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Customer Satisfaction Survey Process in a Service-Based Company

Case Verkotan Oy

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ABSTRACT

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Verkotan Oy is a company which provides testing services for wireless devices worldwide. They are based in Oulu, Finland. The company uses laboratories to test international standards and certificate services for their clients. They use Finnish and English for their communications.

The objective of this thesis is to plan a customer satisfaction survey which Verkotan can use to ask their customers how the service was. At the time when this thesis was started, they did not have a systematic way of doing this yet and were nevertheless supposed to collect feedback. In the past, they have asked about the service quality verbally. This was done with the clients during their sessions together or after their business has concluded. The questions have involved service quality and improvement opportunities.

The research was done from studying various sources through online databases in the form of eBooks. The research covers the importance of customer satisfaction and the theory behind it. Valuable information was also gained from my contact personnel at Verkotan regarding their business processes and ideology. The processes of Verkotan were mapped out into a diagram and they were used to analyze the important aspects to their clients. These aspects were then used to create a survey that Verkotan can use on their clients. They can then improve their processes and customer experience to satisfy customers according to their needs.

The conclusion to the thesis is that a successful analysis of the processes was made to achieve a certain set of questions that can be used by Verkotan however they wish. The questions arose from key aspects that were identified as key ones for the company and their customers.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, Feedback, Service Quality, Customer Experience

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the world of today every business tries to stay competitive and maximize profits. One of the most important things to achieve this goal is customer satisfaction. If the customers are not satisfied with what they are getting, they will most likely stop doing business with you and go do it somewhere else. The customers compare their expectations and their perceptions to determine their level of satisfaction. This means that businesses want to keep their customers happy to keep them coming back for more.

Verkotan Oy provides testing services for wireless devices worldwide. They are based in Oulu, Finland. These devices include cell phones, tablets, antenna base stations, trackers and military radios. They use their laboratories to test the devices for international standards and certificate services for their clients. They are in the process of incorporating a customer satisfaction program into their business, which is why they have asked me to plan a survey for them. In the past they had done this verbally with their clients during their business or after everything had concluded.

This thesis focuses on customer satisfaction and the theory behind it as well as identifying important quality dimensions that are used to assess business processes. Verkotan's business processes are also looked upon and mapped out. It will then include identifying important dimensions for their processes. These will then be used to create questions which the company can use on their surveys for their clients. This will help the company improve their customer satisfaction program.

2 CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

2.1 Significance of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction comes from the perceptions of customers' expectations being met. If purchases match the expectations of the customer, they are generally satisfied. If expectations are not met, customers will be dissatisfied. Satisfied customers are more likely to do business with a company multiple times. They are also more likely to refer the company to their friends and family members. Satisfaction also ties together with sales, service and profits. Satisfied customers are more likely to spend money, thus increasing business profits. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 5.)

The goal of a business should not be focused on creating a quality service or a product but instead in creating loyal customers who are satisfied with what you provide. These customers are the ones who will stay with your services or products and are likely to come back to do business with you. According to this idea, quality service becomes key in order to meet the expectations. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 6.)

The quality of a product or service can be defined as "Whatever the customer says it is." This means that the quality expectations do not come from the company itself, but from the customers. It is essential to know what the customer defines as quality, so companies can understand them better and meet their needs. Customers pay for what they use and that gives them the value (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 7.)

Poor service can cost a lot of money. There is the lost customer revenue, which means the money that was lost because customers went to competitors because of poor service. There is the lost opportunity revenue, which means the amount of potential money that will be lost due to customers that are dissatisfied and may refer to associates not to do business with the company. There are also the customer replacement costs, which means the gaining of new customers to fill in the void of the ones that were lost. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 9.)

Quality is the other part that can cost a ton of money. Inadequate quality can make you lose customers and will turn away potential future ones. There are a multitude of things that can affect this factor. Performance costs happen when something is done without error and revisit, so that a second time is not needed. Rework costs are associated with doing something again because of failures that needed to be corrected. Detection costs arise when detecting issues in quality and includes inspection costs. Prevention costs come up when small quality issues come up before they reach quality control. It is very important to have excellent quality in everything that is done to address issues and suitability beforehand. Otherwise, these things will take their toll in the future. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 10.)

Having superior quality allows businesses to have access to key factors that promote business. Prices can be set higher when service and quality are at a high tier. Improving quality also decreases costs in production as things get done right the first time. Profitability is increased when customer expectations are met which leads to savings in cost and higher sales. Along with this comes higher market share, as customers are more likely willing to pay for higher quality services or products, even at a higher cost. Marketing and advertising costs are also decreased. If a company sells more, their costs per sale decrease effectively. This will also increase referrals and word-of-mouth. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 11.)

There is a clear relationship between quality, customer service and satisfaction. This becomes even easier to grasp when the thought: "Service and quality are what the customer says they are, not as what the company defines them to be", is understood. The customer's perception of their expectations being met is satisfaction. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 12.)

2.2 Concepts of Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is somewhat of a new concept to as it was only identified in the 1970s and worked more on in the 80s. There are two theories that explain customer satisfaction the best and they are disconfirmation theory and expectancy-value theory. (Mill, 2011, 7-8.)

Disconfirmation theory states that customers compare new services with a certain standard that they have developed for themselves. Based on this theory, customers purchase according to their own attitudes, expectations and intentions. After they have gone through the experience, they develop a perception of it and evaluate it in their mind. In the end, they compare their service performance to their expectation or standard that they have developed. (Oliver, R. L. 1980). The conclusion is either satisfaction, dissatisfaction or confirmation. (Mill, 2011, 8.)

In this theory, there are four components: expectations, performance perceived, disconfirmation and satisfaction. Expectations are the expectations of the customer before they consume the product or service. Performance perceived is the customer's own perception to the product or service. Disconfirmation happens if there is a discrepancy between the customer's expectation and the actual performance they experienced. In the end, a degree of satisfaction is achieved with the combination of the other three attributes. (Mill, 2011, 8.)

Expectancy-value theory on the other hand suggest that customers make judgments about a product or service and its benefits as well as looking at the outcomes of consumption. This way people will learn to follow behavior that gives positive results. The overall attitude they get is according to their beliefs about the attributes of their purchase and the strength of them. This is shown in formula 1. (Mill, 2011, 9.) Both theories show that there is a difference in perception and expectation which create satisfaction.

The theory is as follows:

$$Q = \sum I_i (P_i - E_i)$$

where

Q is the overall quality

I is the importance of the service attribute of i ,

P is perception

E is expectation

The total sum then comes in the end from the different service attributes.

FORMULA 1: Expectancy-Value Theory (Carmen, J. M. 1990, 49-50)

It is impossible to say what the customer wants exactly and what is important to them in business relations. The only way this can be done is by asking them. By asking customers their subjective opinions, we get closer to the truth. This feedback can be either pleasant or painful to hear, but that is unimportant; what matters is the truth. If the customers would not be asked, how would anyone know that they had complaints or had an awful experience. Companies want to know their shortcomings so they can be remedied. If complaints are replied to quickly and the customer is pleased, it can leave them with even greater satisfaction and loyalty. Even if this works however, it is not a method that should be used too frequently, because companies need to be able to figure things out before they cause dissatisfaction. (Goldstein, 2009, 6.)

A good facilitator for this is having quantifiable units. If something is measured, it gets input, gets completed and can be improved. That is the reason why measurements are very crucial to improve quality. This can be done using numbers or qualitative research. (Gerson, Machosky, 1993, 6.) There are various different ways of gathering data: interviews, email questionnaire, phone surveys, focus groups, observing, reports and so on. Quantitative data allows people to compare the performance data from a specific time period to another, that is why it is important. For a company, performance indicators are necessary. (Goldstein, 2009, 8.) There are four different quantitative scales for data in

customer feedback as shown in figure 1. The nominal scale is used in categorization as in likes and dislikes; tried or did not try. Ordinal scales give scales such as bad/neutral/good and allows more categorization. It also gives the order of preference. In interval scales, distance is very meaningful, such as 50 people to 70 people or temperature in Celsius. It can have an arbitrary zero point. Ratio scale is a number from a true origin of zero. It is also important to have the correct scales when asking customers. They need to be tailored to receive the most accurate and valuable information. That means they need to have good amount of relevant answer choices. (Goldstein, 2009, 10-11.)

Nominal:		
Male	Female	
Ordinal:		
7 th grade	8 th grade	9 th grade
Interval:		
Rate this product from one to ten:		
0	5	10
Ratio:		
How old are you? _____		

Figure 1: Examples of Quantitative Scales

There is also qualitative data in feedback. These questions seek answers for questions that cannot be answered by simple numbers or scales, but by words. From numerical values companies can determine what they need to work on a specific department. From comments, they can understand the reasons for their customers' needs. Neither data is sufficient alone in customer surveys. It is highly recommended to program questions in ways that both qualitative and quantitative data are acquired. (Goldstein, 2009, 15.)

3 QUALITY AND MEASUREMENTS

3.1 Process Creation

A general process of creating customer questionnaires is to focus on essential elements of understanding the customers' opinions. There are three simple steps in a general model as presented in figure 2. (Hayes, 2012, 7.)

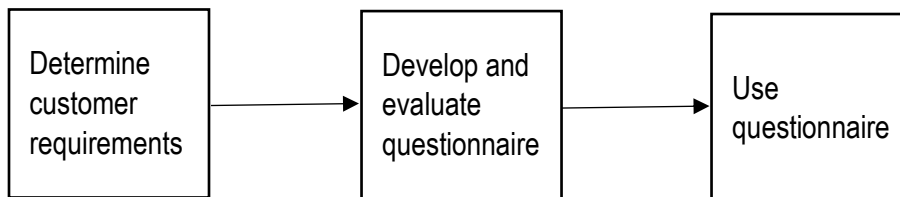


Figure 2: Examples of quality dimensions and definitions (Hayes, 2012, 8).

The first step is to identify these customer requirements or quality dimensions, as they will be referred to later, which are the important aspects of the service or product. They define the quality of the said service or product. It has been stated before that understanding the customer is key to satisfaction. The second step is developing the questionnaire in a way that allows the pre-determined customer requirements to be assessable from the customer's perspective. It should also be made user-friendly, to not drive away the customers from filling it. The last step is to use the questionnaire after it has been developed. From the answers, it should be possible to measure specific information on the customers' perception. Of course, this information needs to be stored as well, so the information will be reachable when analyzing. (Hayes, 2012, 8.)

3.2 Quality Dimensions

The idea behind defining the quality dimensions is to list the important aspects that define a certain product or service. This way the customers can define the quality for the product or service. If these dimensions are understood correctly, it becomes easier to measure them and improve them. There can be a set of standardized quality dimensions that effectively generalize a variety of services or products; however, there are dimensions that will only affect certain types of services and products. Some of the general ones are: availability, convenience, responsiveness and timeliness (Kennedy; Young, 1989, 87-91). These dimensions could be included in industries such as hotels and banking, but then there can be differences such as food quality in the hotels. In this way, other industries can have dimensions that are unique to them. (Hayes, 2012, 11.)

It is crucial that every company identifies their own quality dimensions in order to understand their own services or products. Quality development approach is a way to identify these dimensions. This involves individuals who are closely working in a quality circle or individuals that try to independently understand the requirements of customers. In this case, the people are involved within the business process and should have enough knowledge to understand the specific purpose of what they provide. This involves identification of the dimensions and then giving specific ways for them to be defined. (Hayes, 2012, 12-13.)

1. **Availability of support:** the degree to which the customer can contact the provider
2. **Responsiveness of support:** the degree to which the provider reacts promptly to the customer
3. **Timeliness of support:** the degree to which the job is accomplished within the customer's stated time frame and/or within the negotiated time frame
4. **Completeness of support:** the degree to which the total job is finished
5. **Pleasantness of support:** the degree to which the provider uses suitable professional behavior and manners while working with the customer

Figure 3: Examples of quality dimensions and definitions (Hayes, 2012, 13).

The dimensions then need to be developed even further by declaring specific cases for all the scenarios that they represent. They should cover all the possible examples that are associated with the specific dimension. They also should include an action verb that specifically describes a part of the service or product. For example, they could be about a certain task in the process or behavior performed by staff. This allows the customers to assess these easier and with more clarity. If the dimensions are clearly defined and sufficient, customers should completely understand them. The generation of the examples along with the dimension can be done at the same time or by creating the examples first. Figure 4 has examples to figure 3's quality dimensions. From them, a list of assessments could be made to customers to evaluate their customer experience. This could then be used to create questions for surveys. (Hayes, 2012, 14.) There can also be a category that asks for overall satisfaction with a service that can be used. This does not need to be based on any specific dimension and it serves as a final question or two. (Hayes, 2012, 26.)

Availability of Support

1. I could get help from the staff when I needed
2. The staff was always available to help
3. I could contact the staff at any time I needed
4. The staff was there when needed
5. I could arrange convenient meeting times with the staff

Responsiveness of support

1. They were quickly to respond when I asked for help
2. They immediately helped me when I needed help
3. I waited a short period of time to get help after I asked for it

Completeness of support

1. They ensured that every aspect of the job was completed
2. They completed everything they said they would do
3. They were there to provide help from the beginning to the end of the project

Figure 4: Examples of quality dimensions with declarative statement descriptions (Hayes, 2012, 15.)

3.3 Creating Questionnaires

Customer satisfaction questionnaires are developed in four stages. First, questions need to be determined. Second, the response format needs to be chosen. Then the introduction to the questionnaire needs to be written. Lastly, the final contents need to be chosen from the original set of satisfaction items. (Hayes, 2012, 57.)

When asking questions or casing scenarios, certain rules should be followed. The text should be made concise and difficult words should be avoided. Questions should not be ambiguous or vague either, as this can create confusion in the meaning of the question and thus create different answers. They need

to be clearly defined, to prevent wrong interpretations. It is recommended to specify statements to give the customers the right idea and get better responses. For example, "The service provider was good", could instead be "The service provider was friendly to me." A single item should also represent one thought and ask only one thing. If a positive answer were to come from this sort of a "two-part" question, it could mean that the responder agrees with both listed items. If the response was negative however, we would not understand what part the answer was referring to. It is therefore a better idea to cut a question or statement into two parts. "The service provider was friendly and processed the transaction quickly", would instead be listed as two separate items: "The service provider was friendly", and "The service provider was quick with the transaction." Another thing that should be avoided is the use of double negatives, as they create confusion and over complicates things. (Hayes, 2012, 61-62.)

To obtain results, things need to be measured. This is true for questionnaires as well. Answers need to be made quantifiable. It is useful to use scales for the measurements that can be used to calculate results. A simple checklist format would be a response format with a "yes" or a "no" to a specific question. The results could then be easily measured, as the number of positive answers could be compared to the number of negative ones. This is very easy to measure and can yield results, however it cannot go into much detail. (Hayes, 2012, 62-63.)

Likert-type response formats are a way of getting more depth out of a question. They allow responses to be put into degrees of satisfaction towards an item. It offers a spectrum of a low and a high end to be answered to. The low end means a negative response and the high end means a positive response. Responders can answer to the level accordingly to what their experience was like relating to each specific case or item. These can be in an agree-disagree spectrum, satisfied-dissatisfied spectrum or in a good-poor spectrum. (Hayes, 2012, 64) Statistically having more options rather than just "yes" and "no" is more reliable. Five scale points are deemed as enough, as higher answer points do not increase reliability and have minimal incremental change. These types of scales also allow for the percentage of positive and negative answers to be measured as well. If a good-poor spectrum is taken into consideration, the good/very good options give positive answers and the poor/very poor show negatives. (Hayes, 2012, 65.) Figure 5 shows different examples of Likert-Scales.

Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither Agree nor Disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
Very Dissatisfied 1	Dissatisfied 2	Neither Satisfied nor Dissatisfied 3	Satisfied 4	Very Satisfied 5
Very Poor 1	Poor 2	Neither Poor nor Good 3	Good 4	Very Good 5

Figure 5: Examples of Likert Scales (Hayes, 2012, 64).

It is also important to write a good introduction to the questionnaire. It should be made brief as well as explain the purpose of its usage. It is fine to explain how the data will be used as well. This can provide incentive for the customer to complete it by increasing the perception that their responses are valued. It should also provide instructions for completion. (Hayes, 2012, 66.)

Another important aspect is to think about the sample size of the survey. How many clients or customers will be surveyed? This could apply to customers who have used the service at least one time or customers that use services multiple times. This can be also applied to customers who stop using a service. There can also be a mixture of surveys. However, the size of the target group and the costs of running the surveys need to be considered. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 3.2.1.) One example is census sampling and it means using the entire population of customers. This accurately represents the whole group as everyone is being measured and is entirely doable if the customer base is small enough. Judgmental sampling is a way to select a subset of the entire population. The judgment comes from the conductors of the researcher and could be used to measure for example that both genders are represented equally. While it is not effective to generalize the whole population, it can be easier than taking the whole set into account. Statistical sampling is the third way to select targets. This

process uses random selection from the available set and can be used to generalize the results about the population. (Hayes, 2012, 84-86.)

When designing surveys, one must also think of the frequency of sending them as well as when to include them. There is no single right answer to this problem. A single product or service could be given to a customer multiple times or just once. It is important to consider the satisfaction levels of the customer and the quality of the given product or service as they can fluctuate over time. They need to be monitored accurately and in a timely fashion. For a company, it is necessary to keep the monitoring going, as it is not enough to ask customers just once about their experience. Data over time is required, which means a regular basis and a system is necessary. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 3.2.4)

3.4 Conducting Methodologies

There are different ways data can be collected to gain measurements for customer satisfaction. Face-to-face is the most basic one. This is a very time-consuming method and it is expensive as it requires for the interviewer and responder being in the same room. The presence of the interviewer can also create a bias which can cause measurement errors. Another problem is that they are not easy to measure and compare with others. Also, only a limited amount of them can be practically done. For this method, open-ended answers are appropriate as it gives customers the possibility to express and explain themselves quite easily. They can give improvement suggestions in this way. This can be a good method if all the customers are not known. Another type is the open survey; they are pencil and paper surveys that can be given to the customer after the service. This is also a very easy method to use, but this requires the acceptance of the customer. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 3.4.)

Computer-assisted telephone interviewing is another way to conduct interviews. It is not very expensive and is used quite often, although it takes time. It also produces high response rates. This method gives immediate results and analyses as the information is put into the computer by the interviewer. The computer can also dictate how the interview goes and adjust accordingly. This is a good method if there are customer lists. It also produces very few errors. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 3.4.)

Computer assisted web interviews is one option as well. If a company has the email addresses of the customers, this can be applied very easily. This is a very easy method of collecting data as well as being inexpensive. The responder can also take their time freely and not be affected by the interviewer. Questions follow a certain script which can modify questions according to previous answers, which makes this a good option as well. The problem is that not everyone cares to answer which affects response rates. The questionnaire should be made short enough not to deter subjects from answering. It is also a good idea to establish the importance of the subject's contribution to make them more willing to answer. However, sometimes reminders need to be sent if answers fail to show. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 3.4.)

Web surveys are similar to computer-assisted web interviews as they are both conducted via the internet. This method is very popular these days as it is very easy to handle. This method is useful if customers are willing to fill them in as the interviews are open to the public, so they require self-selection. These are most often used in for company websites. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 3.4) There are also web surveys that are list-based, which can be sent to, for examples, employees of a company, members of associations, or just clients. Again, response rates can be an issue. There can also be surveys such as web panel and web community. However, they do require recruitment to be in the selected group. (Kenett, R; Salini S, 2012, 6.2.) The good aspect of web surveys and computer assisted interviews is the fact that they can be answered whenever it is convenient for the customer. The results are also instantly in electronic form which makes the handling of such data easy for processing.

4 VERKOTAN

4.1 Business Background

Verkotan Oy provides testing services for wireless devices worldwide. They are based in Oulu, Finland. These devices include cell phones, tablets, antenna base stations, trackers and military radios. They use their laboratories to test the devices for international standards and certificate services for their clients. They do specific absorption rate (SAR) testing. It represents the amount of radio frequency that is absorbed by the human body when they use a device that is wireless. They can also do over-the-air (OTA) testing and antenna testing. They are a CTIA authorized test house and a member of many global organizations.

4.2 Verkotan's Process

Figure 6 is a diagram showcasing Verkotan's process to their clients. It shows the steps that the customers need to go through when they purchase the service from Verkotan.

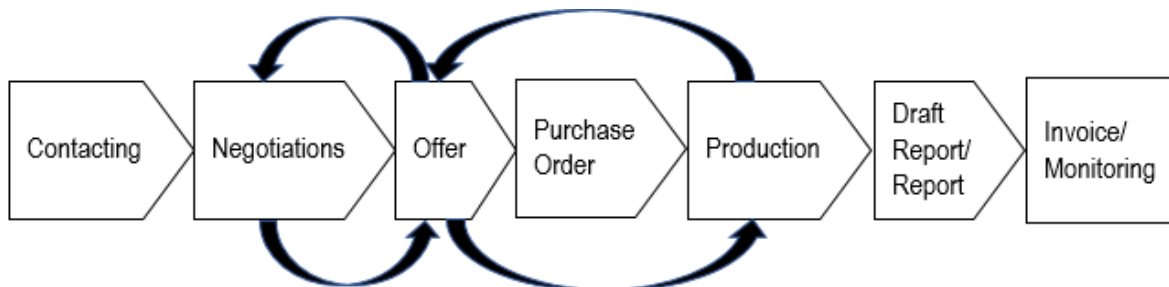


Figure 6: Verkotan's Business Process

Contacting:

About 70% to 80% of Verkotan's clients contact them through the internet. They can be in the form of emails, phone calls or filled forms through their website. About 20% of clients come from events where they learn from Verkotan. The last <10% are through other contacts such as lead finder.

Negotiations:

After the clients have contacted Verkotan, they need to begin negotiations, where they discuss the product information and specifics, along with what needs to be tested. This can take a very long time, even months in the worst cases. The negotiations are also done mostly online through skype calls and sometimes regular calls. The step is very time-consuming, because all the information is required to make an appropriate offer in the next step.

Offer:

In the offer-phase, the information that has been collected in the negotiation-phase is taken into consideration, and is used to create a price offer. 99% of the time this is done online.

Purchase Order:

In this step, the purchase order is made and it includes when the tests are to be initiated. It also includes how the product that is to be tested will be transferred to Verkotan and when the bill should be paid. If changes are required at this point, the step goes back into the negotiation-phase and continues again from that point.

Production:

Here the product is in production. Sometimes, the client's test engineer comes to Verkotan's testing facility with the testing product. Other times just the product is shipped to the facility along with instructions and guidelines for the testing. They also require the producer's software for the product. This step can last from a few days to 2 weeks maximum. Delays can also happen which increase the time period, if for example some instructions are missing or something is unclear.

Draft Report/Report:

At this point, the testing method and results are written into a draft report. This is then shown to the customer and they get to give a bit of feedback on what they receive as results. If the customer is happy with what they see, an official report is made. This report is the product which brings in the money to Verkotan. They have recently added a survey to this phase to be sent alongside with the report. They send one of the two different options, as seen in appendices 1 and 2.

Invoice/Monitoring:

At this point, the testing product is transferred back to the client along with an invoice. After the client pays the invoice, the steps are complete.

Support:

Now this is not really a step of its own. However, if their clients have any questions about the processes, Verkotan will help their clients along the way. This can include not understanding some parts of the process; for example, interpreting the report that goes to the client or assisting the client in putting their devices ready for testing. After the whole chain of processes is done, there usually is no need for any more support, as the client has the report and the customers' devices usually go forward in their development cycles. They are also planning to do some more after-sales.

4.3 Assignment

The assignment that was given from Verkotan was to create a survey for their customer satisfaction process, where they can ask their customers how the service was. It is crucial for them to know what the customers think of them. They do not have a systematic way of doing this currently and they would like to have one. In the past, they have asked about the service quality verbally. This was done with the clients sometimes during their sessions together or after their business was concluded. These questions have involved service quality and improvement opportunities. They have also done two questionnaires in the past using Google Forms for their clients.

The reason why they want to do this is to find out their aspects that can be improved. They want to figure out if they can speed up their services as well to make it better. It is also important for them to know if their customers would recommend their services to other possible customers. This also includes asking if the customers' problems were solved in proper time frame. If they can improve their service quality through these, they can potentially increase their sales as well.

4.4 Previous Surveys

Currently Verkotan has made two different surveys that they have sent to their customers. One of them is a very short survey with two questions and the other one is longer with nine questions. This has been added into the draft report/report -phase. They have sent one of the two surveys at random to their clients. Appendix 1 contains the short survey and appendix 2 contains the longer one. They were both done in Google Forms.

By looking at the content of the questions they have made, some conclusions can be made on their aim. Both of their surveys ask if they were to recommend Verkotan's services to others. As was mentioned in the Assignment part 4.3, this is a really important question for them. It also gives an overall rating of the client's thoughts on the service level. The longer survey also contains questions regarding their testing among other things in the service process. There is also a comment section in both of the surveys as potential feedback is valuable for them, even if it is just a sentence or two. They have also stated that the surveys should not be long as their clients are usually quite busy. If they are too long they might not take their time to answer them. These surveys only take less than a minute to two minutes of their clients' time.

In their short survey they also used a NPS (Net Promoter Score) question. This is used quite often by companies to predict business growth with one simple question. If a customer answers 9 or 10 they are promoters. 0 to 6 are detractors and 7 to 8 are passives. The score itself is calculated but subtracting the percentage of detractors from the promoters. This is a fine way to determine overall ratings but it does not go into specific satisfaction details.

5 IMPROVING FEEDBACK COLLECTING

5.1 The Analysis of Verkotan

It is important to look at Verkotan's business process here and identify quality dimensions for their type of service. These then need to be defined so they are understood properly. First, we can start with listing the different dimensions and defining them. These aspects describe the service process to the customer. For this part, the help of the CEO and the Head of Marketing and Sales of the company was used. In the paragraphs below are dimensions that were concluded to be important to measure.

Purchasing difficulty: The level of difficulty that the client experienced when trying to purchase the service. This is really important for Verkotan because the field that they are in experiences many difficulties when buying these types of services. The services are high-tech and high quality. They are also very detail-specific and niche. If this aspect can be improved, it can make a difference.

Communication: The level in which Verkotan and its employees communicated back to their client. Communication is essential in everything and in businesses as well. There should not be a need to stress how important this is. Businesses must communicate properly and through the right mediums to reach their targets. Clients need to be able to interact with businesses. In Verkotan's case, communication needs to be a two-way street. That means that Verkotan must be ready to respond properly to customers and their needs to sell their service.

Professionalism: The way in which the employees of Verkotan treat their clients. It is very important for businesses to treat their clients the right way. If this is not done properly, it will turn down clients. Clients need to be respected and handled the proper way.

Testing: The degree to which the testing period was handled in Verkotan's test labs. This is a very important aspect in Verkotan's business process. In order for them to sell their product, which is their final report, they need to be able to create it. This involves the testing-phase and it needs to be done according to plans. If the testing is not complete, the report cannot be written. It is crucial to assess this

part accordingly in the chain of processes. The testing is done according to international standards, measured during the tests.

Product satisfaction: the degree to which the final product was made in the end. The product itself is key in everything that sells. In this case, it is the written report of test results that were measured for a specific device which required tested. This needs to be top-notch in terms of technical specifics and validity as it is an official document.

Overall Satisfaction/Recommendation: the overall rated customer satisfaction and recommendation. This is a bonus at the end and can ask a question about the overall experience. It can be used as a final question. Below are statements that these dimensions could include.

DIMENSION STATEMENTS

Degree of Purchasing Difficulty:

The level of difficulty that the client experienced when trying to purchase the service.

- The company could be found through the internet easily
- It was easy to contact the company through their website
- Sufficient information about Verkotan's services was found from their website
- Communications with sales for the purchase of the service were simple
- Defining the offer requirements was made easy with the sales staff

Level of Communication:

The level in which Verkotan and its employees communicated back to their client.

- Response times in communication with employees was quick and sufficient
- The instructions for testing were sufficient and accurate
- The client knew the steps that were taking place with the service process
- Verkotan communicated in a clear and understandable fashion to the customer

Level of Professionalism:

The way in which the employees of Verkotan treat their clients.

- The company and its employees acted as experts in their field
- The customer was treated with good manners and respect

Level of Testing Experience:

The degree to which the testing period was handled in Verkotan's test labs.

- Testing duration lasted according to plan
- All tests were completed properly that the client had asked
- The client's product was handled with extreme care
- The customer could send the testable device into Verkotan's labs

Degree of Product Satisfaction:

The degree to which the final report was completed in the end.

- Report was well-constructed and of high quality
- Customer was satisfied with accurate test results
- The customer could ask for clarifications on the report

Overall Satisfaction/Recommendation:

The overall rated customer satisfaction and recommendation.

- Overall satisfaction with the service
- Likelihood of customer recommendation to others

The best solution in conducting methods is either web surveys or computer-assisted interviews. These methods are likely to yield the most answers, as they give the recipients the freedom to answer whenever it works for them. The links to the surveys can be easily sent online through emails and take advantage of customer lists that the company has. The received answers are also in digital form which makes them easy to process. However, this requires that certain websites and/or programs are used.

As has been stated before, Verkotan has currently sent out one of two different surveys along with the report. Adding more questions to the surveys may be beneficial for the company, as more information is gathered. The only problem with having more questions is the lowering of response rates. Now this could be countered with giving some incentive to the responder. As an example, Verkotan could give a 5% discount or a flat price discount on the next business engagement with them. This would even give the client incentive to have more future business with Verkotan.

5.2 Survey Content

In this section, questions have been formed as they would look in a survey. They have been taken from section 5.1 and used here. All of these questions do not have to be used necessarily, but for the sake of this project however, they have been listed. These can also be used to hand-pick certain questions if a shorter survey needs to be delivered. If specific ones are picked, it is important to understand what are trying to accomplish and measure with them. The response form is the Likert-scale of 5 options from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. If this is sent to all customers along with the report it can measure the entire population, which is very useful.

The survey can also include a small textbox section for user feedback and comments at the end of the survey. The introduction can also mention that there is incentive to do the survey for a discount for the next purchase. This is really important as it can boost the amount of responses received. This should also be mentioned somewhere else too and not just in the survey, to make it so customers do not overlook this detail. If the customer does not submit the survey within the example period of 10 days, friendly reminders should be sent via email. The set of questions could be more expansive but not every specific detail is necessary for valuable analysis. Putting in more questions also takes more of the customers' time. Questions like these can be for example about the tidiness of the office space.

Now that the different aspects of Verkotan's business process can be evaluated through the customer's eyes, they can gain valuable information. If something goes really wrong or right with a customer, they will know about it through these questions. Also, if bad experiences do occur, Verkotan can make

phone calls asking the customer about specific details or incidents if they did not add any comments at the end of the survey. Personally contacting customers also shows that their feedback really matters and it can help repair relationships if something unfortunate does happen. In the part below is an introduction that could be used and the questions. A finished version can be found in appendix 3. In its form it looks like a paper version, although this can be made to look different depending on what programs are used to create the survey. The order of the questions is in the order that the customer experiences them in the service process.

SURVEY INFORMATION

“Verkotan Oy is looking to improve its services and is concerned about your satisfaction as our customer. This data will only be used confidentially and to make our services as best as possible. Your feedback is greatly appreciated. Please take your time to answer the following questions and submit the answered survey within the next 10 days. Submitting this entitles you to a discount for your next purchase.”

1. Verkotan’s company information was found easily through the internet.
2. Verkotan was easy to contact through their website.
3. Sufficient information about Verkotan’s services was found from their website.
4. Communications with the sales staff for the purchase of the service were simple.
5. Making the offer requirements with the sales staff was easy.
6. Response times in communication with Verkotan’s staff were fast.
7. The instructions for testing were sufficient.
8. The steps that were taking place in the service process were clear.
9. Verkotan’s staff acted as professionals of their field.
10. Verkotan’s staff treated me with respect.
11. The testing duration lasted according to plan.
12. All the planned tests were completed properly.
13. Verkotan handled the test product with extreme care.
14. There were no issues in getting the test device to Verkotan’s labs.

15. Final report was of high quality.
16. The test results were satisfactory.
17. I could ask for clarifications on the reports if needed.
18. I was overall satisfied with Verkotan's service.
19. I would recommend Verkotan's services to others.

5.3 Measuring Results

When we receive data that we want to understand, we have to measure it. Obtaining results from a survey is basically just numbers. In the case of using a Likert-scale of 5, the answers would be a number of 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5. The highest number, or 5 in this case, means that it is the "best" result. It could be a "Very Satisfied" or "Strongly Agree" as shown in figure 5 on page 16. Plenty of things can be counted from these numbers, such as mean, median, mode, standard deviation, among other things. For individual cases, looking at numbers is sufficient on its own. If something is rated low and clarification is needed, customers can be contacted and asked politely to elaborate. This can help in understanding some mishaps and to perhaps apologize obvious reasons. From larger amounts of data, patterns can be concluded. These are measured over time for longevity as well as for specific time periods. It makes sense that if a number is on the lower end of the spectrum, something needs to be done to push it back up. This then requires carefully looking at an aspect and figuring out what is not working and how to improve it. This will then be an issue for the management of the company. The customers can also be contacted again for additional information.

As an example, customers could rate the statement: "Sufficient information about Verkotan's services was found from their website" low. This would mean that Verkotan needs to put more emphasis on their website and increase the quality and descriptiveness of their services. Another example is when customers would rate the following statement high: "The steps that were taking place in the service process were clear." This would mean that enough emphasis is being put on to communications between the company and the customer that are about the steps that are taking place in the service process and when they occur.

It is important to note that even if a customer gives good results from surveys, it does not necessarily mean that they will come back. Maybe they do not have any more needs for the types of testing and it was a one-time only transaction. Maybe they found a different supplier which was much closer to them. Maybe they just ran out of business after things did not work out. There are many possibilities. However, we can try to influence and prevent customers from making the conscious decision to not have their business with you. Positive experiences are so important. That is the importance of having good customer satisfaction.

Another aspect that can be included in this process is after-sales. After-sales are a viable strategy for businesses and Verkotan should also try to take advantage of that. The way to make customers answer surveys is usually to incentivize them. Not everyone likes filling in surveys just out of goodwill, but this can give them the push to do it. Other different examples for carrots can be entering raffles for a big prize or a simple pair of movie tickets. These may not be suitable for Verkotan however, as their customers are from around the world some movie tickets to a local theater would not work. Raffles are also suited way better for masses of individual customers that can win a car for example and not in business-to-business.

By putting in a discount for the next purchase it creates an opportunity for the customer. If they take this opportunity and they have business in the future with Verkotan, they can surely understand the benefits. If they are not sure that they will have reoccurring business they should still recognize the possibility.

Another thing that can be incorporated is phone calling the customer. This should happen after a certain period of time from the end of your business together. This phone call should include asking the customer how the product is doing. During this call, the caller should also ask if Verkotan could be of any other or future assistance. It is very important to get back satisfied customers and in order to achieve this, the customer experience needs to be great. If the customer comes back for more business down the line, success has been achieved.

6 CONCLUSION

The thesis was successfully complete. The time frame was reasonably well met with a small delay towards the end. The results of this thesis also seemed to please the client, as they told that they would put it into use (Appendix 3). During the writing of this thesis, Verkotan had started doing a few surveys of their own, and some of the questions that were come up with in this thesis did overlap. This was good however, as multiple people identifying common requirements and questions means they are truly valuable.

The theory from the sources was used to create a basic outline on how to form survey content. The theory also included many other aspects that seemed self-evident but are really important to the ways that surveys are done in a specific way. The theory came together with practice when Verkotan's business processes were mapped out and customer requirements were made from them.

Customer satisfaction is not a simple thing. It is an incredibly hard task to please all customers. Processes need to be made customer friendly and incorporated into businesses. Asking customers about their experience is just one part of the process. The right questions also need to be asked, so that different aspects can be improved. It is crucial to understand the company and its processes to understand what the customer goes through.

All in all, the customer satisfaction survey was made complete. The business processes of Verkotan were analyzed and from them, a list of customer requirements was made. This was then used to create questions and after that, a survey. The survey is in the hands of Verkotan now, and what they want to do with it is up to them. They can use as many questions as they like. This can mean all, half, or a select few. Overall, it was a way of looking into details and creating measurable content for Verkotan.

7 DISCUSSION

Verkotan was really on board with the thesis. During this process I engaged in conversations with members of Verkotan. Most of the time, that meant the Head of Marketing and Sales, Mikko Koistinen. The CEO, Kari Komonen, also joined in on conversations on other times. They helped me get ideas that were suitable for the company.

A part that I did not include in this thesis was statistical analysis. This would include measurement errors, reliability, variance and other things. I felt that it was not hugely necessary for this project and is beyond its scope. Besides, it is also not that easy to understand properly and it would have been too time-consuming. Statistical analysis can be important if the wish is to understand everything about the data and in many cases, it is recommended to do this. There are also programs that can analyze data for us, which should be used for these purposes

Another part that could have been explored was which programs to use for survey creation. There is a huge variety of programs made for the purpose of surveys that can be found online. However, this was not a priority, as these programs pretty much accomplish the same things. Some are certainly better than others and offer different features. Some are also free while others require hefty payments. Nevertheless, I did ask Verkotan why they chose to use Google Forms, and they told me because it was free and offered features that the priced programs and websites also did.

After doing this thesis, I came to the conclusion that customer satisfaction is a never-ending process that always needs to be tuned according to what is important for the businesses and the customers. Customers need to be kept satisfied to stay in business. So even if I created questions that are suitable now, things can change and questions can be changed accordingly.

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Short Survey

Customer Satisfaction Survey

We are constantly improving our services and your feedback is important. This survey has 2 questions and takes less than 1 minute of response time.

*Pakollinen

Sähköpostiosoite *

Sähköpostiosoitteesi

1. How likely would you recommend Verkotan's testing services to others? *

- ☐ 1 Not at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10 Highly recommending

2. Please specify why and feel free to share any other feedback *

Oma vastauksesi

Longer Survey

Customer Satisfaction Survey

We are constantly improving our services and your feedback is important. This survey has 10 questions and takes 1 -2 minutes of response time.

*Pakollinen

Sähköpostiosoite *

Sähköpostiosoitteesi

1. Recommending Verkotan testing services to others *

- ☐ 1 Not at all
- ☐ 2
- ☐ 3
- ☐ 4
- ☐ 5
- ☐ 6
- ☐ 7
- ☐ 8
- ☐ 9
- ☐ 10 Highly recommending

2. Please specify why *

Oma vastauksesi

3. How would you rate the response time (email negotiations, receiving the quote etc.)? *

- ☐ 1 poor
- ☐ 2 improvement needed
- ☐ 3 average
- ☐ 4 good
- ☐ 5 excellent

4. How would you rate the content of the quote (clarity and accuracy)? *

- ☐ 1 poor
- ☐ 2 improvement needed
- ☐ 3 average
- ☐ 4 good
- ☐ 5 excellent

5. How would you rate the availability of test slot? *

- ☐ 1 poor
- ☐ 2 improvement needed
- ☐ 3 average
- ☐ 4 good
- ☐ 5 excellent

6. How would you rate the test duration? *

- ☐ 1 poor
- ☐ 2 improvement needed
- ☐ 3 average
- ☐ 4 good
- ☐ 5 excellent

7. How would you rate the quality of the test report? *

- ☐ 1 poor
- ☐ 2 improvement needed
- ☐ 3 average
- ☐ 4 good
- ☐ 5 excellent

8. How would you rate the test engineers' expertise? *

- ☐ 1 poor
- ☐ 2 improvement needed
- ☐ 3 average
- ☐ 4 good
- ☐ 5 excellent

9. What was your overall experience of Verkotan? *

☐ 1 poor

☐ 2 improvement needed

☐ 3 average

☐ 4 good

☐ 5 excellent

Any other feedback or comments concerning Verkotan`s services?

Oma vastauksesi

Customer Satisfaction Survey



Verkotan Oy is looking to improve its services and is concerned about your satisfaction as our customer. This data will only be used confidentially and to make our services as best as possible. Your feedback is greatly appreciated. Please take your time to answer the following questions and submit the answered survey within the next 10 days. Submitting this entitles you to a discount for your next purchase.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
1. Verkotan's company information was found easily through the internet.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Verkotan was easy to contact through their website.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Sufficient information about Verkotan's services was found from their website.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Communications with the sales staff for the purchase of the service were simple.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Making the offer requirements with the sales staff was easy.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Response times in communication with Verkotan's staff were fast.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The instructions for testing were sufficient.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The steps that were taking place in the service process were clear.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Verkotan's staff acted as professionals of their field.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Verkotan's staff treated me with respect.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The testing duration lasted according to plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not Applicable
12. All the planned tests were completed properly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Verkotan handled the test product with extreme care	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. There were no issues in sending the test device to Verkotan's labs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Final report was of high quality	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. The test results were satisfactory	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I could ask for clarifications on the reports if needed	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I was overall satisfied with Verkotan's service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I would recommend Verkotan's services to others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Additional Comments/Feedback