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Customer Satisfaction Survey for Ammeraal Beltech

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Abstract

This thesis is about customer satisfaction survey conducted for the company Ammeraal Beltech (Finland). The thesis concentrates on planning and conducting the customer satisfaction research and analyzing the data and results derived from it.

Ammeraal Beltech is one of the world's leading companies in process and conveyor belting. The company was formed in 2001, when two belting companies, Ammeraal and Verseidag Belting merged together. In Finland Ammeraal Beltech has offices in six regions and its service area covers the whole country. Ammeraal Beltech Finland's head office is located in Tampere, and the other offices are located in Klaukkala, Turku, Oulu, Seinäjoki and Haukipudas. Ammeraal Beltech's products are used by many different kinds of industries such as airports, food processing, textiles and print shops.

A questionnaire was prepared in order to find out about the level of customer satisfaction among the customers of Ammeraal Beltech. The questionnaire was sent to 356 people and 91 of the questionnaires were returned. The response rate of 25,5% was considered to be adequate in order for the results to be reasonably reliable.

The results from returned questionnaires show that a majority of Ammeraal Beltech's customers are either satisfied or very satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's performance. The customer's were most satisfied with aspects related to Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel. The aspects the customers were least satisfied with were the availability of product information on the company website and price-quality relation of the products and services. Ammeraal Beltech was also seen as superior to its competitors in all aspects of its operation by the respondents.

Keywords	Customer Satisfaction	Marketing Research	Questionnaire
	Total Quality Management		

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1. Introduction

1.1 Ammeraal Beltech

Ammeraal Beltech is one of the world's leading companies in process and conveyor belting. The company was formed in 2001, when two belting companies, Ammeraal and Verseidag Belting merged together.

Ammeraal Beltech is owned by the Dutch company, Gamma Holding. The Group head office is located in Netherlands.

The company has more than 1600 employees worldwide and has affiliates in 24 countries. The global turnover in 2003 was approximately 200 million euros.

Ammeraal Beltech's products are used by many different kinds of industries such as airports, food processing, textiles and print shops.

In Finland Ammeraal Beltech used to be represented by a Finnish company, Tammertekes Oy. Tammertekes Oy was an importer and distributor of Ammeraal Beltech's products until 1999, when it was purchased and made a part of Ammeraal Beltech.

In Finland Ammeraal Beltech has offices in six regions and its service area covers the whole country. Ammeraal Beltech Finland's head office is located in Tampere, and the other offices are located in Klaukkala, Turku, Oulu, Seinäjoki and Haukipudas.

1.2 Research Purpose and Problem

Ammeraal Beltech Finland has never attempted to measure the level of customer satisfaction among its customers. The research assignment – to conduct a customer satisfaction survey – was laid out by the management of Ammeraal Beltech.

The questions Ammeraal Beltech wanted to find answer for were as follows:

- What is the general customer satisfaction level among the customers of Ammeraal Beltech?
- What are Ammeraal Beltech's customers most / least satisfied about?
- What affects the customer satisfaction level of Ammeraal Beltech's Customer's?
- What could be done to improve the customer satisfaction level of Ammeraal Beltech's customers'?

2. Customer Satisfaction

2.1 Definition and Importance of Customer Satisfaction

In this chapter I will present two different ways of defining the concept of customer satisfaction and explain why it is important for companies.

Customer satisfaction can be defined in many ways. One simple definition would be “the extent to which a product's (or service's) perceived performance matches a buyer's expectations.” (www.meta-morp.co.uk)

Customer Survey Store.com, a division of the National Business Research Institute, Inc, defines customer satisfaction as “*The company's ability to fulfill the business, emotional, and psychological needs of its customers.*” This definition is probably the most commonly used definition for customer satisfaction, and it emphasizes that customer satisfaction consists of different types of customer needs that need to be fulfilled.

Customer satisfaction is important for all business’ and business professionals. There are many different reasons why customer satisfaction should be considered extremely important and paid attention to.

Boone and Kurtz write about the link between customer satisfaction and quality. “*Customer satisfaction is a vital component of quality.*” (Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 55) Therefore having customers experience customer satisfaction directly contributes to them experiencing quality, and naturally experiencing quality also leads to customer satisfaction. Total quality management, or TQM, is an approach which involves all employees in continually improving products and work processes to achieve customer satisfaction and world-class performance. The idea behind TQM can be described as follows:

In a total quality organization, marketers develop products that people want to buy, engineers design products the way customers want to use them, production workers build quality into every product they produce, sales people deliver what they promise to the customers, information systems people use technology to ensure customer orders are filled correctly and on time, financial specialists help determine prices that give customers value. (Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 51)

Therefore it could be said that both customer satisfaction and TQM are basically about giving the customers what they want, and without customer satisfaction there is no experience of quality.

The importance of customer satisfaction is especially apparent for marketing professionals and sales personnel, as their ability to successfully market or sell products and services largely depends on the previous experiences and impressions the customers have had regarding those same products and services – in other words if they have been satisfied with them in the past or not. The following quote emphasizes the importance of customer satisfaction especially for market oriented organizations and states that they should strive to improve customer satisfaction. The quote also emphasizes the fact that for market oriented

organizations superior customer satisfaction is an important way of differentiating and gaining competitive advantage over their competitors.

Market oriented organizations embrace an organization-wide focus to learn their customer's needs so they can offer superior customer value – that is, so they can satisfy customer needs better than their competitors. Marketers should strive to increase customer satisfaction. (Zikmund & d'Amico, 1996: 129)

“A declining customer satisfaction rate usually indicates a declining customer rate.” (Kotler, 1999: 190) Customer retention is another apparent reason why customer satisfaction is extremely important. *“Research has established that, in a variety of businesses, customer retention is linked to increased profitability.”* (Cespedes, 1995: 263) Engel, Blackwell and Miniard describe the importance of customer satisfaction from customer retention point of view as follows:

It is much more difficult to win anew customer than to retain an existing customer. Incontrovertible evidence shows that sustainable market share comes primarily through a commitment to the ongoing priority focus on customer satisfaction and retention, leadership in quality, and service. (Engel, Blackwell & Miniard, 1995: 28)

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel continue to discuss the subject of customer retention in a newer edition of their book:

Probably the most obvious reason companies must pay attention to customer satisfaction is that it influences whether consumers will buy from the same company again. Positive post-consumption evaluations are essential for retaining customers. Those holding negative evaluations of the product following consumption are unlikely to buy again. Typically, it is cheaper to retain an existing customer than to recruit a new one. (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 172)

Kotler emphasizes that the probability that the new customer will buy again is strongly related to his level of satisfaction with the first purchase. He also states that a customer who feels very dissatisfied, dissatisfied or even undecided will be lost, but that a satisfied customer is likely to buy again – even more so if the customer is very satisfied. Even satisfied customer might easily switch when another supplier can offer equal or greater satisfaction. *“Companies can lose anywhere between 10 and 30 percent of their satisfied customers.”* (Kotler, 1999: 190)

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 172) also remind that the relationship between customer satisfaction and customer retention is not perfect. In today's world consumers are constantly being lured by competing companies and might therefore take their business' elsewhere even if they were satisfied with the products or services they were purchasing to begin with. However, even though customer satisfaction does not guarantee customer loyalty, higher customer satisfaction is likely to lead to higher customer loyalty. Blackwell, Miniard and Engel (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 172) report that the Xerox Corporation discovered that customers reporting to be “totally satisfied” were six times more likely to purchase their products again than the customer's who reported being just “satisfied”. This suggests that Xerox and other companies in a similar situation

should strive to create “customer delight”, which occurs when a customer is completely satisfied, instead of just customer satisfaction.

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel mention one more reason why customer satisfaction or positive post-consumption evaluations are important: “*negative consumption experiences not only reduce the odds of repeat buyers, they also lead consumers to say unflattering things when discussing their experiences with others.*” (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 173) Especially when extensive, this kind of negative word-of-mouth communication can sometimes seriously harm the image of a company and lead to serious financial losses. In other words, dissatisfied customers will not only most likely take their business elsewhere, they may also spread their negative views on the company. On the other hand, satisfied customers are likely to make a new purchase from the same company and may also spread their positive views on a company and thereby help the company to recruit new customers and even keep their existing customers.

Extreme cases of customer dissatisfaction might lead to official complaints and law suits, which again can generate negative publicity and take up time and resources that could otherwise be used for more productive purposes. (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 174) Since customer satisfaction leads to customer loyalty and repurchases, customer satisfaction both generates revenue and resources and prevents those resources from having to be used in protecting the company from negative publicity and law suits. “*Without customer satisfaction, organizations are unlikely to increase their sales and revenues. And without increased revenues, organizations do not have the resources to invest in customer service centers, special sales promotions, or sales training – all of which are important components of even the most elementary customer satisfaction programs.*” (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 10) Therefore it can be said that investing into customer satisfaction enables other future investments that from their part help to create greater customer satisfaction. The subject of creating customer satisfaction will be discussed in the following chapter 2.2.

2.2 Creating and Maintaining Customer Satisfaction

In this chapter I will present different ways of creating and maintaining customer satisfaction by listing factors that affect customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction can be created by improving the company’s product and services by adjusting them to better answer the customers’ needs. Also by trying to affect the emotional and psychological factors, such as how the customers perceive those products and services to be and how do they make them feel can the level of customer satisfaction be affected.

In order for a company to create and maintain customer satisfaction the company must at least understand how the consumers use the products. An example of an act meant to create greater customer satisfaction by changing the tangible features of a product after learning about a problem customers experienced when using the product is described by Blackwell, Miniard and Engel in their book *Consumer Behavior* (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 8). In the example Procter & Gamble found out that the economical giant packages of laundry detergent they manufacture were too high in order to fit to the laundry shelves of many of the

customers, causing some of them to discontinue purchasing the product. The simple but effective solution was to redesign the boxes to be shorter and wider while containing the same amount of detergent. Procter & Gamble was able to solve the problem that was causing customers to feel less satisfied with their product because they understood where and how the customers were using the product.

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel continue on the link between customer satisfaction and understanding the way the customers use the products. They state that the most important determinant of satisfaction is consumption: how consumers use the products. Even if the product is good, it will cause the consumer to feel dissatisfied if used improperly. For example, a car is likely to break down if it is not maintained properly. Therefore companies include instructions with their products and offer warranties, instruction programs and help lines – that also decrease cognitive dissonance or buyer's remorse – in order to promote customer satisfaction by trying to eliminate the dissatisfaction due improper use. (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 80)

Consumers will only want to pay for products and services that satisfy their needs, but that is unlikely to occur unless the firm thoroughly understands how buyers consume or use a particular product. Unless a product is used as intended, it is likely that the consumer satisfaction with the product will suffer. (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 8)

Blackwell, Miniard and Engel also state that in order to increase customer satisfaction, many effective modern organizations strive to seek methods to allow their customers to affect product development, innovation, research and communication instead of attempting to influence their customers. (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 10)

By seeking methods to allow consumers to influence the organization to have the products, prices, promotions and operations that consumers will buy, organizations are more likely to satisfy customers, create brand loyalty, and increase revenues. Marketing oriented firms of the 21st century will be focused more on allowing customers to influence them rather than on how they can influence consumers. (Blackwell, Miniard & Engel, 2001: 10)

The idea of allowing customers to affect the way the products are made and marketed is of course linked to the idea total quality management as discussed in chapter 2.1.

“An important means of enhancing customer satisfaction is another TQM technique, continuous improvement, or kaizen in Japanese.”(Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 61) Continuous improvement is a process of constantly studying and making changes in work activities to improve their quality, timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness. For marketers the concept of continuous improvement goods with added value and services that meet customer needs and innovations that exceed customer expectations. The process must be ongoing since the customers' wants, needs and expectations are constantly changing. Continuous improvement and its ongoing nature can be illustrated in the form of the PDCA cycle, a step-by-step of Planning, Doing, Checking and Acting. Throughout the cycle, employees are encouraged to view their work activities as a means of enhancing customer satisfaction. (Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 61)



(<http://www.roi-ally.com/pdca.htm>)

Kotler states that companies who want to attract repeat customers must periodically survey their customers' level of satisfaction. In the best case, most of the customers would of course be very satisfied or satisfied – unfortunately this is rarely the case. Studies show that customers tend to be dissatisfied with their purchase 25% of the time, and to make matters worse the 95% of those dissatisfied customers do not complain as they do not know how or who to or just think it is not worth the effort. If a company has many dissatisfied customers the reasons for that should be found out. (Kotler, 1999: 130) The subject of measuring customer satisfaction will be discussed next in the following chapter 2.3.

2.3 Measuring Customer Satisfaction

In this chapter I will first discuss the basic history of marketing research and measuring customer satisfaction and then continue to present the different stages and methods of measuring customer satisfaction, how should a questionnaire for measuring customer satisfaction be prepared and what factors should be taken to account when measuring customer satisfaction.

Measuring customer satisfaction is a form of marketing research and more precisely form of customer or consumer research – marketing research that yields information about the motives and needs of different classes of consumers. (www.wordnet.princeton.edu) Customer research covers investigation into buyer behavior – studying the social, economic, and psychological influences affecting purchase decisions, whether these are taken at the consumer, trade distribution or industrial level. (Chisnall, 1997: 19)

The first developmental stages of marketing research occurred in the United States, where marketing as a distinct function of management also originated. According to Lazer, there are five stages in this developmental process:

1. Pre. 1905: Application of research to marketing problems.
2. 1905-1919: Organized approaches to market information.
3. 1919-1930: Structuring the market research discipline.
4. 1930-1945: Solidification and refinement of marketing research.

5. 1945-1973: Restructuring and the modern era of marketing research.
(Chisnall, 1997: 7)

The concept of measuring customer satisfaction was developed later. Allen and Rao describe the history of measuring customer satisfaction as follows:

The first forays into the measurement of customer satisfaction occurred in the early 1980s. These typically involved assessing the drivers of satisfaction. Early works by Oliver (1980), Churchill and Surprenant (1982) and Bearden and Teel (1983) tended to focus on the operationalization of customer satisfaction and its antecedents. By mid-80s the focus of both applied and academic research had shifted to construct refinement and the implementation of strategies designed to optimize customer satisfaction according to Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman (1996).

Rigorous scientific inquiry and the development of a general service quality theory can be attributed to Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1985). Their discussion of customer satisfaction, service quality, and customer expectations represents one of the first attempts to operationalize satisfaction in a theoretical context. Parasuraman, Berry and Zeithaml proposed that the ratio of perceived performance to customer expectations was the key to maintaining satisfied customers. (Allen & Rao, 2000: 1-3)

Allen and Rao continue to explain the concept of SERVQUAL, one of the first attempts to operationalize the customer satisfaction construct. SERVQUAL is a multi-item scale consisting of “tangible scale”, “reliability scale”, “responsiveness scale”, “assurance scale” and “empathy scale”. Throughout the 80s the primary research question involved which of the five scales was the most important from the customer satisfaction point of view. (Allen & Rao, 2000: 5)

Today the methods and theories involving measuring customer satisfaction are numerous and sophisticated. Most companies understand the importance of knowing how their customers feel about them and their products and services, and are therefore also interested in conducting customer satisfaction research.

When an organization is interested in measuring the level of customer satisfaction among its customers it should initiate a customer satisfaction measurement (CSM) program, a procedure for measuring customer feedback against customer satisfaction goals and developing an action plan for improvement. Such programs can sometimes be very sophisticated and a lot of times require help from outside specialists. (Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 60) Although CSM programs can vary widely, most of them include the following steps:

- Determine what areas are critical to the business and what measurement systems are currently being used.
- Probe a representative group of customers to learn what factors or attributes are important to their use of a good or service.
- Conduct research to determine the company’s performance in relation to the selected attributes.
- Analyze results and develop an action plan. (Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 60)

This can be simplified to determining what is important to your business and what is your current position, finding out what is important to your customers and conducting the research based on that information, analyzing the results and then reacting to the findings accordingly.

Boone and Kurtz also state that all marketers should realize that there may be gaps between expected and perceived quality of the firm's goods and services. Such gaps can be favorable or unfavorable – a product may be better or worse than expected. In order to avoid unfavorable gaps marketers should stay in touch with current and potential customers. Companies should go beyond traditional performance measures and explore the factors that determine purchasing behavior in order to formulate customer-based missions, goal and performance standards. (Boone & Kurtz, 1995: 61)

Peter Chisnall writes about planning and conducting a marketing research and its different aspects in his book *Marketing Research*. He emphasizes the importance of reliability and validity in research practice. These two factors need to be taken to account from the beginning when planning a marketing research. (Chisnall, 1997: 34)

Reliability refers to the stability of consistency of the results derived from the research: to the probability that the same results could be obtained if the measures used in the research were replicated. ... Essentially, reliability is concerned with the consistency, accuracy and predictability of specific research findings.

Validity refers to how well a specific research method measures what it claims to measure. For example, a thermometer is designed to measure temperature and a barometer to measure atmospheric pressure. It is generally more difficult to resolve validity than reliability. (Chisnall, 1997: 34)

“Five logical steps can be identified in the survey process; these apply irrespectively of the nature of the market – consumer, industrial or public service.” (Chisnall, 1997: 35)

1. Research brief
2. Research proposal
3. Data collection
4. Data analysis and evaluation
5. Preparation and presentation of final report

(Chisnall, 1997: 35-39)

The first stage, research brief, is critical because it decides the nature and direction of the entire research activity. In this stage the research problem on which the survey is expected to focus should be clearly defined. Before this can be done, it might be necessary to conduct some exploratory research. (Chisnall, 1997: 35)

The second stage of research activity – the work plan – entails devising a research proposal which describes the nature of the problem, the population involved, factors affecting market behavior, the methodologies to be used and estimates of time resources needed. This stage includes, among other things, exploring and analyzing relationships between variables that appear to be significant in the problem being surveyed. (Chisnall, 1997: 36)

The data collection stage is the central part of the research activities. In this stage the survey methodology has to be put into practice. Since a major part of the efficiency of the complete research program depends on reliable and valid data being gathered, the activities of this stage should be carefully planned and executed. (Chisnall, 1997: 38)

In stage four, data analysis and evaluation, the data collected is processed by tabulation, analysis and interpretation so that the research findings can be communicated to clients. Depending on the complexity and volume of the data collected, tabulations and analyses can range from hand processing to sophisticated computer packages. (Chisnall, 1997: 38)

The final stage, preparation and preparations of final report, should be done thoroughly. Writing a marketing research survey report involves professional skills in communication, as it needs to be easily understandable by clients. Whether researchers should interpret the research findings for the client is debatable, but the researchers are likely to have acquired an insight into the business and its markets. (Chisnall, 1997: 39)

The data collected in the stage four can be classified as primary or secondary data. Primary data is data that has been collected for the first time by observing, experimentation or questionnaires. Secondary data is existing information that can be useful in some surveys. Secondary data can be achieved internally or externally from books, internet, and statistics or from other reliable sources such as governments or trade associations. (Chisnall, 1997: 44 and 53) Since this thesis concentrates on a customer satisfaction questionnaire, questionnaire as a research method will be discussed next.

Questionnaire is a research method used in gathering primary data. It is a commonly used method – most marketing investigations use some form of questionnaire, either postal or administrated through personal interviews such as telephone surveys. Questionnaires are the backbone of most surveys and require careful planning and execution. The objectives of the survey should always be kept in mind when compiling questionnaires. (Chisnall, 1997: 51-52)

A questionnaire is a method of obtaining specific information about a defined problem so that the data result in a better appreciation of the problem. Questionnaires can be conducted by personal interviewing, postal surveys, telephone enquiries, panel research, group interviewing or different special survey techniques. The survey presented in this thesis was conducted by using postal survey, which means questionnaires were mailed to a sample of the population to be surveyed. Postal survey as a research method is superficially attractive mainly because of low cost, but the response rate is usually relatively low unless the recipients are very interested in the subject of the survey. It should also be noted that non-response is not a random process and therefore those who do respond might not represent the whole population. (Chisnall, 1997: 52)

A questionnaire can be designed to gather information about one or more of the five classes of information that are useful for marketing decisions: facts and knowledge, opinions, motives, past behavior and future behavior (intentions). (Chisnall, 1997: 129)

When planning the questions to be asked in the questionnaire bias should be avoided in order to increase the reliability of the data gathered. A question can be considered bias if its

content, structure, or wording leads respondents in the direction of an certain kind of answer. Bias in questionnaires might also arise from the order in which the questions are placed. (Chisnall, 1997: 132)

There are two types of questions that are commonly used in questionnaires: closed questions and open-end questions. Closed questions call for responses that are limited; The respondent is offered a selection of alternative replies of which he expected to select an answer corresponding to his views on the subject in questions. Open-end questions, or free answer questions, call for answer that have more than a few words. The topic is established for the respondent, who is let to structure a reply he sees fit. (Chisnall, 1997: 136-137) The results from the closed questions are practically always easier and faster to analyze, but might not be able to offer as complex and sophisticated data as the replies from the open-end questions. In the questionnaire used in this thesis consisted mainly of closed questions but also included a few open-end questions.

Chisnall emphasizes the importance of careful planning of the questionnaire when the questionnaires are sent to the respondents in mail. (Chisnall, 1997: 141)

Because of the impersonal nature of mail enquiries, the drafting of effective questions is more important than ever. These must be clearly worded and easily understandable; only one interpretation should be possible. The language in which they are phrased should be suitable for the sample population. In a general survey, questions may be informally worded. Colloquialisms may help to attract genuine responses. (Chisnall, 1997: 141)

Chisnall also continues to state that mail questionnaires have to be self-contained, meaning that instructions have to be printed on them to guide respondents. Also the instructions need to be clearly worded and easily found next to each question. (Chisnall, 1997: 142)

In addition to usually low response rate, mail questionnaires have certain limitations: they can not be used to gather all kinds of data, the answers must be accepted in written and without the benefit of additional explanations. Generally speaking, mail questionnaires are not suitable method when the sample population is poorly educated or of low intelligence. In case of mail in questionnaires it is usually also impossible to know for certain who has given the answer. Low response rate is a critical limitation of mail surveys, but it can most of the time be increased by sending reminder letters. (Chisnall, 1997: 142-143)

Most companies use a five-point scale in tracking customer satisfaction: very dissatisfied, (somewhat) dissatisfied, indifferent, satisfied and very satisfied. The level of satisfaction is measured not only on an overall basis but for each component of the company's offerings. (Kotler, 1999: 130) In the questionnaire used in this thesis work the respondents were given only a four-point scale: very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, satisfied and very satisfied. This was done as an intentional attempt to encourage the respondents to give either negative or positive opinions instead of neutral opinions.

3. Implementing the Research

In this chapter I will present the way the customer satisfaction research for Ammeraal Beltech Finland was planned, tested and conducted.

From the beginning it was clear that order for the research to be useful large amounts of data needed to be gathered. Questionnaire was chosen as a research method in order to gather large amounts of comparable information effectively.

In order to achieve a high response rate it was decided that the respondents would be able to give their answers anonymously. The questionnaire would also be available in paper or online form.

The questionnaire was created to give answers to the following questions:

- What is the general customer satisfaction level among the customers of Ammeraal Beltech?
- What are Ammeraal Beltech's customers most / least satisfied about?
- What affects the customer satisfaction level of Ammeraal Beltech's Customer's?
- What could be done to improve the customer satisfaction level of Ammeraal Beltech's customers'?

After the questionnaire form was accepted by the management of Ammeraal Beltech, 10 copies were sent out for a test sample of ten people. All ten people were selected by the employees of Ammeraal Beltech, and they were called before hand and informed about the questionnaire in order to get a better response rate.

The results from the test sample were feasible, and the questionnaire was considered clear and easy to understand. At this point one more question meant to gather background information was added.

Once finished, the questionnaire form was sent to 356 people. The respondents were chosen by the management of Ammeraal Beltech to represent all the different customer types of the company. The target sample consisted of people whose jobs within Ammeraal Beltech's client companies included making the purchase decisions of products and services such as the ones offered by Ammeraal Beltech.

The questionnaires were sent via mail and included an envelope with stamp and address for returning the questionnaire and a cover letter explaining the purpose of the questionnaire.

Out of the 356 questionnaires that were sent out 91 were returned making the percentage of returned questionnaires 25,5%. Out of the 91 returned questionnaires 16 were returned trough the online questionnaire form and the rest in printed form. The percentage of returned questionnaires was considered adequate in order for the results to be reasonably reliable and in order for careful generalizations to be made based on them.

4. The Results

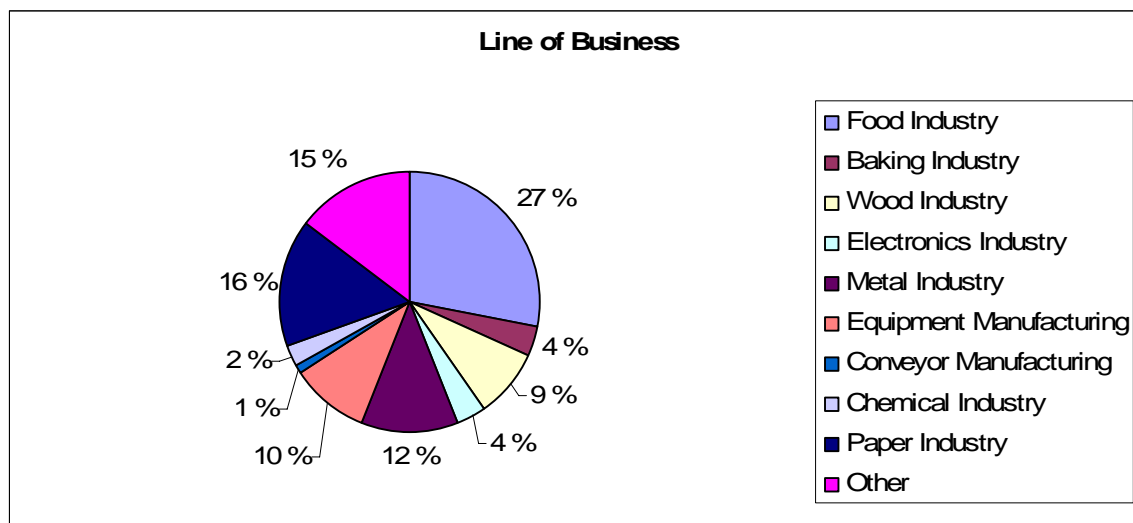
In this chapter the results of the customer satisfaction survey will be presented and discussed.

4.1. Questions 1 - 4

The first four questions of the questionnaire were designed to gather background information of the respondents' and their employing companies'. These questions were also included in the questionnaire to find out how accurately the target sample represents the whole customer base of Ammeraal Beltech and if data derived from the results of the questionnaire can be generalized.

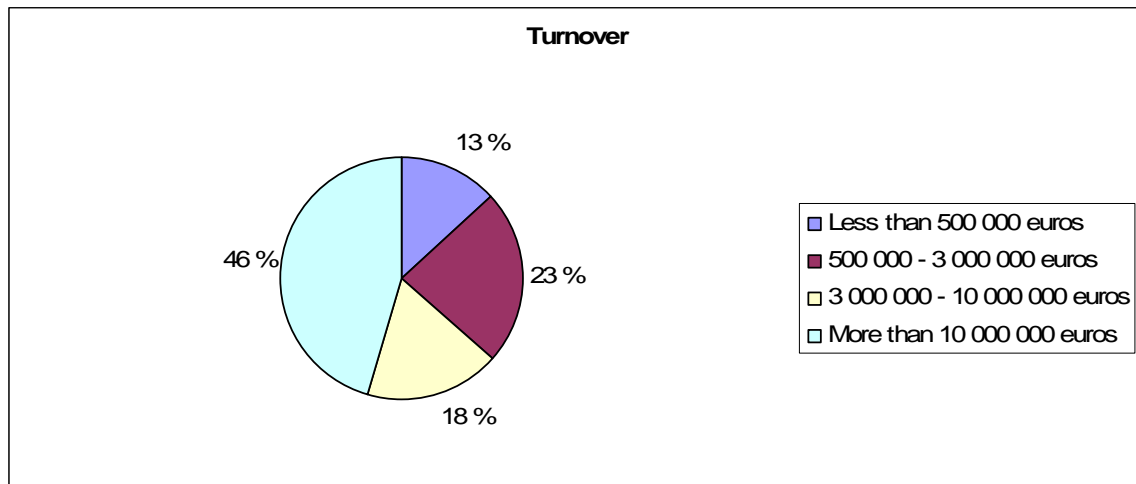
4.1.1. Question 1: Line of Business

Question one on the questionnaire was about the respondents' employing companies' line of business. Comparing the results from this question to the existing data about the distribution of customers by their lines of business of the whole customer base of Ammeraal Beltech a resemblance can be seen. This suggests that the sample the questionnaire was answered by represents the whole population of Ammeraal Beltech's clients in terms of line of business.



4.1.2. Question 2: Turnover

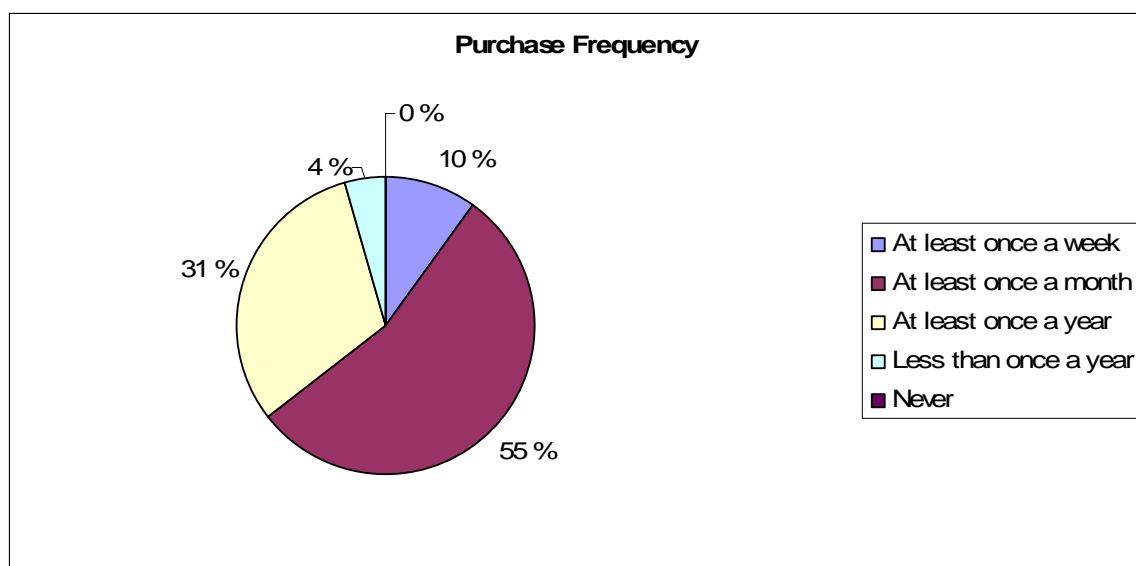
Question two on the questionnaire was about the turnover of the respondents' employing companies. According to Ammeraal Beltech's management the distribution of the respondents by turnover is also likely to be similar to the actual distribution by turnover of the customer base of Ammeraal Beltech, as many of the companies using conveyor belts are often large.



4.1.3 Question 3: Purchase Frequency

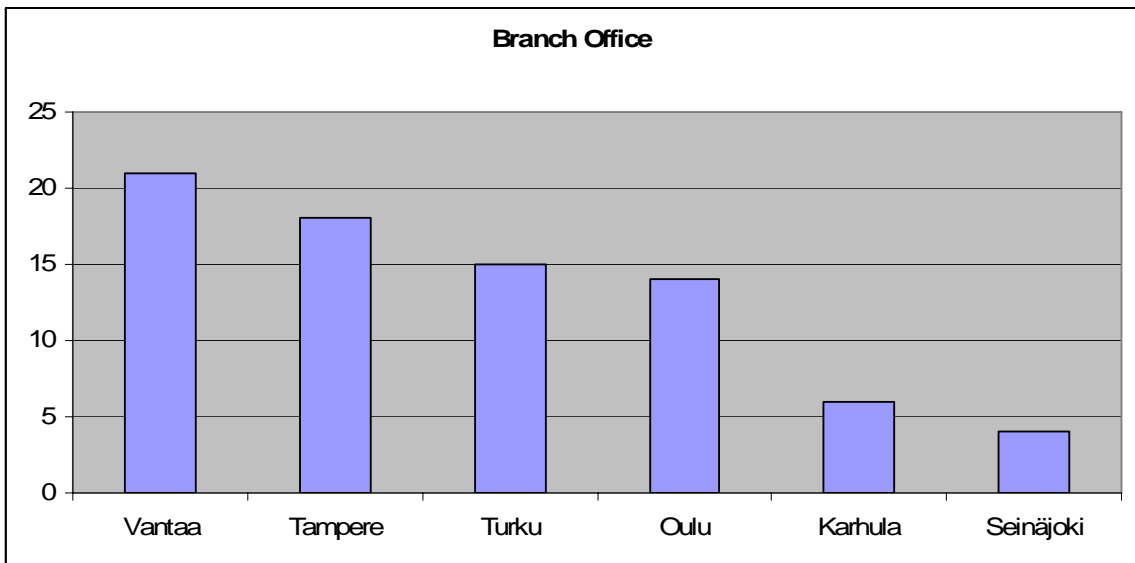
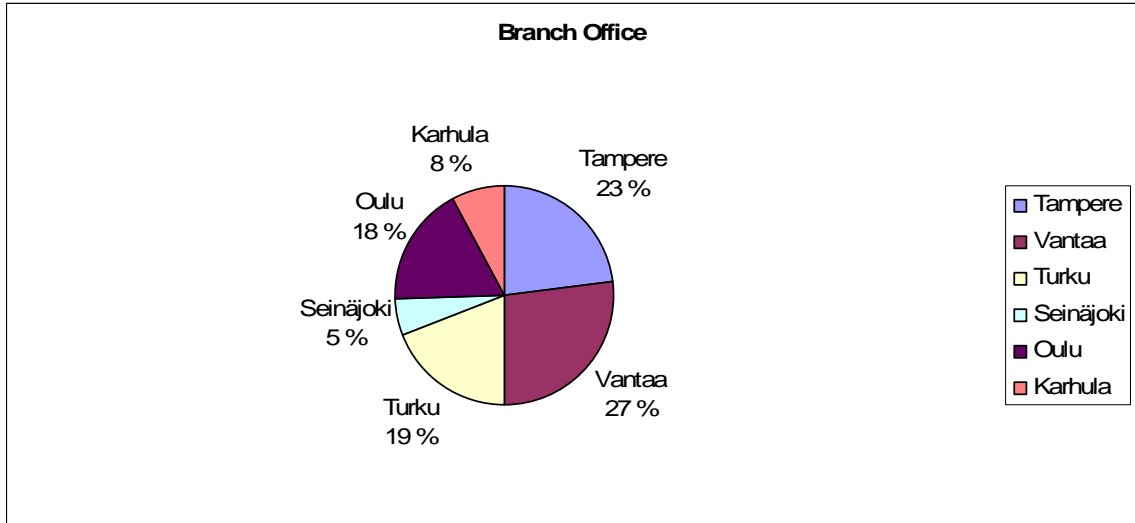
Question three was about the respondents' purchase frequency. The respondents were asked to choose an answer that best described the frequency of purchases from Ammeraal Beltech from "Once week or more", "Once a month or more", "Once a year or more", "Less than once a year" or "Never".

The results show that 65% of the respondents buy Ammeraal Beltech's products and services at least once a month. This means a majority of the respondents can be described as frequent buyers. None of the respondents chose "Never" to best describe their frequency of purchase which suggests the questionnaire had reached its target audience of people making the purchase decisions within the companies. The fact that there were no respondents who chose "Never" in this particular question might also suggest that no customers who had used Ammeraal Beltech's products and services in the past but later on stopped using Ammeraal Beltech's products and services had returned the questionnaire.



4.1.4 Question 4: Branch Office

The fourth question of the questionnaire was about which of Ammeraal Beltech's branch offices the respondents most commonly dealt with. This distribution does not very accurately reflect the actual sizes of the offices so it appears customers from a certain area have been more active in returning the questionnaires.

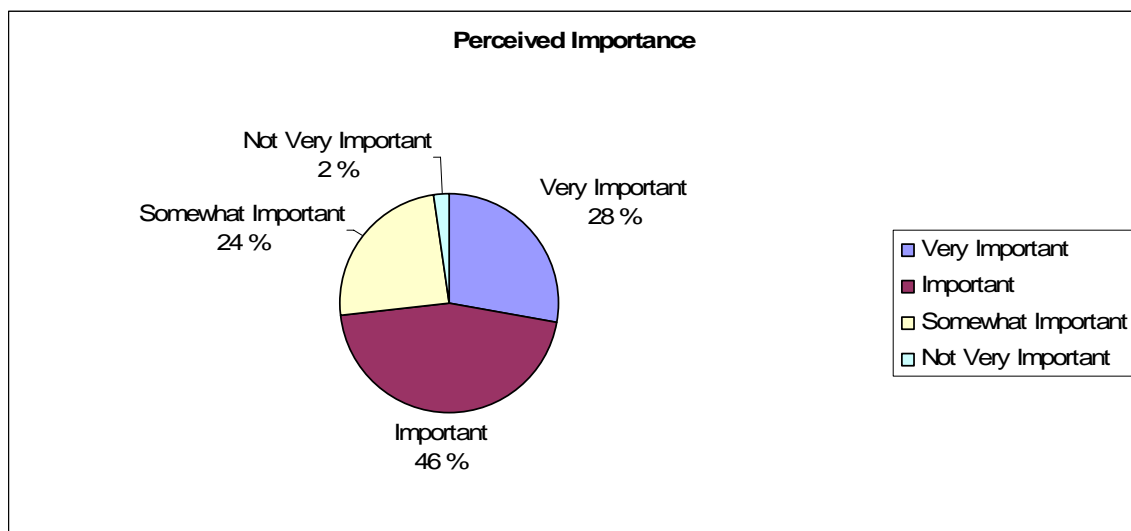


4.2. Questions 5 – 9

Questions five to nine were designed to give answers to the research questions. The aim was to acquire information about the respondents' views on the quality and the importance of different aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations, Ammeraal Beltech's performance compared to competing companies and the general level of performance of Ammeraal Beltech as perceived by the respondents.

4.2.1. Question 5: Perceived Importance

Question five was about how important the respondents' considered Ammeraal Beltech's products and services from the respondents' employing companies' operations point of view.



The results indicate that a huge majority of the respondent's considered Ammeraal Beltech's products and services important from their employing companies' operations point of view – 74% of all the respondents chose “Very important” or “Important” as answer for this particular question.

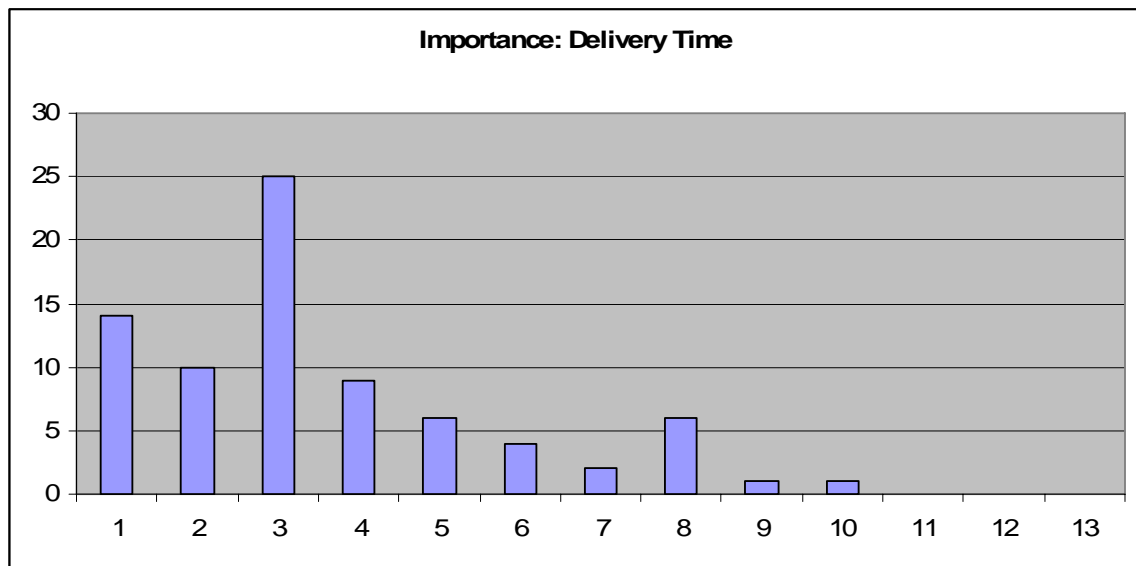
4.2.2. Question 6: Importance of Different Aspects

Question six was about the importance of different aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations as compared to the other aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. The respondents were asked to put 13 different aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations in order with numbers 1 – 13, where 1 stands for the most important and 13 stands for least important. The 13 aspects in question were;

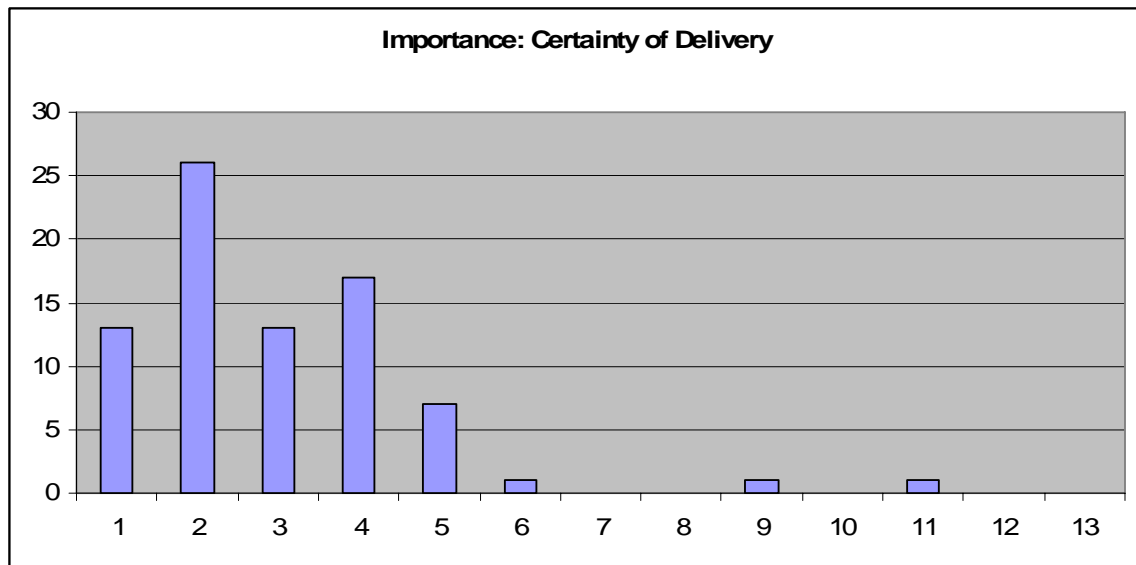
- Delivery time
- Certainty of delivery
- Price
- Quality

- Product range
- The availability of product information on the website
- Ability to solve practical problems
- Ability to understand the nature of the clients' business
- The expertise and competency of the sales personnel
- The helpfulness and politeness of the sales personnel
- The expertise and competency of the installation personnel
- The helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel
- The clarity and correctness of the billing documents

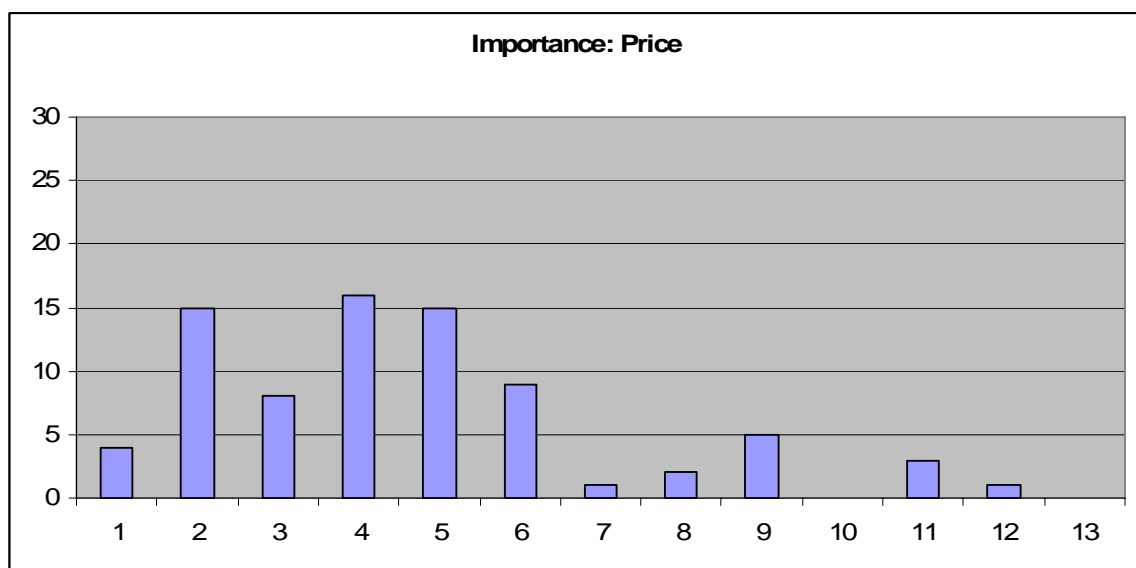
Delivery time was considered to be one of the most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations – 62% of all respondents considered it to be one of the three most important aspects.



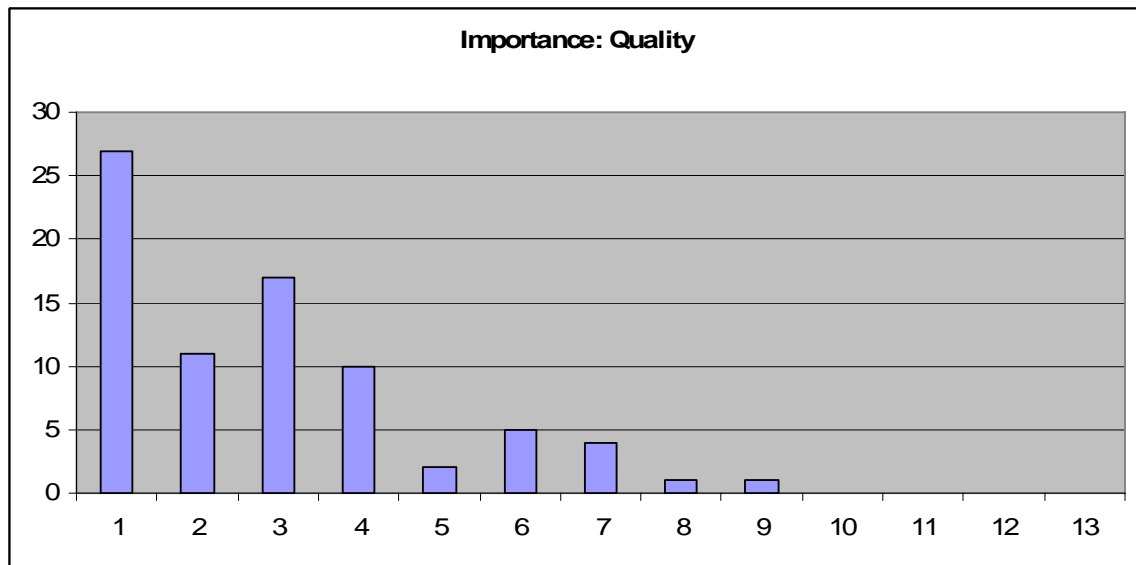
Understandably also the certainty of delivery was considered to be very important. 66% of all respondents considered certainty of delivery as one of the three most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



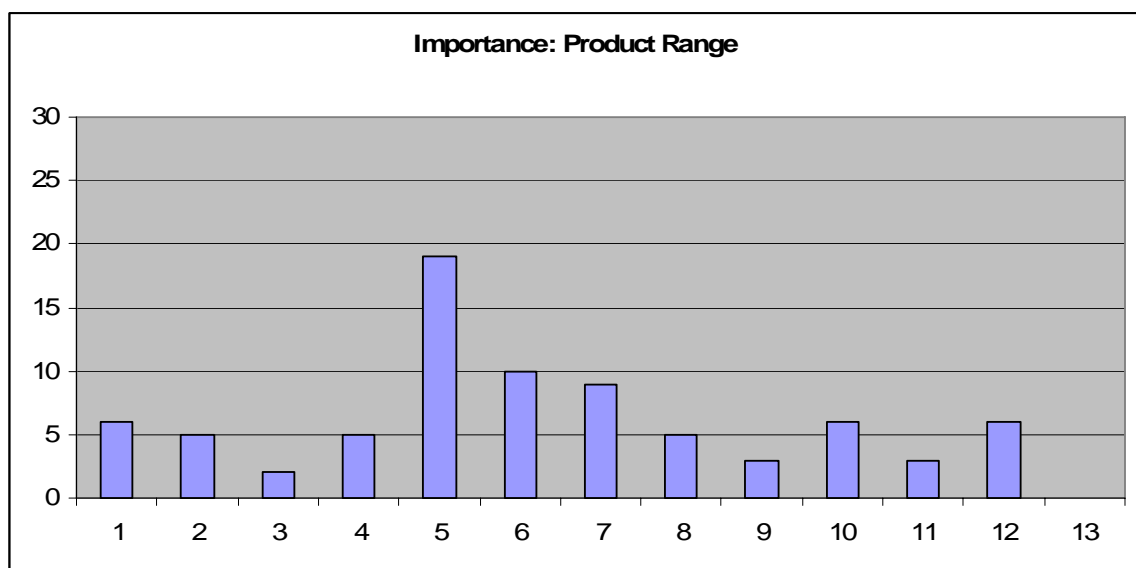
The price of Ammeraal Beltech's products as services was also seen as important, but not as important as delivery time and certainty of delivery. 34% of all respondents considered price to be one of the four most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



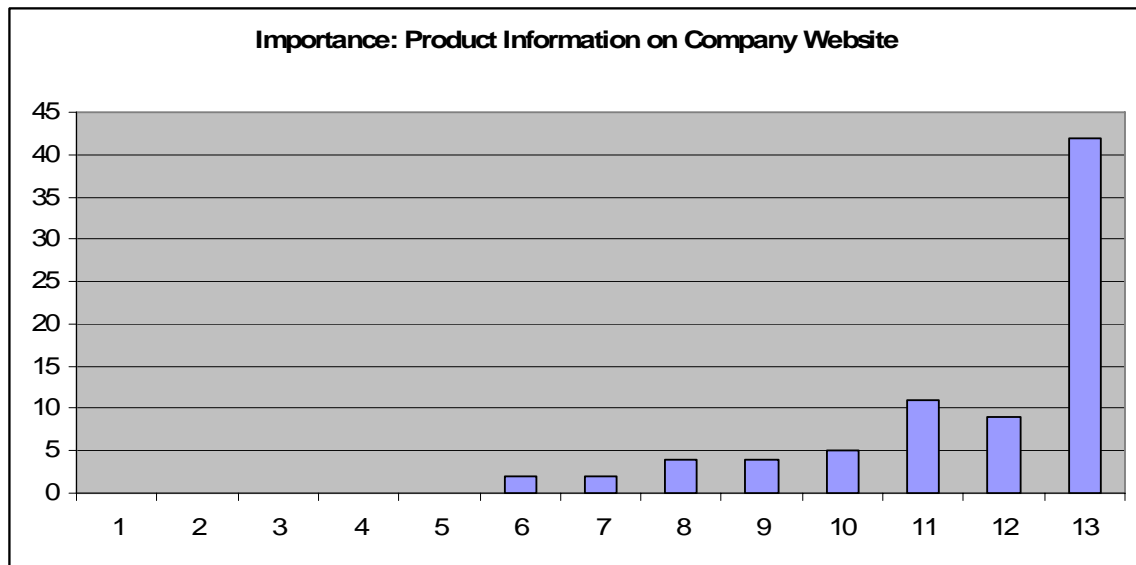
Quality was also considered extremely important, which was to be expected. 71% of all respondents considered quality to be one of the three most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



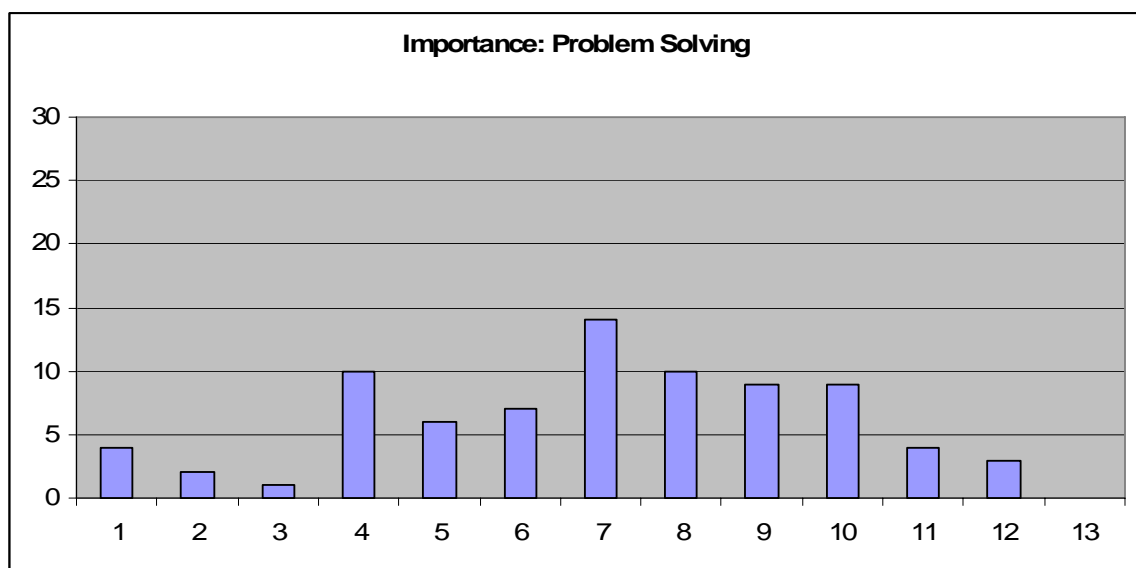
The importance of the product range was not considered to be very big as compared to the other 12 aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. 17% of all respondents considered product range to be one of the three most important aspects.



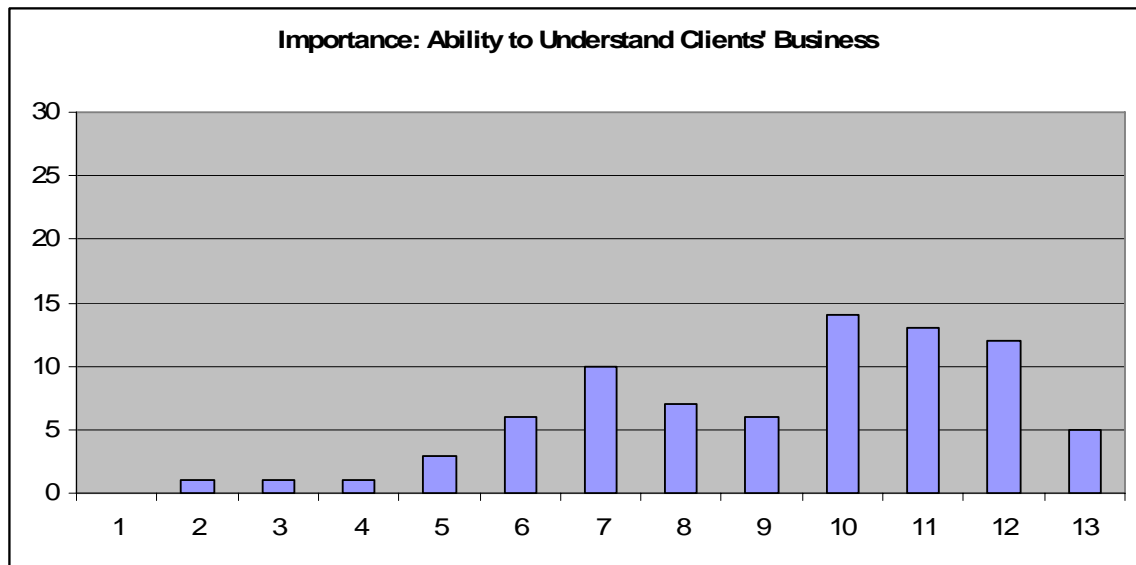
The availability of product information of the company website was not considered important compared to the other aspects by the respondents. None of the respondents thought the availability of product information on the company website was one of the three most important aspects. 53% of all respondents considered this particular aspect to be the least important out of the 13 different aspects.



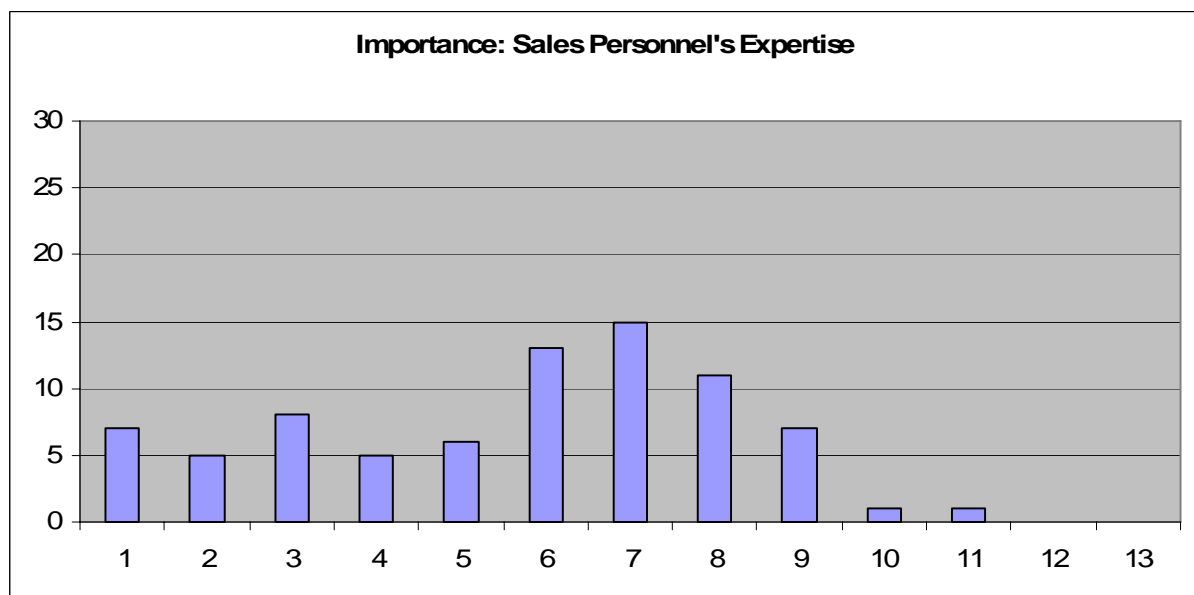
The importance of Ammeraal Beltech being able to solve the practical problems of its customers was considered moderately important as compared to the other 12 aspects. 8% of all respondents considered this aspect to be one of the three most important aspects.



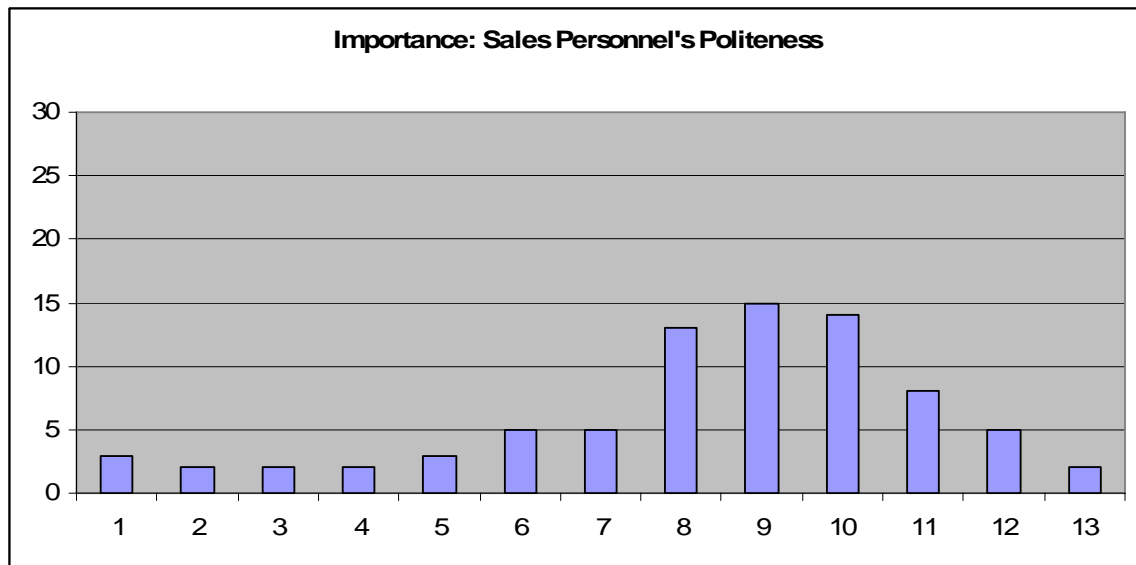
The importance of Ammeraal Beltech's ability to understand the nature of its clients' business was considered to be quite low. Only 2% of all respondents considered this aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations to be one of the three most important aspects.



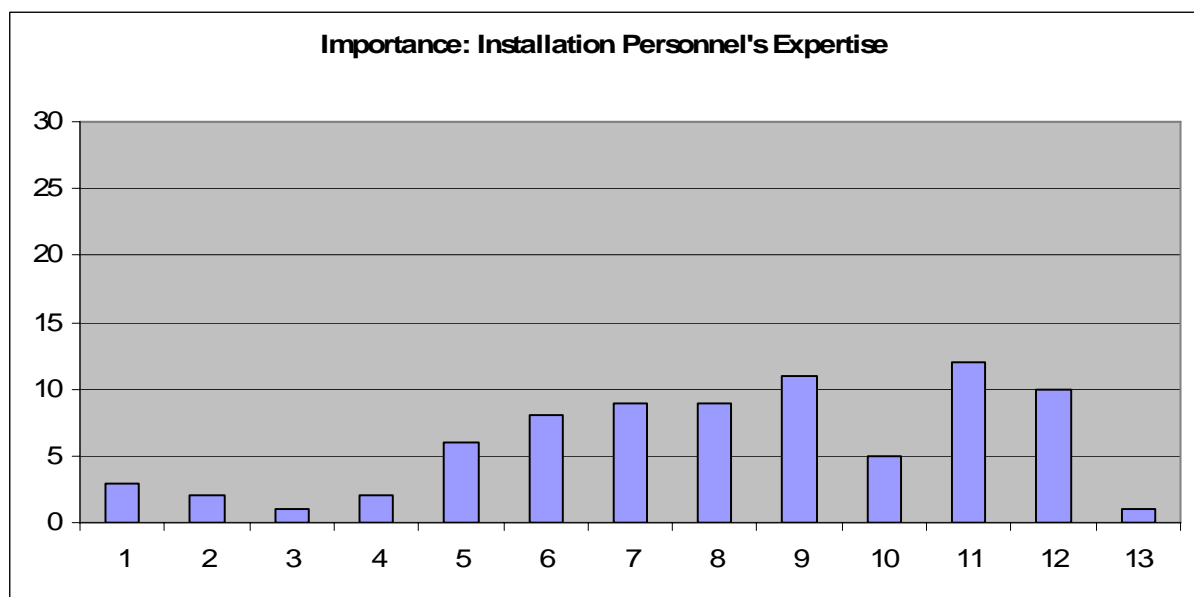
The importance of the expertise and competence of the sales personnel was considered moderate as compared to the other aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. 25% of all respondents considered this particular aspect to be one of the three most important aspects.



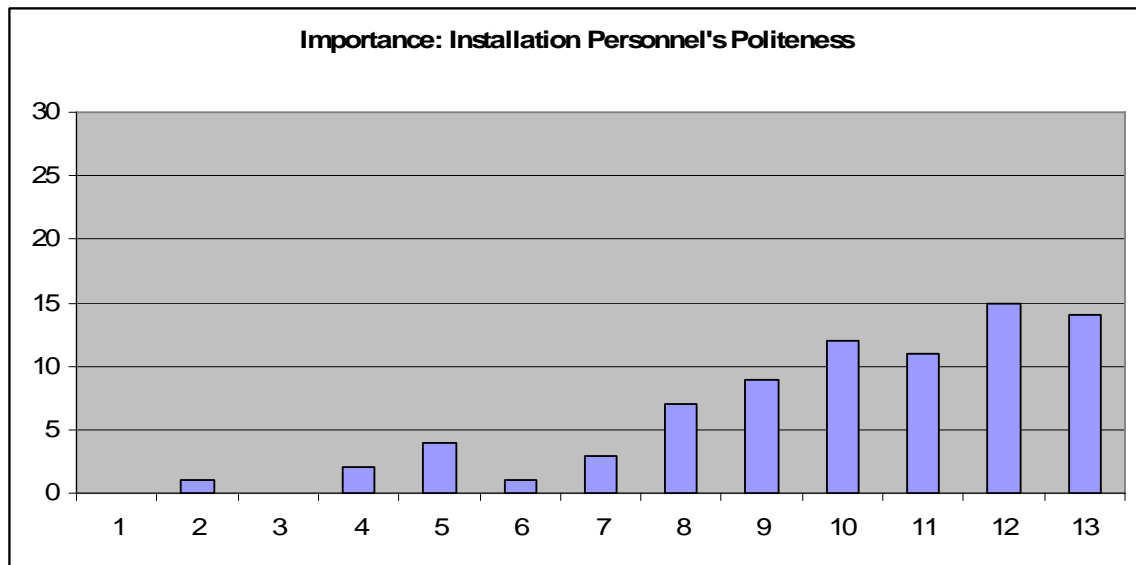
The importance of the politeness and helpfulness of the sales personnel was considered relatively low as compared to the other aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. 8% of all respondents considered this particular aspect to be one of the three most important aspects.



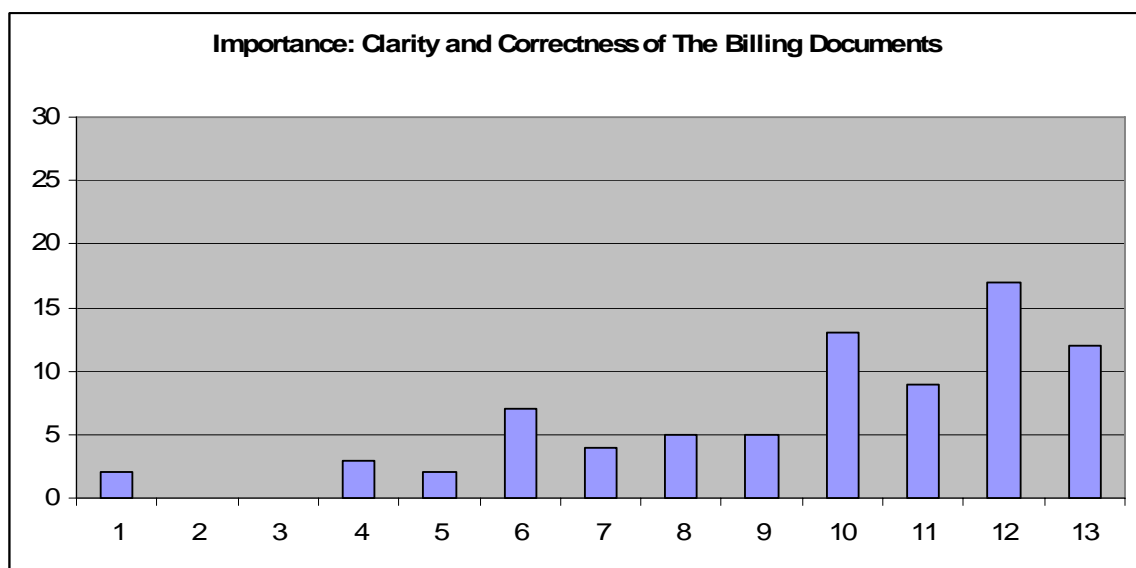
The importance of the expertise and competency of the installation personnel was considered relatively low as compared to the other aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. 7% of all respondents considered this particular aspect to be one of the three most important aspects.



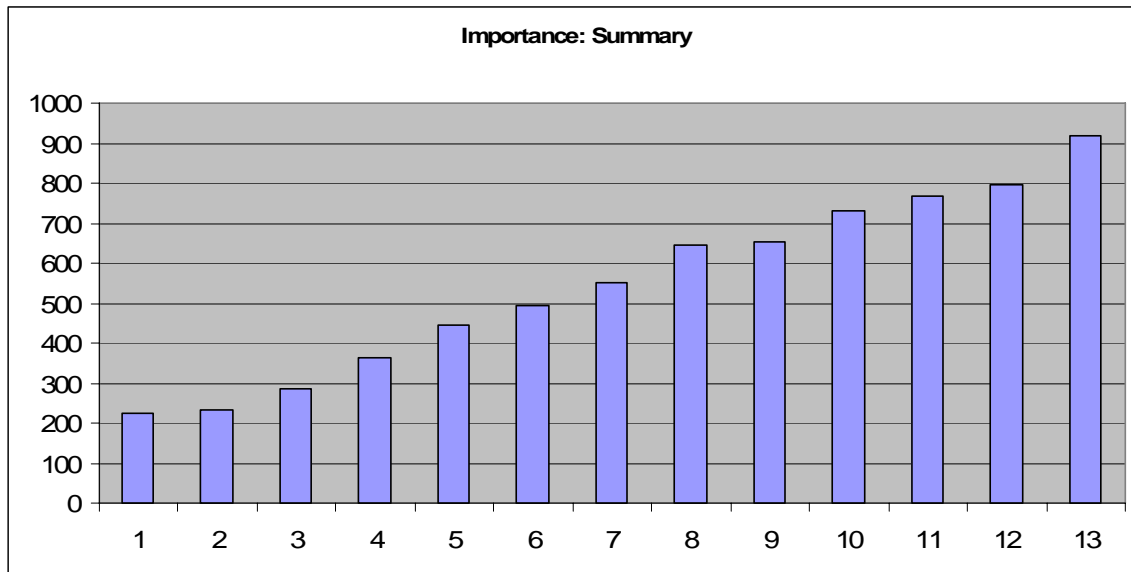
The importance of the politeness and helpfulness of the installation personnel was considered very low as compared to the other aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. Only 1% of all respondents considered this particular aspect to be one of the three most important aspects.



The importance of the clarity and correctness of the billing documents was considered low as compared to the other aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. Only about 2% of the respondents considered this particular aspect to be one of the three most important aspects.



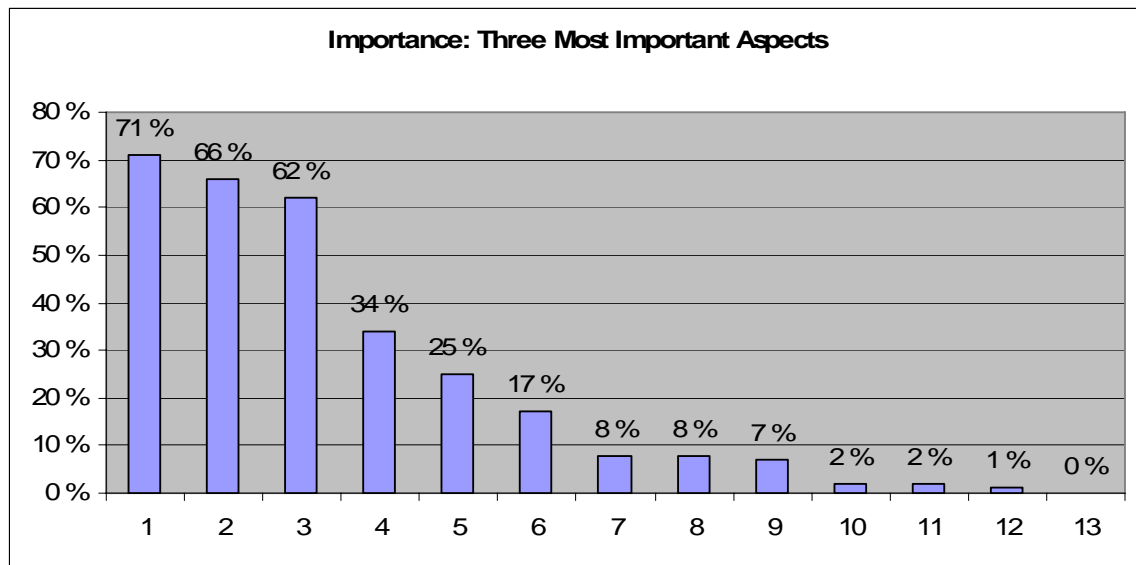
In order to summarize and analyze the information provided by question six, the values given to each aspect by each of the respondents were summarized. As the small values represent higher importance as compared to the other aspects, the smaller the summarized value the higher the appreciation.



- 1) Quality
- 2) Certainty of delivery
- 3) Delivery time
- 4) Price
- 5) The expertise and competency of the sales personnel
- 6) Product range
- 7) The ability to solve practical problems
- 8) The expertise and competency of the installation personnel
- 9) The helpfulness and politeness of the sales personnel
- 10) The ability to understand the nature of the clients' business
- 11) The clarity and correctness of the billing documents
- 12) The helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel
- 13) The availability of the product information on the company website

The results of this comparison show that on average the respondents considered the quality of the products and services and the certainty of delivery to be most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. Also delivery time and price of the products and services were considered very important. The two aspects considered to be least important were the helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel and the availability of product information on the company website.

Another way of comparing the results of question six is by arranging the 13 different aspects by the percentage of respondents that considered that particular aspect to be one of the three most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



- 1) Quality
- 2) Certainty of Delivery
- 3) Delivery time
- 4) Price
- 5) The expertise and competency of the sales personnel
- 6) Product range
- 7) Ability to solve practical problems
- 8) The helpfulness and politeness of the sales personnel
- 9) The expertise and competency of the installation personnel
- 10) The ability to understand the nature of the client's business
- 11) The clarity and correctness of the billing documents
- 12) The helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel
- 13) The availability of product information on the company website

The results of this comparison show that on results are almost identical regardless of which of the methods is used. Most of the respondents considered the quality of the products and services and the certainty of delivery to be most important aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. Also delivery time and price of the products and services were considered very important. The two aspects considered to be least important were the helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel and the availability of product information on the company website.

The reliability of the results from question six has some limitations.

Firstly, it is possible that aspects such as the ability to solve practical problems and the ability to understand the nature of the clients' business got rated less important because although they are important they are also a lot more abstract than for example price and delivery time. The respondents might have favored less abstract aspects of which importance can be easily seen in their dealings with Ammeraal Beltech.

Secondly, it is possible that the respondents were not directly affected by aspects such as the clarity and correctness of the billing documents or the helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel and did not therefore consider these aspects important as compared to the other aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. In other words the respondents' views on

the importance of a certain aspect were probably affected by their personal areas of responsibility within their employing companies.

Finally, as the respondents were asked to put the different aspects in order from the most important to the least important, no conclusions about some of the aspects not being important should be made. In other words it is possible that the respondents considered all of the 13 aspects to be important, and that the aspects that were considered least important were only considered less important as compared to the other aspects.

4.2.3. Question 7: Satisfaction in Different Aspects

Question seven was about how content the respondents were with 12 different aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. The respondent's were asked to choose an answer that most accurately reflected their views on how content they were about each of the aspects from "Very satisfied", "Satisfied", "Dissatisfied" or "Very dissatisfied".

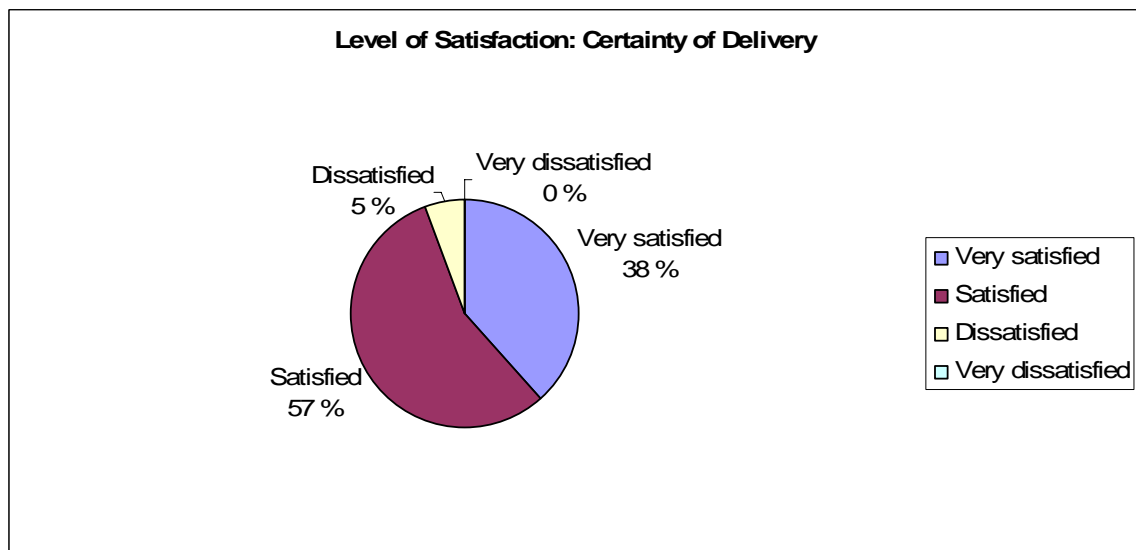
The 12 aspects in question were:

- Delivery time
- Certainty of delivery
- Price – Quality relation
- Product range
- The availability of product information on the website
- Ability to solve practical problems
- Ability to understand the nature of the clients' business
- The expertise and competency of the sales personnel
- The helpfulness and politeness of the sales personnel
- The expertise and competency of the installation personnel
- The helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel
- The clarity and correctness of the billing documents

The respondents were highly satisfied with the delivery times of Ammeraal Beltech's products and services. 27% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



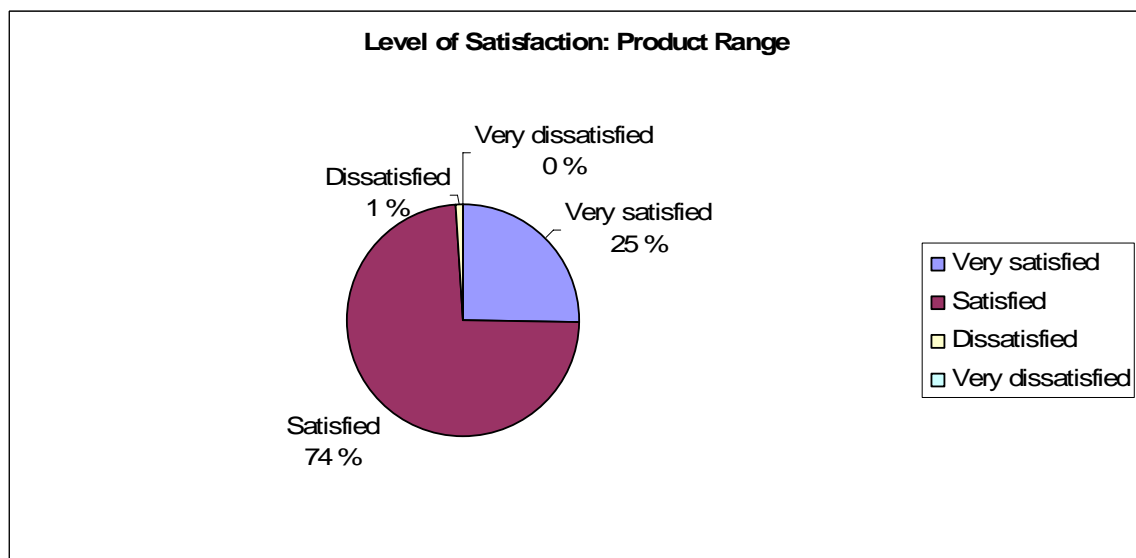
The respondents were highly satisfied with the certainty of delivery of Ammeraal Beltech's products and services. 38% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



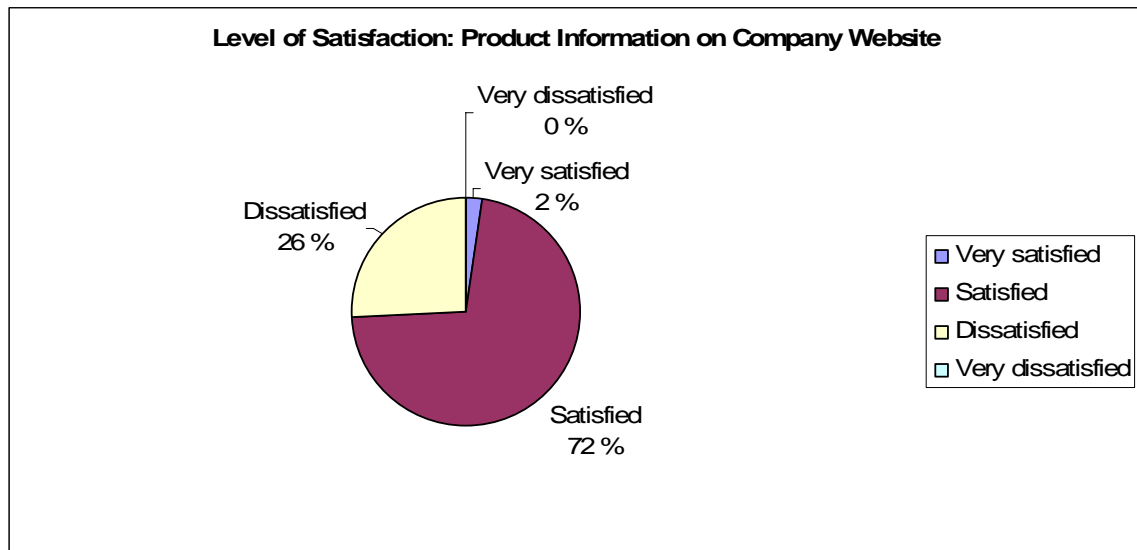
The respondents were satisfied with the price-quality relation of Ammeraal Beltech's products and services. 8% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



The respondents were highly satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's product range. 25% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



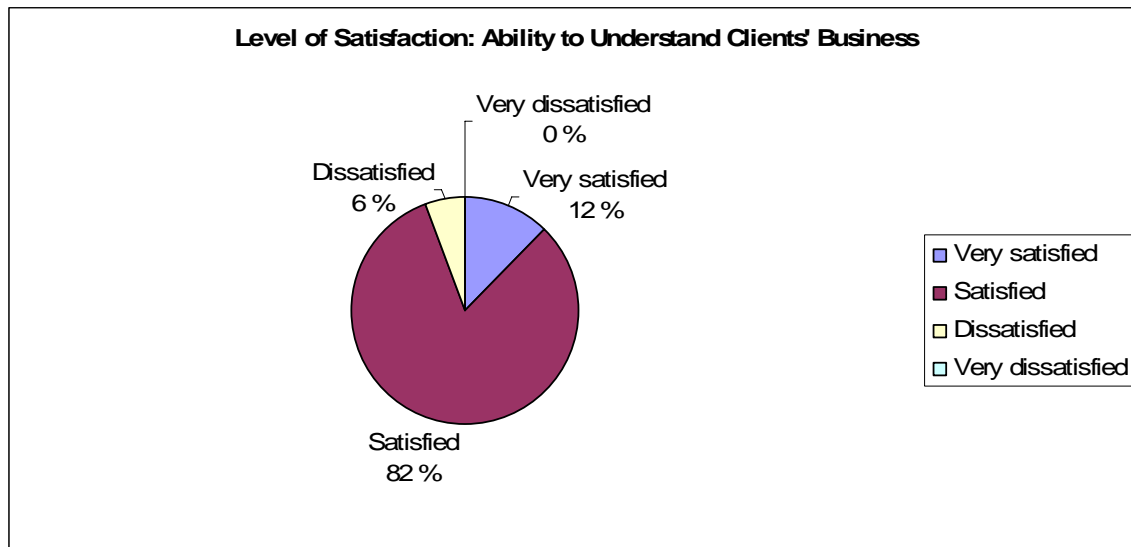
The respondents were satisfied with the availability of product information on the company website. 2% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



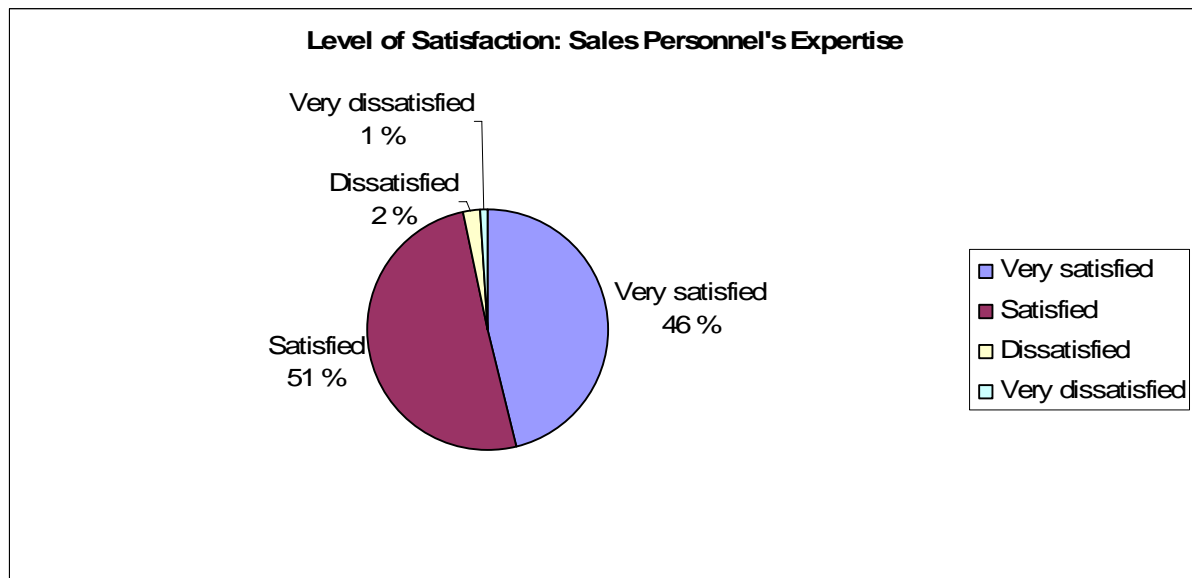
The respondents were satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's ability to solve their clients' practical problems. 22% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



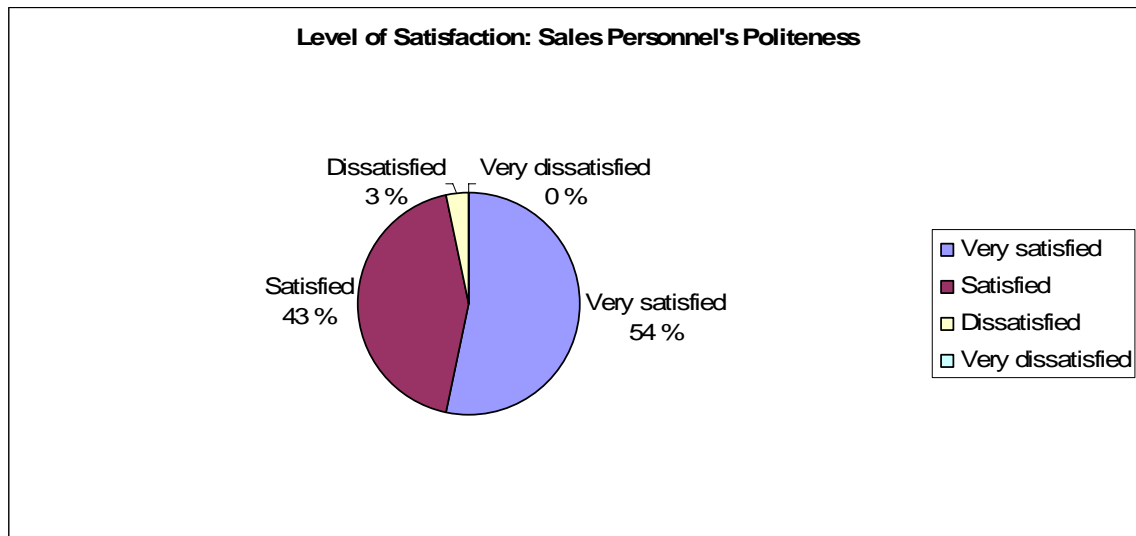
The respondents were satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's ability to understand the nature of their clients' business. 12% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



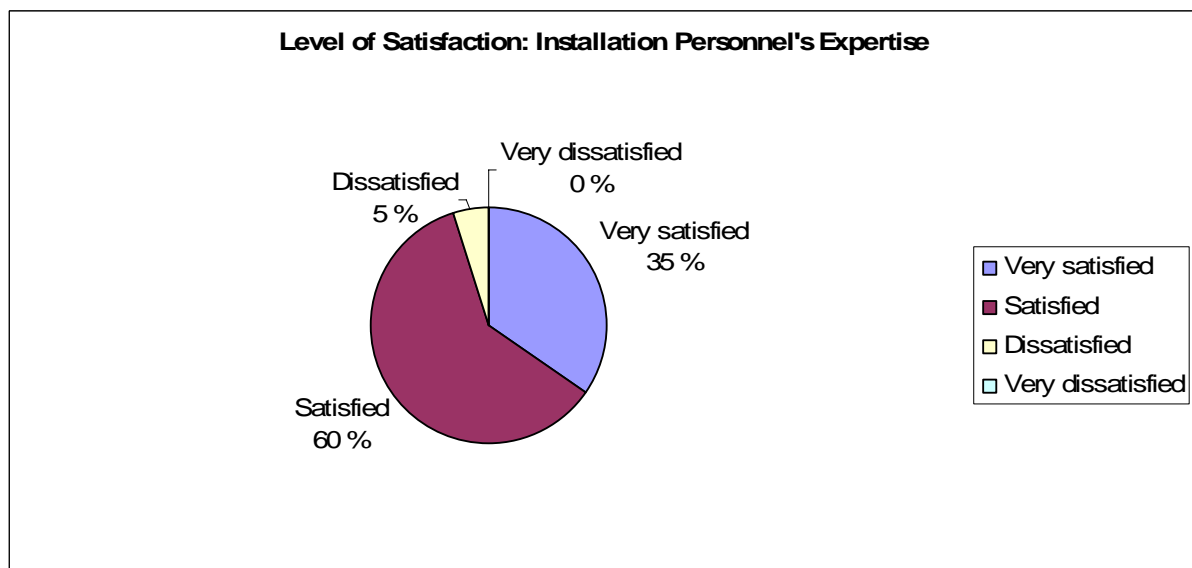
The respondents were highly satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel's expertise and competency. 46% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



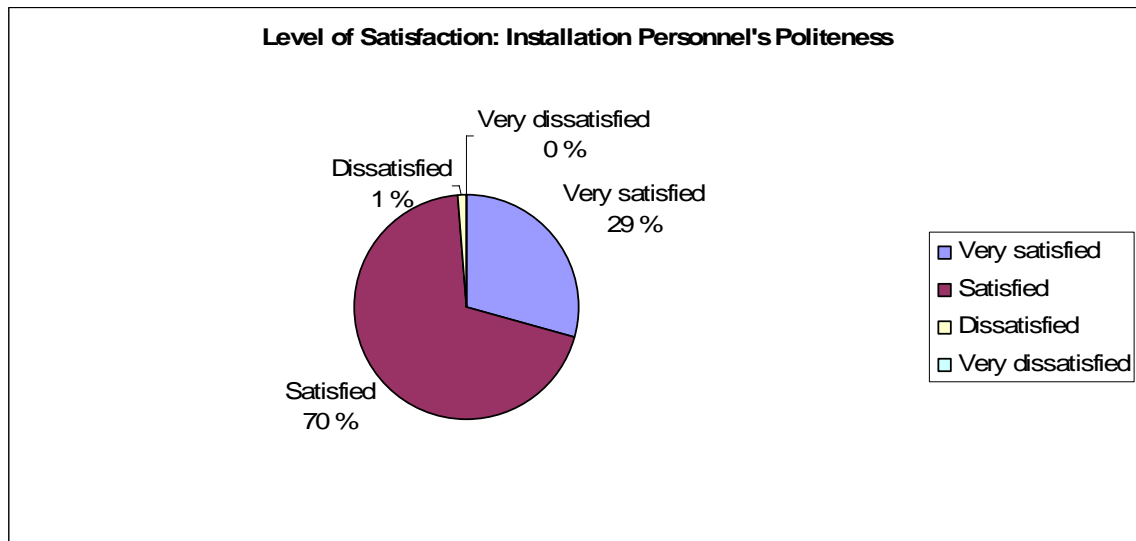
The respondents were highly satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel's helpfulness and politeness. 53% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



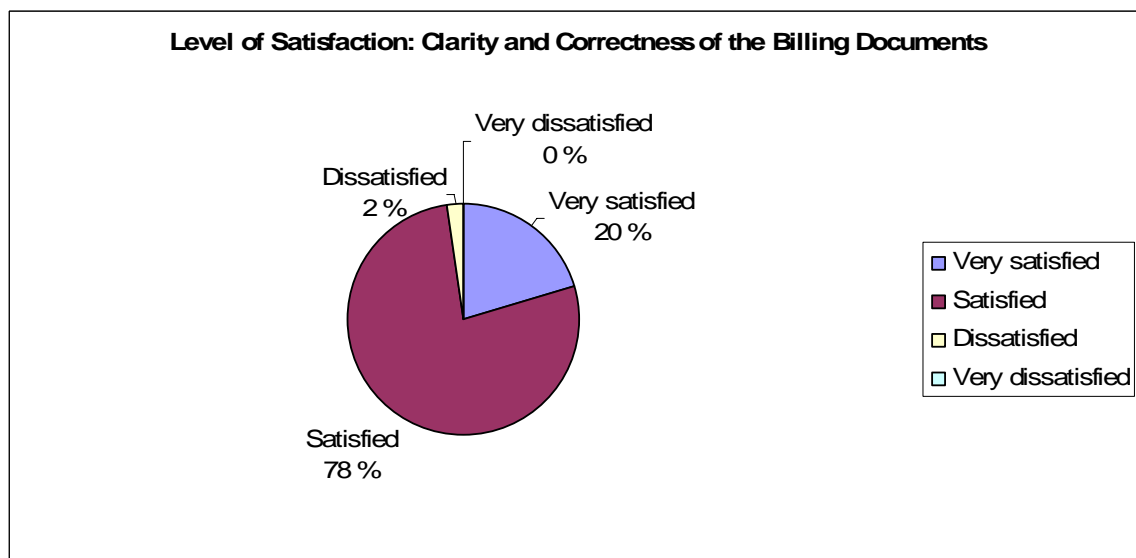
The respondents were highly satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's installation personnel's expertise and competency. 34% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



The respondents were highly satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's installation personnel's helpfulness and politeness. 29% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



The respondents were satisfied with the clarity and correctness of Ammeraal Beltech's billing documents. 20% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" as an answer that best described their views on this particular aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.



The results of question seven suggest that the majority of the respondents are either satisfied or very satisfied with each aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations. The amount of answers indicating that the respondent was either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with a specific aspect of Ammeraal Beltech's operations was very low.

The aspects that the respondent's were most satisfied with were the sales personnel's expertise and competence and the sales personnel's helpfulness and politeness. The respondents were also very satisfied with delivery time, certainty of delivery, product range, the installation personnel's expertise and competency and the installation personnel's helpfulness and politeness.

The respondents were least satisfied with the price-quality relation and availability of product information on the company website, but the majority of respondents were satisfied with even these aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations.

The reliability of the results from question seven has some limitations.

Although the results clearly suggest that the customer's of Ammeraal Beltech are satisfied with the company's performance, there are some factors that might limit the reliability of the results derived from the answers for this question.

Since the respondents were not given the possibility to give a neutral answer in question seven, it is possible that the respondents with no clear opinions tended to give "satisfied" as an answer. Such behavior could be explained with the people's tendency to avoid giving negative-toned responses when possible.

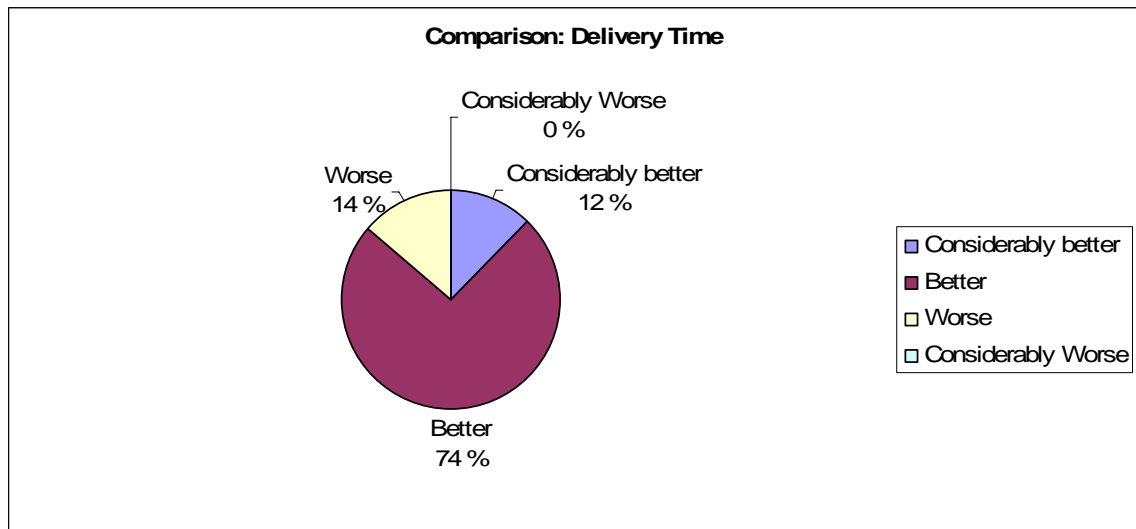
4.2.4. Question 8: Performance as Compared to Competition

In question eight the respondents were asked rate the performance of Ammeraal Beltech as compared to its competitors. The respondents were instructed to rate 12 different aspects of Ammeraal Beltech's operations by choosing from options "Considerably better", "Better", "Worse" and "Considerably worse".

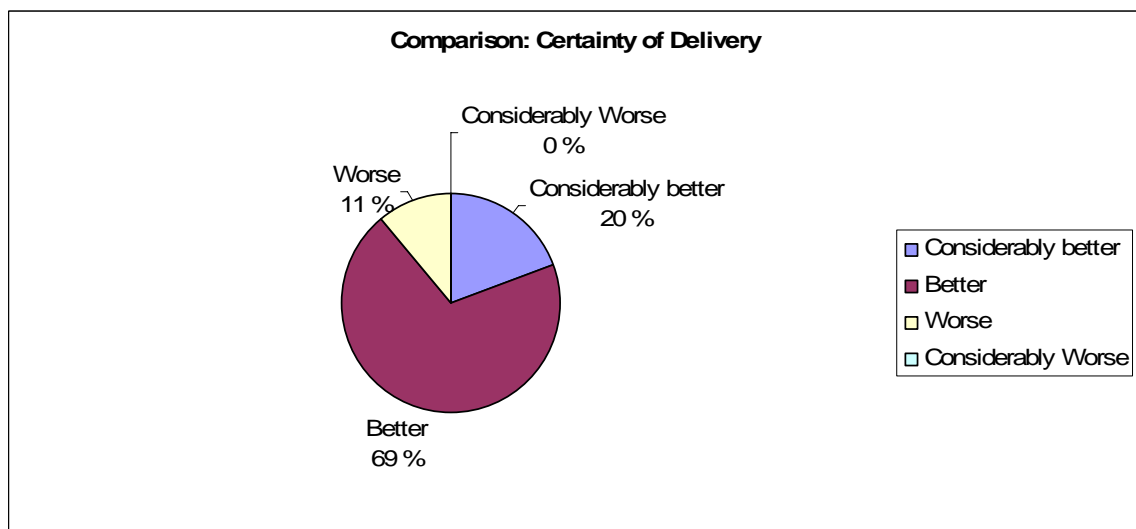
The 12 aspects in question were:

- Delivery time
- Certainty of delivery
- Price – Quality relation
- Product range
- The availability of product information on the website
- Ability to solve practical problems
- Ability to understand the nature of the clients' business
- The expertise and competency of the sales personnel
- The helpfulness and politeness of the sales personnel
- The expertise and competency of the installation personnel
- The helpfulness and politeness of the installation personnel
- The clarity and correctness of the billing documents

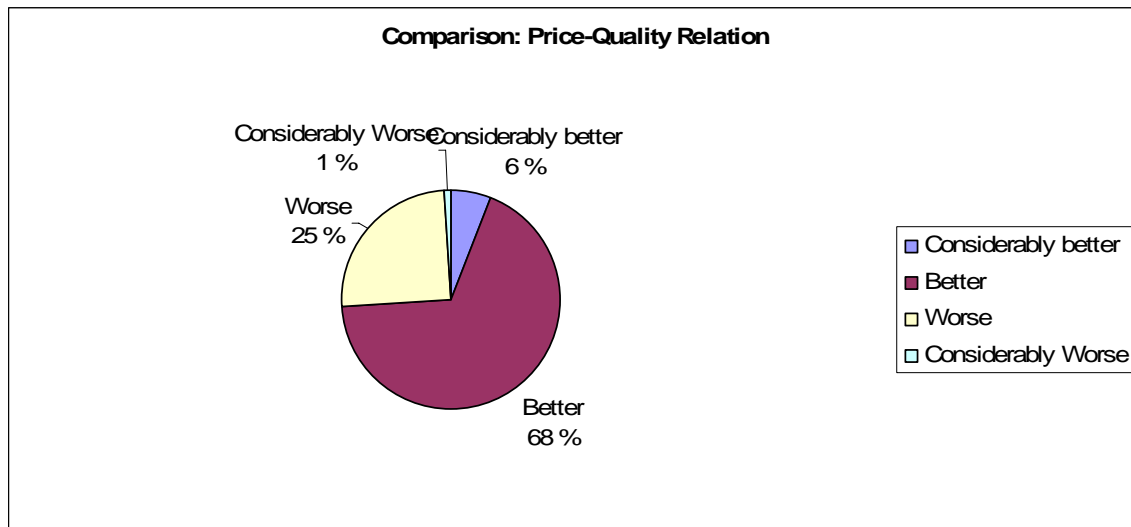
The respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's delivery times to be better than the competitors'. 12% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



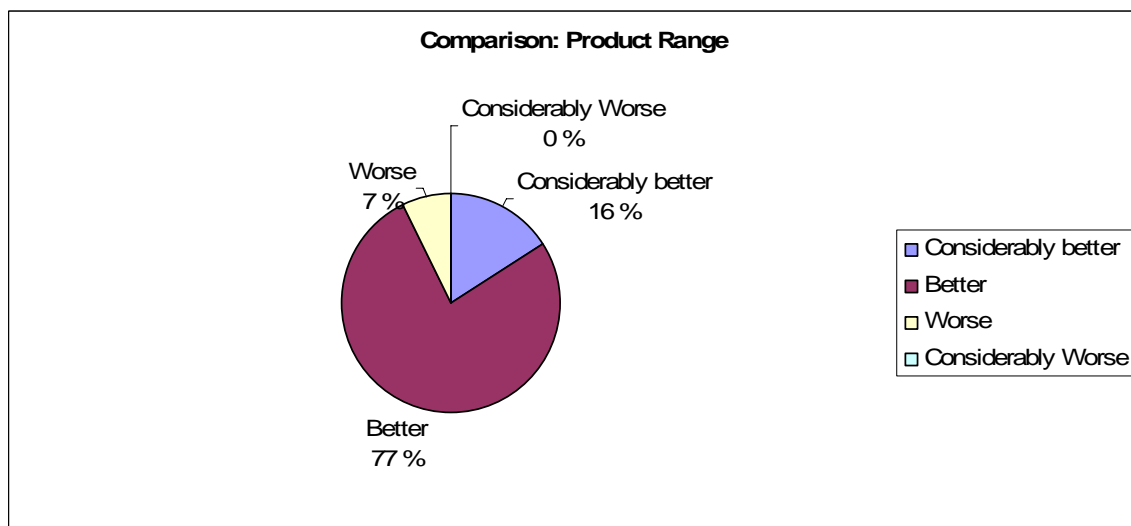
The respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's certainty of delivery to be better than the competitors'. 20% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



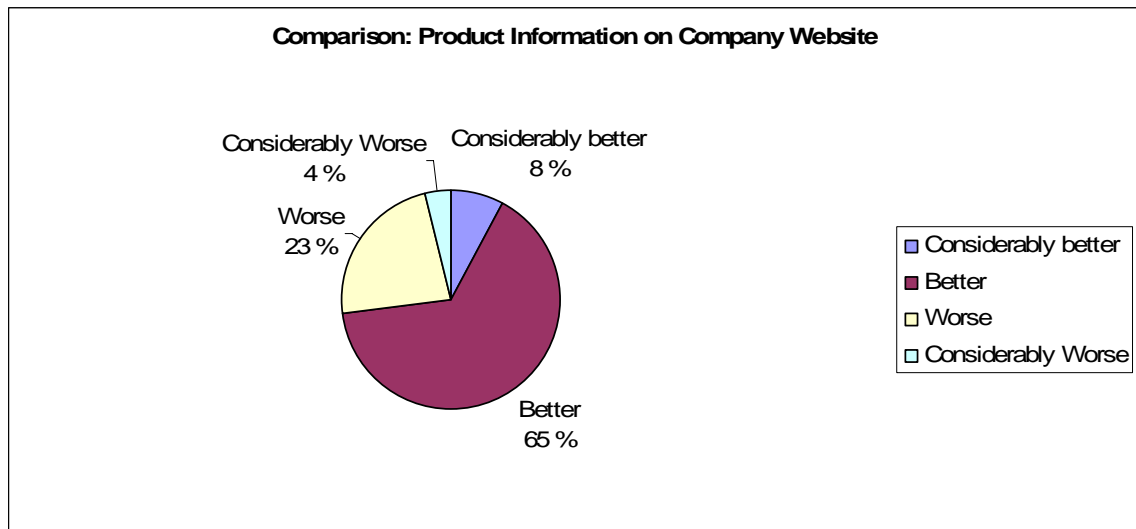
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's price-quality relation to be better than the competitors', but only 6% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect, whereas 25% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance to be worse than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



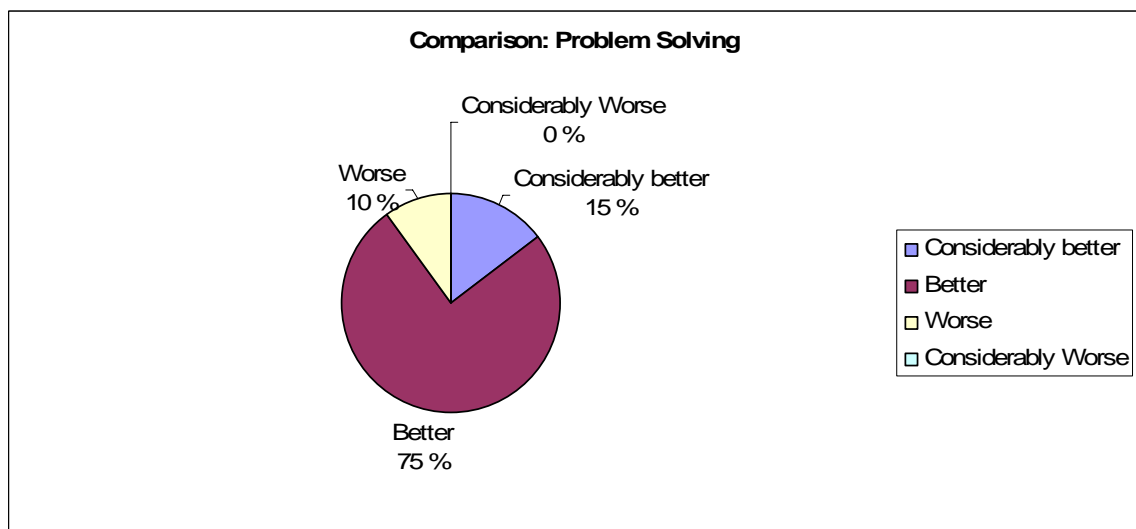
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's product range to be better than the competitors'. 16% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



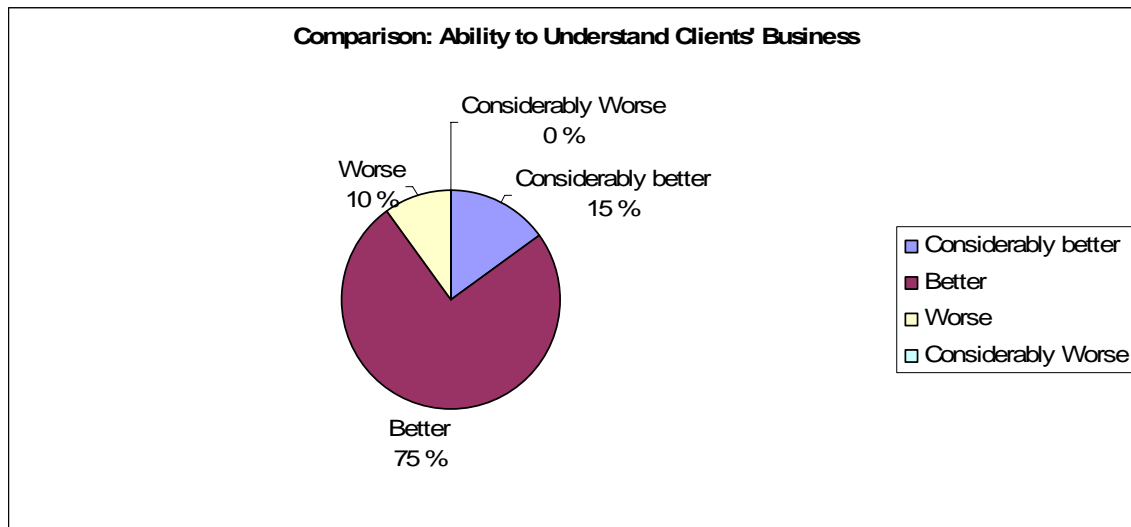
Most of the respondents considered the availability of product information on Ammeraal Beltech's website to be better than the competitors', but only 8% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance to be considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect, whereas 23% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance to be worse than the competitors' in this particular aspect. The results from this question might be questionable, as there is in fact very little product information the Finnish website of Ammeraal Beltech.



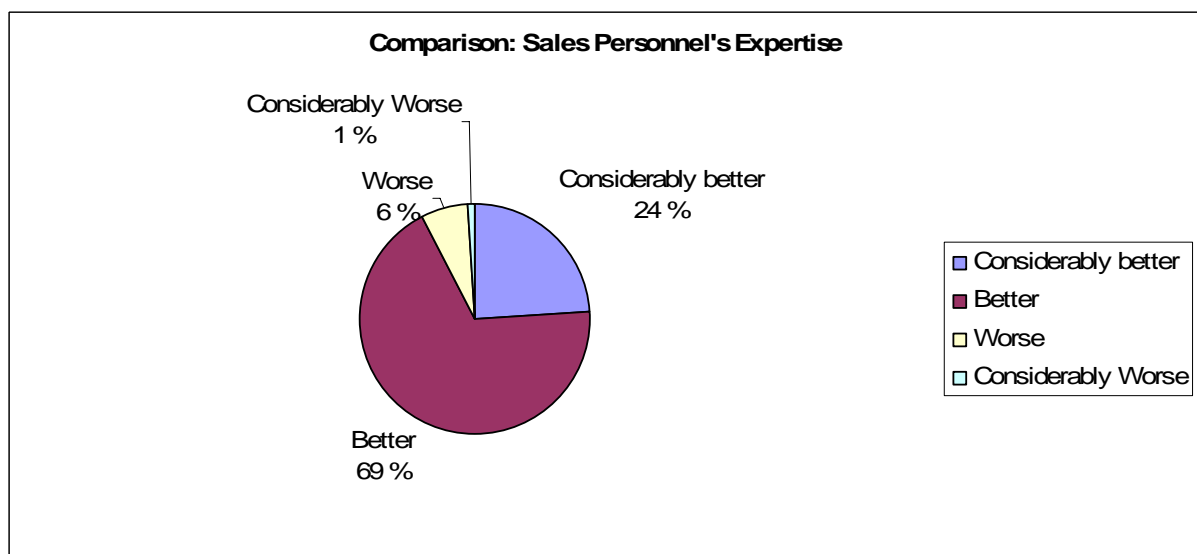
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's ability to solve practical problems to be better than the competitors'. 15% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



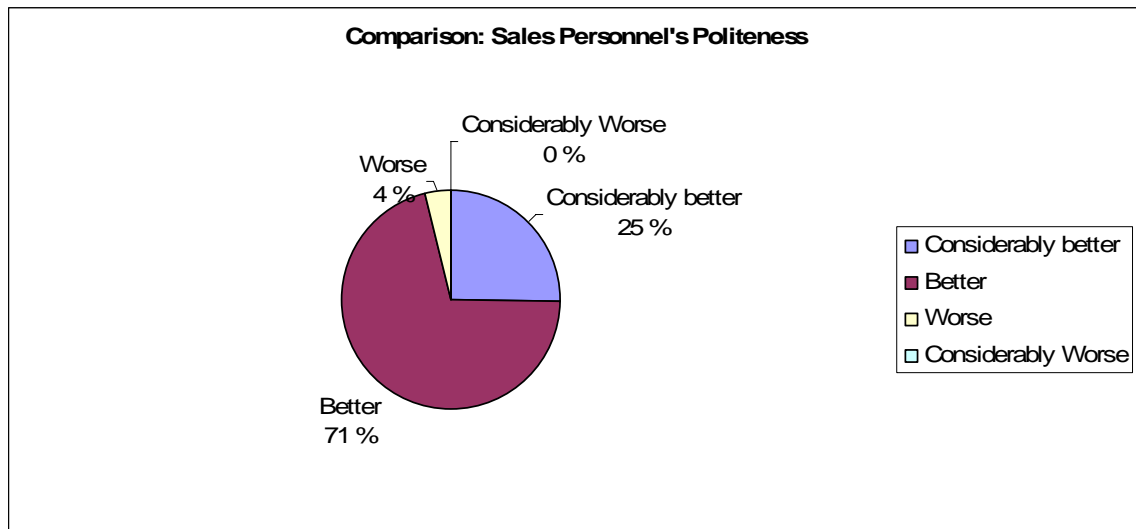
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's ability to understand the nature of the clients' business to be better than the competitors'. 15% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



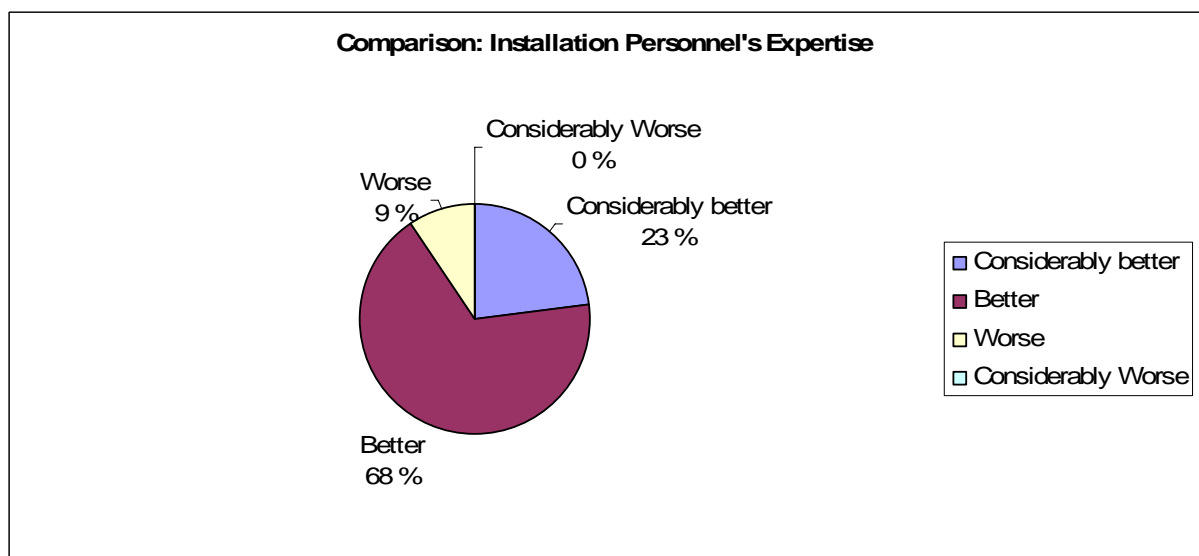
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel's expertise and competency to be better than the competitors'. 24% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



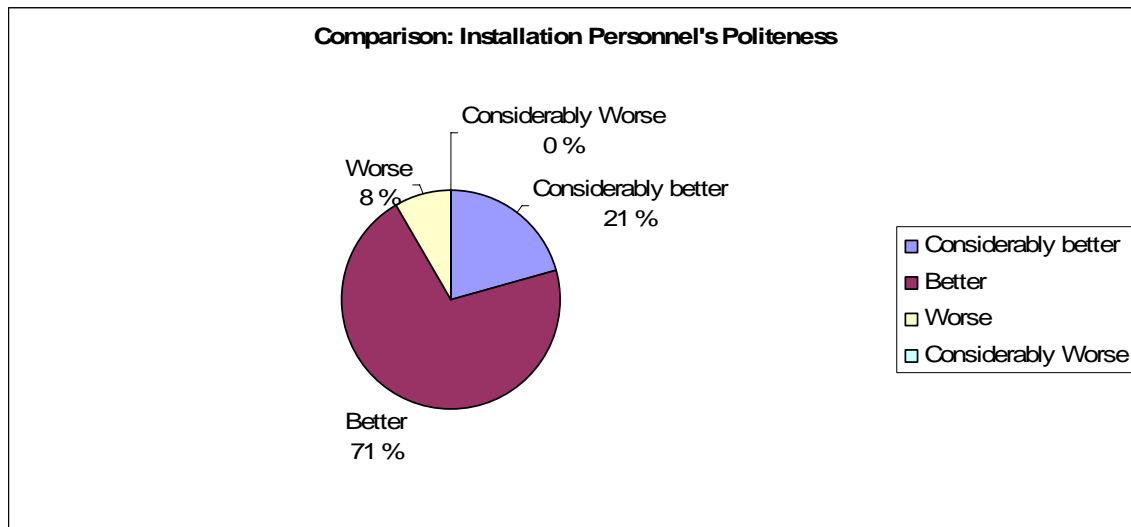
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel's helpfulness and politeness to be better than the competitors'. 25% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



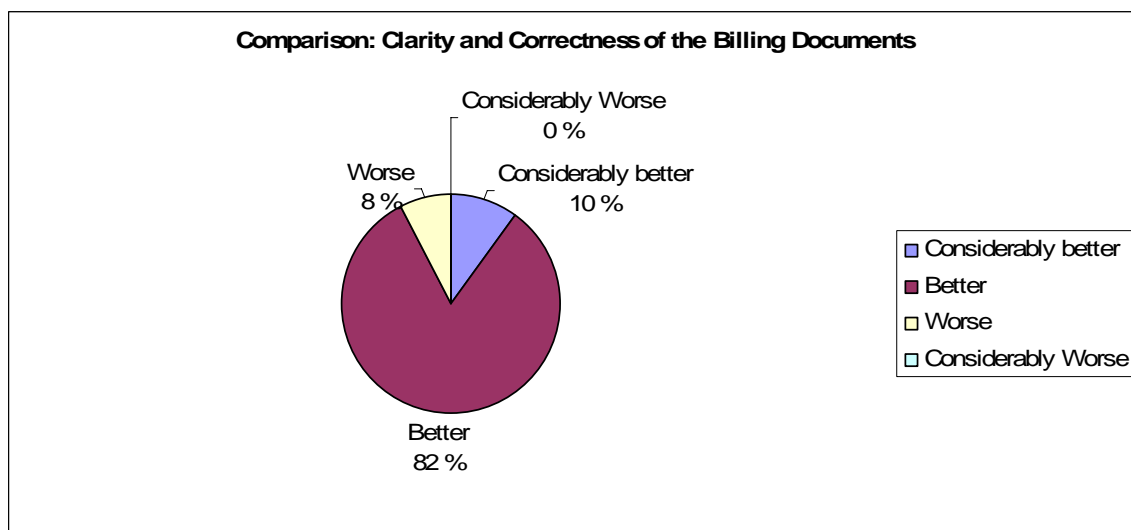
Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's installation personnel's expertise and competency to be better than the competitors'. 23% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



Most of the respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's installation personnel's helpfulness and politeness to be better than the competitors'. 21% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



Most of the respondents considered the clarity and correctness of Ammeraal Beltech's billing documents to be better than the competitors'. 10% of all respondents considered Ammeraal Beltech's performance considerably better than the competitors' in this particular aspect.



The results from question eight suggest that the customer's of Ammeraal Beltech consider the overall performance of the company to be better than the performance of the competitor's. Especially the helpfulness and politeness of the sales personnel and the expertise and competency of both sales and installation personnel was considered considerably better than the competitors' by many of the respondents. In this comparison the price-quality – relation and the availability of product information on the company website were considered worse than the competitors' by a considerable amount of respondents suggesting that the performance regarding these two aspects should be improved in order to promote customer satisfaction.

Although the results from question eight clearly suggest that the customer's of Ammeraal Beltech consider the performance of Ammeraal Beltech to be superior to the

competitors', there are some factors that might limit the reliability of the results derived from the answers for this question.

A considerable amount of the respondents chose to leave this question unanswered, probably due to their lack of knowledge regarding the competitors of Ammeraal Beltech. This became apparent from little notes and comments some of the respondents wrote on their questionnaires to explain their reluctance to answer this particular question. Because of this the results of this question are based on fewer responses and are therefore less reliable than the results of other questions of the questionnaire.

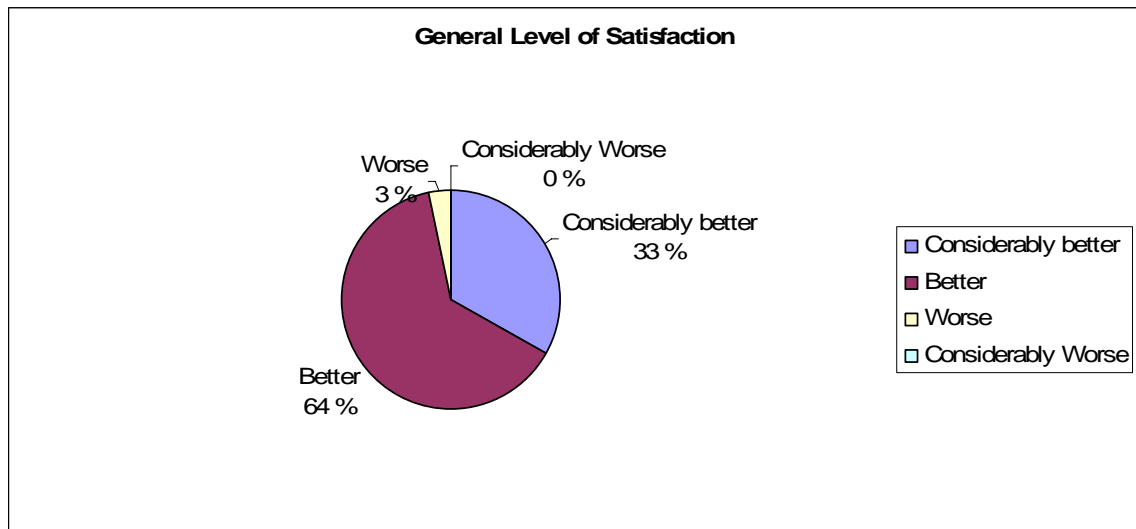
Since the respondents were not given the possibility to give a neutral answer in question eight, it is possible that the respondents with no clear opinions tended to give "better" as an answer. Such behavior could be explained with the people's tendency to avoid giving negative-toned responses when possible. Since the respondents were also Ammeraal Beltech's customers, it is also possible that the respondents who did not have experience on the services of the Ammeraal Beltech's competitor's ended up choosing "better" as an answer in order to avoid the paradox of admitting to have knowingly chosen to use the services of an inferior service provider.

In question eight it was also clear that some of the respondents had promptly chosen "better" as the answer for every part of the question which might suggest that they did not give the question much thought but instead chose an easy, identical answer for each part of the question. This might be due to their inability to give accurate answers, their general good impression on the products and services of Ammeraal Beltech and/or plain laziness.

4.2.5. Question 9: General Level of Satisfaction

Question nine was about the respondents' general level of satisfaction regarding the overall performance of Ammeraal Beltech. The respondents were asked to choose an answer that best describes their views about the overall performance of Ammeraal Beltech from "Very satisfied", "Satisfied", "Dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied".

The results from this question suggest that the general level of customer satisfaction among the customers of Ammeraal Beltech is very high. 33% of all respondents chose "Very satisfied" and 64% chose "Satisfied" to best describe their views on the overall performance of Ammeraal Beltech. Only 3% chose "Dissatisfied", and none of the respondents chose "Very dissatisfied" as an answer for this question.



4.3. Questions 10 – 11

Question 10 and 11 were open end questions were the respondents were asked to answer in their own words.

4.3.1. Question 10: Desired New Products and Services

In question 10 the respondents were asked to describe what kind of new products and services they wished Ammeraal Beltech to offer in the future.

Most of the respondents left this question unanswered suggesting that there was no acknowledged demand for new products and services from Ammeraal Beltech.

The few who answered this question suggested products and services such as new more economical products, product descriptions translated in Finnish, new innovations and

visits to premises where the products are being used. Some specific product types were also requested, some of which Ammeraal Beltech already carries. This suggests that not all of the respondents are aware of the products available to them through Ammeraal Beltech. Customer satisfaction of those customers might therefore be increased by improving the flow of information between Ammeraal Beltech and its customers regarding new and existing products.

As the huge majority of the respondents left this question unanswered, only a few actual suggestions on the additional products and services were given. As the amount of responses acquired in the question were so few, the reliability of the information derived from this question is very unreliable and might not reflect actual demand for new products and services.

4.3.2. Question 11: Other Comments and Messages

In question 11 the respondents were asked to write down any additional comments or messages they wanted to leave for the personnel of Ammeraal Beltech.

Although majority of answer given in this particular question were cheerful greetings and wishes of happy summer holidays, there were also some comments about the performance of Ammeraal Beltech and requests regarding the ways of operating in the future.

The few who answered this question left messages and comments regarding mainly positive and negative past dealing experiences, perceived problems and weaknesses in daily operations and personal messages and greetings to specific members of the staff.

The messages concerning positive and negative dealing experiences were mainly about specific individual cases. Some of the respondents wrote about times when their special needs and requests had been taken to consideration or exceptions made to help them to deal with urgent problems. Similarly, some respondents wrote about cases where their orders had for example arrived late due to a human error or a problem unrelated to Ammeraal Beltech. Comments such as these are relevant as even a single negative or positive experience can have a major effect on the satisfaction level of a customer.

The messages concerning Ammeraal Beltech's daily operations included comments about delivery times, order confirmations, cooperation with Ammeraal Beltech's foreign offices, and problems in flow of information, pricing and managing customer relations. A few of the respondents also expressed frustration due to feeling unappreciated as customers and suggested small discounts for loyal customers as themselves. Comments such as these might prove useful when looking for ways to improve customer satisfaction, but since the amount of responses from this specific survey was so small, no reliable conclusions or decisions should be made based solely on them.

Many of the respondents left messages thanking and praising specific staff members of Ammeraal Beltech. Since the members of the sales team were praised for their expertise and helpfulness it could be said that the sales team is an important asset of Ammeraal Beltech and an important factor in creating customer satisfaction. This conclusion is also consistent

with the results from question seven where the respondents were asked about their opinions on Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel.

Other comments and messages left by the respondents in questions 11 concerned things such as brochures, promotional gifts, instructions and product descriptions.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions for Ammeraal Beltech's Management

356 questionnaire forms with cover letters and envelopes for returning the completed questionnaires were sent out as a postal survey in order to acquire data about the level of customer satisfaction among Ammeraal Beltech's customers. Out of those 356 questionnaires 91 were returned making the percentage of returned questionnaires 25,5. Although the amount of returned forms was not great, it was considered adequate in order for the results to be reasonably reliable.

The results from returned questionnaires show that a majority of Ammeraal Beltech's customers were either satisfied or very satisfied with Ammeraal Beltech's performance at the time they filled in the survey. The customer's were most satisfied with aspects related to Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel. The aspects the customers were least satisfied with were the availability of product information on the company website and price-quality relation of the products and services. Ammeraal Beltech was also seen as superior to its competitors in all aspects of its operation by the respondents.

There are certain factors that limit the reliability of the results and should therefore be taken to account when viewing the results of the survey. The biggest factors limiting the reliability of the results are that in some questions the respondents were not allowed to give a neutral answer and that all of the respondents were current customers.

Although the results of the questionnaire were encouraging, there are always some improvements that could be done in order to promote higher customer satisfaction.

Firstly, Ammeraal Beltech should get an up-to-date and informative website. A website is in many cases an inexpensive way to promote a company and inform potential customers about the products and services on offer. The importance of Internet as a media is growing fast, and more and more people are starting to use company websites as their first and primary source of company and product related information. Therefore good company websites also promote sales and help to create positive company image.

Secondly, although companies are rarely willing to lower the prices of their products and services even when their customers find them too high, an image of an overly expensive company should be avoided. As many of the respondents also expressed their hopes for better and more personal customer management and case-by-case price reductions, it is likely that the customer satisfaction could be further improved by trying to introduce a culture where the customers are let to understand that they are seen as valuable clients and therefore receive small price reductions when possible, and that their problems are given an appropriate amount of attention. According to Ammeraal Beltech's employees, many of the customers do in fact receive some discounts but might not always notice them or remember them later when paying the bill. Therefore it is possible that greater customer satisfaction would be achieved if the customers were clearly informed about price reductions, for example by mentioning it at the time of purchase and clearly showing the amount of discount on the bill.

Since Ammeraal Beltech's sales personnel and their professional and social skills were considered exceptionally good, it would be wise to hang on to the team as they are obviously an important factor in creating customer satisfaction and therefore an important asset for the company. Many of the customers indicated some sort of an affection or gratefulness towards the sales person they had been dealing with.

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Appendix

Appendix 1: Cover Letter

Arvoisa Asiakkaamme

Voidaksemme kehittää tuotteitamme ja palvelujamme vastaamaan Teidän toiveitanne, olemme Ammeraal Beltechissä valmistelleet oheisen asiakastytyväisyyskyselyn. Toivoisimme, että vastaisitte kyselyyn ja palauttaisitte sen meille mukana tullessa palautuskuoressa. Kyselyyn vastaaminen vie vain hetken, ja sen voi halutessaan palauttaa myös nimettömänä.

Kyselyn voi myös täyttää nopeasti ja helposti Internetissä osoitteessa:
<https://lomake.tpu.fi/v2/lomakkeet/895/lomake.html>

Mikäli ette koe olevanne oikea henkilö vastaamaan tähän kyselyyn, olkaa ystävällisiä ja ohjatkaa se yrityksessänne asianmukaiselle henkilölle. Mikäli yrityksessänne on usampia henkilöitä jotka haluaisivat vastata tähän kyselyyn, voitte ottaa siitä kopioita tai pyytää meiltä lisäkappaleita.

Kiitos vastauksistanne jo etukäteen, mielipiteenne ja palautteenne ovat meille tärkeitä.

Terveisin

Timo Hyppönen
Toimitusjohtaja

Tuuli Koskinen

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

1) Mikä seuraavista vaihtoehtoista kuvaa yrityksenne toimialaa parhaiten?

- Elintarviketeollisuus
- Leipomoteollisuus
- Puu- ja metsäteollisuus
- Elektroniikkateollisuus
- Metalliteollisuus
- Laitevalmistus
- Kuljetinvalmistus
- Kemianteollisuus
- Paperi- ja painoteollisuus
- Muu

2) Mikä on yrityksenne vuotuinen liikevaihto?

- Alle 500 000 euroa
- 500 000 – 3 000 000 euroa
- 3 000 000 – 10 000 000 euroa
- Yli 10 000 000 euroa

3) Kuinka usein ostate Ammeraal Beltechin tuotteita ja palveluja?

- Kerran viikossa tai useammin
- Kerran kuukaudessa tai useammin
- Kerran vuodessa tai useammin
- Harvemmin kuin kerran vuodessa
- En osta Ammeraal Beltechin tuotteita tai palveluja

4) Kuinka tärkeiksi yrityksenne toiminnan kannalta arvioisitte Ammeraal Beltechin tuotteet ja palvelut?

- Erittäin tärkeä
- Tärkeä
- Kohtalaisen tärkeä
- Ei kovin tärkeä

5) Merkitse seuraavat Ammeraal Beltechin toiminnan osa-alueet tärkeysjärjestykseen numeroin 1 –13 (1 = Tärkein, 13 = Vähiten merkitystä)

- ___ Toimitusaika
- ___ Toimitusvarmuus
- ___ Hinta
- ___ Laatu
- ___ Valikoima
- ___ Tuotteita koskevan tiedon saatavuus Internet - sivulta
- ___ Kyky ratkaista käytännön ongelmia
- ___ Kyky ymmärtää asiakkaan liiketoiminnan luonnetta
- ___ Myyntihenkilökunnan asiantuntemus ja ammattitaito
- ___ Myyntihenkilökunnan ystävällisyys ja palvelualttius
- ___ Asennushenkilökunnan asiantuntemus ja ammattitaito
- ___ Asennushenkilökunnan ystävällisyys ja palvelualttius
- ___ Laskutuksen selkeys ja oikeellisuus

6) Kuinka tyytyväinen olette Ammeraal Beltechin toiminnan seuraaviin osa-alueisiin:

	Erittäin tyytyväinen	Tyytyväinen	Tyytymätön	Erittäin tyytymätön
Toimitusaika	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toimitusvarmuus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuotteiden hinta – laatu – suhde	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valikoima	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuotteita koskevan tiedon saatavuus Internet -sivulta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kyky ratkaista käytännön ongelmia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kyky ymmärtää asiakkaan liiketoiminnan luonnetta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myyntihenkilökunnan asiantuntemus ja ammattitaito	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myyntihenkilökunnan ystävällisyys ja palveluالتتius	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asennushenkilökunnan asiantuntemus ja ammattitaito	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asennushenkilökunnan ystävällisyys ja palveluالتتius	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laskutuksen selkeys ja oikeellisuus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

7) Verrattuna kilpaileviin yrityksiin, kuinka Ammeraal Beltech mielestänne sijoittuu seuraavien toiminnan osa-alueiden suhteen?

Ammeraal Beltech on:

	Huomattavasti parempi	Parempi	Huonompi	Huomattavasti huonompi
Toimitusaika	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toimitusvarmuus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tuotteiden hinta – laatu – suhde	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Valikoima	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tiedotus saatavilla olevista tuotteista ja palveluista	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kyky ratkaista käytännön ongelmia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Kyky ymmärtää asiakkaan liiketoiminnan luonnetta	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myyntihenkilökunnan asiantuntemus ja ammattitaito	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myyntihenkilökunnan ystävällisyys ja palveluالتتius	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asennushenkilökunnan asiantuntemus ja ammattitaito	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Asennushenkilökunnan ystävällisyys ja palveluالتتius	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Laskutuksen selkeys ja oikeellisuus	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8) Kuinka tyytyväinen olette yleisesti ottaen Ammeraal Beltechin toimintaan?

- Erittäin tyytyväinen
 Tyytyväinen
 Tyytymätön
 Erittäin tyytymätön

9) Millaisia uusia tuotteita tai palveluja toivoisitte Ammeraal Beltechin tulevaisuudessa tarjoavan?

10) Muita kommentteja / Terveisiä Ammeraal Beltechin henkilökunnalle:

Terveisin:

(Vastaajan ja yrityksen nimi)

Voitte palauttaa kyselyn myös nimettömänä.