



How to attract more Finnish customers to X restaurant Helsinki

Phuong Hoang

2019 Laurea



Laurea University of Applied Sciences

How to attract more Finnish customers to X restaurant Helsinki

Phuong Hoang
Restaurant Entrepreneurship
Bachelor's Thesis
9.2019

Phuong Hoang

How to attract more Finnish customers to X restaurant Helsinki

Year	2019	Pages	43
------	------	-------	----

As a kind of rewarding and enjoying life after busy working days or week, nowadays it is becoming a trend that many Finnish customers, even from capital areas coming to the hotel to have “staycation” or just simply a romantic treat. A Nordic hotel chains setting a foot on Finland 3 years ago has been achieving a huge success in Finnish market. Considering local guests are their target customers, Y hotel is trying to draw locals’ attention and get them to the hotel, especially the restaurant. For that reason, this thesis work is carried out in order to help to company get closer to their target.

Eating out is nowadays more and more popular among the Finns not only because of a raise in incomes but also a boom in restaurants. Understanding the harshness of this competitive industry, the author concentrates more on studying about customer service and satisfaction because she believes that the food itself cannot win this targeted customer group but the service and the feeling a service bring to them. Marketing is also considered as a powerful tool to attract customers, however the author aims to spread the good of the restaurant by the “word of mouth”, from the customers who experience the service in X restaurant.

The knowledge background of this thesis is approached through theoretical books, company documents and online articles concentrating on customers’ experience, expectation, retention and satisfaction and basic knowledge about marketing. The thesis is also carried out by using research methods which are benchmarking, interview, observation and company’s customer surveys to find out the best way to persuade the Finns to use services at the X restaurant.

The result of the research project gives the author a through look and understanding about customers’ requirements and all the factors which affect customers’ feelings and point of views on a service and product. As a result, the author provides service guidelines for the restaurant which helps to encourage restaurant workers to contribute fully and effectively on the success of the business by offering outstanding attentive customer service to the guest. Through that X restaurant can differentiate itself from other competitor on the field and be a favourite place for the Finns to come.

Keywords: customer experience, customer service, customer satisfaction, employee contribution, marketing

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	5
1.1	Case company- X Restaurant of Y Hotel	5
1.2	Objectives of the study	6
2	Customer Experience	6
2.1	Customer segmentation	7
2.2	Relationship between employee and customer experience	10
3	Customer service	12
3.1	Customer Expectation	12
3.2	Customer Satisfaction	16
4	Marketing and 7Ps marketing mix	17
5	Research and Practical Implementation	25
5.1	Benchmarking	25
5.2	Interview	26
5.2.1	Interview with Sale Manager of Y Hotels Finland, as a customer	28
5.2.2	Interview with shift manager of X restaurant	29
5.3	Hotel's customer satisfaction survey, feedbacks from tableonline.fi and Tripadvisor	29
6	Result analysis and developing ideas	32
6.1	Interview results	32
6.2	Customers' feedbacks analysis	33
6.3	Business and development ideas	33
7	Conclusion	36
8	References	37
	Figures	39
	Tables	40
	Appendices	41

1 Introduction

Eating out or dining in the restaurant nowadays is becoming more and more popular because of busy lifestyles, more unconventional working hours, a rise in single households and an increase in the number of working women as well as the demand of enjoying life. Specifically, people are now spending a lot of time working or studying, they often feel tired and want to have more free-time for family members or friends than cooking. In addition, it is more likely that people have a need of reward themselves for working so hard and one of ways is to take them out to a meal outside in the restaurant to enjoy the food and service. These are fundamental elements which boost service industry's development in our today world. In fact, there were about 200 restaurants opened in Helsinki in 2017 (NewsnowFinland 2018)

Thanks to a dramatically booming in service industry, customers nowadays has more choices to make and more chances to experience different products and services from different service providers. It can bring customers some sources of comparison and expectation and reason to choose certain restaurants or dining places. Due to this fact, hospitality field has becoming more competitive than ever before where restaurant entrepreneurs need to find the innovative way and business ideas to bring new things to the business to differentiate themselves in the market as well as to persuade customers to buy products from them but not others.

In this competitive hospitality world, it is not enough to just satisfy customers' needs and requirement. It is considered to be a mission for any service worker to exceed customers' expectations. Staying updated about customers' demanding is extremely crucial as it changes time to time. Knowing customers' requirements can help to create a feasible plan to deliver high quality services which make customers happy with the services. In order to have a successful customer service, it is a must to have contribution from all the staffs because nobody is more or less important than the other and only one people trying hard cannot make things going right.

It is undeniable about the important of customer service on service industry. However, marketing is also contributed a huge part in the success of any business. It is an important tool to bring companies and customers together. It helps companies to reach their potential customers and customers get to know different offers. Because of these reasons, it is easier for company to achieve profit achievement if they have unique and innovative marketing plan.

1.1 Case company- X Restaurant of Y Hotel

Hotel Y, specifically X restaurant which is located in Jätkäsaari, Helsinki was chosen as case company for this thesis. The author has been doing her part time job in the restaurant during the last two years. During these times, she has contributed many innovative ideas to develop the restaurant operation, also to make it easier and more convenient for customers to use the

services at the restaurant. This was the reason why the restaurant manager offered her a topic for this thesis.

Hotel Y is among five hotel brands of Hotels Group Z, one of the largest hotel chains in Scandinavia with some 190 hotels (Wikipedia 2018). Entering Finnish market in October 2018, Hotel Y has made a positive image in customers' eyes thanks to unique Finnish interior design, friendly services, amazing rooftop pool, Sky Room and so on. According to statistics collecting through an online guest satisfaction surveys, during the last September 2018, Y Hotel has welcomed over 16,000 customers. Among those numbers, over one third of them were Finnish customers.

The concept of X restaurant was first released in 2012 thanks to cooperation between Hotel Y and the world-famous chef who was recognised by New York Times as the best chef of New York City in 2003 (Wikipedia 2018). For that reason, the food served in X restaurant is inspired by Finnish ingredients and a slice of Manhattan region. The main concept of the X restaurant is "fun-dining" where customers can enjoy the music and have relaxed conversation either for meetings or social dinning.

1.2 Objectives of the study

This thesis mainly focuses on creating a customer service and marketing strategy to attract more local customers to restaurant X of hotel Y. To be clarified, the study targets to have an insight into customer experience and customer service, the most important factors in service industry, then design an action plan to bring all ideas into practice. To be able accomplish this goal, it is also necessary to study about Finnish food culture and Finnish customers' consuming habits so as to make restaurant X being a favourite fun dining place for the locals.

The thesis consists of two part which are theoretical background and practical implementation. In theoretical part, there are two main topics are carried out: customer service and its impacts on customers' decision is the first topic, the second one is about marketing and marketing plan. The author has collected all the knowledge and theories for this part from books, articles and statistics on the internet. About practical implementation, the author took qualitative and quantitative research methods into use. Qualitative research is involved of benchmarking, interviews and observation when quantitative research is implemented by hotel's customer survey.

2 Customer Experience

There is a famous saying that "customer is always right" and it is popular in many businesses where people place customers in the heart of their business and have special care about customer's feeling. Service industry is a typical environment that customers are considered to be

the highest priority and due to the harsh competition in the field, improving customer's experience is a big task that has been carried out in all time. Nonetheless, it is fundamental to understand thoroughly the definition of "customer experience". (Peppers 2016, 8.)

Peppers (2016, 8.), in his book, defines customer experience is everything which is involved in individual interactions of a customer with a brand, a company time by time. Shaw and Ivens (2002, 65.) also give another definition that customer experience is all the interaction between a customer and an organization, since the moment customer know organization's name, search for information, consider, purchase, post-purchase. It is also evolved of customer's overall feeling over the duration of their relationship. When customers' experience during all moment of contact meet their expectation, it means that they have good customer experience.

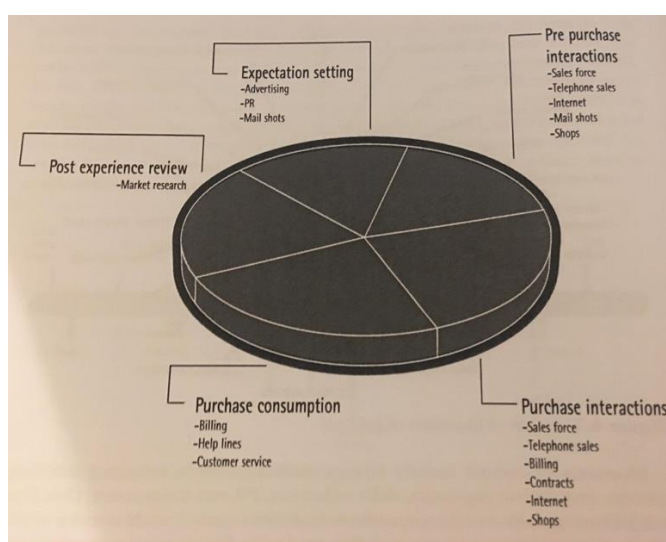


Figure 1: Primary moments of contact during stages of customer experience (Shawn & Ivens 2002, 66.)

Figure 1 clarifies different aspects which create or affect customer experiences. It is formed not only by direct contact with a company when customers buy, receive, use a product or have purchase interactions with sale staffs but also by indirect contacts through reviews or receive recommendations about the product, advertisements or PR about a product or an organization. (Shaw & Ivens 2002, 66.)

2.1 Customer segmentation

One of the biggest benefits of customer segmentation is helping customer management more effective. Dividing customers into different groups helps a company go along with customers' needs and have quick responses to those requirements. Effective customer segmentation helps to stimulate customers' loyalty. Thanks to customer segment, an organization can have

strategies to improve products or services' quality so as to meet customers' needs and desires, introduce new products which are attractive to potential customers. (Salomon 2013, 34.)

In the past, television or newspapers were the only channels for companies to bring their products closer to customer, therefore the biggest marketing investment went to advertisement on TV. However, in our today modern world, thanks to the development in technology and power of social media, marketing strategy has been changing dramatically. Salomon (2013, 33-34.), in his book, gives example of how McDonald's, a world famous American fast food company, has changed their way of using their marketing budget. In steads of using two third of their budget on marketing to television, that share was down to one third due to the change of customer interaction with information. The rest of marketing budget was distributed to different marketing channels for example to Upscale magazines to attract African American customers, to Foot Locker's in-store video network to reach young women or to YouTube and Flickr to be visual to gamers. After this campaign, the company gained a lot of benefits when their image came to wider range of customers (Salomon 2013, 34.)

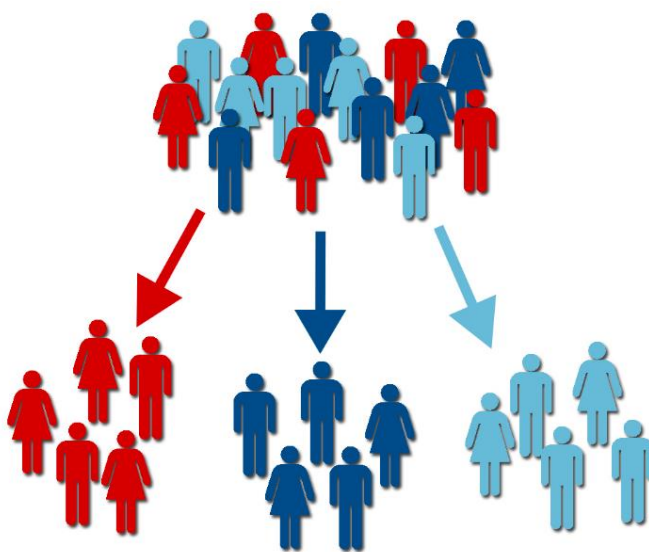


Figure 2: Customer segmentation (Subiz 2018)

Figure 2 explains how customers is segmented or divided into different groups. It can be group according to ages, gender, marital status, social class and income and lifestyle. Obviously, different customers have different needs and reasons of purchasing things, therefore marketers need to take customer segmentation into consideration so as to have suitable approach which can affect their targeted customers' purchasing decisions (Botibol 2016).

Customers' needs and desires are different in different age groups. It is quite common that a business makes a lot of effort to attract their target customers in a certain age range then try

to spread their image to a larger market. Red Bull was taken as an example when they concentrated on bringing their product closer to the young people by introducing them in the bars, nightclubs or gyms. After some time, when their target was achieved, they sponsored for some Tour to reach older people. Red Bull cans were even given away for free to the taxi drivers or car agencies to promote its effectiveness on helping drivers to stay awake on their way. (Salomon 2013, 35.)

Beside the age, gender is among the top element in customer segments since difference in gender affects strongly on customer psychology and consuming behaviour. Women can buy a product to release stress without the needs for that but men tend to buy things that they are really in need. At the early stage of life, children products also have different versions with blue for boys and pink for girls. It is also stated clearly that products for women usually wrapped in glimmering package. (Salomon 2013, 35.)

In addition, marital status is also an important factor which drives customers' consuming priorities. Young people are commonly found out as most active customers in the bars, concerts, movie theatres and consuming alcohol, while families with small kids are "friendly" with healthy food and juices. (Salomon 2013, 35.)

Moreover, there is a close relationship between social class and income as people in a same class tend to have similar jobs with similar income. Besides, those people who have same background or social title usually be together, have influence on each other and have same taste in music, fashion and way of enjoying life. In reality, marketers have special care about this market segment because it might tell them which group of customers can be their potential ones. (Salomon 2013, 35-36.)

Last but not least, lifestyle is also an important factor that every business needs to consider in order to have suitable products for their end users. People with different lifestyles will spend money in different way even they share other demographic features. The way they spend their free time to entertain or relax. The value they have in life will decide which product they will buy. (Salomon 2013, 37.)

From the author's observation on Finnish customer groups who usually visit the restaurant for breakfast and also dinner, most of them are business customers who go to Helsinki for work based purposes or they have company's meeting and event held at the hotel. The others are couples and families who lives in capital area coming for a "staycation", a new short getaway trend, and spend their breakfast and sometimes lunch or dinner time at X restaurant.

2.2 Relationship between employee and customer experience

Customer experience is created by many factors and employee plays an extremely important role among them. It is not deniable that there is a strong link between employee experience and customer experience. For customers, employees are the mirror which reflects the operation of an organization and every single staff is a representative for the company's brand in customer's eyes. It is also said that the front-line staffs contribute a huge part in an organization's success. (Wilson et al. 2016, 235.)

By human nature, everybody has desires to feel special and connected (Kazanjian 2007, 3.). This is for sure applicable for not only customers but also employees. Once, employees have good experiences in the workplace where they are treated well and fairly, learn new things, develop themselves and have a firm base for their careers, they can influence customer experience (Morgan 2018).

Employees are the ones who directly or indirectly interact with customers and give them the experience about the company. They are expected to deliver an enjoyable service to customers and make them engaged and connected ones to the company. However, there is a saying that we cannot give what we do not have. Therefore, it is necessary that employees themselves need to be inspired to engage and connect to the organization (Morgan 2018).

There are many benefits a company can gain by building a connection with employee. Connected employees are usually will do the jobs with their best effort, willing to go along with the goals of the company and try their best to achieve them. These people are also willing to communicate more and go an extra mile to make customers happy with their products and services (Morgan 2018). Wilson and his co-authors (2016, 235.) also emphasize the role of front-line service providers as the ones who observe customers' feelings and decode them so that a company may come up with solutions and innovation in time. It comes naturally that when employees are happy, satisfied and connected with the company, they will have desires to share it with customers (Morgan 2018).



Figure 3: The link between employee experience and customer experience (Forbes 2018)

Figure 3 illustrates the impact of employee experience on customer experience. It is explained that if employees are treated fairly and highly engaged with the company, they will perform better at work and bring better profit to the company. Furthermore, engaged employees can have positive influence on customers and outperform the company's competitors. Having been working in service industry for many years, especially at a big organization like Hotel Y, the author has observed the huge difference between customer-oriented staffs and the others. The service-minded staffs usually present high quality customer service and take a good care of customers, for them making customers happy is a kind of simple happiness. Besides, they are willing to go further and put more of themselves into what they are doing to make sure customers are satisfied with the service they offer. However, the ones who do not feel connected to the company or department, "they are only coming to work to get a paycheck, and it shows in their interaction with customers" just like what Morgan (2018) said.

3 Customer service

Customer service plays a significant important role in the success of a business or service. It is considered to be one of the most effective and low-cost tool of marketing a business. So what is its definition? Customer service, specifically in restaurant business, is just about greeting, taking orders, delivering the food, cleaning up the table or it means something else more than that? It is argued that customer service is anything or any action that service providers do for customers that make customer experience a good or great one. However, in order to create an excellent service or make customers satisfied, a service provider needs to understand customers' needs and expectations. (Harris 2007, 4.)

It is argued that customer expectation and customer satisfaction have a strong relationship with each other. Every single customer coming to a restaurant with some set of expectations and they have a picture of what is going to happen, how they are served, how long they have to wait, what the atmosphere can be like and so on. The service itself cannot decide a customer's satisfaction but customer's expectation on the service can do this job well.

3.1 Customer Expectation

In this competitive business world, when there are more and more service providers being "born" every day, customers have opportunities to experience different products and services and compare the values between them. The author could perceive that knowing customer expectation is one of the most important action that every company or service provider need to take so as to have the best way to treat or serve their guests. In order to do so, it is necessary to understand thoroughly the definition of customer expectation. Customer expectations are total perceived values or benefits a customer expects to receive from a company's product or service. Expectations are also individual's imagination about the outcome that will come after experiencing a product or service.

Customers often have different types of expectations about the service. Somehow it is described figure 4 where examples for each type of expectation is shown. The expectations from customers for the service or product can be low, high or reasonable and the level of expectations customer hold for certain service provider at a certain time can be the assessment scale for the whole purchase interaction. In their book, Wilson and his co-authors (2016, 50-55.) focus on two main types which are desired and adequate service expectation level.

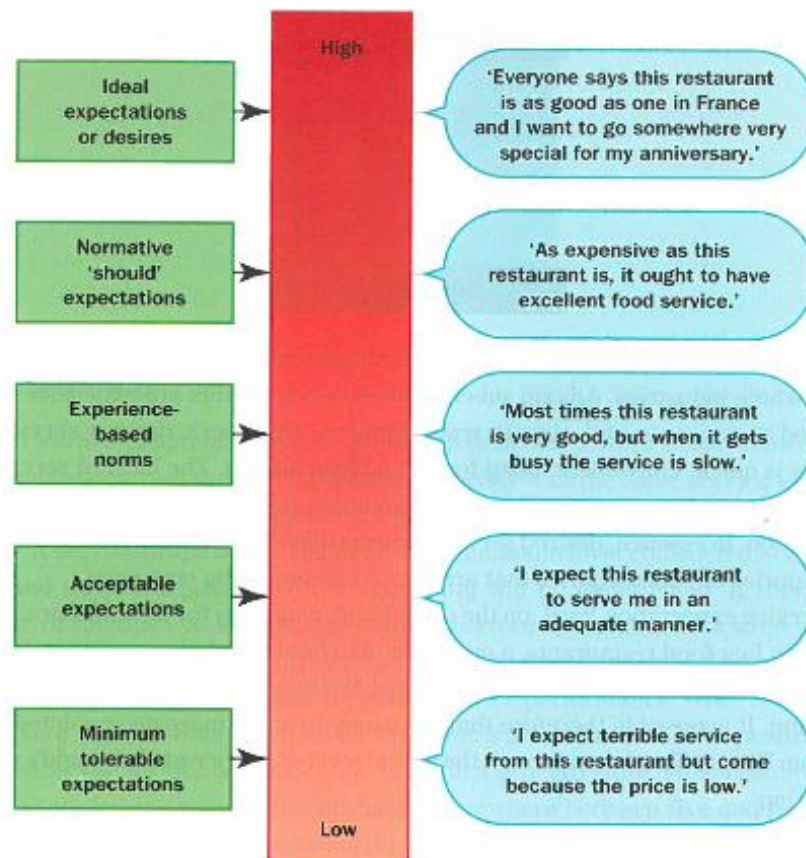


Figure 4: Possible level of customer expectation (Wilson et al. 2016, 51.)

Desired service is the level of service the customers wish to get from the service provider. Duunitori can be taken as an example, people are surfing on this website with the hope that they can find a nice job vacancy which is interesting and suitable for them and then they can find a job through this page. There is also another case when a customer chooses AliExpress, a large Chinese online market which is a part of Alibaba group, to buy a glass screen protector for her phone with the expectation that she can get a cheap one (\$1.5 online compared to \$30 in store) with similar quality. (Wilson et al. 2016, 5.)

Adequate service level is the level at that customer can accept when they know that their service desires are not always possible to fulfil. It can be explainable in the case with customer who want to buy screen protector from AliExpress. This customer wants to have fast delivery but usually it will take 30 days with standard shipment but she can shorten the delivery time if she pays \$5 more for express service. This is acceptable for the buyer because the total cost is still much cheaper than the one in store and she can buy few more as backups in the same order. (Wilson et al. 2016, 5-6.)

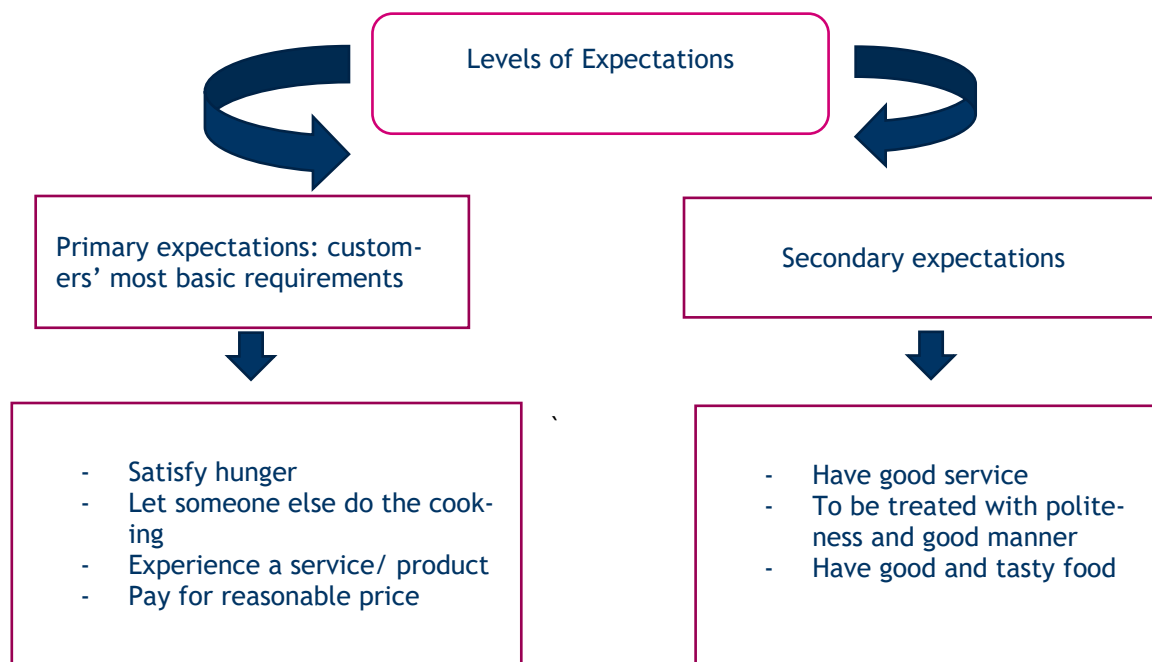


Figure 5: Basic levels of expectations (Harris 2007, 17-18.)

Figure 5 describes two basic level of customer's expectations which are primary and secondary expectations. Primary expectations are the most fundamental needs of customers. To clarify, customers who use the service at the restaurant just because they are hungry and need something to eat or they have no time to cook at home because of a huge workload and so on. However, there are many people using catering service with other higher expectations which can be good service, delicious dishes and relaxed dining atmosphere. That is so-called secondary expectations. (Harris 2007, 17-18.)

It is said that customers usually have certain kind of expectations whenever they purchase a product or a service. Customer expectation are created based on many different elements, from previous personal experiences, reviews or recommendation from friends and family members, from advertisements, or feedbacks from other customers on the internet. Knowing customer experiences helps a company or service provider to adjust marketing campaigns, customer service operations so as to make customers satisfied and engaged with enterprises. This matter will be explained thoroughly below.

Factors that have impact on customer expectations

Personal needs: this factor is related to the customer's physical and psychological wellbeing. For example, a customer who just gets out of the club, is hungry and thirsty, has a hope that there is no or short queues in the fast food restaurant nearby. Besides, a customer who has

allergy with gluten products expects that hotel breakfast has a wide range of gluten free breads or sweets for them. Once customers have any kind of allergies, they have strong desires that staffs have solid knowledge about allergy matters. (Wilson et al. 2016, 55.)

Lasting service intensifiers: this factor makes customer intensified reactivity of the service. There are two main subtypes of this factor which are derived service expectation and personal service philosophy. In derived service expectation, customer expectation is affected by the third party who also experience the service. For instant, if the author has responsibility to choose a place to hold Christmas party for her company. She will be representing the management team to choose a dining place for the party so her desires will be driven by derived expectation from other people in the company. In the other hand, personal service philosophy is about the customer's own experience background. If the customer has experience working and training as a waiter, obviously she knows serving standard of a service so she would have expectations based on what she has learned. (Wilson et al. 2016, 56.)

Temporary service intensifiers: is the factor that occurs in short-term or suddenly that make the customer has more need for the service. Tax office's hotlines, in late December or January, is a good example when many people have needs of tax card renewal. Customers during this time of the year often have to wait for a while to have free lines to contact with the tax officers for a new tax card for a new business year. (Wilson et al. 2016, 56-57.)

Perceived service alternatives: is the factor that related to other options of service providers that customer can choose from. Those customers who have many options to choose usually have higher level of expectations than those are have limited choices to make. This can be seen clearly in the airport in small cities or provinces where there are not many airlines operating there. Customers do not have many chances to compare prices, schedules and services, therefore they are quite willing to accept a certain level of service or product quality than when they have flights in big airport where many other alternative options are available. (Wilson et al. 2016, 57.)

Customer self-perceived service role: is about the impact of customer on the level of service they might get. For example, there is a couple go out for beef steak. The lady asks for a medium rare steak might be dissatisfied if the beef is under- or overdone compared to what she expects it is going to be. In the other hand, the gentleman has no special request upon how well-done the steak should be, it is easier to get satisfied feedback from him. (Wilson et al. 2016, 57-58.)

Situational factors: is the factor that customers have expectation depending on the control of the service provider. A customer who has personal emergency problem (maybe car accident, important flight delayed, etc.) often requires quick respond from insurance company, whereas a customer has loss during a typhoon or flood which brings huge damages for a big

area is often more patient due to the fact that insurance company has many cases to respond. (Wilson et al. 2016, 58.)

During the time working in Y Hotel, the author has observed that customers always have some sets of expectations when you come to the restaurants, even though they may vary between different individuals. As the author quite often has interaction with Finnish customers who stay in the hotel come to the restaurant for breakfast, she can realise that Finnish guests are familiar with hotel restaurant standards and they know what they are supposed to get from a four-star hotel restaurant. That is why they are more likely ask for something else than foreign customers. Besides, the local customers have huge desires of personal space where they can have their own tables without sharing with anyone else.

3.2 Customer Satisfaction

There are many definitions of customer satisfaction. According to Szwarc (2005), customer satisfaction is how customers' view or feeling after using products or services of an organization together with their comparison between their actual experiences with what they have heard or seen about those products and company before. Then, customer satisfaction is also defined as "the customer's overall feeling of contentment with a customer expectations" (Harris 2007, 2.)

The outcome of a service is either good or bad, customers might be satisfied or dissatisfied with the service provided. Surely, the highest target of a business is delivery excellent customer service to customers and make the satisfied. In order to make customers satisfied with the services, service providers need to understand customers' needs, requirements and expectations. (Harris 2007, 14.)

Additionally, Kotler and Amstrong (2017, 7.) argues that marketers need to consider thoroughly and make sure that they set the right level of expectations for customers. Due to the fact that if the expectations are set too low, it can satisfy the one who buy but might attract non-target buyers. Conversely, if the expectations are too high, it might leads customers to dissastisfaction easily. In fact, X restaurant did face this problems three years ago, when it was just opened, due to intensive marketing campanges. There were so many negative feedbacks from customers at that time, not because of the food and services but because of customers' excessive expectations on a new restaurant concept in the town.

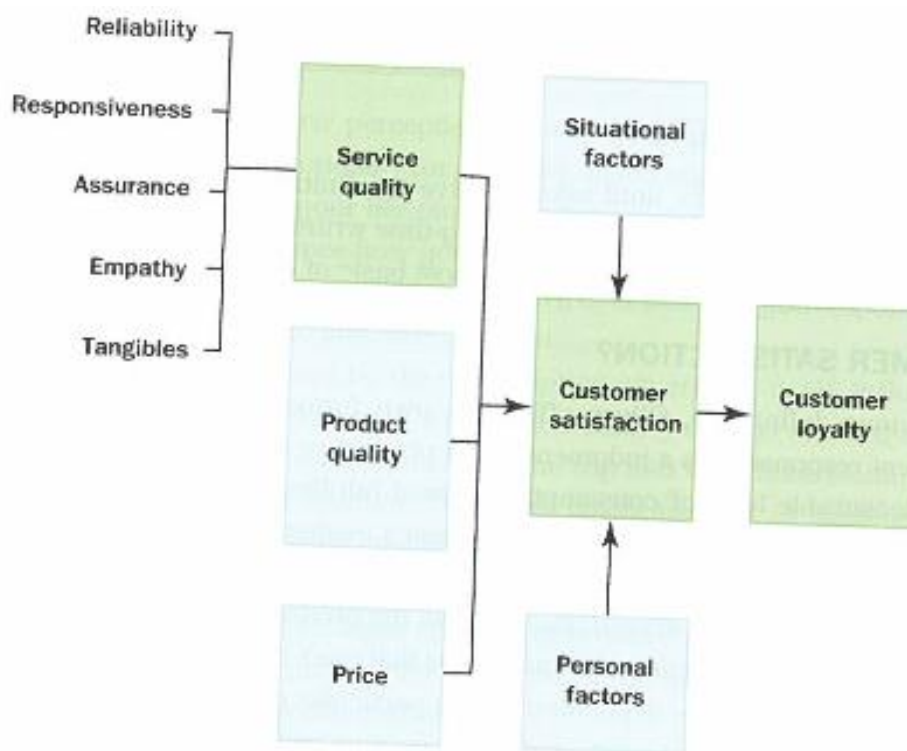


Figure 6: Quality- satisfaction link (Wilson et al. 2016, 71.)

It is shown in figure 6 two main factors which decide a customer's satisfaction, such as customer experiences and customer expectations. Satisfaction is not affected only by situational factors such as service quality, product quality or price, it is also defined by personal factors such as customer's previous experiences and their set of expectations before using the service. While observing the service in X restaurant, the author realized that customers usually come to the restaurant with high expectation. Some would love to have table service and special coffee included in breakfast, some want to have fresh juice offered. However, the common expectation from Finnish customers is having service served in their language.

4 Marketing and 7Ps marketing mix

Marketing is a fundamental part of any business in our today world when consumers have hundreds different choices of the products that they want to purchase. In one hand, it is a huge benefit for consumers since they have opportunities to compare different products from shapes, functions, designs and prices. Besides, they will have better chance to get a good product with reasonable price due to the harsh competition in the market. However, in the other hand, customers may easily get lost due to a massive of available products and information. This factor will bring a good chance for marketers to do their jobs and brings products to their customers (Gross 2016).

What else makes marketing so important? Marketing does not only help to raise awareness to company brand but also increase sales, grow business and create customer engagement. Besides playing a role as education channel for customers, marketing helps to sustain presence of the company. It helps the company to maintain the healthy and long-lasting relationship with customers. In addition, it is said that without marketing, many businesses could not survive even if they have good products since people do not know about their existence (Gross 2016).

The importance of marketing is undeniable in business, however not everyone understands the exact its definition. Many people assume that marking is all about selling and advertising since “we are bombarded every day with TV commercials, catalogs, sales calls and emails” (Kotler & Amstrong, 2012, 29.). Nevertheless, marketing is also about satisfying customer needs in the sense that marketers understand customers’ needs, develop and introduce the products or services that meet customers’ requirements and value, then promote the products effectively so that the sales can be increased. (Kotler & Amstrong 2012, 29.)

7 Ps service marketing mix

Marketing mix is the set of actions or tactic that the company uses to introduce their products to the target market (Kotler et al. 2008, 49.). Historically, the term “Marketing mix” was first created and used in 1949 by Neil Borden and McCarthy was the first person who brought out the 4 Ps of marketing which are product, price, promotion and place. Thanks to the development and update time to time, nowadays more Ps (people, process and physical evidence) are added and 7 Ps shown in Figure 7 are widely used in service marketing (Baalbaki 2015).



Figure 7: 7Ps of Service Marketing Mix (Baalbaki 2015)

Product is the first aspect in marketing mix and is defined as anything made available for consumers to use or for a market to satisfy customers' needs and desires. It can be tangible in form of goods and intangible in form of services. It cannot go without indicating the importance of product since without product, the company or service provider have nothing to offer. Products are classified as consumer and industrial items in Table 1 and 2.

Consumer products	Convenience products	The goods or services which are bought frequently with minimal comparison and effort. These products are widely available at convenient points and usually low price. Examples: candies, newspapers, soaps, cleaning liquids, etc.
	Shopping products	The goods which are purchased less frequently. This type of product requires consumer research, comparison of brands on price, quality and style. Its distribution is a bit narrower in fewer outlets. Examples: clothing, furniture, etc.

	Speciality products	<p>The consumer goods that certain group of customers will actively seek to purchase due to its unique characteristic or brand identification. The buyers who seek speciality products know what they want and usually do not make comparison. They will spend time and effort to get it. This kind of product has high price.</p> <p>Examples: luxury goods, designer clothing, medical equipment, etc.</p>
	Unsought products	<p>Kind of product of which customers are unaware, not interested in purchasing or even do not know about it. It requires intensively marketing and sales effort.</p> <p>Examples: life insurance, home security systems, etc.</p>

Table 1: Consumer Products (Kotler et al. 2008, 502- 504.)

Industrial products	Materials and parts	<p>The goods that become a part of buyer's product and are needed to process further. They have two types which are raw materials and manufactured materials and parts.</p> <p>Examples: fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables, etc.</p>
	Capital items	<p>Industrial products which are fixed assets or infrastructure items. They are used in the production progress.</p> <p>Examples: factories, machinery, buildings, bridges, roads, etc.</p>

	Supplies and services	<p>Industrial products that support the operations of the buyer's organization. They are not considered to be part of the finished goods.</p> <p>Examples: paints, oils, paper, maintenance and repair services, etc.</p>
--	-----------------------	---

Table 2: Industrial Products (Kotler et al. 2008, 502- 504.)

Before opening any business, products are the first element that entrepreneurs need to consider. They need to know the desires and needs of the market and what they can offer so as to be able to fill the hole and make profit for the company. In this case study, the author aims to bring X brand and products to Finnish customers. Accordingly, figure 8 gives examples of the products served at X restaurant breakfast buffet.



Figure 8: Part of breakfast production at Y Hotel

The second P in marketing mix is price. Price is the amount of money customers have to pay in order to get a product or service. Price used to be the main element that customers considered before their purchase and it has been changing noticeably in the market nowadays that customers do acknowledge the importance of other non-price factors. However, price still has its crucial position in which a company's profitability are determined. It is also claimed that price is the one and only aspect of marketing mix that can bring revenue to the organization, therefore setting a right price is one of the most important objectives of any marketers since it plays a big role in company's success and relationship between customers and the company. (Kotler et al. 2008, 639.)

Pricing a product or service either too high or too low affects dramatically to the business due to the fact that customers do not buy a product which they think is higher than its value, whereas low price will bring loss the service provider. In any business, marketers are the ones

who set the price of a product but customers are the ones who determine if the product's price is precise. For that reason, it is necessary to study customer's perceptions of value so that marketers can set the price for which customers are happy to pay and the company can have profit and its right position in the market in customer's eyes. (Kotler et al. 2008, 639-640.)

Promotion is another crucial P in marketing. Kotler (2008, 691-692.) defines promotion mix (marketing communications mix) is a combination of promotional methods chosen by marketers to bring products, services closer to target customers. Elements of a promotion mix include advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing. The usages, pros and cons of these tools are described clearly in figure 7. Because of the fact that each element in the mix has its own usages and tools used to communicate with customer, marketers need to consider and design the most effective and suitable communication program for their campaign. Kotler (2008, 701-713.) presents all the steps in developing the promotion program which are selecting the target audience, identifying the communication objectives, designing a message, choosing a media, collecting feedback, deciding the promotion budget and setting the overall communication mix.

Promotion Method	Used For	Pros	Cons
Direct Marketing	Direct outreach to prospects in a database or sales list.	Easier to reach specific audiences and measure results.	People are overstated with marketing offers. Personal outreach brings need for customer service too.
Personal Selling	Used most often for expensive, technical, or specialized products.	Good salespeople are often the best marketing tools a company can have.	Salespeople can be expensive and take a lot of training.
Sales Promotion	Get people to use product more often. Gain competitor's customers.	Creates excitement among audience. Can be used to test price sensitivity.	Risk of trivializing brand and product. Might be dependent on discounted promotions.
Advertising	Introduce audience to new products, features, and uses	Adds credibility & human face. Can be used at specific times. Builds brands.	High cost. Little follow-through and feedback. Consumer indifference.
Publicity	Getting attention for something that is newsworthy.	Objective news media is more trusted. Improves employee morale. Gets natural links.	High cost. Little control of outcome. Marketing messages might not reach audience.

Figure 9: Five components in Promotion mix (Crowdspring 2018)

Place is the fourth factor in marketing mix. In marketing, place is not only a location where products are produced or displayed but also the process of moving products from producer to the intended user. The target of place (distribution) is to make products, services available at

the right time in the right place to achieve objective customers. Marketers can use different distribution channels which are retailers, distributors, direct-marketing channels and wholesalers to fulfill their jobs. (Kotler et al. 2008, 881.)

Every company and marketers are putting much effort in making their products, services available for customers and distribution channel can be a link to bring production and consumption together. Systems which from any particular distribution channel carry through many key functions which is explained in Table 3.

Information	Collecting and distributing market research and intelligence which is important for marketing planning and facilitating exchange
Promotion	Developing and spreading communications about offers
Contact	Finding and communicating with prospective buyers
Matching	Adjusting the offered to meet customers' needs
Negotiation	Reaching agreement on price and other terms of the offers
Physical distribution	Transporting and storing goods
Financing	Acquiring and using funds to cover the costs of distribution channel
Risk taking	Estimating the risks of channel operation

Table 3: Key functions of marketing channel (Kotler et al. 2008, 882.)

People is one of the most important elements in any types of business. People, or human resource in another word, are everyone who directly or indirectly involved in making product or service. Without people, no company can be operated; no products are produced and no services are delivered. However, "people" element in hospitality industry play a slightly more vital role as it can make customers differentiate one service provider from the others. Kotler and his co-authors (2008, 882.) stated specifically the importance of customer-contact and front-line staffs who have direct interaction with customers that these people can make a great impact on customer's satisfaction.

Every single employee is one representative of the whole company or brand, who bring not only product or service but also company' values and messages to the target customers.

Through service staffs' performance, customers can have a general picture about the company. Therefore, it is often said that the company need to take time to hire the right people who has right attitude toward the field. They need to be customer-oriented and service-minded people who are ready to serve customers' needs. The right staffs for the field do care about customers' feeling and have the desires to make customer experience a good one and for them, making customer happy and satisfy is one kind of happiness. (Kotler et al. 2008, 882-883.)

In this competitive hospitality world nowadays, where there are many companies offer the same products, people has been becoming the key differentiator that make things different, outstanding and exceptional. They will help to bring more new customers to the company and keep more existing guests. Besides, investing in training employees about customer service and other necessary skills is also encouraged since it helps company's staffs keep on track with new trends and requirement in the field. (Kotler et al. 2008, 883.)

In service marketing mix, physical environment could say a lot about how successful the product could be in the future, hence "service organizations can demonstrate their service quality by developing a superior physical environment in which the product is presented and delivered" (Kotler et al. 2008, 604.). It is also often said that we should not judge the book by the cover but we also need to admit that quite often we choose to buy the products which are more attractive and appealing. This is even more common nowadays among young adults due to the popularity of social media which encourage them to share their experiences and part of their life in digital world.

It is recognizable that it happens quite often when we think about a brand, its logo appears in our mind. The logo helps to reveal the company's identity and is a tool to communicate with target customers about who they are, what products or services they offer. For that reason, if we want people to remember what we are all about, it is necessary to be consistent with the logos and images we used for promotional purposes. (Kotler et al. 2008, 605.)

Kotler and his co-author argue in their book *The Principle of marketing* (2008) that "hotels will pay a great deal of attention to interior décor and ambience to project a superior service to target customers". By observation, the author could agree with Kotler in this point as she can see that Y Hotel invest a huge budget on interior design in every single space in the hotel. It is not so difficult to find famous littala birds in different areas in X restaurant, Marimekko cups in hotel rooms. And the hotel and restaurant will be decorated according to the celebration them of the year

5 Research and Practical Implementation

In this thesis work, the author uses qualitative research method in order to figure out what Finnish customers expect to receive when using service in general and in restaurant specifically, then through that the author will start to make plan or come up with ideas to reach more local guests to X restaurant. Benchmarking is a great tool that helps the author to learn about how product and service are offered in the market. The author also makes use of interviewing to have deep understanding and broad overview through both customer's and employee's experiences. Thanks to the support of Y hotel, the author has smooth access to company's customer satisfaction surveys which provide a lot of valuable insights to the thesis writer.

5.1 Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the performance measuring process of a company's products, services or processes against another business or company which considered to be the best or well-known on the market. The purpose of this process is to find out the internal improvement potential to improve products and service. Starting with collecting sufficient data regarding not only the business's dominance from various perspectives, but also the determinants of such superior. After that gather all the data and analyze it fully and compare the findings to either the business plan or to the current business operation, before reaching to any important developmental decisions. The decisions can vary from changing the products' features to strengthen the competitiveness of the product on the market or changing the focus of the service and so on. The developmental opportunities are continuous and dramatic, which mean either installing small adjustments or completely re-organize the internal work (Kyrö 2014).

Choosing a product or a service within the company that is considering improving is the very first step researcher needs to carry out when doing benchmarking. This step helps the company focus its attention on specific priorities. After the product is chosen, researcher need to determine the benchmark process which is quite crucial because it can result in a clear procedure that based on it, the management will know what the changes are, how much changes can be achieved within the limitations and how to measure the process of changes. The incorrect process will result in resources waste in the future (Hassan 2016).

The following step is finding and deciding the company which has the service or product that is worth to benchmark. Usually, the company with dominating and relevant products on the market. Then, comparing data of 2 companies to seek out the gaps in competence. By discovering to which extent of the present performance is lagging from the best on the market and then combining the best determinants from the best models into an ideal process that is relevant and compatible to the company. After reviewing the past performance in relation to its

competitors, the organization will try to calculate the upcoming possible change in the industry and propose future performance (Hassan 2016).

Romantic Getaway Package	Y Hotel	Z Hotel
Price	Deluxe Suite from 228 € Junior Suite from 398 €	Delux Room 380 € Premium Delux Room 410 € Executive Room 470 € Junior Suite 730 € Executive Suite 1360 €
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodation for two - Bottle of Champagne and chocolate - Breakfast in the room - Access to rooftop swimming pool, gym and sauna - Late check-out at 2pm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accommodation for two - Bottle of champagne and seasonal fruits or berries - Breakfast served in room - Access to spa and gym - Late check-out at 2pm

Table 4: Benchmarking on Romantic Package in Y hotel and Z hotel

In this thesis, the author uses benchmarking research method to benchmark the price on food and especially the Romantic Getaway Package as shown in Table 4, a package usually booked by new marriage couples. Looking at the package, the author realizes that the offer is quite similar between the two packages in two hotels. However, there is a significant difference in the price. For the Y hotel offers more reasonable Romantic Package, the author comes up with a business idea which will be introduced in research result and development idea session.

5.2 Interview

Interview method is defined in different ways by different people, however it is considered to be a person-to- person interaction either face to face or through internet or email and so on with a determined purpose. Interview is ranked as one of the most common way to collect information from people. It is also said that in an interview, the interviewers are free to design

their format, questions and how they want to carry on the interview. There are a few types of organizing the interview question which are flexible and inflexible. In flexible interview, the author “has the freedom to think about and formulate the questions as they come to mind around the issue being investigated” (Kumar 2014, 177.). However, in inflexible interview, interviewer needs to stick on the plan and questions which are prepared and decided beforehand. (Kumar 2014, 176-177.)

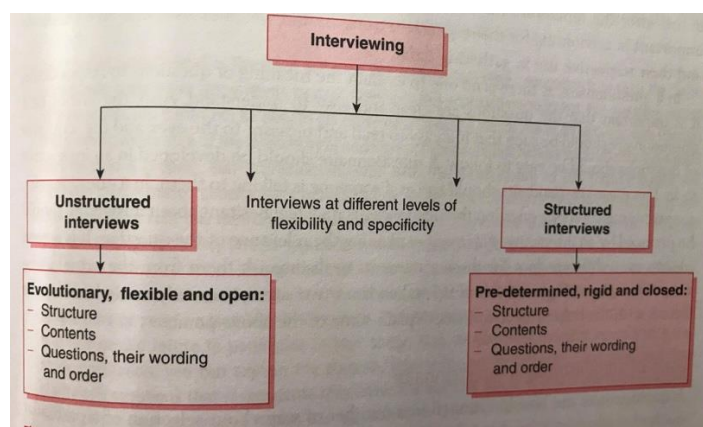


Figure 10: Types of interview (Kumar 2014, 177.)

As shown in Figure 10, unstructured interview or flexible interview in the other word gives interviewers the freedom to interview in every aspect such as structure, contents, questions, wording and order. For that interviewers have higher possibilities to access to information they want to obtain since they can re-design the questions and flows according to the answers from interviewee which they have not thought about when they guideline their questions. In the other hand, everything is fixed for structured interviews, all the questions, use of word and order are set and specified in the interview schedule. (Kumar 2014, 177-178.)

Like every other research tool, interview method also has its two sided, advantages and disadvantages. The researcher needs to study about its strengths and weaknesses to choose the most effective tool which bring the best use of this data collecting method. Table 5 will clarify these two sides so that the author can have her own decision to choose the suitable way of conducting research.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More appropriate for complex situations • Useful for collecting in-depth information • Information can be supplemented through observation and non-verbal reaction during the interview • Can be explained to clarify the questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time-consuming and expensive • The quality of data depends upon the quality of the interaction • The quality depends upon the quality of the interviewer

Table 5: Advantages and disadvantages of interview (Kumar 2014, 182-183.)

In this research, the author decides to make use of in interview method as she sees more benefits which can obtain through this data collecting methods rather than the disadvantages. Having permission from the company, the author contacts to book the interview appointment with the people who are Finns and have experience working and using the service in the restaurant. The interviews were carried out in the Y Hotel, a hotel with tuning view by the sea with a sales manager and a shift manager from X restaurant.

5.2.1 Interview with Sale Manager of Y Hotels Finland, as a customer

There are many reasons for the author to book an interview appointment with the hotel's sales manager for the study of this research. First of all, the manager has deep understanding about sales and the way to attract customers. Through that, the author can benefit some advices from him for the thesis work. Besides, he is also a frequent customer in the restaurant since he quite often has meeting with customers during breakfast and lunch time in the hotel. For that reason, he can provide information from his own experience as a guest. The interview was taken place in Y Hotel from 12:00 to 12:45 on 7th November 2018 and interview questions is listed in Appendix 1.

The author had a quality time interviewing the sales manager since he was friending, supportive and opened to answer all the question from the interviewer. He said that he came to have breakfast and mostly lunch once or twice a week with business partner as a part of his sales work. During the two years of experiencing the products from the restaurant, he found that the menu which had quite similar options of burgers was quite narrow and not so appealing. He also mentioned that the menu stayed the same for the last two years without any changes.

In addition, the price was quite high with 21 to 22 euros for a burger, and 8.5 euros for a glass of beer. However, he highly appreciated the great service from his all visits.

As a Finnish customer, the hotel sales manager said that menu and price are one of the most important criteria to choose a restaurant. As mentioned above, the price is set quite high and through his opinion and experiences, it is as high as Z Hotel, a five-star hotel. He suggested to have some action on pricing so that the restaurant can offer more reasonable price which can help to attract more locals. In addition, a touch on menu is also needed to bring the variety to the food choice so as to reach more customers' needs and requirements.

5.2.2 Interview with shift manager of X restaurant

After the interview with the sales manager who functioned as a guest to learn about customers' aspect, the author has second one with X restaurant's shift manager, also a Passion pilot who was full of positive energy, passionate vibes and service minded leader who understand the important of an extraordinary service and customer minded staffs. The shift manager has many years of experiences in the field and she herself was raised up in different cultures and had been working in different companies during her career so she had a deep understanding about dealing with customers from all over the world. The interview was carried out in X restaurant on 23rd November 2018 and the interview based on the question list in Appendix 2.

In the interview, the shift manager said that in the week days customers were mostly businessmen who stayed in the hotel and leised and Finnish guests usually came in the weekend. Since on Sunday, the hotel was quite empty, it impacted in restaurant business in the evening. Therefore, Sunday was usually least busy day of the week. On the other side, it was super busy on Friday and Saturday. She also mentioned that the frequent customers were the ones who owned Membership of the hotel chain since they usually got vouchers value from 4-13 euros.

When was asking about customers' satisfaction, the shift manager shared with the author that most of customers were happy and satisfied with what they received from the restaurants, from the service to the food. If there were any complaints, it was just about the long queue. she also told the way she dealt with customers' dissatisfaction that the head waiter who were in charge in that evening should go to talk with customers personally to show the care and respect to them. Depend on the situation, the restaurant can offer some refunding or extra gift card for dinner.

5.3 Hotel's customer satisfaction survey, feedbacks from tableonline.fi and Tripadvisor

Hotel's customer satisfaction survey is a tool to collect feedbacks from customers and get to know customers' feeling after using the services in the hotel. After check-out, customers will

receive a link to the survey pool which contains questions concerning the whole stays of customers. Through the satisfaction survey, the company can also see their performance so that they can have the action and adjustments in time. Since the research is done to find out strategies to bring X restaurant's image to locals, the author has permission to access to the hotel's guest satisfaction survey to gather the information needed. For the purpose of this research which is focusing on local customers, the author just concentrates on responses from Finnish guests and it will be shown in Table 6. Some of the feedbacks are written in English and the other are done in Finnish so it will be translated by the author into English so as to parallel with the whole research.

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffs are friendly • Good service • Variety of option in food 	<p>For breakfast:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor selection of gluten-free products and lack of information about it • Some staffs are not able to speak Finnish • Breakfast is overcrowded in the weekend <p>For a la carte:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service is slow, customers had to wait for long • Food is cold • Waiter is lack of information about allergies

Table 6: Y Hotel's customer satisfaction survey results

Tableonline.fi is one of the tools for booking table to the restaurant. There are hundreds of restaurants to choose from, it might be Asian restaurants, European or even American style. Customers can find all the information they need to know from the restaurants, from the style of restaurants, the food they serve with the photos and all the menu they have, opening hours to all the upcoming events and offers. Through the website, customers can also reach to other guests' experiences and feedbacks to decide if they also should make a try in the restaurant as shown in Figure 11.



Restaurant reviews

3.87/5

Overall

4.03/5

Kitchen

4/5

Atmosphere

3.97/5

Service

Figure 11: Tableonline.fi (TableOnline 2019)

During a long time working in the hotel, the author notices that besides booking through phone calls, there are many customers enjoy booking through the tableonline.fi webpage. The guests also leave the feedbacks and reviews about the food, service and atmosphere they experience from their visit. As written in Customer Service section, each customer comes to the restaurant with a different set of experiences and expectations, therefore their points of view also are varied. In this research, the author will sum up customers' reviews from the website in the Table 7.

Positive	Negative
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Good location with stunning view to the sea - Good service, friendly staffs - Delicious food - Nice atmosphere 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not good service - Waiting time is too long - Non-experienced waiter

Table 7: Feedbacks on tableonline.fi and Tripadvisor from X restaurant's customers

6 Result analysis and developing ideas

Since the purpose of this study is to attract more locals to the restaurant, the author needs to gather all the information and analyse all the research work in order find ideas to bring X restaurant closer to Finnish customers. Thanks to support from Y hotel, staffs and customers in there, the author has deeper look and knowledge about the business in there. For that, author suggest some development and marketing ideas for the company.

6.1 Interview results

The sales manager advised that the restaurant may have some changes in the lunch menu, either reduce the price or make the menu wider by adding some more dishes according the season. For example, instead of asking customers pay 4 euros more for a small bowl of salad or fries, a 13 euro-burger can include some salads or fries. It would be more reasonable for a lunch.

In addition, with many experiences of doing sales with different customers and companies, especially with the locals, the sale manager was opened to give some advices on effective marketing for the restaurant. He suggested that the hotel should make a best use of the world-famous chef who co-operation with the hotel to create X restaurant concept, as a mark memory whenever customers think about X restaurant. In addition, the restaurant was favored with romantic sea view which can help to blow customers' mind and enhance their experience. Consequently, a good effort on making a relax atmosphere in a stunning view with a great service should be a win.

Shift manager at X restaurant who has broad understanding and knowledge about restaurant business gives the author many valuable advices about customer and employee relationship management. She believes that knowing product is extremely crucial because when staffs know what they are selling and are confident about it, customers will feel safe about their choices and have better appetizes. For that reason, she advises that staffs need to have training time to time about the new products, how to sell and do outstanding customer service.

Additionally, the shift manager also emphasizes on the important of employee's loyalty. She says that it is important to treat staffs right, with respect, for that employees will stay longer with the company. In the business, it is always a plus when companies have workers who love the job and engaged with the organization. Since they know how things work out in the company and its tradition. They also tend to care about customers' feeling and expectation then put effort on achieving it.

When is asked about conflicts between the workers, she adds that rarely happen any conflict in X restaurant. Nevertheless, she shares a tip to handle negative feedbacks between the staffs. That whenever there is anything happen, the leader needs to identify the root of the

matter, then do confrontation and have conversation with each of the staffs who get involved. She also mentions that the relationship between staffs will affect directly to team-working and have result on the service, therefore she always makes sure that there is no misunderstanding in the team.

She also gives the last advice on doing customer service and getting engaged customers. She says that everyone wants to be important and need recognition, therefore being attentive to customers' needs and putting effort on make personal touch to customers will definitely bring a wow and good experience to the guests. As she says, small things make difference and it helps to break the ice and reach customers' expectation.

6.2 Customers' feedbacks analysis

The hotel has received many feedbacks from many different channels such as hotel customer satisfaction surveys, tableonline.fi, tripadvisor.com and hotel's Facebook page. However, the answers are quite similar. Many customers agree that the service is friendly, the food is good and the view from the restaurant is amazing.

In the other side, some customers also say that they are not satisfied with the service and food in the restaurant. Some complaint about gluten-free and vegan choice. Some other are not happy when the water are lack of information about food allergies. What is more, some says that they do not feel relaxed when having breakfast in the restaurant in the weekend since it is overcrowded and somehow it makes they feel like they need to fight for the food.

There is a feedback about customer service that might make reader feel complicated. Since many customers demonstrate that they experience really good and friendly service, many other seem not to agree and say that the service is so slow and bad, the waiter is not so attentive and they need to wait for long to get a "cold" dish. After reading those contrast reviews from customers, the writer raised this issue up to restaurant manager and it is explained that sometimes customers coming a lot without reservation, at that time somehow it is understaffed that make customers had to wait for long or sometimes the restaurant does not have enough of their own staffs so they need to outsource from agency. That can explain why the service is not good all the time and there is a waiter who do not know well about the food. However, she declares that things are getting fixed nowadays.

6.3 Business and development ideas

Having a concrete marketing plan which can boost the process of reaching customers' attention and persuading them to use a product or service is a fundamental part of any business. However, according to author's experience and observation, concentrating on only creating effective marketing plans is not enough to make a business success but a company also need to improve and update their product and service strong from within so that the customers

who come to them due to impressive marketing channels will stay with the company and become part of their marketing tools by the “word of mouth”. Thanks to all the researches and feedbacks from customers in restaurant X, hotel Y, author has ideas and suggestions for the company to have more Finnish customers to the restaurant not only by marketing but also by outstanding customer service itself.

Maximizing marketing through internal resources.

There is a huge amount of customers staying in hotel Y on daily bases, especially in the weekend. Moreover, the hotel is also famous for small size event venues which host up to 300- 600 guests from different companies in Finland, mostly in capital area every day. It means that the customers are already at the hotel, the only thing the hotel needs to do is drawing their attention and curiosity to try the food and services at the restaurant. According to author’s observation, each guest elevator has one led screen and at the moment it is just used for showing opening hours of different service points in the hotel. The author suggest that the hotel should make the best use of the screen to be an information channel and bring the dinner service closer to hotel guests, also outsiders who come for Sky Bar in 16th floor by displaying photos and short video about the service in X restaurant.

Hotel’s Bar nowadays is more and more popular to the citizens in Uusimaa area. Many Finns coming to the Y hotel just for rooftop Bar, to enjoy the extraordinary view, atmosphere, music and drinks. It must be ideal to have dinner in the restaurant and some drinks to warm up first then make a move to the 16th floor to have another adventure. In order to make that happen, the hotel can leave some small vouchers in the bar for customers to take so that they can have small discount on the restaurant (5-10 % off on food or drinks) in certain occasion or by over 50 euros purchasing in the Bar, customers can have a discount voucher to the restaurant.

Furthermore, the restaurant can also make them known through their own pages on Facebook and Instagram or through the Hotel’s by having customers’ interaction with the pages in different occasions. For instant, before Mother’s day the hotel can run the campaign to let customers write about their best memory with their moms and 3 best stories will be chosen to have free dinner with the mom on Mother’s Day or within that week. Or create an event like “tag the one who you want to spend Valentines with” and the winner will be picked randomly with a reward or some other occasion depending on the high or low season of the hotel.

Introducing new Romantic Getaway Package

At the moment, the hotel is serving a Romantic Getaway Package which is ranging from 228 euros to 398 euros for one night. In this package, customers can have accommodation either in Deluxe suite or Junior Suite, one bottle of champagne (375ml) and breakfast to the room.

However, by benchmarking the author notices that there is no hotel in Helsinki have a package that includes dinner, therefore the author believes that it would be a great chance for hotel Y to be pioneer in this category for a lovely romantic fun dinning they have in X restaurant. By doing so, there hotel will allow customer to have more choice to enjoy their romantic getaway day but choosing the original one with the same price or pay extra 100 euros for a premium package.

Improving customer services

Staffs are the face of the company and the ones who differentiate the services from one to another service provider. Not only the food but also the staffs do make customers decide if they are going to come back to the restaurant. Further, figure 3 also emphasize on the benefit of investing on employee experience which can help the firm to reach four times income than the ones which have low-performed staffs. For that reason, it is extremely crucial to recruit the right people to the industry, the ones who are customer-oriented and service-minded since they do care about customers' feel and expectation and have desires to make customer's experience a great one.

Moreover, in customers' feedbacks collected from restaurant's online pages, some guests say the service are good and friendly, conversely some others are absolutely against it. It can be explained that the hotel industry barely has enough of their own employees, especially in the restaurant. Because of cost-effectiveness, the restaurant sometimes has to outsource workers from agency. If they just come to help for the first few times, they might not know well about how things work out in that workplace and about the menu. For that I might affect the business in general when customers cannot get the service they expect to have. In order to deal with that matter, the hotel can have their own staffs with small contracts. It will not be a burden in low season but a better solution for the weekends or peak season. Besides, the restaurant can have frequent extra who do the good work and know the premises to call when it is needed.

In addition, not every restaurant worker has background knowledge in the field therefore conducting department staff training will be a great tool to assist workers to do work more effectively. The company needs to make sure that all of their employees understanding about the important of a good service in the industry as well as about customers' needs, requirements and customer satisfaction must be the goal of each service worker. Moreover, through the training, service staffs will be explained all the possible cases that might happen in the restaurant and how to solve it pleasantly at the first place so as to reduce the stress for both customers and staffs. Through that, customers can enjoy professional and friendly service where they feel that they are treated right and truly welcome.

7 Conclusion

In our busy world nowadays, people are more and more engaging to their career therefore eating out and enjoying life is considered to be a nice treat after a long hardworking day or week. Staying or dining in a hotel is not only for a business trip or leisure travel but it is becoming a trend of relaxation called “staycation”. Locating just 2 kilometres from Helsinki city centre in a peaceful area by the sea, hotel Y is now a favourite place for Finnish customers to have short stay away from home and work. They can enjoy the sauna and swimming from a top floor, or a fun-dining service in the restaurant. Catching the trend, hotel Y has desires to maximize the amounts of local customers to the restaurant. As a result, a research work is carried out to find out the help the restaurant to reach the target customers.

Understanding the important of customer service in the industry, especially in Finland, a country which highly expect and require a good service besides a good food, the author starts her research by gathering the knowledge about customer experience, customer service and the factors impact customers’ satisfaction. In order to have those knowledge and information, the thesis writer has read many books and articles from many different sources and the outcomes are shown in theory part of the thesis. Since the hotel has many activities to reach the locals like Dog dates, Egg hunting, Jätkäsääri Clearance day and so on, the author concentrates on improving the service, employee’s skills and knowledge so that when customers come, they will stay and bring more business to the restaurant by the word of mouth.

Since author is also an employee of the hotel, she has open opportunity to access to company’s customer satisfaction survey tool and some other sources to understand more thoroughly about customers’ experiences and expectations. Moreover, during her working time, the author has a lot of interaction with Finnish customers and through observation, she can learn about the how Finns use services and their desires. Besides, in the practical research method, benchmarking and interview are two effective research methods which help the author to collect all information and ideas she needs for the thesis work.

After doing the research, the author suggests the management team should concentrate more on the service itself than the powerful marketing. Caring about customers’ experience and expectation is a key to reach customers’ satisfaction. For everyone wants to be important, it will be a big plus if the staffs try to go an extra mile for customer with personalized interaction. In order to achieve that the company should be patient to recruit the right candidates to the industry and provide employees knowledge through training time to time. Giving opportunity for employees to develop in the career or small rewards can boost their motivation to work and contribute to the success of the company.

8 Referencesⁱ

Printed sources

Harris, E. 2007. Customer Service- A Practical Approach. New Jersey, USA: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Harris, E. 2007. Customer service: a practical approach. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall Limited.

Kazanijian, K. 2007. Exceeding Customer Expectations. US: Crown Business

Kotler, P., Amstrong, G. 2018. Principles of marketing. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Kotler, P., Amstrong, G. 2012. Principles of marketing. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Kotler, P., Amstrong, G., Wong, V., Saunders, J. 2008. Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Limited.

Kumar, R. 2014. Research methodology: a step-by-step guide for beginners. California, USA: SAGE Publication Inc.

Peppers, D. 2016. Customer experience: what, how and why now. Pennsauken, new jersey: bookbaby

Shaw, C. and Ivens, J. 2002. Building great customer experiences. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Solomon, M. 2013. Customer behavior: buying, having, and being. Boston, USA: Pearson.

Szwarc, P. 2005. Researching Customer Satisfaction & Loyalty. London, UK & Sterling, USA: Kogan Page Limited.

Wilson, A., Zeithaml, V., Bitner, M. & Gremler, D. 2016. Services Marketing- intergrating customer focus across the firm. Berkshire, England: McGraw-Hill Education.

Electronic sources

Baalbaki, Y. 2015. History of Marketing Mix from the 4Ps to the 7Ps. Accessed 8.1.2019

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/history-marketing-mix-from-4ps-7ps-yousef-baalbaki>. Accessed 26.11. 2018

Botibol, A. 2016. The Important of Customer Segmentation. Accessed 12.07.2019

<https://www.bluevenn.com/blog/the-importance-of-customer-segmentation>

Euromonitor International 2012. Home Cooking and Eating Habits: Global Survey Strategic Analysis. Accessed 16.11.2018

<https://blog.euromonitor.com/2012/04/home-cooking-and-eating-habits-global-survey-strategic-analysis.html>

Hassan, H. 2016. 10 Steps to Best-Practices Benchmarking by Charles J. Burke

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/10-steps-best-practices-benchmarking-charles-j-burke-hasnaa-hassan/>

Kyrö, P. 2014. Benchmarking as an Action Research Process. Accessed 17.07.2019

<https://metodix.fi/2014/05/19/kyro-benchmarking-as-an-action-research-process/>

Morgan, B. 2018. The Unignorable Link Between Employee Experience and Customer Experience. Accessed 12.12.2018

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/blakemorgan/2018/02/23/the-un-ignorable-link-between-employee-experience-and-customer-experience/#453a947a48dc>

Statista Research Department 2016. Most popular social media services among young people in Finland. Accessed 16.11.2018

<https://www.statista.com/statistics/601659/most-popular-social-media-services-among-young-people-in-finland/>

Statistics Finland 2017. Finns travelled in the home country as well as to Southern Europe in the summer of 2017. Accessed 20.11.2018

https://www.stat.fi/til/smat/2017/14/smat_2017_14_2017-10-04_tie_001_en.html

Figures

Figure 1: Primary moments of contact during stages of customer experience (Shawn & Ivens 2002, 66.)	7
Figure 2: Customer segmentation (Subiz 2018)	8
Figure 3: The link between employee experience and customer experience (Forbes 2018) ...	11
Figure 4: Possible level of customer expectation (Wilson et al. 2016, 51.)	13
Figure 5: Basic levels of expectations (Harris 2007, 17-18.)	14
Figure 6: Quality- satisfaction link (Wilson et al. 2016, 71.)	17
Figure 7: 7Ps of Service Marketing Mix (Baalbaki 2015)	19
Figure 8: Part of breakfast production at Y Hotel	21
Figure 9: Five components in Promotion mix (Crowdspring 2018)	22
Figure 10: Types of interview (Kumar 2014, 177.)	27
Figure 11: Tableonline.fi (TableOnline 2019)	31

Tables

Table 1: Consumer Products (Kotler et al. 2008, 502- 504.).....	20
Table 2: Industrial Products (Kotler et al. 2008, 502- 504.)	21
Table 3: Key functions of marketing channel (Kotler et al. 2008, 882.).....	23
Table 4: Benchmarking on Romantic Package in Y hotel and Z hotel	26
Table 5: Advantages and disadvantages of interview (Kumar 2014, 182-183.)	28
Table 6: Y Hotel's customer satisfaction survey results.....	30
Table 7: Feedbacks on tableonline.fi and tripadvisor from X restaurant's customers	31

Appendices

Appendix 1: Face-to-face interview with Sales Manager of Hotel Y, a frequent customer of restaurant X on 7th November, 201842

Appendix 2: Face-to-face interview with shift manager of X Restaurant on 13th November 2018.....43

Appendix 1: Face-to-face interview with Sales Manager of Hotel Y, a frequent customer of restaurant X on 7th November, 2018

1. How often do you use our service?
2. How satisfied you are with our products/ services
3. Is there anything we might change or improve to enhance customer's experience?
4. Have you ever had dinner at X restaurant? How was your experience?
5. How likely would you recommend the restaurant to your friends?
6. As a Finn, do you have any criteria to choose a restaurant?

Do you think of any difficulties or challenges we might have to attract the locals?

7. As a sales manager, do you have any advice for us to bring more local customers to the restaurant?

Appendix 2: Face-to-face interview with shift manager of X Restaurant on 13th November 2018.

- 1 What kind of customers usually visit X Restaurant? Are your customers mostly Finnish or foreigners?
 - 2 Which days are the busiest day/quietest day?
 - 3 How many staffs do you have on the busiest day/ quietest day?
 - 4 Do you often outsource staffs? Is there any difficulty to work with them?
 - 5 Do you have frequent customers? Is there any special offer for them?
 - 6 In what way have you worked with your staffs to go extra miles to deliver great customer service?
 - 7 How do you handle complaints from customers?
 - 8 Is there any training do you think your staffs might need? How do you inspire staffs' loyalty and trust?
 - 9 Are there any difficulties your staffs might face when they work for the restaurant?
-