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Degree in International Business

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Ways to Improve Customer Service in KIA Dealer Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter in Saint-Petersburg

Bachelor's Thesis 2015

ABSTRACT

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Ways to Improve Customer Service in KIA Dealer

Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter

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Contemporary world of consumption provides customers with a great choice which raises the issue of an immense competition for businesses, as a result companies go beyond the core product and strive for delivering outstanding customer service.

This research was aimed at assessing customers' perception of delivered service in Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter, identifying weaknesses of applied service techniques and consequently suggesting appropriate methods of its improvement.

Qualitative research was used as a research method in order to receive objective data. Interviews were chosen to investigate deeply emotions of customers and employees of the company.

As a result of the research, it was concluded that such factors as price absence in the showroom, inappropriate follow-up, wrong welcoming, unqualified specialists and long waiting decrease customers' satisfaction and the commissioner received proposals on methods of changing those techniques, as well as to add and diversify provided facilities in order to make staying in the center more pleasant for customers. Apart from that it was concluded that salespersons are not motivated and disengaged which results in a weak level of customer serving, consequently the company was advised to reorganize conditions of salesperson labor.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world of consumption all businesses suffer from a high level of competition. Organizations that are operating within a trade industry cannot survive without a certain amount of customers (the indicator differs for each company), however customers have an immense choice which leads to the fact that they become more selective and it is becoming harder to please and satisfy them. That is the reason why a lot of companies are trying to be customer-oriented and are constantly working on the improvement of the customer service level.

In this thesis the sector of the auto business in Russia will be reviewed with the focus onto the case company ZAO Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter on the basis of the researcher's work experience there.

1.1 Research problem

1.1.1 Automotive car industry

The automotive car industry has risen through the last decades and by the contemporary days has become one of the most massive one. It combines several industries together such as extraction and elaboration of raw materials, engineering, manufacturing, design, logistics, sales, repair services, spare parts transportation and selling, and a lot of others. It goes without saying all these processes require a vast amount of people involved. In developed countries every adult is somehow engaged in the automotive world: in case a person is not an employee of the car industry, he/she might have some partner working links with that industry or be a consumer (any driver is a consumer). Even those people who are not straightly engaged are being touched by this industry every day from using any kind of transport to watching advertisement of well-known brands.

Cars have become an inherent part of our everyday lives from simple transportation means to luxury life facilities or even long-term aims. Corporations are constantly creating new idols which attract millions of consumers who feel themselves ready to work for several years in order to make the dream come true. Innovations are being developed and enhanced every year following the companies' aim not to lose the interest of public. All these factors are the results of appropriate marketing and

brand-management campaigns which allow thousands of organizations to gain profit.

There are a lot of elements in the supply chain process of automotive industry however the main elements of final product sale to a consumer are dealer centers. Dealers are intermediaries between a manufacturer and a customer, they operate all contacts with the public from car presentations to repair services. That means, any contacts straightly between a corporation itself and a customer are almost excluded, so customers perceive dealers to be not only the representatives of the main corporation but even a part of it. That is why brand holders require strict obedience in service and quality performance from dealers. There are always some requirements which have to be met before gaining the honorable name of the official dealer center.

1.1.2 Russian automarket 2014 and 2015

The Russian automarket is constantly changing following the fluctuations of the world automarket. Automotive car sales on the Russian market were decreasing through the whole year 2014 states Slobodchikova (2014). According to the statistics of the Association of European business Russia took the second place after the UK among European auto markets and it seemed that it would not be able to keep it. However that forecast was not met due to the utilization program which allows getting a discount on a new car and due to the Russian people's desire to make an investment on the grounds of falling rouble. By the end of November, 2014 2,2 million of cars were sold in Russia which was 11% less than a previous year's indicator (Slobodchikova, 2014).

According to Vladimir Mozhenkov interviewed by Gazeta.ru (2015), the devaluation of rouble was almost 100% in December which means that auto cars should have become twice more expensive, however the companies have realized such a sour would lead to the total death of the market as no one would buy for such a tremendous price (Gazeta.ru, 2015).

Oleg Moiseev, the vice-president of the association 'the Russian autodealers', has noticed to Slobodchikova (2014) that the companies

owning a manufacturing in the country are usually dominant sellers in that country. To his mind, states the author, there are only a few companies which can feel self-confident in Russia, these are those who have factories there, and the alliance Renault-Nissan and the group Kia-Hyundai are among them. It will be easier to survive for the manufacturers with the high-level localization of production than for those with the smaller level of localization, while those who are totally dependent on import will experience a very difficult situation through the nearest time (Slobodchikova, 2014).

The latest news inform that the rouble starts to approach the stable position, this fact leads to the complicated position for car retailers in Russia as the consumers are rejecting their purchases and orders in order to wait for the price decrease. That means the dealers will have the hardest times in the nearest quarter, state Blohin, Zhdanova and Moiseev in the interview with Zaharov (2015).

BBC (2015) relates to the ministry of industrial trade in Russia claiming that the Russian automarket is considered to fall by 24% according the optimistic forecasts and by 50% in the worst case.

This information portends the significant reduction of attracted customers interested in a purchase, so a value and importance of one customer will considerably rise, that equals to an increase in loss when losing that one customer. The result can be drawn that it will become much harder to compete with other dealers so the customer service has to be incredibly strong and exceptional.

1.1.3 ZAO Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter and GC TerrAvto

ZAO Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter is an official dealer of KIA motor vehicles. Abbreviation ZAO shows it is a closed joint-stocked company; the number of employees is 67, which means it is a medium enterprise. The centre is owned by the Group of the Companies "TerrAvto" which operates six dealer centers in Saint-Petersburg. The centers represent two KIA brand dealers, three Lada dealers (Russian auto manufacturer) and one center which combines Opel and Chevrolet brands. Apart from Saint-Petersburg the organization is also represented on the regional automarket which includes such cities as Novgorod, Petrozavodsk and Pskov, where the company's

product is Lada cars. In total the group of companies TerrAvto owns nine dealer centers. Trading brand new cars is not the only sphere the corporation operates. The separate large sphere is the network of used cars selling, which exists and is represented by managers in every dealer center, which allows providing services for another target group of customers. Apart from that there is also another field of business- network of centers implementing the car body works (painting and restoration), which was formed due to the long-term experience of operations with auto vehicles. The workshops are located in several centers, they allow different auto brands to be repaired so that leads to the fact that even competitive brand owners are attracted to the TarrAvto dealer centers which expends the awareness among potential target groups (TerrAvto, 2015).

The aim (the vision) and the mission of the organization are represented on its official website. The vision is presented in six paragraphs which are divided on the base of six factors of a successful company: the great choice of cars of good quality provided to customers according to their different capabilities and desires; guaranteed repair works of all kinds; setting of the best modern equipment; the offer of convenient and beneficial services in order to make the possession and the change of a car being a pleasant and a simple process; the customers' opinion is valuable and welcomed; the provision of prestigious job and comfortable working conditions for the united team of specialists (TerrAvto, 2015).

The company states to provide great services carrying full responsibility with the mission to make the car possession affordable and enjoyable for everyone, the automarket to become civilized and secure and the cars of the city to be valid, modern and safe (TerrAvto, 2015).

The company also claims that the customers, their opinion and satisfaction are highly important and that the organization helps to solve all kinds of problems relating to car possession in a quick, precise and qualitative way (TerrAvto, 2015). This thesis will look at the ways one of the dealer centers of the company implements this statement in a real life and will suggests some methods to improve the efficiency of its operations from the customers perspective.

Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter operates since the April 2012 (Vasauto-kia, 2015), the building is constructed according to KIA Motors Rus requirements: its front side is all made of windows, the housing has a form of a cube and is painted in red color, all of that makes the center looking bright and drawing people's attention. The centre's main product is KIA brand new cars. Apart from that it also offers used cars, KIA original spare parts, all kinds of optional additional equipment for cars, banks services (auto loans), insurance companies' services and a café.

1.1.4 KIA brand

KIA is a Korean auto manufacturer founded in 1944 and is the oldest one in Korea. KIA group belongs to the corporation Hyundai-KIA and is one of the largest from its industrial groups. 2,7 million automobiles a year are manufactured in 10 factories located in 5 countries. The dealer centers are represented in 150 countries of the world, involving more than 48 000 employees and the annual revenue counts more than 43 milliard of dollars (KIA Motors, 2015).

The brand slogan is 'The Power to Surprise', it reflects the base of the corporate strategy- permanent intention to innovations in order to produce cars meeting the requirements of modern consumers, surprise the world and provide exciting moments which are exceeding the expectations (KIA Motors, 2015).

Autostat agency reports the Agency Interfax citing the President of KIA Motors Rus Corporation Kim Song Hvan, who claims that during the 2014 KIA has raised its market shares from 7.2% to 7.9% and in 2015 the company is aiming to keep the same level or even get the increase by 8%. According to Hvan the forecast of sales quantity is hard to be made in the today situation, however the main goal of Kia this year is to maintain the stability among dealer centers network. The results of 2014 have indicated 195601 cars sold by KIA Motors Rus which has made the company a leader among foreign brands in Russia. Assembly of KIA motor vehicles is performed in Kaliningrad, Russia and the best sold model Rio is assembled in Saint-Petersburg (Autostat, 2015).

KIA is a highly demanded brand: for the 5th year Focus2move (2015) determines absolute record-holding brands of the world automarket. The fifth, the sixth, the seventh and the eighth brands during 2014 were Hyundai, Nissan, Honda and KIA, with the increase in sales more than 4% (Focus2move, 2015).

KIA takes the third place in the rating of new cars sales in Russia for the period of January-March 2014 and 2015, however if compared with 2014 the indicators of 2015 are reflecting 15% decrease in sales, for the March 2015 the figures show 32% decrease in sales compared with 2014 (Abreview, 2015).

There are 13 dealers in Saint-Petersburg so the competition is really tough. The centers are located throughout the city. In Vasileostrovskiy region there is only one dealer center so this segment of customers who are considering the location to be the first factor when choosing the dealer have no other options in case they live in this region or in the nearest ones. However, the location factor influences the choice of the customers only at the first visit, afterwards they relate to the experience received and can change the dealer if the closest was unsatisfactory, so it is highly important to provide the best customer service in order to keep the consumers.

1.2 Research aim

The situation on the Russian automobile market is getting worse, companies operating in this industry are becoming weaker, investors are refusing to deal with autobusiness. All these facts consequently lead to the bankruptcy of some amount of firms, leaving a lot of people unemployed. On the background of falling rouble and rising unemployment the amount of money people are ready to spend sharply decreases, as a result the economic situation in Russia gets even more unstable.

This thesis aims to improve the customer service of a dealer center in Saint-Petersburg which can help to increase the amount of sold products-automobiles. This will bring many benefits to the region of Saint-Petersburg, Russia and those impacts will also influence Finland as well.

First of all, with the increased profit the center will operate tranquilly, keeping all employees on their working places and paying taxes. The more profit- the more taxes paid- the better is financial condition of the region. Apart from that, consumers of brand new cars are either substituting the old cars or unloading the public transport. In case a new car replaces an older one on the city roads it has an ecological impact as modern innovations of exhaust systems are making new cars greener. Another benefit for government of an old car substitution occurs when a utilization program is used by a consumer. Finally, car owners bring profit to a lot of complementary service businesses such as gas stations, services, spare parts retailers and others, which also enhances the financial level of the region.

Finland is known as one of the trade and tourism partners of Saint-Petersburg and its regions. The better level of life of the population provides more tourists to Finland, moreover one of the popular transportation way between Saint-Petersburg and Finland is an own automobile, so the more new drivers- the more potential visitors. Undeniably, strong economic situation enables trade links between two countries.

As a result, improving customer service in Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter in Saint-Petersburg will definitely bring positive consequences to the region of the city, to the Russian Federation and even Finland.

1.3 Research objective

The objective of the research is to identify which techniques of customer service applied by the company could be improved in order to enhance the customers' perception of the experience gained during their before-purchase visits to the sales department of the autocenter.

The focus on the visits to the sales department is made with the purpose to limit the target group of the research and the variety of techniques being assessed. The autocenter consists of many departments and people visiting it are often already loyal customers who are heading to the planned meetings with specialists (repair services, insurance prolongation, payment of credits and etc.). However, the main profit is gained from the selling of new cars which means the most fundamental aim of the dealer center is to

increase satisfaction among potential automobile buyers, what is more, car owners usually perform car maintenance at the same dealer where the purchase was made. Logically, the sales department provides other departments with clients and brings the main profit, and the conclusion can be drawn that focusing on it is more reasonable and essential.

The sub-objective is, when the weak points of customer service which decrease customer satisfaction are determined, to find out some methods of their improvement.

The objective of the thesis will head the top-managerial department of the company to the mistakes in dealing with customers and the sub-objective will advice on what actions could be taken.

1.4 Research question

The main question of the research is:

How the customer service of sales department in the case company could be improved?

In order to answer this question the following sub-questions should be answered:

What are the service techniques the center is using, benefits and lacks of those techniques?

What do customers feel about the centre according to those techniques and how it affects the business on the whole?

Which aspects of the applied customer service need improvement?

What are the possible ways of enhancing weaknesses of the contemporary customer service?

2. CUSTOMER SERVICE

'It's not the employer who pays the wages. Employers only handle the money. It's the customers who pay wages' (Ford cited by McKechnie, 2014).

This statement of Henry Ford, the founder of Ford Corporation, reflects the situation of every business that aims to gain profit. Profit is money and money is paid by customers for the products or services the company provides. In the business world the simple rule applies: no customers- no business. Unfortunately, this unspoken rule is not inversely applicable- existence of customers does not guarantee existence of business. There are a lot of other factors influencing the profit however a customer is a fundamental one. Attraction of customers is a problem which finds its solution in such spheres as marketing, advertisement, public relations, however a successful organization should go beyond and take care of keeping and satisfying a customer who has already expressed an interest in a company's business with the help of using the appropriate techniques of great customer service delivery.

2.1 Customer satisfaction

Customer service is 'making customers feel great about being in your store; so great that they tell others about their positive shopping experience' (Miethner et al. 2013:7). In other words, great customer service is impossible to be reached without its main inevitable component- customer satisfaction.

Revealing the concept of customer satisfaction, Zineldin (2006) uses the five quality dimensions framework, which is presented in a figure below. The figure demonstrates that the framework concludes five quality dimensions which influence total customer satisfaction: quality of object (the core product), quality of processes (service delivered), qualities of infrastructure, interaction and atmosphere (Zineldin, 2006:430-438).

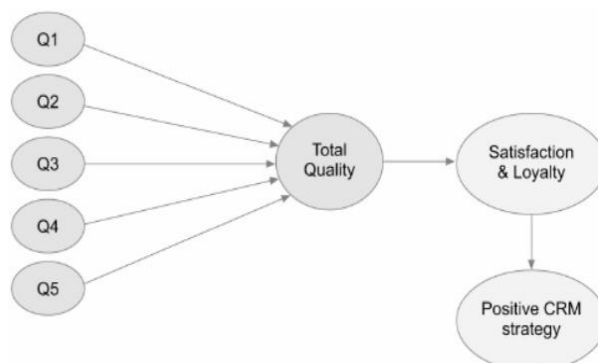


Figure 1. Five quality dimensions framework (Zineldin, 2006)

McKechnie (2014) expresses another alternative view on service components and presents a customer-service hallmark which means a unique quality standard of service and it is viewed by the author as four dimensions represented in Figure 2. The first dimension stated by the author is that the main value for the organization (macro level) and its employees each individually (micro level) should be a stance to customers. This includes satisfying customers' needs, wants and expectations. The next one is service delivery which actually means continuously improving all aspects of the company that affect customers' perception and quality delivered to them. The third dimension is relationship management which aims at gaining continuous long-term customers relationships which are beneficial for both parties (the organization and its customers). The last dimension mentioned by McKechnie (2014) is customer perception. This dimension requires searching for the information about customers' reaction and feelings concerning the company and about having deals with the company. It also means taking actions to react to this information and change negative perception (McKechnie, 2014).

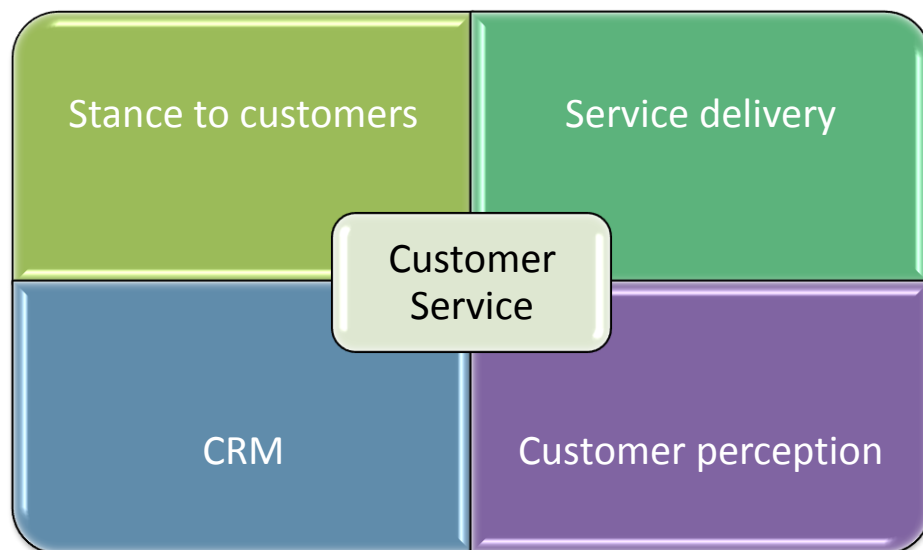


Figure 2. Customer service hallmark

The four dimensions organize the framework which works only in case of combined effort of all dimensions which can be described in one word as synergistic. When appropriately used not only the hallmark helps to improve

customer service, but also it improves effectiveness and efficiency of the organization and other aspects of operational management. The use of several systems such as enterprise resource planning, enterprise marketing management or marketing resource management helps the organization to support operations within customer service (McKechnie, 2014).

2.2 Customer perceptions and emotions and factors affecting them

Some of the main factors of how to position the customer service in the best way are listed by McKechnie (2014) and they are the customers' emotions which accompany the purchase decisions, the values of the company concerning the customer service and the customers' perceptions of those values. This statement could be explained by the management of the company in a way that every customer's visit should definitely bring the most positive emotions and underline the total customer-orientation of the organization by the means of every employee demonstrating the best care of the customer's needs, wants and comfort. The customer perception should not underestimate the values of the company but on the other hand they should not be overestimated so that the expectations could be realistically met and so that the customer would not feel adulation towards him/herself (McKechnie, 2014).

Edvardsson (2005) promoted the idea of the importance of customers' perceptions and emotions as well. However, compared to the thoughts of McKechnie (2014), he does not divide perceptions and emotions as to different factors affecting the extent of service, on the contrary the author claims that these two factors are mutually dependent. The big role in forming service quality perceptions of the customers play their favorable and unfavorable experience and negative emotions affect this experience more than positive do. Customers form these emotions during interaction with front-line employees and consumption process (Edvardsson, 2005).

The idea of Edvardsson (2005) follows the preceding claims of Jiun-Sheng and Haw-Yi (2011), who also emphasize emotional experience as a valuable tool of customer service. The ideas that those emotions are affected by contacting with employees and the process of buying are similar among the authors stated above. However, Jiun-Sheng and Haw-Yi (2011) review the factors influencing those emotions more deeply. Emotions

gained with the influence of environment affect buying behavior of the consumer- spending levels, time spent in a store and desire to come again. When the customer looks back to the gained experience in order to come up with the assessment of that experience he/she often relies on the emotional side of the visit. Positive emotions increase satisfaction and decrease the level of critical thinking, which results in a positive feedback and a chance of revisit. Positive emotions depend not only on the result of the purchase or the product itself however such details as employee's smile do affect it too. Eye contact or displayed gratitude causes the fact that customers' pleasant emotions occur which can result in a satisfactory experience of the visit. Apart from that, other customers' behavior and mood create an atmosphere which is called customer climate and if this climate meets the expectations and does not generate negative emotions then it also positively relates to customer satisfaction. Design and physical environment do also drive certain emotions among customers and result in a favorable level of satisfaction (Jiun-Sheng and Haw-Yi, 2011).

However, besides emotions and perceptions, Rai (2013) mentions that the customer evaluation process consists of the expectations and perceived performance. Here a simple formula applies. When perceived performance PP is more than it was expected by a customer CE (customer expectation), then a customer satisfaction CS arises. On the contrary if PP less than CE then a dissatisfaction comes. Customer satisfaction leads to positive consequences such as repeat purchase, retention of a consumer, positive feedback, cross-selling and up-selling. However dissatisfaction brings such undesired results as negative publicity (feedbacks), loss in sale and customer dissonance (Rai, 2013:57).

The idea of Rai (2013) is supported by the thoughts of Ford et al (2009) stating that assessing service delivered customers compare expectations with what was received in a reality. McKechnie (2014) states that a customer buying a new car expects to be delighted by the service as this is kind of purchase that raises his/her emotional state and moreover, this is not an every-day based shopping, what means auto dealers have to pay a lot of attention to expectations-reality matching as their customers might have excessive expectations which should be accompanied by not less excessive level of service.

2.3 Employees' factor

Underdelivered customer service is caused by lack of communication, focus, understanding and commitment (Miethner et al. 2013:8). This statement expresses the idea that the quality of employees' attitude to customers plays a dramatically important role in customers' perception of delivered service which means considering employee factor is an inevitable part of service assessment.

2.3.1 Employee-managerial relations as a factor of customer service

Extraordinary customer service means communication: the way employees communicate with customers depends on the way employer communicates with employees (Gallo, 2012). This fact should be carefully contemplated by the management of a company in order to make every hierarchical level understand the effect their mutual relationships have on customer service. Appropriate leadership should be applied to team management with the aim to share the standards of communications in theory and practice so that front-line managers could apply these standards when collaborating with customers. McKechnie (2014) supports the idea of highly importance of employee-managerial relations claiming that the main things in leadership are to be able to create, share and make people understand the vision and help them to adopt changes.

Gallo (2012) states that many companies have disengaged and emotionally disconnected employees, who are not inspired, don't care about the brand and the company which results into low customer satisfaction.

The same idea is expressed by Miethner et al. (2013:7) who agree that if an employee doesn't really want to work hard with an effort then it will be difficult to bring great customer service.

2.3.2 Equity theory

Supporting the thoughts of the authors above, Rai (2013) suggests how this problem could be resolved. In order to raise employee's working ability and desire to do their best it is essential that everyone is treated fairly and equally. Equity theory was developed in 1963 by John Stacey Adams and was described by Rai (2013). Using the example of employment, he states

that measuring equity people compare the ratio of own effort and benefit with the same ratio of a colleague. In a case an employee feels like being underpaid he/she will not perform on the appropriate level and will feel hostilely towards employers, colleagues and a company in general. That means such a person will feel dissatisfaction and will aim to stop this relationship (with a company) (Rai, 2013:6-7).

Other type of suggestion differing to Rai's is 'to buoy enthusiasm among the employees' claim the experts Inghilleri and Solomon, interviewed by Buchanan (2011), they advise morning preparation talks which are recommended to be focused on different little principles including the values of dealing with customers, so that managers are given different focuses every day. Moreover, there should be no strict frameworks of providing great experience: 'If your employees understand the mission and have the freedom to do great things, then they will do great things' (Solomon cited by Buchanan, 2011).

2.3.3 Other factors affecting employees performance

Apart from the inner factors that can cause the wave of dissatisfaction (from employer through employees to the customers), there are also external factors coming from the other side- customers.

The research held by Kim et al. (2012) showed that under the pressure of social stressors such as aggressive customers the front-line employees become emotionally exhausted what affects service recovery performance. Among such stressors the author also mentioned unclear expectations of consumers, unpleasant communication with customers and unfair customers' requirements of desired service. The author advises the managerial team should come up with some special actions to be taken relating to human resource management according the concrete situation (Kim et al. 2012).

However, there are also claims existing that customer perception of good service depends not only on the quality of communications with the front-line but also the gender factors have some influence. Mathies and Burford (2011) have researched the difference between male and female employees influencing customer satisfaction. First of all, the research has

shown that employees of different gender understand the idea of good service in different ways: male employees tend to focus on the result of the contact- a product, however females are more focused on providing a polite contact and smiling- emotional side of the service. That principle is in the same way applicable to the customers- women tend to expect emotionally fulfilled process whereas men are more focused on the result of the provided service (Mathies and Burford, 2011).

Concluding the employee factor influencing the customer service it can be seen that different authors see various reasons causing the quality of service provided to customers. This subchapter has reviewed: managerial and team leadership factors, which can be called internal stress, external stress coming from negative customer behavior and gender differences influencing the employees' and customers' understanding of great service.

2.4 Customer Relationship Management

Nowadays in order to deliver added value to customers companies have to develop customer relationships which will go beyond the core product and create some value for the dealing with the company from the customer's perspective. This value is defined by a customer as total value received through the process of purchasing (the value of the product itself, service, emotions, etc.) and the customer cost deducted (the price, time and energy spent, any other efforts needed). Many companies try to decrease the costs and increase the quality of service however they face their competitors using the same tactics. Creating long-term relationships with customers is the right way to secure and strengthen the firm's position in the competitive market. In the changing environment nothing is constant and prices, technology or even products may be unstable however the relationships last for the longest time (Zineldin, 2006).

When customers have an immense choice of sellers they start to evaluate all of them in order to choose the best one. When the product sold is the same, consumers compare prices and services they get. Pricing relates to the financial department and decision-making procedures, however service is a CRM field.

Rai (2013) provides several definitions of Customer Relationship Management, some of them are: 'an integrated effort to identify, maintain and build up a network with individual consumers and to continuously strengthen the network for the mutual benefit of both sides, through interactive, individualized and value-added contacts over a long period of time' (Shami and Chalasani 1992) , 'a comprehensive strategy and process of acquiring , retaining and partnering with selective customers to create superior value for the company and for the customers' (Parvatiyar and Sheth 2001), 'the process for achieving a continuing dialogue with customers across all available touch points to offer them customized treatment, based on their expected response to available marketing initiatives, such that the contribution from each customer to overall profitability is maximized' (Bohling et al.2006), 'an effective tool to achieve the objectives such as satisfied and loyal customers and increased market share' (Shafia et al.2011).

The same idea can be followed among all definitions- CRM is about partnering, networking and collaborating with customers with the purpose of increasing their satisfaction and loyalty.

Rai (2013:33) claims there are 5 stages in CRM cycle and they are:

- 1) Information search from customers
- 2) Building a great customer value
- 3) Gaining loyal consumers
- 4) Acquisition of new customers
- 5) Aiming at and working at raising profitability

The CRM process includes 4 types of stakeholders who are customers (the main group, the aim of the CRM), employees (the main tools of CRM), suppliers and partners (Rai, 2013:35).

'Customer service is a crucial component of marketing' (McKechnie, 2014). The main components of customer service is attraction, retention and loyalty. It should concern every area of organization, which means that all systems, processes and employees must be customer-focused.

2.4.1 Loyalty

There are four 4 main rules successful marketing person knows, which were published by the American Society of Quality and Arthur Anderson Consulting Inc. in the report 1977 as Rai states in his book (2013:35):

- 1) Eight friends of a consumer are told about a positive experience and 20 friends about a negative one.
- 2) Make existing customers to buy 10% more is easier than acquire 10% of new customers.
- 3) 80% of good ideas of new products and services come from existing customers.
- 4) Old customers require 20% less costs than new ones and can definitely raise profits.

To summarize, loyal customers are much more profitable for a company. Gilmore (2014) states that there are a lot of factors influencing loyalty and satisfaction: expectations, needs, reaction to the organization and the perceived value received by the customer.

However, Dixon et al. (2013) define word loyalty as 'customer's intention to continue doing business with a company, increase their spending, or say good things about it'. The authors state that customer service holds a little percentage in things which affect the customer loyalty, however if taking into account customer disloyalty then customer service is the main factor influencing it. All that customers want from a company is not to exceed expectations, but to easily solve their concrete problem. A customer is satisfied if the problem solving process was easy and quick and took the smallest effort from the customer himself/herself. It means avoiding repeat calling, long waiting for the reply, being transferred and forced to repeat the information many times (Dixon et al. 2013).

Buchanan (2011) shares the idea of Dixon, stating: 'Resolving customer complaints is among the best ways to earn loyalty'.

Summarizing the ideas of authors, they all agree that customer perceptions influence the loyalty, however while Gilmore (2014) visualizes many factors affecting customers loyalty apart from perceptions, Dixon et al (2013) and

Buchanan (2011) state that solving consumers' problems is the most valuable step in CRM processes.

2.5 Stages of selling process affecting customer service

Jobber and Lancaster (2009) offer their view of the successful sales techniques which they advise to implement in a trading company. The selling process itself including negotiation with salespersons, agreement conditions implementation and other stages of purchasing relates to sales more than to customer service. However, some parts of the selling process should be discussed due to their influence on customers' perceptions of the visit.

The very first step in any purchase for the customer is meeting with the sales assistant. It is highly important to designate the customer is noticed and to mark that he/she is valuable and welcomed. On the basis of Richer Sounds example, Jobber and Lancaster (2009: 232) claim that by asking unobtrusive questions such as 'are you okay there?' sales people demonstrate their awareness of the customers and their readiness to help and answer questions any time. Not to pre-judge customers is also highly important as any client should feel equal to others whatever he/she wears, says or looks like. The policy of 'Under-promise, over-deliver' used by Richer Sounds creates high customer service and helps to avoid further complaints as it is always to exceed expectations than not to meet it (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009).

Jobber and Lancaster (2009: 235) divide selling process to the sales negotiations and pure selling based on a degree of negotiation between salesperson and a consumer. In case conditions of the bargain may be negotiated (e.g. price, delivery timing, extras), the situation refers to the sales negotiation. When the price is set, all the conditions are impossible to change and the offer can be specified as 'take-it-or-leave-it' basis, then the authors name it a pure selling. The division is made as preparation to sales negotiation and pure selling varies a lot. The authors offer the description of both ways however it can be easily stated as a process of buying a car includes negotiation as the prices differ for every extra condition deducted or added to the product of discussion (new car), apart from that dealers

often provide various discounts or special offers individually for every customer during the stage of negotiation (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009).

Jobber and Lancaster demonstrate a scheme of selling process (Figure 3) which should be carefully examined and prepared by a salesperson (2009: 250):



Figure 3. Selling process scheme

Havaladar and Cavale (2006) have discovered the selling process as well and it can be clearly seen that their demonstrated selling process (figure 4) slightly differs from the above one, but in general the processes look similar:

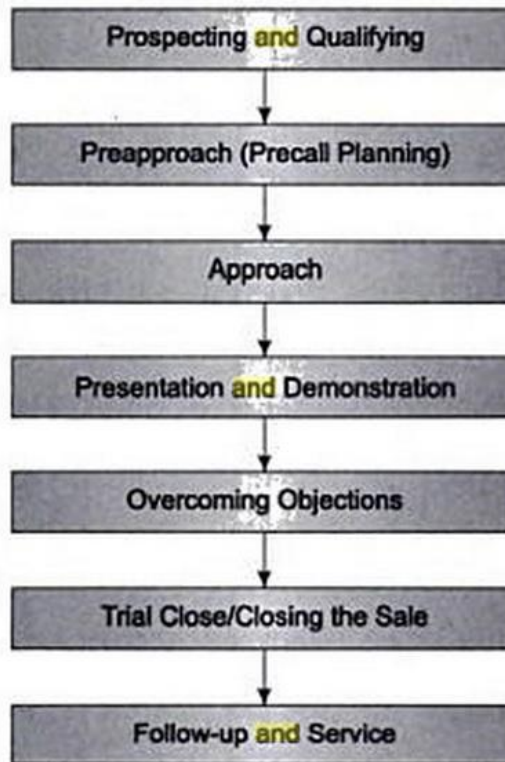


Figure 4. Selling process (Havaladar and Cavale, 2006)

From two sources it can be seen that opening and follow-up are both inevitable stages of selling process which do not refer to sales negotiations however influence customers' perceptions of company visit that consequently means inappropriate conduction of those steps might affect customer service quality delivered by a company.

2.5.1 Welcoming customers

'The first impressions are the most lasting'- states a famous English proverb (Shastry, 2014). Not only it can be applied to an everyday life but to business meetings or sales processes also. Claiming this idea Evanson (2007) states: 'customer service begins with making a great first impression'.

This stage is rather obvious as every person will agree that it is pleasant to communicate with a nice appeared man/woman whatever kind of the dialogue it is. When it is a representative of a company then this person is perceived as a face of that company so his/her appearance should be cozy, official and tidy. The manners have to be polite and open-minded, the name of the company and of the worker should be represented straight away and

one of the most important is to respect customer's time (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009: 251).

The idea expressed in the proverb, by Evanson (2007) and by Jobber and Lancaster (2009) is also shared by Rai (2013:9) who cites a sales management principle: 'Before selling the product one needs to sell oneself'.

Havaladar and Cavale (2006) call this stage 'approach' and highlight the importance of creating a favorable first impression as well, stating that this can help to catch customer's attention and excitement.

Five sources confirm the same point of view so the result can be drawn that is definitely highly important to welcome visitors promptly.

2.5.2 Follow-up

The authors advise that the customer focus should exist not only until the sale is made however till the very end- after-sale services should be provided. This stage is called follow-up and includes customer care which is defined as 'a philosophy which ensures that products or services and the after-care associated with serving customers needs at least meets, and in most cases exceeds, expectations' (Jobber and Lancaster, 2009).

Havaladar and Cavale (2006) indicate the importance of follow-up as after-sale contacts become a foundation of successful relationships with a customer. As a consequence, follow-up is a part of CRM implementation and it is a method of loyalty establishing and customer retention.

Naturally, in the earlier years, Griffin and Lowenstein (2001) mentioned follow-up services among the means of ensuring customer loyalty with the help of value-based long-term relationships.

Combining the three sources it can be concluded that the selling process is not finished when a purchase is made/ an order is placed, to create long lasting customer relationships it is vital to proceed with follow-up stage

which includes after-sale contacts and customer care playing an important role in customers' perception of delivered service.

3. METHODOLOGY

There are two types of conducted researches: qualitative and quantitative, the qualitative method was chosen for this particular research and this chapter will estimate both of them, observe different sources and explain why qualitative type of research and what means were used in this thesis.

Patton and Cochran (2002) indicate the difference of aims between qualitative and quantitative researches. While the aim of the first one is to understand, the goal of the second is to measure. The objective of this thesis is to determine the weaknesses of the case company customer service and to suggest the ways to improve it, so it relates to the understanding what causes negative reaction among visitors. According to Patton and Cochran (2002) qualitative research is applied when there is a need in understanding the experience and attitudes of people. According to Gerson and Horowitz (2002) qualitative research concerns not only facts and static categories but it also focuses on the dynamic processes, on the way people interpret the received experience and on the meaning this experience has for them. Jha (2008) also mentioned the value of meaning people bring to different things and the interpretation of those things. Carson and Gilmore (2006: 66) suggest applying qualitative research if the emphasis is to research in what way a certain phenomena exists and what reasons cause it. Apart from this, authors state it is suitable when there is a need of explanation and understanding of behavior or activities, not just specific measurements, while quantitative research is appropriate to conduct a comparison and assess the extent of differences.

Combining all opinions of authors mentioned above, it could be definitely claimed that qualitative research is more suitable in this thesis. According to the background theory, to understand the perception of customers after their visits to Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter it is highly important to identify their emotions received and their attitude to the whole experience gained in the process of dealing with the company. It is also essential to have an

employee insight to determine what actions can be done in order to increase the quality of service they provide.

3.1 Choice, Justification and Applying of Data Acquisition Methods

In order to choose the method of data acquisition the review of existing methods from different authors' point of view will be made.

Jha (2008) discusses two methods of research: grounded theory and hypothesis-testing, the differences between which are the first method begins at empirical level (data) and then the conceptual level (theory) emerges, however the second method follows the other way of levels. These methods are referred to qualitative (grounded theory) and quantitative (hypothesis-testing) researches. To summarize, the aim of a qualitative researcher is theory building, while the quantitative one goals at theory testing.

Jha (2008) states the following sequence of the qualitative research (figure 5):

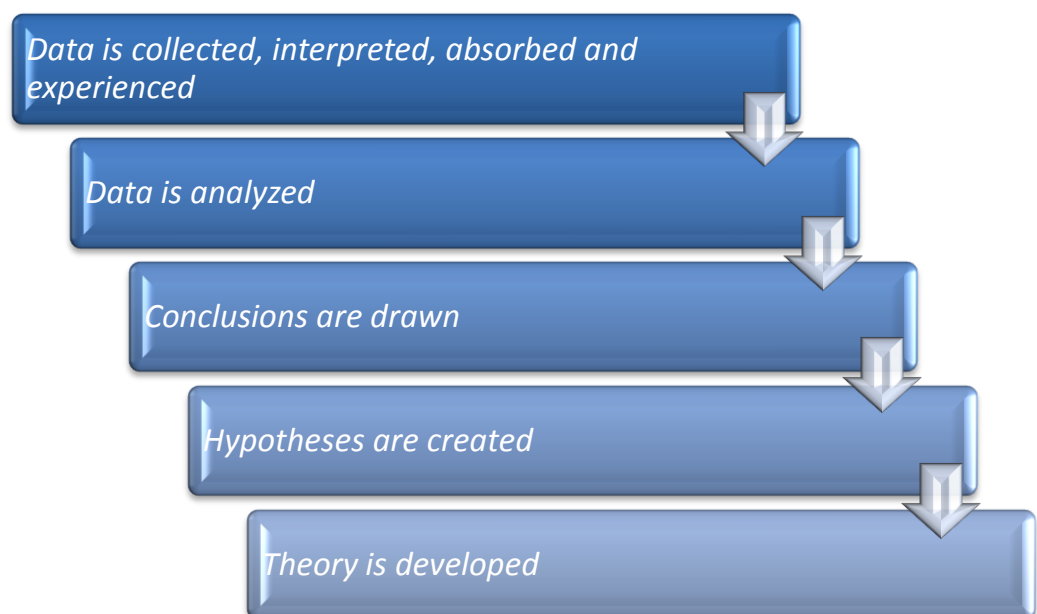


Figure 5. Qualitative research process (Jha, 2008)

However, Carson and Gilmore's (2006) picture of theory-related characteristics varies. The authors assert that the division between researches testing and building theory occurs inside the qualitative research- between its methods, not between qualitative and quantitative. They determine positivist and interpretivism methodologies of qualitative

research. The difference is that the first tests the theory considering objective precision and it is usually structured, as rigour and validity is important. Interpretivism on the contrary means semi-structure, uses empirical insights, and its main purpose is: 'to achieve substantive meaning and understanding of how and why questions in relation to the phenomena under investigation' (Carson and Gilmore, 2006: 64).

Carson and Gilmore (2006) cite Van Maanen (1979: 520) defining qualitative methods: 'an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in social world'.

The qualitative research is conducted with the help of different approaches, the most widely used of them are participant-observation and in-depth interview (Gerson and Horowitz, 2002).

Jha (2008) cites Patton (1990) defining qualitative data as 'detailed descriptions of situations, events, people about their experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts and excerpts or entire passages from documents, correspondence, records and case histories'. The author states that qualitative research uses various empirical materials (interviews, case studies, personal experience and etc.).

Patton and Cochran (2002) state that data acquisition methods used for qualitative research can be interviews, group interviews, or contextual data (observations, written data and oral data). Some other techniques added by Carson and Gilmore (2006) are case-based research, ethnography or grounded theory and action research or action learning.

Among all of the listed methods of data collection the interview was chosen for this research, which will follow the Jha's (2008) scheme of the research process (Figure 5).

Patton and Cochran (2002) define interviews as conversations focused on the data needs which are conducted in a rigorous way with the purpose to ensure reliability and validity of the data. Interviews are divided by authors into three groups: semi-structured (loose structure, open-ended questions),

in-depth or unstructured (open questions, no structure, cover one or two issues) and life histories (a type of in-depth interviews).

The idea of dividing interview types to three is also presented by Freebody (2006) who makes a stress to educational interviews and divides to them to the structured or fixed-response interviews (the set of questions and answers is restricted), semi-structured (the questions are predetermined however some deviation and expansion is allowed, and open-ended interviews (the spectrum of interviewee's answers is free and the direction of conversation is not controlled).

Two different individual interviews were held with customers and employees of Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter aiming at different goals. Customers' interview was conducted with 5 customers who have already bought a car during the last 3 months in the dealer center. Each interview was held individually in order to achieve the atmosphere of trust and confidentiality. The interview consists of 10 questions, the format of the questions is structured and strictly determined, so the interview relates to the fixed-response on the basis of Freebody's theory (2006) and to the semi-structured on the basis of Jha's division of conversational interviews (2008). Each question was planned by the interviewer in advance, there is no connection between the answer and the following question, which means that all respondents were asked the same questions.

In addition, three employees of the case company were interviewed. However, compared to the previously described interview, the one with the employees has another structure: the questions are open, the direction of the conversation is not limited, the control of the interview is mainly owned by the interviewee. This characterized the applied method as open-ended (according to Freebody, 2006) and in-depth (according to Jha, 2008) interview. This style was prioritized as the interviewer has been working in the case company so the employees are treating the interview more as a friendly conversation with a colleague than a formal meeting, which leads to the honesty inducing environment. Some details of management-employee relationships might be unknown for the interviewee so if the questions are strictly limited it might be difficult to cover every aspect and collect useful data. However when the conversation is opened and does not remind an

interrogation, the respondents are more likely to express their real feelings and thoughts.

The names of the respondents will not be provided due to the confidentiality. The whole version of interview questions can be reviewed in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

The main aim of interviewing customers is to reveal negative factors of service which lead to adverse emotions and consequently bad experience, so the questions are designed in a way that it would be easier for a consumer to recall every moment. The first two questions ask general information about a purchasing process in order to recommence pictures in an interviewee's head. Human's brain automatically associates our memories with the feelings connected to them, so having remembered the process of contacts with the dealer center buyers will recall moments which had caused positive and negative reactions. There are no general and excess questions in the interview due to the fact that the research covers absolutely all customers of sales department irrespective of their age, gender, nationality, product (model) of interest and other factors, which means that there was no necessity in asking extra questions, taking respondents' valuable time and trying their patience. It was highly important to receive honest and full answers so the interview was made possibly short not to exhaust interviewees.

Managers of the sales department were chosen to be interviewed apart from customers as they can provide an insight to the inner problems of the company and help to find the reasons of certain matters affecting the customer service. When a problem is being viewed from different sides it is always easier to identify factors influencing it. Customer perspective only gives a usual view to the company and on the basis of this view one kind of conclusions can be made, however after having a look from another perspective (employees) some new innovative ideas might be drawn. As it has already been stated conversation with employees was conducted in a less formal way than with the customers, the questions were determined in advance only for the purpose of having a direction of the interview prepared, all question were open-ended which means it was expected only to forward the respondents to the appropriate topic.

3.2 Choice, Justification and Applying of Data Analysis Methods

Carson and Gillmore (2006) state that analysis of collected empirical data is rather a difficult stage so they provide suggestions on how to deal with this process. Before the initial analysis the authors advise to index and organize the data in a convenient and structured way to allow easy access (it can be organized according to time-chronologically or to theme- topically or some other way). According to Mintzberg (1979), Carson and Gillmore (2006) mention two stages of data analysis: detective work which includes monitoring the 'patterns and consistencies', and creative leap which implies unifying and working up all analysis phases. The second stage requires creativity and intellectual thinking process from the researcher.

In this research the collected data constituted eight individual interviews. Despite the fact that virtually it was only two different kinds of listed questions, each interview was unique and included special information. Firstly all data was divided into two groups- customers' perspective and employees' perspective. Each group consisted of sub-sections according to the questions. All factors named by respondents were spread into sub-sections and each of them was accurately examined with careful estimation of every factor mentioned by the interviewees: firstly, the problem was stated and reasons of its existence identified and described, afterwards all possible outcomes were given according to the interviewees' assumptions and the researcher's logical thinking. On this stage the analysis process has come to the second stage named 'creative leap' by Carson and Gillmore (2006): by means of the researcher's intellectual process and structured data the conclusions were made which included possible suggestions on how those problems could be solved.

3.3 Limitations of the applied method

Among the limitations of qualitative research listed by Patton and Cochran (2002) the first criticism named- the amount of samples is smaller than in the quantitative research which means the results are less generalized. Another lack mentioned- there is always a bias of researchers' perceptions exists.

Interview method has also gotten its critics which were listed by Desai (2002): one of the criticisms of interview is a pressure made on an interviewee however Desai assumes it is applicable to the group interview where there is a group of strangers listening to a respondent. Apart from that, people are asking questions in a special way to present themselves in a favorable way. Another drawback of interview method is that it relies on people's memory. An idea provided by Oakely (1981) and Finch (1984) and mentioned by Desai (2002) is that interview creates an environment of inequality as one side (researcher) is having the control of the conversation, asking questions and demanding information and rarely does the same things he/she requires. Such circumstances will doubly lead to honestly and truly answers (Desai, 2002).

4. FINDINGS

This chapter will include description of outcomes of the conducted interviews which means it will have a review of the respondents' answers. As the empirical part of this research consists of two kinds of interviews the chapter is also divided into two parts one of which will observe the customers' points of view related to their satisfaction from service received and another one- employees' opinions. When the collected data is organized it is easier to analyze it.

4.1 Customer satisfaction

As the real names of the interviewees are related to the confidential information they will be named in this research as: A (a couple, appr.25 years old), B (a woman, appr.35 years old), C (a man, 29 years old), D (a man, 42 years old) and E (a man, appr.55 years old) so that the reader is not confused. All the managers will be mentioned by a pronoun 'he' as there is only one female manager in the sales department and the use of 'she' will clearly refer to her.

4.1.1 Dealer choice

The very first question in the interview with customers refers to their choice of the dealer center. It is created in order to understand what pushes

potential clients to contact the concrete autodealer. All of five respondents have stated more than one reason so this data will be better conceived if visually presented (figure 6).

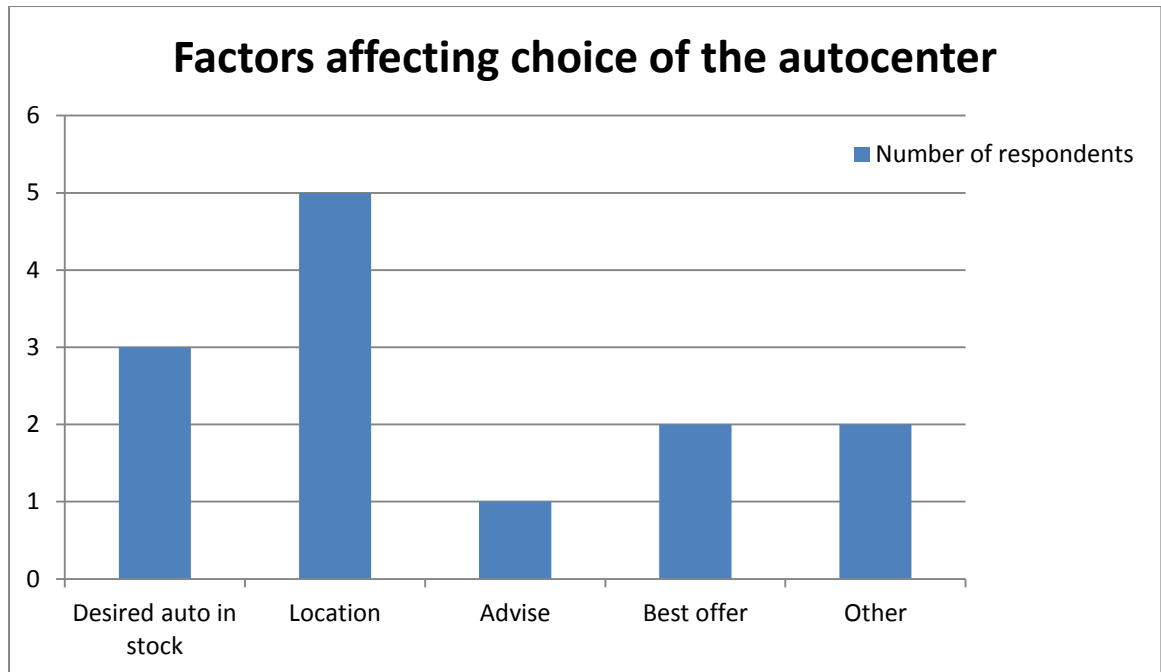


Figure 6. Factors affecting choice of the autocenter

The following diagram (figure 6) shows what factors were mentioned by the respondents. It could be seen that three factors were named by more than one interviewee out of five, that means these factors could be considered as ones of the most important for the clients. Location affected the choice of all five respondents. Interviewees A told the researcher that VAC had had the model they were interested in and apart from this the center was located close to the workplace of one of the respondents which made it more convenient to visit the dealer. B mentioned she was considering few centers according to their locations and availability of the concrete automobile, however the manager of this one made the best offer of price and purchase conditions. C was advised by a friend to deal with this autocenter, in addition C lives in the same region of the city. D was searching the internet and the website of VAC was among the first ones to display so he contacted the center and was told that the auto he was looking for was in stock and moreover he has realized it was not far away compared to others. Respondent E was contacting with another dealer center for a long period of time, however some problems occurred during communication with a manager so E visited many other centers two of

which proposed the best conditions but were both far away from his region. After searching the information and discovering that the new road connecting his region with the Vasileostrovskiy region would be opened next year, he decided to choose VAC.

4.1.2 Customer satisfaction with managers

The second question related to the process of contacting a manager. As it was already mentioned in the methodology part this question was developed in order to stimulate respondents to recall all the details of the communication process and the emotions connected with this process. The answers did not include any emotionally colored expressions, just a coherent story. Some of the interviewees had called in advance and were invited to the center, some had visited it first and met a manager who contacted them further. The details without customers' assessment are not important for this research so it will be described at further stages together with the emotional side.

This sub-chapter will include positive and negative feedbacks of customers according to their managers' work based on their answers to the third question. Managers of sales department are front-line employees so their communication with consumers is an inevitable part of customer service and is highly important to consider when thinking about service quality improvement.

As for positive attitudes, respondents mentioned knowledge of a product, politeness, courtesy and patience of managers. Respondent D was highly impressed by the fact that a manager had offered him coffee and had made it himself despite the fact that he had a considerable amount of things to do. His manager was always available on the phone even during the days-off. When D visited the autocenter, his manager was always there to help and accompany his customer during the whole process. D has never called the center himself, the manager always contacted him first reporting all the news about the purchase process. D told the manager had not asked however D left a feedback in a special book with the gratitude to the manager and advising the management to keep an eye on such a great specialist. 'Sometimes I felt his mood was absolutely far from calm and glad, maybe some problems occurred and like a human I realized he would

happily leave everything and go away, however, despite all this, he stayed a polite and kind interlocutor always smiling and greeting me. Such moments require a huge effort for every person to keep tranquil, I know it, so he really deserves an honor for being that obliging with me', states D.

On the contrary, respondents A were forced to change a manager as they were extremely astonished by his incompetence and lack of proficiency leading to A's dissatisfaction. They claimed he had invited them to the center promising to get all information ready by their arrival, however having arrived on time respondents had to wait for twenty minutes. During the conversation they have understood a manager had not collected the needed information, moreover he did not have any knowledge of a product and had always resorted to a senior manager. 'This is unacceptable! Amazing how this person can still be working in such an official organization. Before coming we were afraid that someone will be trying hard to make us buy a car and will talk without stops, however in reality we had to ask everything ourselves and received reluctant replies. Seemed like we were going to buy his own favorite car against his will. I cannot imagine if I would act like this at work', complaints one of A respondents. Finally, customers have asked to change a manager and as for the new one, they were totally satisfied with his level of knowledge and proficiency.

Answering the previous question, customer B told she had come to the center with a husband without calling in advance in order to have a look at a model they were interested in and to talk to managers to agree about price and other conditions. However, when they had found a car they could not find a price list so it was rather difficult to assess the benefits and disadvantages of a purchase. A couple have asked for a price however they were told only managers of the sales department possess information about the price however there were no managers available at the moment and the customers were suggested to wait for ten minutes. When twenty minutes passed B was very irritated: 'That is a very weird marketing technique. The company hides prices to push customers talk to managers, however managers are that busy so they hardly can print me a price. When I have asked for a price list I was told that prices are available on the Internet. So, a customer comes to the shop and cannot even get a price for a product, and has to go home and search for it on the Internet. It is illogical

and flagrantly. Other customers were leaving the center insulted and I'm sure they would never come back. However I was really interested in a purchase so I waited for 30 minutes and finally a salesperson came to me.' B states the manager was not extremely polite, he acted just as a normal employee should, however he has offered beneficial conditions of sale so that B's mood and satisfaction of the visit has considerably risen.

Customers C and E has given short answers stating that the managers have done their work in a proficient manner and their expectations of normal customer service were met however not exceeded, so nothing special has stuck in their memories before the purchase.

4.1.3 Customer satisfaction with other employees

This question has taken a time to think about for every respondent. The replies were similar on the whole, however some differences occurred. The following table 1 visually represents the respondents' answers.

Table 1. Other employees work perception

Perceptions of customers	A	B	C	D	E
positive	Friendly welcomed on the entrance Pleasant insurance and bank services representatives, described everything detailed	All employees are smiling	-	-	Employees are helpful and kind, even made a coffee however it was not their job
neutral	-	The manner of communication with customers depends on a mood	-	Everyone is doing their job and that's enough	-
negative	Haven't noticed that everyone was keen on helping	A lot of irritating questions on the entrance	Other but your own managers are not interested in not their customers	-	-

4.1.4 Environment perception

All the respondents have stated that if not taking into account the communications they went through, the atmosphere was rather neutral. A claimed it was noticeable that all customers were on their own, employees were also doing their own work. C has mentioned pleasant music which to his mind was properly chosen to accompany calm working process, as for

the employees some of them seemed like they were dreaming about going home, 'however we are all people, not robots, so I don't expect everyone to be crazy happy servants, dealing with humans always takes a lot of energy', stated C. E has said that employees were often discussing private topics, were not paying attention to new people in the showroom which didn't create official atmosphere however in whole it wasn't hectic. B was glad to look at cozy workers who had followed the corporative dress code what resulted in a pleasant atmosphere, apart from that other customers seemed to be delighted and well-balanced, so she concluded she felt this place was for decorous people. D said the staff seemed friendly and united however it was noticeable that some of them were exhausted and lost.

4.1.5 Factors leading to negative emotions

This question is far the most important one as it stimulates customers to talk about things they have memorized like the worst ones connected with the dealer center.

Customers A were highly annoyed by the fact that they were sometimes invited to the center as everything was ready however when they came it occurred that nothing was ready so the customers had to wait in the autocenter for a few hours.

Respondent B told that the situation with the absence of prices was inconceivable as customers had to spend their time on waiting for managers in order to get the price what was impossible to imagine in a usual shop. She claimed that while she was waiting calmly other customers were arrogant and she was sure that afterwards they told all of their friends never even come to that place. 'When you hear that price is available only in a private talk it creates a thought that there is no fixed price at all and that you are being cheated. Seems like the price will depend on customer's appearance, welfare or persistence, however this is not serious, unprofessional and simply not fair.' Apart from that she mentioned that moreover it was insulting when a customer agreed to meet the manager to bargain the price but he/she had to wait for a manager for such a long time. She is sure that is considered by customers as they are not valued and not respected.

Respondent C occurred not to finalize the purchase, he has made an order, has left a deposit however as he has stated while he was waiting for a car to be delivered his private circumstances has changed and he decided to refuse the deal. Unexpectedly, despite the fact the deposit was only 5000 rubles (= appr.90 euro) it took a customer a lot of effort and time to collect it back. His manager was ignoring him according to his words and trying to leave this deal at the last place. 'The customer should be well treated till the last moment, however the company lost their interest in me when I rejected the ordered automobile. The amount of money is miserable so this is about relation to a customer, they simply forget about you when you are not a money bag anymore. I am disappointed.'- complaints C.

D stated that despite the fact he had called to the center in advance and his manager greeted him at the entrance with all the information ready, however the respondent found it weird that one could not get a price for a car without talking to managers. He also was annoyed by the fact that there were no vacant parking places near the entrance.

Customer E has mentioned that sometimes he had to wait too long in the center what didn't make positive his staying there.

4.1.6 Service quality indicators

Combining all answers the respondents have named the following factors of great and proficient customer service:

- Managers are qualified and possess incredible knowledge about products
- Employees are staying late after opening times if a customer needs it, some managers come during their days-off
- After-sale calls in order to collect feedbacks
- The possibility to be transported from the underground station to the center

4.1.7 Facilities as a factor of service

All respondents have complained about the lack of the Internet, the system of switching to Wi-Fi is complicated, time-consuming and moreover does not even work. The television is repeating the same advertising videos,

there is no possibility to watch any channels. There are two computers in the customers area however respondents have rejected using them as it is inconvenient when anyone can watch you surfing the Internet, what is more it is considered to be unsafe to leave any personal data in the computers of public use. Customers were dissatisfied with the availability of entertainment facilities- 'no Internet, to television, only a couple of journals which bother you after twenty minutes, that are the reasons why customers are so disgruntled to wait. Allow a range of various facilities to minimize the dissatisfaction', advises respondent B.

The cleanliness of the center was considered by respondents to be of a good level, floors and toilets were neatly polished, however respondents A mentioned dirty tables in a café. The café was also refereed by other customers: respondent B was not satisfied by the bartender's politeness, however she also added that this fact did not play a big role in her perceptions of a dealer center. Respondent D was often staying late in the autocenter but the café closes at 6 p.m. so he was not able to have a lunch, what he considered to be very inconvenient. Respondent C complained about the quality of the offered coffee: 'That's an absolute trifle but nevertheless it spoils my overall experience as a customer as I feel like the company is being skimping money on me'.

Customers have appreciated the children area and agreed that it had a variety of things for kids to do, however some advised to install a small screen so that it can make children to sit still for a long period of time.

4.1.8 Suggestions for the improvement

Every respondent has offered suggestions concerning particular topics they were disappointed with, apart from that, they have made some conclusions based on their observations of other customers' serving. The following list demonstrates respondents' pieces of advice:

- Not to bother clients with the irritating questions on the entrance
- Provide full descriptions of car features and possible prices near the demonstrated cars
- Control the knowledge of salesperson
- Optimize processes to deduct the waiting time

- Diversify customers' area, add television and establish internet connection
- Lead the customer with the same concern from the very beginning till the very end not depending on his willingness to purchase
- Allocate salespersons' responsibilities in a more efficient way so that new customers don't have to wait for 30 minutes in order to get a price/ have a test-drive/ etc.

4.2 Employees' factor

The respondents will be named as X, Y and Z and as it was already mentioned their gender will be considered to be male.

4.2.1 General opinion

The first four questions were developed in order to create an overview of general employee's relation to the company and his opinion about its activities.

At the moment of the interview all three respondents were having different working experience in the company with the difference of 2 years. That means that interviewees were able to give more objective data as they all have different base the experience can be compared with. On the whole the respondents consider that customers' satisfaction of the sales department is slightly better than of the whole autocenter with the difference of about 10-20%. The interviewed employees have or would have personally advised the company to the people they know which leads to the fact that having observed operations from the inside they are generally satisfied with the company's efficiency and have a good level of trust. Respondent Y has supposed that marketing management should be reassessed to increase awareness among potential customers.

Although employees have a positive opinion of the autocenter as a trading company however there occurred to be a lot of things they would like to change in human resource management and some other inner company operations.

4.2.2 Motivation

The company operates a complicated system of a salesperson's wages: the amount received varies every month depending on several factors the main of which is implementation of a sales plan. The plan is often reassessed however it is usually being increased, the role of this plan is material (tangible) motivation. Apart from motivation there also exists a demotivation which is implemented with the help of various fines applied in certain conditions (being late, negative feedback from a customer, any other mistakes).

The respondent Y has confessed he doesn't apply 100% of effort due to the overestimated plan norms. Employee claims that the plan indicators are absolutely unrealistic to reach so there is no sense in putting an effort, however in case motivation becomes closer to reality than everyone including him personally will try hard to reach the plan as they will know that it will result in a deserved trophy.

Respondent Z on the contrary mentioned that the amount of demotivation should be decreased to the reason that in a current situation the more work managers have the more possible fines they can get, which discourages employees to take any extra work.

Respondent X has expressed his suggestion to add other motivation besides the material one. It can be the authorization of a manager who performed with the best results to use test drive cars in private aims or some other pleasant bonuses.

All employees have mentioned that their wage was not fixed and was totally dependent on the sales amount which resulted to the fact that in a period of economic difficulties in the country when there were almost no sales the managers received the amount equaling the national minimum subsistence level which was miserably low for Saint-Petersburg level of life. As a consequence, employees had the same amount of working hours but incredibly miserable wages.

4.2.3 Equity

All the three respondents have agreed that personal relations with people of higher positions played the greatest role in the way an employee was treated in a company. Despite the absurdity of this fact, this is a usual thing happening in Russian companies. However, respondent Y has recalled that earlier, during previous operating management, the environment was friendly and the staff was united, apart from that real personal achievements and experience influenced career growth. Unfortunately, in a contemporary company only those people who are friends with the executive can hope to achieve career growth. In addition, interviewee Z assumed that personality of employees and their personal rights were not being respected.

Apart from the ungrounded growth of some colleagues the respondents have also mentioned the unjustified dismissal of others, which led to the situation that prospecting specialists were losing jobs for the reason that they could have substituted their chiefs and as a result there was a lack of salespersons so some of them had to work extra days.

The respondents have agreed that the extent of their work satisfaction affects the customer service quality as sales department managers were the first straight contact customer experiences with a company. As a result, negative mood of a manager influences the perceived amount and quality of information and services provided to customers.

4.2.4 Suggestions

As it is shown in Table 2 suggested improvements by employees included both improvements of managers' output (direct work with customers) and the input (human resource management of company).

Table 2. Suggested improvements

Input	Output
-------	--------

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team unification • Staff value • Create and follow liabilities towards employees • Appreciation of experience and achievements, not personal relations • Transparent system of awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constant attention and contact with customer (alert in advance of all delays) • Being always nearby to help the customer • Caring about customers of other managers • Being always friendly
---	--

The respondents have different levels of job satisfaction: respondent Y is fully delighted with the performing activities however the company dissatisfies an employee, respondent Z is not fulfilled with the job itself and X could not give a clear answer. Nevertheless, all three interviewees have claimed that in their opinion the company was customer oriented as it collected customers' feedbacks and undertook actions regarding it.

5. DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

As the objective of this research is to identify how customer service can be enhanced on the basis of existing techniques and customers' perceptions of those techniques, it is now pertinent to discuss what techniques are applied by the company and according to the empirical interview research determine how customers and employees are feeling in the center. Then the suggestions of improvements will be made.

The following scheme (figure 7) illustrates the stages of analysis process: first the problem/factor mentioned by interviewees is stated, then the reason why it happens described, then its possible impact is given and finally the suggestions for improvements are advised.

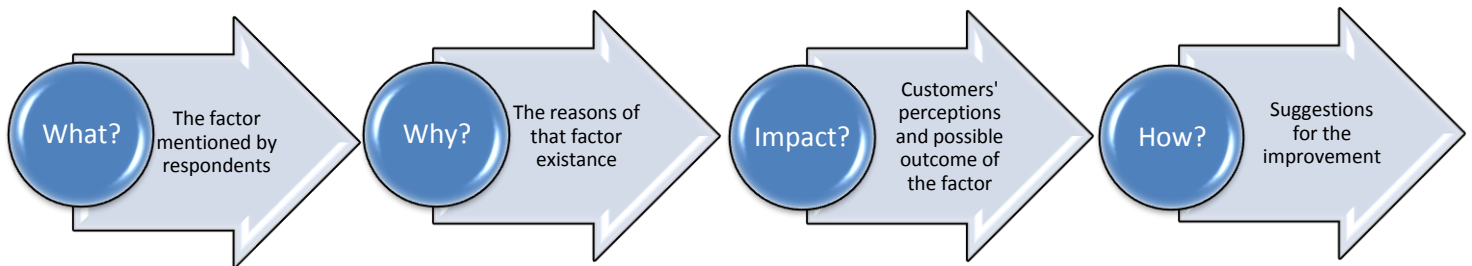


Figure 7. Analysis process

5.1 Identified factors affecting customer satisfaction with service and suggestions on their improvements

5.1.1 Welcoming visitors

According to the interviews the reader is now aware of the main points the customer faces which constitute the whole chain of service processes. These main points include the fact that at the entrance visitors are asked some questions that irritate them. To detail, the first of those questions is: 'Are you going to the sales department or to the repair services?'. When a reply 'sales department' is heard a next question follows asking whether a customer is at the first time in the center or has been there earlier. Empirical research has shown that customers are tend to be irritated by these nasty questions moreover they might feel a pressure put on them. These emotions experienced at the very beginning are not beneficial for customer service quality however there are logical reasons for those questions to be implemented by a management team.

The main aim of the dealer is to reach the result that each incoming potential client becomes a real customer. Customers who enter the center with other but a new car buying purpose (repairs, insurance prolongation

and other) do not require communication with the sales managers, however if a salesperson is not aware of a concrete customers' visit aim he/she will start collaboration thinking that these clients are interested in new cars. As a result, customers go away to the department they need without any interest shown and have just simply taken managers' time so that leads to the situation that potentially interested customers are waiting for the manager while he/she is talking to the wrong target group. Real customers feel like they are not valuable and they are not attracted to the concrete dealer center any more. Afterwards the word of mouth generates negative feedbacks among target groups and the amount of incoming traffic decreases which deducts the profit.

That is the reason for distinguishing customers according to their visit aim at the entrance, this responsibility lies on the reception representatives. The main aim of the receptionists (hostess) is to identify the first need of the incoming people and lead them to the place needed. Apart from that there is also a requirement to distinguish people who are interested in the sales department as they might be the first time in the center or not, they might seek for the concrete manager or for any one. This might be considered as not important at all however this fact does really affect the result of the service received by the customers.

If there would be the one picture of the ideal visit to the dealer from the customers' point of view, then it would be thousands time easier to make the customer service better. However, there are different people who enter the center with different aims. Some of them just want to come in, walk through the cars, sit in all of them, don't be ever disturbed by the managers, draw their own opinion about the car and go away. Others on the contrary require a lot of attention, they want everyone to be ready to fulfill customer's wants and needs and every specialist to be waiting for their visit all day long. That is why the front office of autocenter consists of several elements which make connection between each other. One of those elements is reception which identifies the need of a customer at the beginning and proceeds this information to sales department.

Apart from that, the autocenter leads statistics of incoming traffic which indicates the amount of people visited each department during a day. This

is another reason for asking customers those irritating questions at the entrance.

However, to reduce the extent of annoyance, the process of identifying customers' needs might be changed in a way that customers could be given a couple of minutes to look around and accustom, afterwards a hostess comes and starts communication. Automatically, visitors of other departments will not be touched as they will forward straightly to the place they need, while sales department customers are more likely to walk through the showroom. Hence, the amount of annoyed incoming people will decrease and the questions could be asked in a calm atmosphere not when a person is on his way entering the center.

5.1.2 Price absence

The next point mentioned by an interviewee was a lack of price. Naturally, there are no prices in the showroom available for customers as management of the company expects this would stimulate a communication between interested clients and salespersons. It is planned that every excited customer will be able to get a specialist who would carefully lead the dialogue about prices and at the same time use special tactics to get as much information about the customer as possible. Hence, every incoming potential consumer will be in customer base and moreover manager of sales are trained to push clients to the purchase in a professional way which consequently leads to sales increase.

However, what happens in a reality most frequently is that there is a lack of vacant salespersons so a customer is kindly asked to wait for some time in order to get a price. Obviously, further, a customer who is left alone for uncertain period is going bad-tempered as waiting requires a lot of patience. In case a salesperson finally manages to communicate with a customer who has been waiting it is possible that the customer will become already irascible and nervous by that time which can lead to manager's depressed mood and unsuccessful communication. If no one gets free and a customer goes away without any result of visiting the center he/she feels anger and dissatisfaction due to the wasted time, moreover a client considers him/her-self to be not valued what results in negative emotions.

The solution of this problem is rather simple and obvious- the availability of price lists for all possible specifications of represented in the showroom car models will help to avoid customers' negative reaction and dissatisfaction. There will still be a benefit for potential consumers in contacting with a salesperson due to variety of special purchase conditions and possible discounts or offers. This will help to keep a certain amount of customers satisfied and reduce the negative feedbacks.

5.1.3 Waiting time

A couple of respondents have also complained about long waiting for a salesperson. This situation occurs due to the inappropriate division of personnel' roles during the day. It often happens that while one manager is responsible for the incoming calls for a couple of hours, several others are having planned meetings with their customers and only one or even no one is left in the showroom meeting new visitors. Consequently, customers have to wait for a long time whether it is a totally new client or an already existing one having agreed a meeting with a manager.

As a possible solution a chief manager should develop a curriculum of planned meetings and lunch times of all salesperson so that there are always more than two managers ready to start new communications. Apart from that, it is essential for managers to lead their existing customers with a strong care and precisely plan all the stages of purchase process in advance so that by a customer's visit everything is ready and waiting time is not required- that is a straight responsibility of a sales manager.

5.1.4 Follow-up

One of the interviewees has complained about complicated process of taking back the left deposit when a purchase is being denied. The following system applies in the center- a customer comes personally to the dealer and fills a special application where the bank details are stated, afterwards a manager who has been contacting this client transfers the documents to the accounting office where the application is processed and the deposit is transferred to the customer's bank account. This process is considered by managers to be extra unpaid work as the bargain is being denied so they prefer to proceed with other potential or existing customers first.

However, the delay in officially declared deadlines of refund leads to unsatisfied terms of customer-autocenter agreement which can result not only in customer's dissatisfaction and negative feedbacks but also might cause undesirable legal trials. Moreover, according to theoretical background discussed in Chapter 2.2.9 follow-up stage is an inevitable part of successful implementation of customer service and developing of customer relationships.

As a solution, a special controlling method might be administered, for instance a senior manager collects all applications at the end of every working day and in the morning passes it to the accountant or, as an alternative, one salesperson is appointed responsible and controls the stages of the process. According to Rai (2013) it is 5 times easier and 15 times less expensive to retain an existing customer than to acquire a new one. In case a refund process becomes more systemized the amount of satisfied customers will be increased and what is more the possibility of repeat orders will occur.

5.1.5 Competency of managers

The interview shows that some managers are not enough qualified and do not possess the required amount of knowledge to be able to serve customers professionally. The standards of Kia Motors Rus include periodical examinations of all sales managers however a human brain has an ability to quickly forget information which is not in a permanent use. A special training activity exists in Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter which is practiced every morning by all managers of the day shift. Training lasts about half an hour and consists of revision of theory and practice of communication, in addition a new head of sales department has included various game-based activities helping to 'wake up'. This morning time can be used by senior manager also to examine weaknesses in theory knowledge of each manager and to fill those gaps during next session. Apart from that some lecturers can be invited and extra examinations held in order to have a full control of managers' knowledge base.

5.2 Improvement of facilities

According to customers' complaints and suggestions the following diagram (figure 8) is presented in order to illustrate which improvements should be made among provided facilities:

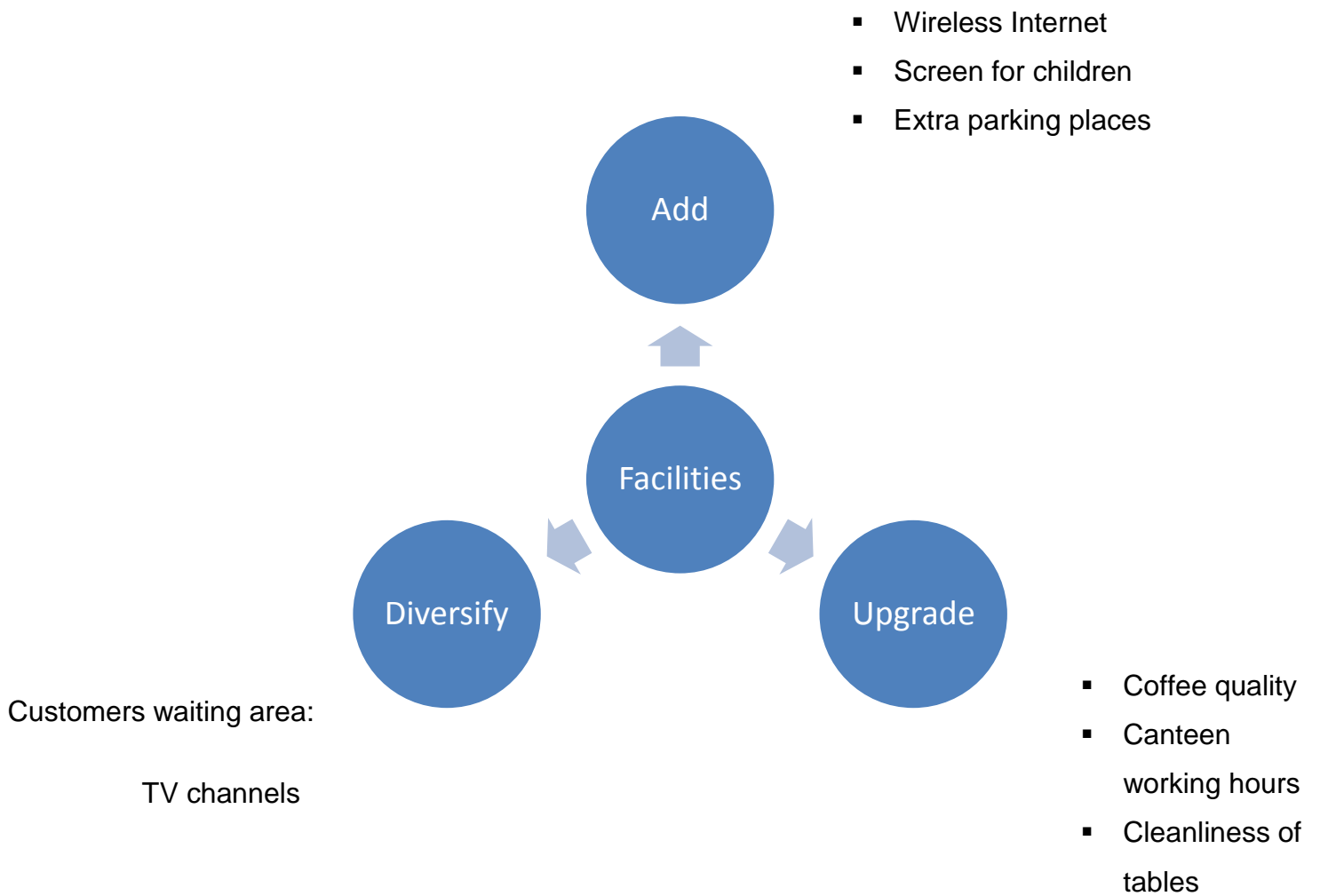


Figure 8. Suggested facilities improvements

5.3 Improvement of employee factor by changing employee-managerial relationships

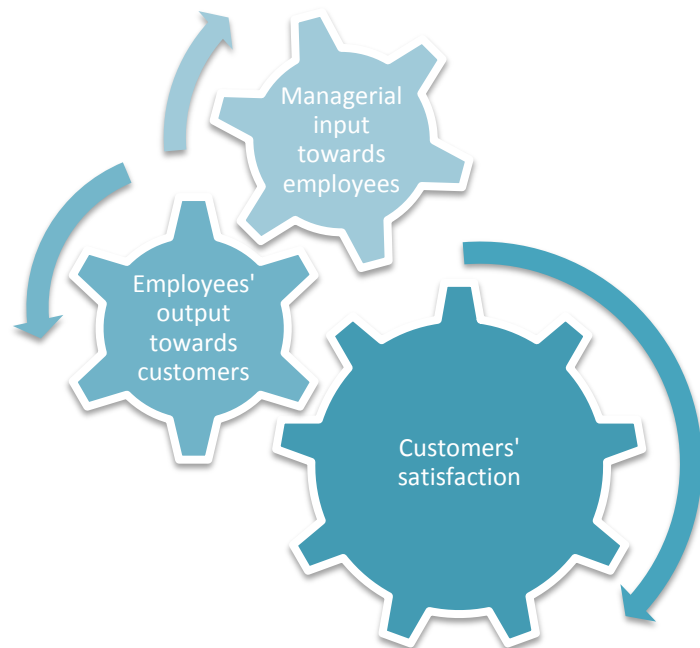


Figure 9. Management, salespersons and customers correlation

The figure 9 above demonstrates the correlation and interdependence between three groups: management of the company, sales department employees and customers, and the effect of their actions towards each other.

According to the theoretical background and empirical research represented in Chapters 2 and 3 it is clear that customer service depends on perceived emotions which are affected by communication with front-line employees whose performance quality is influenced by working conditions regulated by the company's direction and top management.

Having considered, analyzed and combined employees' answers it was concluded that following problematic factors decrease the level of job satisfaction and the amount of effort made:

- High level of sales plans resulting in weak motivation
- Considerable amount of possible fines resulting in strong demotivation

- Unstable salary level
- Importance of personal relations
- Unjustified redundancy of highly professional perspective specialists
- Ungrounded growth of new employees with low sales indicators
- Disrespect of personality and rights

All these factors build a picture of contemporary situation in the company and this picture dramatically contrasts with the ideas of great customer service components expressed in Chapter 2.1.2 of this research: equity theory and appropriate team leadership as indicators of great employee engagement. Sales department employees are personally insulted by the company and as a result are emotionally disengaged which leads to impossibility to deliver outstanding customer service.

Applying methods to turn discovered factors into positive ones will help to raise employees' efficiency in order to reach following results:

- ✓ The effort is on a maximum level as motivation is realistic and desirable
- ✓ Managers are always greeting clients with a positive attitude
- ✓ The extra work is fairly awarded and as a consequence always welcomed and accepted
- ✓ The team is united and managers are interested in customers equally independently on who leads the customer and customer's will to finalize a bargain
- ✓ The working environment is pleasant and allows to develop as a specialist in the sphere
- ✓ The company cares about employees and respects their rights and employees are working hard in order to improve company's efficiency (mutual benefit)

The researcher will suggest some steps which will definitely help the company to get closer to the aims stated above however the final decision is left for the direction of the company to be discussed and made.

The following figure 10 presents suggested actions towards human resource management and the results it will lead to.

Lower the planned sales bar



Realistic
motivation

Deduct fines



Decreased
demotivation

Fix a minimum wage equaling
average amount received so that
employees' salary does not fully
depends on economic situation



Increased employees'
confidence and stability
level

Establish systemized requirements
for growth potential



Equal career prospects

Work with existing employees to
improve their sales indicators and
skills instead of getting rid of
unfavorable staff and employing and
teaching new ones



Reduced staff turnover,
team unification

Figure 10. Employee factor improvements suggestions

5.4 Conclusion of results

The main objective of this research is to give suggestion on methods of improvement of customer service. According to the theoretical background it is concluded that customer service perception by clients is built on assessment of delivered value which is everything beyond the core product and services. The extent of satisfaction from this value straightly depends on gained experience from dealing with a company which consists of perceived emotions and perception of company's values. Chapter 5.1 describes techniques which are perceived negatively by customers and proposes solutions to enhance organizations' values from the customers' perspective. Emotions perceived by clients are considered by different sources to be composed of assessment and perception of environment and communication with front-line employees. Chapter 5.2 presents a figure demonstrating a variety of actions which should be launched in order to improve facilities provided to customers inside the autocenter and 5.3 Chapter investigates factors affecting quality of service delivered to customers straightly from sales department employees and suggests methods of turning these factors into positive stimulators encouraging employees to achieve the lacking components of excellent customer service leading to full customer satisfaction. Having considered all eliminated factors affecting customer service, combining and realizing all suggested methods into life the direction of the company will dramatically increase the level of customers' satisfaction.

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of the main findings

This research was aimed at assessing the customer service provided in sales department of KIA dealer Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter, identifying weaknesses of applied techniques that affect customers' perception and experience and suggest possible improvements. The question of the research reflected methods on improvement of service delivered to customers in sales department, sub-questions were concerning identifying methods already used by the company, the customers' feelings of those

techniques and their impact on the business, determining weak factors decreasing satisfaction of consumers and providing possible ways of their enhancing.

In order to research customer service it was necessary to investigate previous topic researches and sources, Chapter 2 examines existing works of different authors concerning customer service with the aim to conclude about its components and levers of improvement. It is concluded that customer satisfaction is composed of perceptions of the company's values, the experience gained while dealing with the company and customers' emotions received from different factors.

The method of researching was chosen to be qualitative due to the fact that deep and emotionally colored data would more efficiently indicate problematic issues. The empirical part of the research consisted of two kinds of interviewees conducted with five existing customers and three sales department employees. The interviews has shown that there are several factors existing which lead to customers' dissatisfaction, apart from that sales managers have also complained about negative elements of human resource management which impair their job satisfaction level and affect professional efficiency.

These discovered factors relate to such methods applied the autocenter as product price absence, welcoming visitors with the questions and weak process systematization leading to long waiting time. Moreover, human factor also plays an inevitable role in customer perceptions which means employees should be trained and controlled more effectively. Apart from that, some facilities which could fulfill customers' wishes are lacking.

From the inside perspective the extent of employee's job satisfaction is rather low which results in limitations of self-development, lack of respect of the company and its values and decrease in service quality provided directly to customers.

The combinations of above statements will hardly lead to excellent customer service, however suitable suggestions were offered to the company which will considerably benefit from implementing it. The researcher advises a commissioner to demonstrate the prices and

reallocate manager's responsibilities in a way that several salespersons are always available, moreover it is offered to slightly change the system of need identification to reduce customers' irritation. The additional examinations of managers' knowledge are required as well as extra control of refund procedures.

Certain facilities changes are also suggested such as establishing wireless Internet connection, optimize canteen working hours and diversify waiting area to ease the waiting time.

The final improvements inevitably required for customer satisfaction are professional, responsive and amiable front-line employees. However, this cannot be achieved without their job fulfillment and appropriate level of motivation. Creating fair and equal growth opportunities, introducing new rightful conditions of salary increase and deduction and strengthening team spirit- these actions will exactly enhance the level of staff efficiency and company care.

As a conclusion, the customers' feelings were revealed, factors which cause negative ones –named, suggestions on changes advised and as a result, the objective and sub-objectives of the thesis were fulfilled and a question and sub-questions answered.

6.2 Implications for the commissioner

The commissioner is provided with the results of this research and suggestions on further development. The actions proposed in this research are not costly and consequently will not bring loss or extra cost to the company, however if there is a possibility to widen the area of improvement it is highly suggested to use the third party services for staff trainings or it can also be beneficial to employ a specialist responsible for teaching as this need will be constant due to the changing environment.

Some of the employees have been working for the company for a long period of time on the contrary to top management of the autocenter, and their attitude have changed together with the substitutions of operating management, this fact proves that the core reason for decreasing

satisfaction of employees is inappropriately selected business techniques which a new management has introduced.

This research will definitely help new directory of the autocenter to understand problematic issues of those techniques and decide on methods of their improvement which will lead to an increase in customer satisfaction resulting in sales ascent.

The first improvement which requires to be implicated is change of the techniques applied in the showroom , that involves adding price lists nearby the presented automobiles, avoiding asking irritating questions at the entrance and reorganize employees' responsibilities to minimize waiting time. Current organization of techniques leads to customers' negative emotions and dissatisfaction, as according to the empirical data collected, which sometimes results in losing potential buyers. Applying suggested changes the management of the company will avoid negative feedbacks, decrease disloyalty level and improve customers' perceptions of company's values and attitudes to visitors.

Moreover, operating management of the company is highly advised to introduce special extra arrangements of salespersons knowledge control such as the third party teaching services or additional examinations in order to ensure every manager's qualification and proficiency. Apart from that, refund of deposit process should be simplified and carefully controlled as follow-up is an essentially important part of customer relationships establishment.

The next suggestion is facilities diversification based on the interviews' indications that customers did not feel as there were a lot of variable facilities provided for their convenience in the center and had offered several assumptions how this situation could be improved. Wireless Internet establishment, children screen setting, parking area enlargement, TV channels addition, extension of canteen working hours, control of cleanliness and substitution of cheap coffee by one of great quality- these actions will guarantee customers' convenience and comfort during their stay in the autocenter. As a result, waiting time will become less annoying and irritating for customers' of all departments what will lead to deduction of

negative emotions and as a consequence to a total service quality improvement.

Finally, appropriate working conditions are necessary for ensuring a salesperson's customer-orientation and company care. Aiming at enhancing employees' efficiency and increasing their efforts the head of sales department is suggested to increase material motivation by decreasing sales plan and provide equal growth opportunities and facilitate team unification. These actions will lead to salespersons' team spirit strengthening, increased working mood and complaisant attitude towards customers. Mutual benefit for the company and its employees will result in pleased customers and consequent sales increase.

The core target group of this research was customers of sales department however there are also repair services provided in the center what as well attracts a lot of visitors who often leave a considerable amount of negative feedbacks. In order to improve the whole autocenter's efficiency, it is highly recommended to investigate the extent of customers' satisfaction from repair service department and undertake actions on the improvement of center's reputation.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

This research examines the service provided for customers of Kia dealer Vasileostrovskiy Autocenter in Saint-Petersburg. Several factors affecting customer service were identified due to the research and as a result several topics for further development and research are concluded.

Price absence affects customer perceptions of the autocenter rather negatively, a lot of customers are lost and several negative feedbacks are received. Further research could examine the influence of pricing on the purchase decisions and possible impacts of hiding the price and making it dependent on negotiations with salespersons.

Organization of showroom is another area of improvement suggested in the research and this area needs to be analyzed more deeply. This includes welcoming visitors, demonstration of a product and other services provided to accompany the successful visit. Further research could examine what

are possible ways and methods of meeting customers and serving them during their visit and conclude the best ones.

This research has mentioned customer expectations as a factor affecting perceptions of service quality and this theme is of highly interest to modern organizations. What are customers' expectations relating to different business spheres and especially inside the automotive industry and what are possible ways of meeting and exceeding those expectations? Answering these questions further research could enhance services quality in the region and improve the level of consumption procedures.

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INTERVIEW WITH CUSTOMERS

1. Before making a purchase, did you have any other alternative dealer centers?
If no, what are the reasons you were considering only our center?
If yes, what factors did affect your choice in favor of us?
2. Could you please shortly describe the procedure of your contacts with managers before the purchase?
3. To what extent are you satisfied with your manager's work? Please mention the knowledge of the product, the willingness to help, the extent of molestation, any rudeness/courtesy or everything else what dissatisfied or pleased you.
4. How did other employees treat you? Were you happy with the way you were welcomed on the entrance, with the work of insurance and bank service representatives, other but your own managers, did you feel that you are always welcomed by every worker and that everyone is ready to offer their help to you?
5. How do you find the whole atmosphere in the autocenter, was it nice and official, or was it suppressive? Did you feel that employees are happy to serve the customers and are willing to work hard and that the other customers are satisfied?
6. Can you recall of any negative moments that irritated you while being in the center?
7. What can you name as indicators of professional customer service you faced in the center?
8. Were you satisfied with facilities available for the customers (coffee, internet, magazines, clean toilets, the canteen, children area, waiting area, etc.)?
9. What could be improved in order to exceed customers' expectations?
10. Anything else you would like to mention

INTERVIEW WITH EMPLOYEES

1. How long have you been working on a current position for this company?
2. What do you think about the company in whole as an automobile trader?
3. In your own opinion, to what extent are the customers satisfied by the company and all of its services?
What about sales department then?
4. Have you personally advised this company to the people you now in a real life?
Why?
5. Not taking into account your relation to the company, what would you personally advise to improve/change/add/deduct in the autocenter in order to increase customer satisfaction?
6. Do you feel that you are performing at your best or do you think you could honestly do more? If second option is chosen the question to be asked: What are the reasons you are not doing your best?
7. How are company and management treating you as an employee? Do you feel your value, are you and your rights respected, are you treated equally to other colleagues?
8. What changes would you like to be made in the human resource management?
9. Have you ever suggested those changes and what impact did this action have?
10. To what extent are you pleased with your job? Why?
11. Do you think your level of job satisfactions has an impact on customer service?
Justify.
12. Can you claim that the company is customer-oriented and why?