad. Due to the limitations, TelesPro has not had the opportunity to research their own marketing communication, in order to make sure this is the case.

TelesPro has successfully introduced its inventive product, the T-Balance, which provides hospitals with a ground-breaking method of maintaining the body temperature of patients in surgical procedures. However, the understanding of the product's new beneficial features was not always clear for everybody who was using it. TelesPro noticed that their marketing communication towards its customers, the hospitals, needed to be developed, in order for the marketing message of this new product to be clearly conceptualized in the minds of its users. They wanted to research inside the hospital, the communication process chain of the T-Balance, to see what problems were occurring in the understanding, and where were they happening. The marketing communication needed to be developed to avoid the problems in these parts of the chain, due to the fact that the company was on the brink of introducing the product to foreign markets. Due to the limitations of being a small enterprise, TelesPro was heading towards internationalization of T-Balance with question marks in its international marketing communications. Due to past experiences with the company, the author cooperated with TelesPro and performed the needed research. Along with researching the company's marketing communication, TelesPro wanted the internal communication of the hospital researched, as they felt that it might be the reason for the misunderstandings.

The research was conducted at the Kuopio University Hospital, over a period of about a month. Total of seven interviews were performed, not only with hospital staff members, but also with TelesPro employees. The basic result found was that TelesPro should adapt its marketing communication for each of the product's different target groups, and integrate the communication inside these groups. TelesPro does

emphasize different aspects to different groups; however, the emphasis should be put on the different benefit groups and the message has to be consistent in every channel of communication. More specifically, TelesPro can keep the marketing message of the product clear by creating a marketing message that emphasizes the product's competitive advantage, i.e. the maintenance for the whole process, and the benefits of the product's versatility, i.e. the numerous amounts of zippers. This marketing message then needs to be adapted for each of the target groups, the ward, surgery, and recovery departments, along with the hospital administration. TelesPro needs to know what benefits each seek, so that their message reflects the audience and they understand its need for the hospital. This should not be a problem for TelesPro because they use personal selling, which allows very much adaptability in the seller's message. Along with the selling process, the same adapted message needs to be present in the orientation and every other after sales communication. Every channel of communication needs to be integrated. Integration can create another competitive advantage, which leads to increased sales and profits, at the same time saving money and time (MMC Learning 2009). Also, TelesPro cannot rely on the current contact person letter to update all of the staff on information concerning the product. The letter needs to be improved and it also needs to inquire feedback from the staff on the communication of the product.

The results also answered the other research questions. Important people of T-Balance's chain of communication have understood the product, at least at the time of the interviews. This was expected. Biggest misunderstanding is that they do not consider the product as one that works through the whole process of the surgery. Furthermore, they felt that the product was intended to be the answer for every question when it comes to heating surgery patients, which was not TelesPro's intention. Also, there were some misconceptions on the economical benefits of the product. What was significant was the attitude of the respondents to the zippers. This was not a misunderstanding, but an unwanted opinion. TelesPro admitted that the reason for the problems with the zippers might not be the zippers themselves, but the way they are used. Meaning, there has not been enough communication on the use of the zippers, which was the part which the hospital staff wanted the communication to concentrate on. Furthermore, there are misunderstandings about the name of the product, which does not have negative effects on the understanding, but it tells where and what might be causing misunderstandings. The results showed most of the

misunderstandings happen in the ward; however, this was already known by TelesPro. Small amount of misunderstandings happen in surgery, and the department with the clearest picture is the recovery, mainly due to the fact that they are only a small part of the process. The biggest concern is in the contact letter that TelesPro sends out to head nurses and contact persons. The results showed that some information is not passed on to the rest of the staff.

TelesPro can try to fix these misunderstandings and develop their marketing communication in general, by considering the findings of this research. Along with the already discussed suggestions, TelesPro should also take the patient into account when planning their marketing communication. At least in hospitals in Finland, it is up to the patient that is the product used on him or her. One of the important aspects TelesPro wanted to know was whether internal communication inside the product's utilization chain affects T-Balance's marketing communication. The result for this was unexpected. The assumption was that more internal communication would affect the marketing communication negatively. The result was the opposite. TelesPro cannot rely on internal communication to carry their message to the entire staff. In conclusion, the author's suggestion, on what should be taken into account when planning the international marketing communication strategy of T-Balance, is that TelesPro has to realize the effect of having foreign retailers in the marketing communication. They have to make sure that the message gets through the supply chain, and that there is not going to be any misunderstandings due to issues, e.g. in translation. Furthermore, that the buyer-readiness stages and the size of target groups inside hospitals start to play a larger role in the designing of the marketing communication and the message, as the internationalization expands. Also, that the credibility of their sources might not be the same in every country.

This research did not inquire on reasons why there have been problems in the communication. Throughout the research, a general explanation for this did form for the author. The reason why there have been misunderstandings is the fact that the product has more than one target group, compared to TelesPro's earlier products which were easier to market. Furthermore, due to the fact feedback has never been collected on marketing communication. Both of these are a result of the limitation of not having personnel concentrating on the marketing of the company. Nevertheless, the author has realized that even though TelesPro is a small enterprise, it is still

successful and professionally sound. The limitations that the company has faced have not been obstacles that have stopped their progression. Behind this progression and growth, there has to be successful marketing, as well. Thus, the author knows that this work is only a suggestion for TelesPro on ways to improve that marketing. However, the author hopes that this thesis does not only give useful practical pointers, but it also could be used as a piece of the puzzle to the development of T-Balance's marketing communication in order for it to be successful in its domestic market and in every foreign market it enters.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 T-Balance brochure (in Finnish)










Potilaan jäähtyminen koetaan ongelmaksi leikkaustoiminnassa. Jo vähäinenkin ydinlämmön lasku lisää leikkauksen riskejä. T-Balance -asu on suunniteltu ehkäisemään potilaan lämmönmenetystä leikkausprosessin aikana. Asu soveltuu käytettäväksi lähes kaikissa leikkauksissa ja toimenpiteissä. Hoitotoimenpiteet voidaan suorittaa vaivatta paljastamalla potilaan vartalosta vain tarvittavat alueet, jolloin muut vartalonosat pysyvät peitettynä.

Potilaiden jäähtymistä leikkauksen aikana ehkäistään esim. erilaisilla lämmittimillä. Usein potilaan jäähtyminen kuitenkin alkaa jo ennen itse leikkausta, kun potilas siirretään esilääkittynä vuodeosastolta leikkausosastolle ja leikkausalue valmistellaan toimenpidettä varten.

Potilas jäähtyy myös leikkauksen jälkeen heräämössä ennen kuin elintoiminnot palautuvat anestesian tai puudutuksen vaikutuksista. T-Balance -asua potilas voi käyttää koko leikkausprosessin ajan, jotta lämmönmenetystä ei tapahtuisi missään vaiheessa.

T-Balance -asun käyttö

- potilas saa asun jo vuodeosastolla tai päiväkirurgisessa yksikössä.
- leikkauksen valmistelun aikana
- leikkauksen aikana
- heräämöhoidon aikana
- osastolle palatessa, niin kauan kun sitä tarvitaan potilaan lämpimänä pitämiseen.

T-Balance materiaali on kolmikerroslaminaatti:

- Päälliskerros sileää mikrokuituneulos
- välissä lämmön haihtumista estävä, nesteen pitävä, mutta hengittävä kalvo.
- sisäpuoli pehmeä mikrofleecce.

Leikkausalue paljastetaan tarkoin harkittuihin paikkoihin sijoitettujen erikoisvetoketjujen avulla.

Asu pestään sairaalapesulassa mikrokuitutuotteiden tapaan + 72 asteisessa vesispesussa.

Potilaan lämpimänä pitäminen on edullisempaa, kuin jäähtyneen hoito.

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T-BALANCE



Noin puolet leikkaukspotilaista jäähtyy tarkoituksellisesti leikkauksen prosessin aikana. Ydinlämpö laskee jopa yli asteen verran yleisanestesian ensimmäisen tunnin aikana. Anestesia vaikuttaa lämmönsäätelyjärjestelmään niin, etteivät elimistön normaalit mekanismit suojaa potilasta lämmönhukalta^{1,2}.

Leikkauksen aikainen hypotermia aiheuttaa monia fysiologisia haittoja. Jäähtyneen potilaan lääkeainemetabolia hidastuu, verenvuoto lisääntyy ja toipuminen anestesiasta ja leikkauksesta pitkittyy³. Elimistön lämpötila vaikuttaa myös kudosten verenkiertoon. Kurzin ym. (1996) tutkimuksessa 200 suolikirurgisesta potilaasta joka toista lämmitettiin kolmen tunnin leikkauksen aikana. Verrokkeja ei lämmitetty lainkaan. Lämpötilaero normotermiaryhmän ja verokkien välillä oli leikkauksen lopussa peräti 1,9 °C. Haavainfektiot vähenivät 19 %:sta 6 %:iin lämmityksen myötä ja sairaalassaoloaika lyheni 2,6 vuorokautta (20 %)⁴.

Hypotermisellä potilaalla:

- Perioperatiivinen verenvuoto lisääntyy
- Lääkeainemetabolia vaikeutuu → relaksaation eliminointumien hidastuu
- Hapen kulutus lisääntyy → edistää sydäntapahtumia
- Haavainfektiot lisääntyvät
- Potilaalla on epämiellyttävä olo → paleleminen
- Hoitoaika voi pidentyä
- Hoitajien aikaa sitoutuu yhteen potilaaseen
- Erilaisten peitteiden ja lämmittimien käyttö lisääntyy
- Kustannukset lisääntyvät

Jäähtymisen estämisestä aiheutuvat hyödyt:

- Verensiirron kustannukset vähenevät
- Potilaan heräämisaika lyhenee
- Vältetään potilaan sydäntapahtumia
- Kudoshapetus paranee → vältetään haavainfektioita
- Potilastytytyvyys
- Hoitoaika lyhenee
- Hoitajien työ vähenee
- Peitteiden ja lämmittimien käyttö vähenee
- Kustannukset vähenevät



Lämmönhukkaa leikkauksen prosessin aikana aiheuttavat:

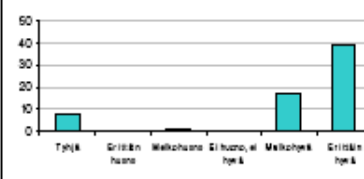
- Toimenpiteeseen valmistautuminen: Esilääkitys, potilas ei saa enää liikkua omatoimisesti
- Potilaan siirrot osastolta toiselle: Lämpötilaero potilaan ja ympäristön välillä kasvaa, viileät käytävät ja toimenpidehuoneet
- Leikkauksen valmistelu: Potilas osittain paljaina, leikkauksen alueen puhdistuksessa käytetyn liuoksen haihtuminen kuluttaa lämpöä
- Anestesia: Vaikutukset lämmönsäätelyjärjestelmään, kuivien anestesiakaasujen kostutus ja lämmitys
- Leikkauksen toimenpiteet: Nesteen haihtuminen leikkauksen alueelta, viileiden infuusionesteiden käyttö
- Heräämö: Anestesian tai puudutuksen vaikutukset lämmönsäätelyyn, potilas yhä liikkumaton
- Potilaan alentunut kyky ylläpitää lämpöä: Vanhukset ym.

T-Balance -asun kehitys sai alkunsa potilaiden jäähtymisestä huolestuneen lääkärin aloitteesta. Telespro Finland Oy on kehittänyt tuotteen yhteistyössä ODL Terveys Oy:n, Kuopion yliopistollisen sairaalan, Saku Oy:n ja Oulun Keskusspesialist Oy:n kanssa. Tällä hetkellä T-Balance -asu on käytössä useissa suomalaisissa sairaaloissa. Potilailta on saatu kiittävää palautetta mm. asun lämpimyydestä (viereinen kaavio). KYS:ssä on toteutettu lääketieteellinen tutkimus T-Balance -asun vaikutuksista. Tutkimuksen tulokset tullaan julkaisemaan tieteellisessä lehdessä. Asulla on Lääkinnällisen laitteen CE-merkintä (rek.nro FI-CA01-2010-0041) ja sille on haettu kansainvälistä patenttia (patenttihakemus PCT/FI2009/050986).

Lähteet:

1. Sessler DI, Olofinson C I, Rubinstein E H, ym.: The thermoregulatory threshold in humans during halothane anesthesia. *Anesthesiology* 68: 836-842, 1988.
2. Bäcklund M, Lindgren L: Potilaiden lämmittäminen leikkauksen aikana kasvatetaan. *Duodecim* 113: 785-787, 1997.
3. Frank S M, Beattie C, Christopherson R, ym.: Unintentional hypothermia is associated with postoperative myocardial ischemia. *Anesthesiology* 78: 468-476, 1993.
4. Kurz A, Sessler DI, Lenhardt R, ym.: Perioperative normothermia to reduce the incidence of surgical-wound infection and shorten hospitalization. *N Engl J Med* 1996; 334: 1209-1215.

Potilaan kokemus T-Balance -asun materiaalin lämpimyydestä (n=65)



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(TelesPro2005b.)

APPENDIX 2 Example of interview questions to hospital staff

Product knowledge

Mikä on T-Balance? (What is T-Balance?)

Mihin sitä käytetään? (For what is it used for?)

Miksi sitä tulisi käyttää leikkaus potilailla? Edut? (Why should it be used for surgery patients? /Advantages?)

Selling

Koska ensimmäisen kerran kuultu tuotteesta T-Balance? Olitko mukana tuotteen kehittämis vaiheessa? (When was the first time you heard about the product T-Balance? Were part of the development of the product?)

Mitä tuotteen ominaisuuksista painotettiin silloin kuin siitä selitettiin? (If it was before the orientation, what characteristics of the product were emphasized when it was explained to you?)

Olitko vakuuttunut tuotteen eduista ja sen tarpeesta sairaalassa? (Were you convinced about the benefits of the product and its need in hospitals?)

Orientation

Miten paljon olette saanut koulutusta tuotteesta Telesprolta? (How much instruction have you gotten about the product from Telespro?)

Miten hyvin itse olet ymmärtänyt koulutuksen? (How well have you understood the orientation?)

Oliko sinun mielestä Telespron koulutuksessa jotain parantamisen varaa? Oliko se helposti ymmärrettävä vai päinvastoin? (Did you think that the orientation could have been done better? Did you find it easy to understand or the opposite?)

Onko sinun mielestä koulutusta annettu tarpeeksi? (Has there been enough orientation?)

Oletko T-Balance tuotteen yhdyshenkilö Telespron ja sairaalan välillä? (Are you a T-Balance contact person between Telespro and the hospital?)

Mitä mieltä olet Telespron lähettämästä yhdyshenkilö kirjeestä? (What do you think about Telespro's contact person letter?)

Jos et ole, niin mitä muut yhdyshenkilöt tiedottaa muille T-Balancelle? (If you are not then what does the contact person inform about T-Balance to everyone else?)

Oletko ollut tyytyväinen Telespron antamaan jälkikäteiseen tiedotukseen tuotteesta? (Have you been satisfied with the informing of the product after the orientation?)

Internal communication

Oletko saanut tietää tuotteesta jotain muualta kuin Telesprolta? Mitä? Keneltä? Oliko se ristiriitaista Telespron antaman tiedotuksen kanssa? (Have you received information about the product from someone else? What? From who? Was it contradicting with the information received from Telespro?)

Oletko itse kertonut tuotteesta muille? Kenelle? Miten? (Have you told about the product to someone else? Who? In what way?)

Onko sinun mielestä sairaalassa koko henkilökunnan kesken yhteisymmärrys koskien tuotetta? Jos ei, niin miten sitä sinun mielestä pitäisi parantaa? (Do you think that there is a common understanding concerning the product? If not, how do think it should be improved?)

APPENDIX 3 Interview questions asked from TelesPro representative

Product knowledge – control to be used to compare answers from everybody else

Mikä on T-Balance? (What is T-Balance?)

Mihin sitä käytetään? (For what is it used for?)

Miksi sitä tulisi käyttää leikkaus potilailla?/Edut? (Why should it be used for surgery patients?/Advantages?)

Selling/Orientation/External Communication

Kun Telespro ”myy” T-Balancea sairaaloitten eri osastoille, ketä sairaalan henkilökunnasta on paikalla? (When Telespro is ”selling” the T-Balance to different departments of the hospital, who from the hospital staff is present?)

Miten myynti prosessi käytännössä tapahtuu? Eroaako se osastojen välillä? (How does the selling happen? Does it differ between departments?)

Kun Telespro kouluttaa sairaalan henkilökuntaa tuotteesta, miten tämä prosessi tapahtuu ja ketä kaikki ovat paikalla sairaalanhenkilökunnasta? (When Telespro orientates the hospital staff about the products, how does the process go and which of the staff is present?)

Onko Telespro koskaan saanut palautetta T-Balancen kouluttamisesta? Oliko koulutus selvä ja helposti ymmärrettävä, vai päinvastoin? (Has there ever been any feedback concerning the orientation? Has the orientation been clear and easy to understand or the opposite?)

Tuntuiko siltä että kaikki ymmärsi tai ei ymmärtänyt? (Did everybody understand?)

Onko Telespro käyttänyt tätä palautetta hyväksi kehittääkseen tuotteen orientaatiota tai muuta viestintää? (Has Telespro used this feedback to develop the orientation or other communication?)

Miten Telespro hoitaa kouluttamisen jälkeisen tiedottamisen tuotteesta? (How does Telespro inform about the product after the orientation?)

Onko Telespro saanut jälkikäteen joitain kysymyksiä tai kommentteja koskien T-Balancea? (Has Telespro received any questions or comments afterwards concerning the T-Balance?)

Oletko kouluttanut sairaalan henkilökuntaa jossain muualla Suomessa kuin Kuopiossa? Missä? (Have you oriented any other hospital staff in Finland besides Kuopio? Where?)

Onko tuotteen vastaanotolla ollut eroavaisuuksia sairaaloiden kesken? (Has there been differences in the reception of the product between the hospitals?)

Language

Oletko kouluttanut tuotteesta Suomen ulkopuolella? Missä? (Have you oriented outside Finland? Where?)

Tuottaako vieraalla kielellä kouluttaminen tai muu viestiminen sinun mielestä ongelmia tuotteen ymmärryksen kannalta? (Does orientating and communicating in a different language present problems in the understanding of the product?)

APPENDIX 4 Email questionnaire (in Finnish)

Arvoisa sairaanhoitaja,

Olen 3. vuoden opiskelija Savonia-ammattikorkeakoulusta ja teen kyselyä opinnäytetyötäni varten. Pyytäisin jos tai sitten kun teillä olisi aikaa vastata 4 nopeaan ja lyhyeen kysymykseen koskien tuotetta nimeltä T-Balance. Opinnäytetyöni koskeen T-Balancen viestinnän selkeyttä sairaaloissa. Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana toimii tuotteen kehittäjä paikallinen yritys Telespro. Kyseessä on kuitenkin minun opinnäytetyöni jota olen itse omaaloitteisesti viennyt eteenpäin, missä Telespro on toiminut yhteistyökumppanina, enimmäkseen opinnäytetyöni idean ja aiheen luoja. Vastata voit yksinkertaisesti kirjoittamalla alle oleviin kohtiin ja lähettämällä viestin minulle takaisin. Voit vastata parilla sanalla tai monella lauseella. Kysymykset ovat teidän mielipiteitä joten väärää vastausta ei ole. Takaan sen että vastaukset tullaan käsittelemään nimettömästi.

Millä osastolla työskentelet?

Mikä on T-Balance?

Mitkä ovat T-Balancen suurimmat edut sairaalalle? Vai onko se sinun mielestä tarpeellinen?

Minkä sortin koulutusta ja tiedotusta olet saanut T-Balance:sta? Onko koulutusta ja tiedotusta ollut tarpeeksi?

Onko sairaalassa yhteisymmärrys T-Balancesta?

Kiitoksia vastauksistanne ja avustanne opinnäytetyötäni ja opintojani varten,

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APPENDIX 5 Translation of questionnaire questions

Millä osastolla työskentelet? (In what ward do you work at?)

Mikä on T-Balance? (What is T-Balance?)

Mitkä ovat T-Balancen suurimmat edut sairaalalle? Vai onko se sinun mielestä tarpeellinen? (What are the biggest benefits of T-Balance for the hospital? Or do you think it is needed at the hospital?)

Minkä sortin koulutusta ja tiedotusta olet saanut T-Balance:sta? Onko koulutusta ja tiedotusta ollut tarpeeksi? (What sort of training and information have you received on the T-Balance? Has there been enough training and information?)

Onko sairaalassa yhteisymmärrys T-Balancelle? (Is there a common understanding on the T-Balance in the hospital?)