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Customer Centricity Roadmap for a Manufacturing Company

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<p>The objective of the study is to develop a roadmap for customer centricity and to build the basis on which more customer centric actions can be built. The case company of this study operates in the field of medical imaging which is highly regulated. It leads to a situation in which the technological way to be distinguished is ever harder to achieve, and therefore other ways of succeeding in the competition need to be considered. As other ways of succeeding in the industry are quite limited, the customer centricity and good customer experience are vital to keep the customers interested and create more loyal and long lasting customer relationships.</p> <p>This study is carried out using the action research approach. The data collection is carried out in four different rounds. The rounds that required a wide range of response are conducted by using questionnaires; and the rounds which need deeper understanding are carried out either by interviews or discussions with customers and in the case company. Additionally, the current state analysis evaluates the company's current operations towards developing a roadmap for becoming more customer centric. The proposal for the roadmap is created by comparing the frameworks currently discussed in business and research literature and the findings from the current state analysis in the case company, as well as suggestions from the customers. Based on that evaluation, the practical aspects of the proposal and its implementation are developed.</p> <p>Customer centricity is a complex system incorporating various aspects mutually dependent and influencing each other. Therefore, a holistic approach to building a roadmap was necessary. The outcome of the study was a more simplified roadmap built as an illustrative example. The other result of the study is identifying the foundations on which the customer centric actions can be later built. These foundations include the active data collection model which was specified and piloted. The other parts of the outcome were the relation based customer journey map and the customer segmentation which were also completed.</p> <p>The study is significant as a starting point on the road to becoming more customer centric and as the guidelines how that can be achieved especially in the long run.</p>	
Keywords	Customer centricity, customer experience, Net Promoter Score (NPS), customer journey map

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1 Introduction

This study attempt to find a solution to the practical problems in the case company and set a new customer centric course towards a more customer centric company.

1.1 Case Company Background and Reasons for This Study

The case company of this study develops and manufactures equipment for medical imaging. The field of medical imaging is highly technological and also quite conservative. This is mostly due to the fact that the industry is quite strongly regulated by the government, and the approval to work within a certain geographical area is difficult to achieve. This results in the practices that the once proven methods tend to be used for a long time, and therefore it is quite difficult to distinguish amongst the competition only through technological achievement.

As the technological way to be distinguished is quite limited and the forces influencing the market are quite strong, it is not possible therefore to compete only through the fierce price competition either, which means that differentiation needs to come from somewhere else. One possible alternative seems to be a superior customer experience and that of course creates a need for a customer centric way of operating. Such a way of work, however, requires a completely different mindset, and in order to truly achieve it the customers should be known better than ever before. This may be difficult for the company, as the case company is currently collecting the customer satisfaction data mostly through self-evaluation. The self-evaluation is conducted so that every person that works in the customer interface is answering an internal questionnaire which contains a few questions considering the speed and accuracy of the service. Thus, even though the best knowledge of the customers within the company can be found from the customer interface, the accuracy of that knowledge might be distorted or not communicated further on within the company.

Another possible source of growth is a better understanding the mechanisms of growth. As Hayes (2013) describes them, there are three main drivers for growth, from the customer centricity point of view, and they are retention, advocacy and purchasing. *Retention* relates to how long a customer stays as a customer; *advocacy* means the number of referrals a customer makes, and *purchase* is the amount of increased purchase.

(Hayes 2013: 145). These variables become important since the acquiring of new customers tend to be costly, therefore it is better to keep the existing customers than to let them go and try to lure new ones by costly marketing campaigns. Advocacy basically relates to the same issue as the referrals and can be seen as a free marketing and usually a very effective one, since if a friend or colleague advocates something, people tend to trust. Purchase helps the company sell more to get the existing customer, so that the cost of getting new sales is usually smaller than with a new customer.

1.2 Research Question

In business and research literature, the importance of customer centricity and customer satisfaction is getting widely recognized, as pointed out by Brewster (2001: 43), Burmann et al. (2011: 50), Bailor (2007: 15), among others. This is despite the fact that the link between the customer satisfaction and economic wellbeing is sometimes questioned (Anderson et al. 1994: 53). The fact still seems to be that without the knowledge of the customers' needs the accurate customer value proposition is hard to make. Therefore, a poor customer satisfaction and the lack of involving the customers' views in the decision making tends to result in a poor economic performance.

The case company has a long history of being a product centric company, therefore, the tradition of customer relationship management has been slim. Since today more and more customers are cost driven and only want to pay for the features they truly need, to identify those truly needed features the manufacturing company has to develop deep and open relationship with the customers, so that their needs and desires of the customers are known to the company. This means that the customer-supplier relationships have to be redefined towards more cooperation and provide the best possible solutions to the end customers. The research question in this study is therefore formulated as follows:

How to achieve customer centricity in a technologically oriented company?

As the research question is quite broad, it has been scoped down to the three different sub questions:

1. What benefits can be achieved through true customer centric way of operating?

2. How the customer centric way of operating can be achieved, and how the customer know-how can be gathered and then utilized?
3. How this process could be introduced as a constant and continual process of operating replacing the set of sporadic actions?

These questions attempt to find a solution to the practical problems in the case company and set a new customer centric course towards a more customer centric company. To achieve this, this study, first, concentrate on reasoning why these issues are important, so that the case company personnel would understand the importance of the new way of operating. Secondly, the study investigates what should be done in order to achieve the benefits from more customer centricity, and how the customers should be involved. Thirdly, the study suggests how this can be embedded into the company structures, so that the customer centric way of operating becomes part of daily routines rather than individual actions.

1.3 Key Concepts

The key concepts in this study are customer centricity, value co-creation, customer experience and customer experience ecosystem, and customer journey. These concepts are considered as having the following meanings in the context of this study:

Customer centricity is an approach to serving a customer in the context of the company culture, with the customer put in the centre of all of its operations.

Value co-creation means the act of developing value that is no longer exclusively added to the product itself in a manufacturing phase, but created together with the customer when the customer uses the equipment or service.

Customer experience is the end result of applying the customer centric culture. The customers have some experience in any case, but in order to design and provide the best possible customer experience the company can utilize a customer centric approach.

Customer experience ecosystem relates to all the interdependent relationships of employees, partners, policies, processes and technologies that create the quality in all of the customer interactions within the company.

Customer journey is a complete picture of different touch points that the customer has with the company whilst they are interacting with the company.

1.4 Scope and Structure of the Study

As in the existing literature the customer centricity and customer involvement are discussed on a rather high theoretical level, this study, first, gathers this information and then brings it down to a practical level, with pinpointing the most critical elements of the customer centricity for the case company. These are the points that the case company would need to enhance in order to give the best possible solutions to the customers, and thus gain the maximal benefit from its customer relationships.

The scope of the study includes customer centricity and its implications to the customer satisfaction, as well as discusses the ways of measuring it. The organisational scope is to provide the roadmap for the whole organisation as the customer centricity cannot be understood as a single silo effort, and the company's operations must be re-organised in such a way that the best possible value is provided to the customer. Therefore, the implementation suggestions will be first implemented in the after sales services department and, if successful, they can then be broadened to include the whole customer interface including the sales. This scalability is the key to gain the full benefit from the customer centricity which eventually should be covering all departments and all the personnel.

This study is written in eight sections. Section 1 is the introduction and Section 2 presents the methods and material, as well as the research design and the data collection methods. Section 3 discusses findings from the literature and existing knowledge on customer centricity. First, it contains a small overall introduction of the customer centricity and after that the key issues in creating the customer centric culture are discussed. After that, Section 3 discusses the current views on the outcome of the customer centric culture, namely the customer experience and evaluation of customer centricity which then leads to building the case specific conceptual framework on customer centricity. Section 3 ends with synthesizing the conceptual framework on how to

achieve customer centric culture which is then applied for developing a proposal for the case company.

Section 4 discusses the results of the current state analysis on the case company's way of operating. First, it presents the results of evaluation of the current practices from the company's internal instructions, and secondly, analyses the data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews. Section 5 builds the proposal based on the case specific framework combined with the information from the current state analysis. It also develops the case specific roadmap how to achieve a more customer centric culture for the case company. Section 6 presents the results of the evaluation of the case specific roadmap and reflects on the feasibility and practicality of the roadmap as well as the theoretical validity of the outcomes. It also discusses the implementation and points to the most urgent points of the customer centricity roadmap validated in Section 6 and presents the implementation plans for the future. Finally, Section 8 contains the discussion and conclusions in which the study is overviewed and the results are evaluated.

2 Method and Material

This section presents the methods and material, as well as the research design and the data collection methods.

2.1 Research Design

This Thesis is conducted following the action research approach. The research design with the steps and data collection rounds is shown in Figure 1 below.

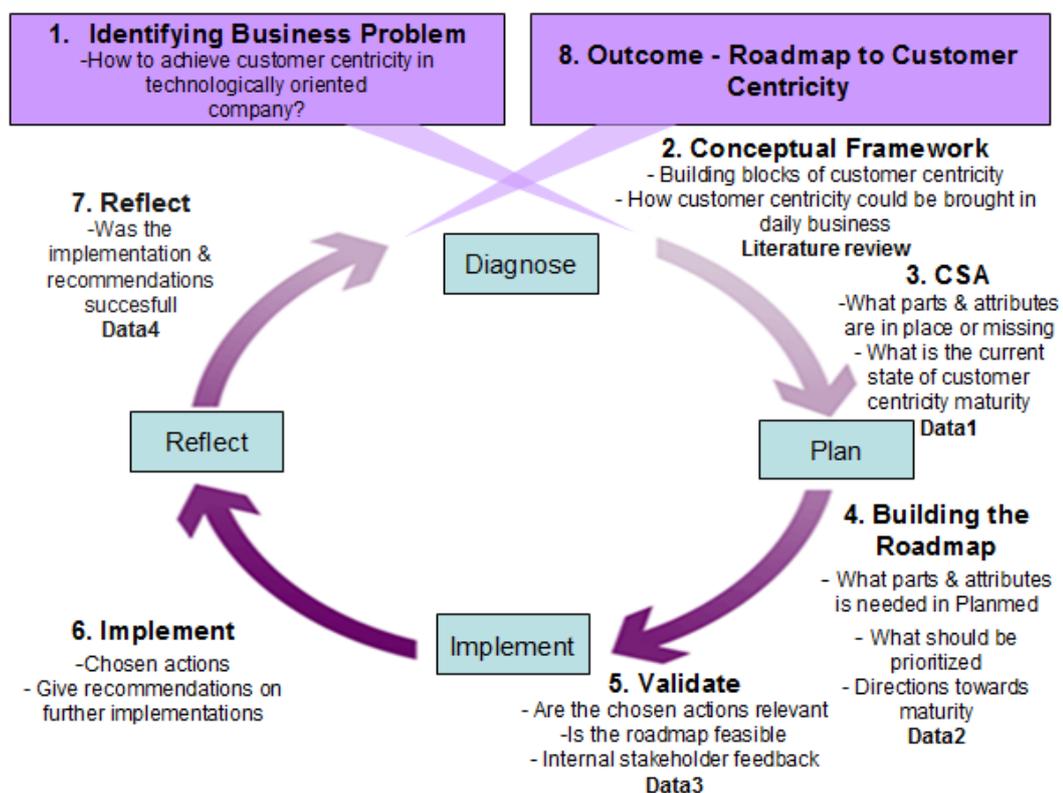


Figure 1. Research design of this study.

As seen from Figure 1, the study starts with investigating the existing literature. The main input for the conceptual framework comes from the literature, and when combining the theory with the issues related to the problems of the case company, the case specific conceptual framework is created. Based on that, the current state analysis is conducted to map the current way of working in the case company. The case specific framework is then compared to the actual way of working, and the differences between

them point to the issues which are then addressed in the roadmap for customer centricity in case company. This roadmap is finally validated by interviewing the experts from the case company, and the proposal is adjusted accordingly. The roadmap suggestions are discussed from the point of view of implementation and reflected in the interviews.

The action research approach was selected due to the practical nature of this study. The study aims at taking action, namely changing the current way of working, and it typically has the cyclical action – reflection process. (McDermott et al. 2008: 4). Therefore, multiple rounds of interviews and surveys are needed, and the iterative nature of action research seems to be appropriate for this study. Also the fact that the change is not an individual effort but rather a collective endeavour to work towards the goals suggests that the action research makes a suitable approach. (Glassman et al. 2012: 272). The main component of this study is to integrate the existing theories into the practice in the company, and the fact that the roadmap will need to be tested and reflected before it can be utilized in the organisation also suggests that the action research is the way to conduct the study.

2.2 Data Collection

Table 1 shows the data collection phases and the methods used during this study.

	Title	Topic	View	Duration / Participants	Appendix
	Customer satisfaction survey (internal 2007-2014),	Customer satisfaction	Front line staff / Management	Frontline staff (7 to 14 respondent)	1
Data 1	Questionnaire Customer centricity reality check	Status of customer centricity in case company	Front line staff / Management (Product & AS)	Frontline staff (10 respondent)	2
(CSA)	Questionnaire 6D	Status of customer centricity maturity	Management	Members of the board who has close connection to customers (2 respondent)	3
	Interview1 (AS manager)	Status of customer centricity maturity	Management	1h45min	5
	Customer satisfaction survey (external 2014)	Customer satisfaction	Customer	Dealers (sent 323, answered 24)	4
	Interview1 (AS manager)	Relation based CJM, attributes for Case Company	Management	1h45min	5
Data 2	Interview2 (Area export manager)	Relation based CJM, attributes for Case Company	Front line staff	45min	6
(Proposal)	Discussion1 (Johanna Vesterinen)	Relation based CJM, attributes for Case Company	Theoretical	1h45min	7
	Discussion2 (Johanna Vesterinen)	Customer Centricity, Relation based CJM, attributes for Case Company, Net Promoter Score	Theoretical	1h45min	8
Data 3	Interview3 (AS manager)	Practical validity of the roadmap	Management	60min	9
(Validation)	Interview4 (Johanna Vesterinen)	Theoretical validation of the roadmap	Theoretical	2 pages	10
Data 4 (Reflect)	Interview5 (AS manager)	Validity of the implementation	Management	30min	11

Table 1. Details of data collection.

In Table 1, the first column shows the part of the study in which the data collection is mainly used; the second column is the title and the type of data collection, and the third one is the topic of that particular data collection. The fourth column shows the position of the respondent which reflects his or her perspective, and in this study there are four main perspectives incorporated: the Management, the Front line staff, the customer and the theoretical viewpoints. The fifth column shows the duration of the interviews and discussions and participants in surveys, and the last, sixth column shows the appendix number in which the summary of the interview is placed.

The study is built based on four different data collection rounds: first, the data collection for the current state analysis; second, the data collection for building the proposal; third, the data collection for validating the proposal, and fourth, the data collection for reflecting on the implementation.

The first round of data collection comprises the questionnaire for customer centricity reality check created by Vesterinen (2013), the questionnaire derived from Manning et al. (2012: 63-66) on the customer centricity maturity, and the case company self-evaluation of the customer satisfaction. First, the questionnaire for customer centricity reality check created by Vesterinen (2013) was answered by all the area export managers, the product and after sales managers, the sales assistant and the after sales personnel, making it altogether 10 people responding to the questionnaire. The respondents were chosen as they all work in close connection with the customers and considered as the front line staff. The second part of Data collection 1 was the questionnaire derived from Manning et al. (2012: 63-66) on the customer centricity maturity. This questionnaire was answered by two people from the board of directors who are related to customer interaction in their daily work in order to get the boards views on the customer centricity and especially about the maturity level that case company currently has. The questionnaire was shortly introduced, then the respondents filled in the questionnaire and their answers were subsequently discussed with the researcher. The third part of Data collection 1 was the questionnaire which case company has used for self-evaluation of the customer satisfaction containing the data from seven years and, for a number of respondents, even from seven to fourteen years. The same questionnaire was also sent to over 300 dealers, to which the advocacy question and open ended question, discussed in Sections 3 and 4, were added.

Data collection 2 comprised a series of interviews and discussions. First, it included the discussions with Johanna Vesterinen about the idea of relation based customer journey map and, after clarifying the concept, two people from the company were interviewed. The after sales manager and area export manager were the chosen personnel as they have the best knowledge about the case company specific customer journey. The after sales manager has the knowledge about the customer journey from after the purchase up to the renewal phase, and the area export manager is the expert on before the purchase and during the purchase period. The interviews were done to create the customer journey map for case company's purposes. In the interviews, the researcher first introduced the concept and the draft of the customer journey map, and then the interviewees were asked to fill in the gaps and think about the relations between each touchpoint.

Data collection 3 was done by interviewing two people, first, Johanna Vesterinen in order to validate the proposal on the theoretical level, and an expert from the company to validate and evaluate the practicality of the proposal. The chosen person was the after sales manager as the main part of the proposal is planned to be implemented in the after sales environment, and in this data collection both the evaluation and validation of the proposal was the target.

The last data collection, Data collection 4, comprised the data collection for evaluation of the implemented parts of the proposal. In this data collection, the interview with four after sales managers focused on the implementation part, but also discussed the customer journey map and customer segmentation.

The methods applied for data analysis were based on content analysis and numerical calculations. The *reality check questionnaire* was analysed by highlighting the average scores less than 2,3 and importance scores over 2,3. These values were chosen to narrow down the problem points to the six most critical ones shown in Appendix 2. The data was also analysed by each department separately, to see if there is any variance between the departments. The results of *the 6D questionnaire* were summarized and shown in Appendix 3. The lowest and the biggest variations were spotted and discussed with the respondents. *The external customer satisfaction survey* was analysed by identifying the priority areas by multiplying the difference of the average score and the maximum score from the importance. Then the highest scores were identified and discussed. *The NPS* was analysed by counting the NPS, with the responses to the

open ended questions classified under three main categories: positive, negative and the only detractor comment. The positives and negatives were then counted, which made the numbers shown in the summary in Appendix 4. The only detractor open comment was also included. The averages of the external customer satisfaction scores were analyzed and discussed, as well as the averages of the self-evaluation survey. The differences in their rankings were spotted, and the results were compared and discussed. In Interviews 1, 3 and 5, field notes were taken and analyzed; they are summarized in Appendices 5, 9 and 11. Discussions 1, 2 as well as Interview 2 were recorded and summarized, as shown in Appendices 7, 8 and 6. Interview 4 was conducted as email interview, and it is summarized in Appendix 10.

2.3 Validity and Reliability Plan

The *validity* of research which needs to be considered when conducting a study consists of three main categories, the *internal* validity, *external* validity and *structural* validity. The *internal* validity deals with the fit between the results of the actual research is what the researcher intended to research. In other words, whether the answers found are answering to the original question (Quinton et al. 2006: 126-127). The internal validity is therefore more about whether the aim of the research is achieved at the end of the research or not, and how it is achieved.

The *external* validity relates to the applicability of the results in other context or situations and the evaluation of how possible that is, as well as about the transferability of the findings and their relevance to other context contributes (Quinton et al. 2006: 129). Thus, the external validity concentrates on whether the findings would be achievable in other surroundings or by other researcher. The *construct* validity means the use of multiple sources of evidence to form a chain of evidence which can be followed. One of the measures to improve it is the validation of data collection and results, by for example, reviewing the draft, by the key informants. (Yin 2003: 34).

The *reliability* of the research comes from the repeatability of the research process and results. In order to be reliable, the research should lead to the same results if conducted by another researcher or repeated at a different point in time. The challenge in reliability of the research is that the replication of the research is difficult if it incorporates any social context involving people (Quinton et al. 2006: 129).

The reliability of the study can be strengthened by taking various steps. First, the variety of data sources can increase reliability. Secondly, triangulation (Quinton et al. 2006: 130) which means the use of different data collection sources and tools to answer the research question can help to ensure the reliability of the research. Thirdly, it can be done by applying established theories from one area to another. Additionally, collecting data at different time points and varying the research data along the research is supposed to enhance the reliability of the study. (Quinton et al. 2006: 130)

Another way of improving the reliability of the research is to establish whether the research is trustworthy and authentic. *Trustworthiness* consists of credibility which means the triangulation as well as transferability and related to the richness of the data. Additionally, reliability of the research can be ensured by increasing dependability which means that has the findings were tested, audited or piloted. Another way to contribute to reliability is conformability which means avoiding the researcher's bias. Authenticity, in its turn, consists of fairness and ensures that all parties are concerned in social context. The educative authenticity relates to any learning capabilities that the research provides. Finally, authenticity combines the catalytic authenticity and tactical authenticity. The catalytic authenticity is about triggering the change, while the tactical authenticity focuses on whether the research has empowered the people to take action. (Yin 2003: 34 – 59).

In this research, ensuring reliability and validity is planned to be achieved, first of all, thought the amount, the number of sources and quality of the data collected. The data collection will be made from several data sources, by using three main approaches to utilizing the data collection tools. First, the majority of the data will be collected through questionnaires and surveys to ensure that the whole front line staff is contributing to the findings. Secondly, the key people in each stage will be interviewed in order to get deeper knowledge from the most relevant and knowledgeable personnel inside the company. Simultaneously, special efforts will be done to ensure that the number of customers who are responding would be as high as possible in order to get their in-depths view on the problem. Thirdly, a discussion with an outside consultant will be held in order to ensure theoretical accuracy of the research approach throughout the research process.

Yet another way to address triangulation in this study will be to incorporate three different viewpoints. These sources are namely the management, the front line staff and the

customer. Additionally, a theoretical viewpoint, which comes from an outside consultant and finding from the literature, will also be considered. The customers' viewpoint will be taken into account by conducting a dealer survey. By using multiple sources and utilizing multiple viewpoints the research aims at maximising the construct validity and minimising the possible bias which could distort the findings. The findings will also be evaluated against their practicality inside the case company, as well as against their theoretical accuracy by the outside consultant. This revision is needed to ensure the usefulness and theoretical accuracy of the findings. The time perspective will be taken into account in using the self-evaluation data as well as dividing the customer centricity reality check into two parts: first, the answers collected in September 2013 and, second, the data from April 2014. The implementation of the validity and reliability plan is discussed again in Section 8.1

3 The Customer Centricity System

This section the study concentrates on the existing knowledge of customer centricity. First, the customer centricity is covered and after that different aspects that create a customer centric culture are highlighted; then the end result of the customer centric culture, the customer experience, is discussed. Also the existing customer centricity frameworks are discussed in this section.

3.1 Customer Centricity

The customer centric company can be defined by its ways of operations and usually it has been said that the customer centric company is the one that integrates the customer experience program throughout the company. (Hayes 2013: 68) The integration can have many forms but the main idea is that the knowledge and the importance of the customer centricity are communicated widely. It also means that the customer centric companies has customer feedback and customer satisfaction metrics build into a decision making process as well as used as a part of the incentive programs. (Manning et al. 2012: 164).

Customer centricity is founded on the idea that customers' needs comes first and that the company should put its effort in delighting customers and solving their individual problems and give them value creation possibilities to capitalize on instead of the old way of building the best possible product and then trying to sell it to the customers who then need to decide what they can do with the product. As Gummesson states the customer centricity is the prerequisite for surviving and being profitable. Therefore the customers' needs and desires should be indentified and satisfied. (Gummesson 2008: 316)

As the customers and the suppliers are creating more complex networks in which the innovation and value creation is dependable from more entities than before it can be said that customer centricity has an indication of systemic nature. One of the challenges in this is that the individual person's cognitive skills and capabilities are not adequate to understand the complexity of systems they are trying to manage. (Senge et al. 1990: 1008). As Maani et al. states (2004: 21), the systems thinking has a possi-

bility to explain these more complex relations. Therefore, the problems created by more complex networks could be resolved by implementing the systems thinking to customer centricity.

3.2 Co-Creation

The value co-creation is one of the bases of the customer centricity and first step in the unique value creation process is that the role of customers has to be defined or recognized and that has lately been changing from isolated to connected and from unaware to informed as well as from passive to active. (Prahalad et al. 2004: 4). This is mostly due to the fact that there are numerous ways for customers to evaluate different products and services as the internet and especially the forums are full of places where customers can make the judgement. Additionally, the web based reviews and magazines give a customer an easy access to be able to compare the value offerings of different companies. This of course enables companies to make a different value propositions to their customers and the interaction is the key for co-creating the value. (Prahalad et al. 2004: 5). This means that companies need to listen quite closely to the discussions by customers in social media or web based reviews about their products or services, and adjust their portfolio or products accordingly. Usually also when the customer needs are better understood, the supplier may identify more opportunities to improve the co-creation with the customers (Payne et al. 2007: 86). This organizational learning usually needs good channels for customer feedback and the processes to take this feedback into account.

Customers can also be seen as a valuable resource if they are allowed to take part in the product development phase. There are different methods in doing so, but the two main categories are the usual concept especially in consumer business that the customers can suggest a new application or feature of the product or service and the company then evaluates the feasibility of the suggested improvement. The second one is the way of letting the customer be truly involved in the product development project and this usually means that the customer should have the application of the new innovation already in their mind and they should be willing to take part in financing this project. (Westh 2011: 371). In this kind of projects the customers have to have the expertise needed and therefore this way might not be suitable for all the cases. But on the other hand customers are usually the ones that know the need better than the producing

company. More recently the mix of these two ways have been rising due to the fact that most of the mobile apps have been developed by the customers even though the platform has been provided by the company and customers has had a minor impact on that.

3.3 Customer Journey

Customer journey is a sequence of events that customer goes through with the providing company throughout the customer lifecycle. These events can be designed or not but the customer has a journey nevertheless. The *customer journey map* is a tool to study the series of complex experiences and processes that connects different *touch-points* and systems. It is a customer oriented way to understand the *customer experience* from the customers' point of view. (Mangiaracina et. al 2009: 3). If a company wants to be a customer centric they need to understand and make the sequences to support the customer to make the decision of a purchase. The customer journey should be seen as an end product of company's strategic plan in action. (Norton et.al 2013: 12). The ultimate aim for a company would be that the company's business strategy would be aligned with the experiences that create the most value to the customers and therefore the customer journey should be based on the actual customer behaviour (Norton et.al 2013: 13). The main idea about the customer journey mapping is that even though the single touch point is important it does not help if the rest of the touch points are not up to the standards as well. Thus, the true aid of customer journey mapping comes from the fact that the customers' end to end journey will be studied and improved (Rawson et. al 2013 :90). Even though modern technology helps to map the customer journey in a more detailed way, it also makes the mapping more difficult as the customers has a long list of methods to be in contact with the company, and as the customer has more touch points than even in the journey. Therefore, the way to map it has become more complex and intertwined. (Smith 2011: 28)

Keskinen et al. (2013) divide the customer journey into five different parts as seen from Figure 2. First of all, the status or state of the brand affects the way the customers see the company in question. And if the image or the brand of the company aligns well with the customers' view of world, the entrance to the customers list of choices is much easier. Additionally, if the brand is representing something that the customer would like to promote the rest of the journey will be smoother. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 23) The customer journey is shown in Figure 2 below.

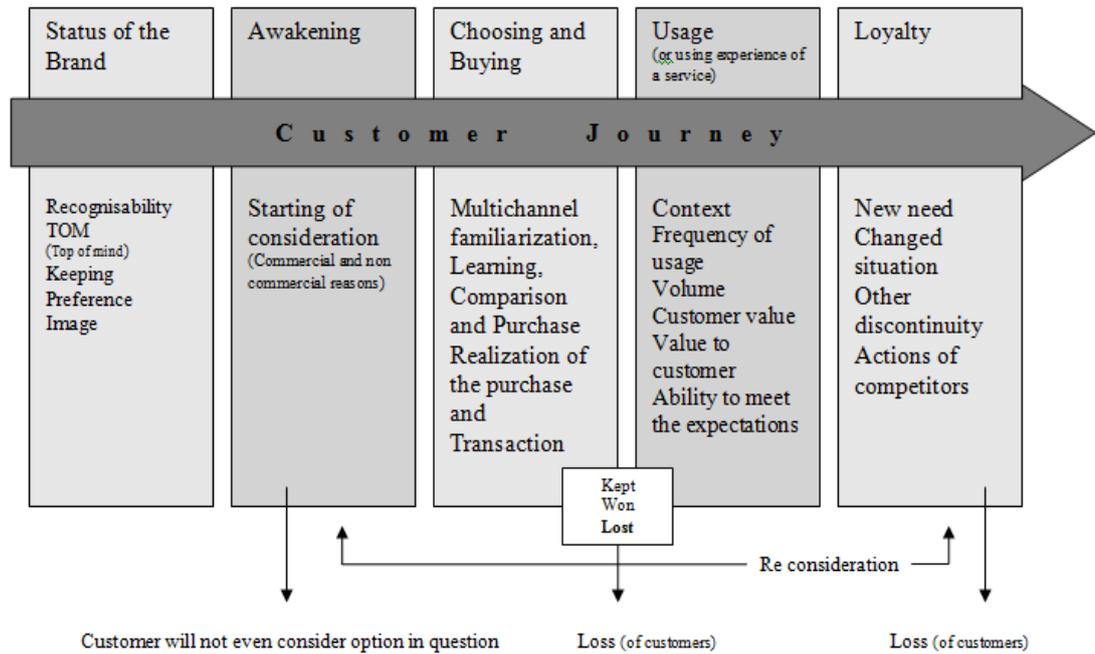


Figure 2. Parts of the customer journey (Keskinen et al. 2013: 23).

As seen from Figure 2, the status of the brand is additionally divided further down to five individual sections. The first of these sections is the *awareness*. The awareness means that how commonly known the brand in question is. This does not correlate directly to the interest of the brand or the willingness to purchase or work with the brand in question as the awareness might also come from the negative publicity. The second section is *TOM* or *Top-Of-Mind*, in other words, and this is basically the rating of how high the brand in question is in customers mind. The third section is the *preference* and, as the name suggests, the section defines how many of the potential customers favour the brand in question. The fourth section is the *image of the brand*, and that consists of all the qualities that the potential customer associates with the brand in question. The most typical attributes in this section include trustworthiness or innovativeness. The fifth section is *liking*, which is a relatively new attribute as the modern culture of blogging and changing opinions in internet forums has reached its peak to such an extent that many of the potential customers search for the user experiences of other customers from the internet before making their own decision. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 79-81)

The liking allows for the companies that provide superior customer experience to gain advantage on the ground that existing customers are spreading a positive word-of-

mouth, and on the other hand, if the customers are finding the product or service not to be up to the standards, the bad image is also spread fast. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 83).

The second main part is about *awakening* of the customer and, in most of the journeys, the single point or situation that triggered the conscious interest for purchase is identifiable. This active consideration is further divided to reasons, motives and context of the awakening. The whole awakening process can be roughly divided into commercial and non-commercial reasons. The *commercial reasons* include advertising and the effort of sales personnel and such and the *non-commercial reasons* is related to the changes in the customer's life situation such as move or change of a job. Additionally, the reviews and evaluation of products can be included in this category. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 93)

The third main part is *choosing and buying* which can be divided in four subsections. The first of which is the *browsing* and in the browsing phase the customer is getting familiar and learning what the actual need is and what kind of solutions there are in the market. The second subsection is *fitting* and this means the individualization or configuration of the needed product or service to fit into the precise need of the customer. The third subsection in this *category* is the decision which as the name suggest is about the final decision. The reasons that finally trigger the making of the purchase decision can be various and the magnitude of the purchase affects these reasons. The fourth subsection is the actual purchase and in this section the main interest is in the channel of the purchase. The purchase channel is informative concerning the dynamics of the final decision making, and it makes the evaluation of the guidance influence different channels in relation to the final transaction channel possible. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 115-122)

The fourth main part is the *usage*, and the usage is usually the base for the long lasting customer relationship. The different factors that contribute to the customers' satisfaction on the purchase decision are context, frequency of the usage, volume, value to the customer and ability to meet the expectations. After the purchase the experience can be defined as a single experience, usage product without the customer relationship or long lasting customer ship. Learning from the customers' experiences enables continuously strengthening customer relationships and in the best cases the customer will eventually choose the same solution and recommends it to others as well.

The value for the customer is a process in which the customer is using the product or the service thus the value is not something that can be added to the product but it comes from the benefits that the usage of the product or service creates. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 136) Thus with the help of services companies can engage the customers better and provide more rewarding customer ships. When the information is more readily available the modern day challenge for the companies is to exceed the customers' expectations over and over again as the disappointments are noticed fast and far.

The fifth main part is about *loyalty* and that is about the customers' willingness of staying as customers of the company even though the customers are reaching a point where they have to make the decision of the customer relationship again. Recruitment of new customers is usually more costly than serving the existing customers and the time that it takes from the new customer to become a profitable customer might take as long as two years and therefore the loss of customers should be minimized. (Keskinen et al. 2013: 160)

The understanding of the customer journey for the company is essential in order to create the customer journey map by which the problem points of the customer journey can be identified.

Customer Journey Map

The Customer Journey Map is a tool by which the companies can identify the different touchpoints of the customer interaction and to illustrate the customers' activities over time and therefore reveal that what are all the actual ways of interacting with a company. (Manning et al. 2012: 97) The map is two dimensional as it maps out all the steps that the customer take throughout the customer relationship and on the other hand it reveals all the possible touchpoints that the customer might use while interacting with the company. (Hagen(2013: 8). According to Watkinson this mapping of all the possible touch points is quite a challenge as in modern world there is multiple ways to interact with the customers and the chosen touchpoint might vary depending on the customers' individual preference. (Watkinson 2013: 89).

The mapping of the customer journey and identifying those touchpoints helps the stakeholders to see matters from the customers' perspective by revealing the sequence of interactions. (Hagen 2013: 8). Additionally, the customers have different

journeys depending on the customers' preference as well as the necessity of the product or service and various other attributes. Some of the customers have a relatively short journey when others tend to consider longer journeys and compare different offerings quite along their way, and might end up interacting with the majority of the touchpoints. (Lipiäinen et al. 2013: 42).

3.4 Customer Experience

The customer experience is an outcome of customer centric culture and it can be seen as overall picture that the customers will get about a company and its products. It is not just the actual product or the salesperson that affects the customer experience but all the steps taken before the actual purchase as well as the needed assistance after the purchase. Thus, basically every material that a company provides and every person who is in contact with the customer and all the contact points that the customer has creates this one unique customer experience. It consist all the clues that company gives out. The clues can be anything that can be detected or observed as well as noticed that they are missing by the customer. Product or service is one of the obvious ones as well as the physical settings of the company or the body language and the attitude of the employees. The clues can be seen in two different categories first of them being the functioning of the good or service and second being the sensations such as smells and colours which wakes the emotions that triggers the customers behaviour. (Berry et al. 2002: 86).

Customers have always a customer experience whether it is good, bad or insignificant and therefore it is important to try to maximize the good customer experiences. (Berry et al. 2002: 88). The customer also has more possibilities than ever before as well as more knowledge of the offerings, and therefore the customer experience has never been as important as it is today. The customer experience can be seen as one of the last true competitive advantages due to the fact that it is quite difficult to copy all the aspects of the customer experience. Technological advantage can be reached quite rapidly by copying or benchmarking the best in the business and the cost driven price competition is hardly a long lasting advantage either. (Gianforte 2013: part 1).

Because all the customers have an experience it leads to situation where all the companies are in the customer experience business whether they want it or not and quite

often the customer experience is the best predictor of the future customer behaviour and thus the future success overall. Manning and Bodine (2012) believe that

customer experience goes to the heart of everything you do- how you conduct your business, the way your people behave when they interact with customer and each other, the value you provide. (Manning et al. 2012: 6).

This means that whatever a company does makes an effect on the customer experience and thus it would be crucial to manage that experience.

The customer experience creates a holistic system of all the actions and touch points as well as all the personnel and partner companies that are trying to provide the customers the best value possible. Matt Watkinson defines the customer experience as being the “qualitative aspect of any interaction that an individual has with a business, its products or services, at any point in time”. (Watkinson 2013: xvi) This can be interpreted in a way that the customer experience is not just about a random touch points or a scattered actions but more of a system of touch points and interactions which all need to be up to a standard in order to create a good customer experience. (Rawson et al. 2013: 92).

Watkinson then breaks this statement down to smaller pieces first of which is about the term qualitative which in this context means that the experience is not factual, measurable thing but more of subjective to the ideology of a customer. The second term that has been clarified is the term individual that is mentioned instead of the customer because not all individuals that has some touch points with a company end up being their customer. Thus, the definition was broadened and the word individual was selected. Furthermore, there is a clear notion that the customer experience is not only about the use of the product or the service but it includes every step from the original browsing of different options all the way to the disposal of the product or ending the service. (Watkinson 2013: xvi).

Customer experience is quite widely used in the companies' communication materials and strategy declarations but the reality is often somewhat different. The reason for this is that the customer experience is quite often referred as being a synonym to customer satisfaction. The other usual misinterpretation is that it is a soft and fluffy and has nothing to do with the bottom line as well. It can be mixed up with the customer service and usability but the customer service is usually needed when the customer have had a

bad experience already. The usability also is part of customer experience but it is not the only thing that affects the total customer experience which is much wider phenomena (Manning et al. 2012: 7). The difficulties also happen due to the fact that customer experience seems to be hard to define, and it is comprehend on a wide enough level, so that the maximising of a single touchpoint satisfaction is often the case. This may be misleading, however, since when measuring the customer satisfaction in certain touchpoints that have been addressed, might imply that the customer experience is generally in a good condition, but the truth might be that there are a few points that let the customer down. (Rawson et al. 2013: 92)

To counteract this problem Watkinson suggest that the focus of the company should be delighting the customer and if the sums are right the profit will be a by-product of successful business in broader sense. If the company is focusing only to maximise the profits, it tends to do so in a short time span which leads to a conflict between the customers and company's interests. This results, in the long run, in an unsatisfied customer which then needs to be treated with expensive marketing campaigns or compensations which then tends to lead to an overpromising and underdelivering, and that of course puts the customers off even more, thus, the downward spiral is ready. (Watkinson 2013: 5)

The other reason why the customer experience is being deteriorating is the current way of measuring the shareholder value and judging based on that about the success of a company as this leads to the company's executives attention to be changed from the actual customers, products and services to the expectation market which has quite little to do with the actual products (Watkinson 2013: 9). Therefore, the decisions are made to satisfy the stock market more than the actual market. This logic has been questioned and the actual numbers seems to indicate that when the attention was moved to maximize the shareholder value the actual returns were worse than before (Martin 2010: 60). In other words, when the customers are put in first priority the shareholders will do fine as well (Martin 2010: 62). This is probably due to a fact that the greater customer satisfaction affects the customer loyalty for the current customers as well as results less price elasticity and therefore reduces costs of future transactions. It also enables to gain on the enhanced reputation by lowering the costs of acquiring new customers and reduced failure costs. (Anderson et al. 1994: 55)

Watkinson (2013) finds six principal reasons why the customer experiences are not improving. First of them is the fact that the companies tend to see that their business needs to be run by logical and rational decision makers and that there is no room for emotion. The second reason is the compulsive measuring that takes place in the modern day companies. Calculating return on investment in one particular customer experience improvement project is difficult as the customer experience is a combination of a vast array of different things. Even though being hard it would be crucial to learn how to build a real business cases out of the customer experience projects (Manning et al. 2012: 21). The third reason is labelled as drag racing and it basically means that the over efficiency where all the slack has been removed from the business causes the business to become less agile and being unable to respond to the changes in the customer expectations. The fourth problem is the obsessive competitor analysis which results the company to compare its performance against the competition which basically leads to a situation that the company is always one step behind the company that was benchmarked. The fifth reason is the unrealistic timetables which results that the offerings are pushed to the markets without thorough designing and testing. (Watkinson 2013: 24-28).

The sixth and probably the reason what contributes to the first five problems is that there are rarely designated person who would be responsible and accountable for the customer experience. This leads to the situation where all the key personnel try to partially optimise the customer experience and the big picture is left unattended. (Watkinson (2013): 29). According to Bean et al. there are three key strategies to counterattack these problems. Firstly the short term winnings should sacrificed in order to benefit in a long run and secondly the customer data should be used to drive the customer experience and thirdly the constant innovation with the customers to provide best possible customer experience. (Bean et al. 2012: 109).

Watkinson (2013) also divides the customer experience in ten major parts all of which are more emotional than technical. This is probably due to the nature of the customer experience and the fact that the customer experience cannot be universally described in a factual manner. Thus, in order to incorporate most of the views the chosen perspective is the customers' perspective and not the company viewpoint. This results that the tools needed to achieve this is left unattended but the significant part is to realize that it is the customers desires and needs in collaboration with the companies offerings that define the customer experience. (Watkinson 2013: 36).

As customer experience is the force that drives customer loyalty, the customer experience also needs to be defined on the ecosystem level.

3.4.1 The Customer Experience Ecosystem

The customer experience ecosystem illustrates the interdependent relationships of employees, partners, policies, processes and technologies that create the quality in all of the customer interactions within the company. This is a complex web among the employees, partners and customer and it does not only consist of the actual customer touch points but also from the parts invisible to the customer but contributing to the actual customer touch points. (Manning et al. 2012: 39).

The customer experience ecosystem can be divided into living beings as well as non-living components. The living beings are the different categories of people like customers, employees and partner companies. These parties affect each other and thus contribute to the customer journey. This influencing might be direct or indirect, in other words, the people not working in the customer interface will also contribute to the customer journey and therefore to the whole customer experience. The non-living components are the policies, processes and technologies that give the living beings the ground rules for interacting with the customer. In a well-balanced customer experience ecosystems the different parties act in order to create benefits or value to the other parties. (Mannig et al. 2012: 44).

Therefore, when evaluating customer experience, the whole customer experience ecosystem should be mapped in order to identify the entities that affect the customer experience. One of the entities is the company employees and their positive influence on the company climate should be considered.

3.4.2 Climate

The climate of the work place makes an effect on the customer experience and therefore the individual aspects that create the inspirational climate need to be addressed when discussing the customer experience. The climate consists of the individuals' experiences of the working community's interactions as well as of leadership. In the lead-

ership the main driving force is their commitment to customer experience which allows employees to realize the importance of it. When the individuals feel joy and pride of their work they can affect the less motivated employees' perceptions of the company and eventually to translate to the customers as well. This results in the fact that the employees' perception of the company exerts influence on the customer experience and the customer experience influence translates further on to the customers' purchasing behavior and loyalty. (Fischer et al. 2014: 11).

The linkage has been tested in business to business environment by Fischer and the links between the field service personnel's perception of their personal engagement correlated with the customers' perceptions of reliability and assurance. (Fischer 2012: 110). Additionally, the link between the workplace climate and internal quality was found which indicates that the employees' perception of the workplace climate can be seen as a relative attribute to the internal quality that the company can provide. (Fischer 2012: 112). Fischer also states that the interactions affect the positive meaning and positive emotions, which further affects the creation of positively deviant performances that result in a climate of positivity. (Fischer 2012: 153). The link between the employees' attitudes towards the company and the customer satisfaction was also found by Hayes when he was comparing the technical account managers with low level of satisfaction with the company and the technical account managers with high level of satisfaction with the company and the correlation between the customer satisfactions between these two groups were meaningful. (Hayes 2011: 112).

The climate as well as the customer experience has a strong systemic nature in which everything is related and when one link of the chain is not up to a par with the rest of the links both the climate and therefore the customer experience will be threatened which results lower repurchase rates as well as lower loyalty. The system can be brought down into an individuals, organization, quality connections and working order. (Fischer et al. 2014: 14). The individuals are held responsible to the choices they make and therefore eventually they are responsible of their own happiness. The other people can affect individuals in a positive or negative way but it is at the end the receiver who chooses how he or she will react to that. (Fischer et al. 2014: 17).

The organization has the responsibility to create a culture in which people are allowed to make the decisions and then enable the employees to make the right choices. The company's intent is usually seen as a series of community's repetitive evolving at-

tempts towards the same goal. The common intention means that the majority of the personnel are aware of the common goal and this goal is usually explained through vision and strategy. The common emotional energy is usually contributing to the common goal. (Fischer et al. 2014: 118). The quality connection is a connection between two individuals that empowers and energize both. The quality connection between two individuals consists of several attributes such as resilience, flexibility and longevity. (Fischer et al. 2014: 61).

It is noteworthy that the better the quality connections between the employees are the more natural it is to an individual to ask for support and resolve the problems together and trust with each other. (Fischer et al. 2014: 62). This means that the problems will be addressed more carefully and quite often when there are more people working towards a solution the more solid the solution will be. The working order or the performance of the whole organization is created through the individual's choices and the experience of relevance as well as quality connections and the organizational common intention. These attributes creates an emotional capital which creates the overall customer experience. (Fischer et al. 2012: 145).

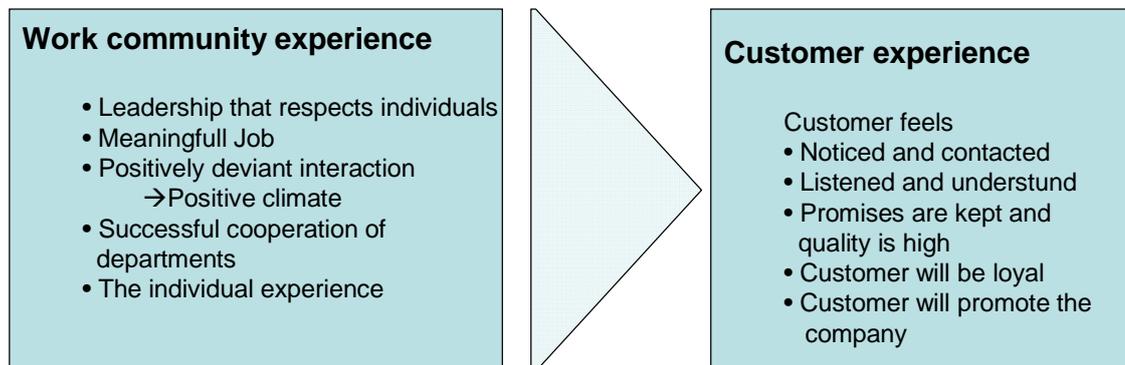


Figure 3. Effect of work community experience on customer experience (Fischer et al. 2014: 111).

As shown in Figure 3, and discussed earlier the work community experience affects the customer experience in multiple ways and therefore it should be noted in the context of creating customer centric ways of operations. The way of employee experiences the leadership, internal quality, working atmosphere and personal engagement make a direct effect on the customer experience. (Fischer 2012: 112).

Therefore the workplace climate is important factor in creating the positive atmosphere in the company which leads to improved customer experience. The consistent cus-

tomer experience improvements leads further on to the different maturity levels of customer centricity

3.4.3 Customer Centricity Maturity

The customer centricity maturity consist of several stages that the companies must take in order to become a truly customer centric. First stage is the improve which means that in this stage companies are looking for the problems in customer experience and then fixing those problems when they are identified. The improve stage is good starting point because it provides small but stable improvements to customer experience and this evolution can produce economic benefits like higher retention rates and cost savings. With these benefits the rest of the company can be attracted to the customer experience. (Manning et al. 2012: 172). The challenge in this approach is that it will fix the problems only when they arise and the company keep creating these problems as it will continue to operate in a same manner that created the old problems in the first place. (Manning et al. 2012: 173).

The second stage is the transform and in this stage the companies are adopting the customer centric ways of operating and are highlighting the root causes and are concentrating on fixing those by changing the way they operate. In this stage the company tries to create a culture where these problems are not created at all instead of just fixing those. The major challenge in this part is that when the easy fixes of the improve stage has been corrected the root cause fixes tend to be more costly and that of course can put decision makers off. (Manning et al. 2012: 174).

The third stage is the sustain in which the newly adopted ways of operations are kept and made as a routines and with this stage the costs are relatively lower than in the transformation stage it still needs an effort not to let the newly introduced ways of operations to erode. In this face the benefits are seen as the customer service costs tends to get lower with fewer complaints and because of the higher retention rates as the customer experience correlates to the future purchasing behaviour. Additionally, the new customers are more easily attracted through the good word of mouth and therefore the cost of acquiring a new customer will be smaller. (Manning et al. 2012: 175). The way to achieve the sustain stage is that the adaptation level of the current practises needs to be determined and the main idea is that the company will be judged

by all the practices function by function and the different maturity levels would be missing, Ad Hoc, Repeatable and Systematic.

The first level, *Missing*, means that the company do not perform that particular practice at all. *Ad Hoc* on the other hand means that the practice in question is done sporadically and that there is no systematic way of doing this practise. Usually it is only a persona or a unit that is interested and they tend to do it sporadically but it is not a companywide policy nor is it a systematic and constant way of operating. The third level is *repeatable* and it means that there is a defined process within the organisation that dictates when and by whom the practice should be performed but it is not followed throughout the organisation or not at all times. (Manning et al. 2012: 176). The fourth level is *systematic* which means that the organisation has the defined processes in place and the organisation is following this process at all times and at all parts of the organisation. This level of maturity is achievable if, for example, the payroll and the taxation of the company are at this level, making it possible to achieve this level of maturity in different business lines as well. (Manning et al. 2012: 177).

The transformation cannot be done for all the practices and disciplines at the same time and therefore the prioritization need to be done. This is case specific but there are several approaches first of which is building on the strengths which means that when the company has identified that, in one discipline they are close to systematic, in every practice they can then opt to strengthen these practices that are lagging behind and then use that experience as an leverage to succeed in the other disciplines too. (Manning et al. 2012: 179). The second part is to identify the weakest links that lets the company's customers down and try to master those or at least bring those up to a par with the most successful disciplines. As there is quite a strong dependency among the disciplines and as the one truly horrific experience can scare customers off and make the total customer experience a bad one, the identification of such cases would be crucial. It would help make the decision on which of the two approaches would be more suitable. (Manning et al. 2012: 180).

Therefore, when aiming at the customer centric culture, the maturity level needs to be considered and to achieve the sustainable level of maturity the best practice of customer centricity should be addressed.

3.5 Best Practice of Customer Centricity

In addition to the individual tools such as the customer journey map and the customer experience ecosystem, a broader best practice of customer centricity could be addressed. They are divided by Hayes (2013) into four main categories. The first of these categories is the best practice on *strategy and governance*. This category is further divided into five sections. The first section is *incorporating a customer focus in the vision and mission statements*. This is due to a fact that the customer related information should support the company mission and also in order to get the customer metrics a part of setting and monitoring the overall goals of the company. (Hayes 2013: 41). The second section is to *identify an executive as the champion of the customer feedback program*, and this is because the reliability of the customer feedback program is much higher when it is led from the top management level or when an senior level executive is running the program and it is dealt with in the executive meetings. (Hayes 2013: 41). The third sections is *incorporating customer feedback as a part of the decision making process*, and this means that the customer metrics are treated in a similar way as the traditional scorecard metrics. This will further communicate the importance of the customers. (Hayes 2013: 41). The fourth section is to *use customer metrics in incentive and compensation for executives and front-line employees*, which means that the company incorporates the objective business metrics that are linked to customer satisfaction as a basis of its incentive programs. (Hayes 2013: 41). The fifth section is *building accountability for customer satisfaction and loyalty goals into the company*, and this means that the companies need to incorporate customer feedback metrics into their key performance indicator. (Hayes 2013: 41).

The second main category is *business integration* and this is divided into four sections. The first of the sections is *presenting customer feedback metrics in executive dashboards*, which means that summary scores are maintained in a business unit or companywide and help in communicating the rate of customer relationship on a macro level. The second section is *integrating the customer feedback program into business processes and technology*, which means that the customer feedback metrics are used in meetings with customers and the success stories are incorporated into marketing and sales materials. The third section is about *communicating all areas of the customer feedback program to the entire company*. This means that the customer feedback including satisfaction and loyalty trends as well as the data collection methods and research results are accessible to all the employees. The fourth section is *integrating the*

resolution of customer issues into the company's Customer Relationship Management system, and this can be achieved through a closed loop process of problem notification to the resolving the problem. (Hayes 2013: 70).

The third main category is the *method and reporting* which is divided into five different sections. The first section is *using the automated tools to collect and report customer feedback metrics*, and this enables cost effective data collection through internet as well as quick integration with other sources of data. The second section is *using different measures of customer loyalty*, and this means that the different aspects of loyalty, the retention and advocacy as well as purchasing should be measured by an appropriate mix of questions. The third section is *using multiple methods to collect customer feedback*, which is needed in order to gain a holistic picture of the customer experience. The fourth section is *presenting customer feedback program results throughout the company* which can be achieved by publishing the results via the company's internal communication channels such as intranet or magazine. The fifth section is *incorporating customer contact management of the customer feedback program into the CRM system*, which enables the company to focus on the right customers with the right surveys at the right time. (Hayes 2013: 122)

The fourth main category is *applied research*. This category is divided into six sections. The first section is *ensuring results from customer feedback collection processes are reliable, valid and useful*. This can be achieved through ensuring validity of the study where the reliability, validity and usefulness of the customer feedback metrics are evaluated. The second section is *identifying linkage between customer feedback metrics and operational metrics*. This can be done by identifying those operational metrics that are linked to customer feedback metrics. These metrics can subsequently be utilized in the employee incentive programs. The third section is *regularly conducting applied customer focused research* which means building a comprehensive research program targeting the customer as well as operational metrics to get the insight into the certain business processes. The fourth section is *identifying the linkage between customer feedback metrics and business metrics*. It is important to identify the financial metrics such as profit or sales which are linked to customer metrics in order to create a business case for the customer feedback programs. The fifth section is *identifying the linkage between the customer feedback metrics and other constituency attitudes* which means the linkage between employee satisfaction as well as partner satisfaction and constituency attitudes are demonstrated. By this linkage, the management of employee

and partner relationship a high customer loyalty can be achieved. The sixth section is *understanding the customer segments using customer information*. This can be achieved by comparing the customer groups through the key customer metrics and identifying the differences. (Hayes 2013: 237).

The above mentioned best practise should be considered when discussing the customer centricity. Additionally, the tools such as Net Promoter Score which can help to identify both the problem points and the success stories from the customer experience and customer centricity should be utilized.

3.6 Net Promoter Score

The Net Promoter Score (Net Promoter®, Net Promoter Score®, and NPS® are trademarks of Satmetrix Systems, Inc., Bain & Company, and Fred Reichheld) has gained reputation of being one of the most accurate metrics that can predict the future growth of the companies (Reichheld 2003:51). This has resulted that it has become a chosen metrics of the big companies such as GE. Net Promoter Score is about one simple question in which the customer needs to give a number from zero to ten that how likely they would recommend the company.

The idea in Net Promoter Score is that the customers will be divided into three groups first of which is the detractor. The customers that give a number up to six are known as detractors. The customers that give a seven or eight are known as a passively satisfied which is the second group and the last group, the promoters are the ones that score nine or ten. Thus, basically Net Promoter Score is a subtraction between the percentage of promoters and the detractors. (Reichheld 2006: 73). The reason for this grouping is that the company's profits should be thought as a good profits and bad profits. The good profits comes from delighting the customers which results that the customers keep on coming back to the company and give recommendations to other possible customers. The bad profit on the other hand are earned in unethical or otherwise not sustainable ways which leads customers to be dissatisfied and not returning to the company and they tend to badmouth the company in question. (Watkinson 2013: 30) Reichheld (2011) also describes that on the overall level the non-responders tend to be 10% promoters and 50% detractors which helps to calculate the NPS from the whole population if part of the respondents is not answering. This division is field specific and thus it cannot be thought as being totally reliable. (Reichheld 2011: 110)

The detractors tend to give bad word of mouth and they seem to create more credit losses and use more of the company's customer service resources and therefore they tend to be more costly than the other two groups. The passively satisfied usually do not promote the company neither in positive nor in negative way and their repurchase rates are higher than the detractors but substantially lower than the promoters. The promoters on the other hand are usually less price sensitive and their repurchase rates are highest and they also tend to give a good word of mouth for the company. They also tend to consolidate their purchases to the promoted supplier as they think that they get good overall value from the company. (Reichheld 2006: 74)

Even though there are also opposite views that the traditional customer satisfaction metrics would be as good as Net Promoter Score (Sharp 2008: 29), it still seems to be a simple way to understand and direct the company towards more customer centricity, as it gives an overall idea how the customer metrics are monitored. And even if it would not be superior to other customer satisfaction metrics, it is mentioned to be at least an equally valid metric to measuring customer satisfaction (Garrity 2010: 33). Additionally, the fact that the single question should be just a starting point and followed by explanatory question to get out the reasons behind the score is what makes Net Promoter Score an interesting alternative (Garrity 2010: 32). Thus, although Net Promoter Score has its limitations it would still be a valid tool to measure customers' view about the company and possibly steer the company towards the customer centricity as it would give a powerful message to the employees that the customer centricity is a key value of the company.

3.7 Existing Customer Centricity Frameworks

In this section the study presents existing customer centricity frameworks which will be later used in creating the case specific framework.

The chosen frameworks for this study are the Burns' six Disciplines evaluated by Manning and Bodine which is more about the company level aspects and it is discussing more on what methods or practices a company should have in order to create good customer experience. The second one is the meaningful experiences created by Diller et al. and this framework is more about the customers point of view and it is discussing the issues that makes the customer to have a meaningful experience. Third one is

Gianfortes' eight steps to great customer experience and this framework combines both the company internal practices as well as the customers' point of view. The fourth framework is Watkinson's ten principles behind great customer experience which also combines both customer and company related matters. The combined approach to the attributes of customer centricity is shown in Table 2 below.

Manning and Bodiac	Watkinson	Gianforte	Diller, Shedroff and Rhea
Strategy	Reflect Identity	Knowledge Foundation	Accomplishment
Understanding	Higher Needs	Empower Customer	Beauty
Design	Leave Nothing to a Chance	Empower Frontline Staff	Creation
Measurement	Set / Meet expectations	Multichannel Support	Community
Governance	Effortless	Listening Customers	Duty
Culture	Stress Free	Design Seamless Experience	Enlightenment
	Indulging the Senses	Engage Proactively with Customers	Freedom
	Socially Engaging	Measure and Improve Continually	Harmony
	Put Customer in Control		Justice
	Consider Emotions		Oneness
			Redemption
			Security
			Truth
			Validation
			Wonder

Table 2. Attributes of customer centricity.

Table 2 shows the different attributes of each framework and the different attributes will be gone through in groups of disciplines, as described by Manning and Bodiac (2012). The first discipline is *strategy* which means that the company's overall strategy should incorporate the customer centricity or a specific customer strategy should be created solely for the customer experience purposes. This strategy has to align with the company's overall strategy and it should be derived from the overall strategy to function without conflicts. This helps the employees to understand what the company wants to achieve and it enables to employees to make the right decisions and prioritize actions when they are interacting with the customers. (Manning et al. 2012: 66).

The attributes found in other frameworks that relates to strategy is Gianfortes first step which is to *establish a knowledge foundation* and this foundation should be considered as both for the customers and about the customers for the sales person. The foundation should consist information about the customers. It also should contain information about the products and about the company for the customers to find. (Gianforte 201): part 1). Gianforte (2013) also discusses *empowering the customer* in his second step which means that the company should empower the customer with self-service. That can be achieved by creating a frequently asked questions type of database or wiki style

forum of information about the company or product and possible some first aid error diagnostics. (Gianforte 2013: part 1). These are related to strategy as the decisions behind these are highly strategic in nature. Also Diller et al. have covered two meanings which are related to strategy. The ninth meaning which is *justice* and this means that the customer want to feel that the treatment is unbiased and equal and therefore have a sensation of fairness. (Diller et al. 2006: 34) Also the thirteenth meaning *truth* is related to strategy and it is about the commitment to honesty and integrity and this means that the company needs to do as they promise. This is especially important in personal relationships which are usual in business to business relations. (Diller et al. 2006: 35). These two meanings are also related to culture but as they are profound questions on how the company is operating they have a strategic dimension.

The second discipline is the *customer understanding* and this is about knowing the customers and their desires and needs. The customer understanding can be divided into a three sub categories first of which is the research. This part is all about the surveys and different research methods as well as gathering information about the customers from the front line staff. Secondly it is about analyzing this information and thirdly the documentation of the analyzed information in such way that it is easy for all employees to find and understand. This customer understanding is the foundation on which the company can build on the more elaborative customer centricity practices. The company needs to know what is needed or wanted throughout the customer base in order to meet and exceed the customer needs. (Manning et al. 2012: 67).

For this discipline there are several supporting attributes found from the other frameworks. First of all Watkinsons' first principle *great customer experience strongly reflect the customer's identity* and this is about the fact that many of the customers want the items they own to be aligned with their view of world and present the values of the person in question. In modern world, the customers are not that much driven by the need but more by desires which means that as all the basic items are on every ones reach the way to gain customers is to be distinguishable and to stand for something. The value of the item is divided into four different parts first of which is the use value which is the function or utility of the object. Second value is the exchange value which is the economic or market value. Third is the symbolic value which means the subjective value of an object to an individual. And the fourth value is the sign value which is the value of the object in relation to other objects in the category. This fourth value is more about how the object is describing the owner social status. (Watkinson 2013: 46) If

these values can be defined by the customers' point of view it enables the company to start working on towards the great customer experience. (Watkinson 2013: 50).

Also every feature of the product or service should have distinctive function and they should be available for a reason, not just to be more or better than your competition. Usually the more features the product or service has the more expensive they become and more bewildered the customer will get trying to find the one feature he needs. More often the personality of a product or a company is more important than the endless list of features and therefore when trying to be distinguished the personality of the product or service or the whole company might be the matter that wins you customers. (Watkinson 2013: 54) The other important thing is to build a brand reality not a brand image, as one of the most offensive matters to the customers is the fact that the marketing and the image of the product or service are promising something else than the actual product or service can maintain, so the customers feel as let down. (Watkinson 2013: 55).

Also the second principle the great customer experiences *satisfy our higher objectives* and that basically means that the customer don't want the product or service but they want what they can achieve with the product or the service. So this part is to understand the higher motives than just needing a piece of equipment or service. Customers have goals and the product or service needs to help the customer to achieve that goal. Watkinson is dividing the issues to surface issues and shadow issues in which the surface issues are then ones that can be observed easily and the shadow issues are the ones that the customer is not willing to openly share. But nevertheless these shadow issues are at least as much of a driving force in the customer's behaviour as the surface issues. (Watkinson 2013: 62).

The sixth principle great customer experiences are *stress free* also relates to this discipline and this is important because in the modern days there are multiple sources of stress and therefore eliminating one source will give the customer a better experience with the product or the service. There are several elements within products or services that can cause stress and the most obvious one is the errors or malfunction in the actual product or the service. The problem with the errors is that they tend to cause a spiral as the errors cause stress and the stress can cause errors, therefore, the possibility of making errors should be minimized. (Watkinson 2013: 128) The errors can be divided into two separate categories which are intensions and actions. In the intention

related errors the intention itself is wrong but the following action is according to the intention. The action related errors are the ones which the intention is right but the action is wrong. (Watkinson 2013: 131)

The second reason for causing stress is about the customers competence as the level of expertise of the customer affects the stress levels. The professionals are usually able to perform a part of the task without consciously thinking which then frees' up the mental resources to concentrate on the more difficult parts. The second reason is that the experts usually have different strategies to accomplish a certain task and therefore they can change their approach to the problem when needed. (Watkinson 2013: 133)

The third reason for the stress is caused by the communication between the company and the customer as the reason for the task also affects the stress, so that when the customer has to do some task it would be good to have the reasons for addressing this task made transparent. This communication also includes the frequent and responsive feedbacks to the customer as the uncertainty tends to make people nervous. In order to remove this cause of stress the customer should be given a frequent and responsive feedback in order to convince the customer that they are going towards their targets. (Watkinson (2013): 136)

The last cause of stress is the distractions in the environment that the task is performed as interruptions easily distracts customers and doesn't allow them to concentrate on the task in hand which prevents the customer from completing the task. Additionally, Gianfortes (2013) fourth step suggests that the customer should have *multichannel support*. This means that the company needs to be present in the social media as well as have the opportunity to get in contact by phone or email. In this case the important factor is that if one of the channels seems not to give the customer a positive result the change of channel should be effortless in order to avoid the dissatisfaction of not being able to solve the problem via self-service channel and therefore not using it again. (Gianforte 2013: part 1).

Diller et al (2006) also point to the meanings that relates to the understanding of the customers. First of the meaningful experiences is *accomplishment* and this means that the customers need to get a sensation of achieving the goals and making something for themselves. This satisfaction can be an end result of things like productivity or status for example. (Diller et al. 2006: 32). The fifth meaning is *duty* and this means that people are willing to take responsibility and feel worthiness when they are taking

the responsibility and then fulfilling the demands that the responsibility brings. The seventh one is *freedom* and this means that the customer wants to have a sense of being without unwanted constraints. This freedom is quite tempting for many but it will decrease the sense of security so that a balance between the two matters needs to be maintained. (Diller et al. 2006: 34). The tenth meaning is *oneness* which means that the customers are looking for a sense of unity with everything around them. The unity can be achieved through spiritual experiences but also from a company which connects its customers into nature or broader sense of the world. (Diller et al. 2006: 35). The fifteenth meaning is *wonder* and this meaningful experience is about the fact that the product or service should create awe. This is usually created by offering something beyond what has been thought as a standard. (Diller et al. 2006: 36). All of these attributes require that the company knows their customers and understands their desires and needs in order to create the best possible customer experience.

The third discipline is *design* which means that the customer experience needs to be controllably designed and this means that every interaction and touch point needs to be defined in order to create a holistic and consistent customer experience. (Manning et al. 2012: 68).

Watkinson (2013) identifies three principles which relate to design, first of which is the third principle of great customer experiences *leave nothing to a chance*. Watkinson defines the total customer experience as the sum of all the interactions between the company and the customer. Thus, to get started with improving the customer experience, the companies should start it by small steps as if they are trying to fix everything at once the projects tend to get too wide, time consuming and expensive so the likely result is that nothing will be improved after all. This third step is about the customer journey which consists of two different parts: first, identifying the customers' objectives and defining the needed actions from the customers' point of view. (Watkinson 2013: 76-78). The second part is the step that unites small single stages so they may seem unnecessary or unimportant, but in every stage there are multiple steps inbuilt which offer the possibility for improvements. (Watkinson 2013: 85). The message here is to try to identify all the stages from the very beginning of the customer journey to the very end of it in order to maximise the positive feeling in the customer journey (Rawson et al. 2013: 90).

The second principle fitting into this category is the fifth principle great customer experiences are *effortless* and this means that the customer should get most out of customer ship with as little effort as possible. The effort needed is divided to three sub-categories first of which is time on task and if the company is able to reduce the time on task the amount of effort is reduces as well assuming that there will be no other trade-offs to the complexity if the task. Secondly, companies need to make the experience as convenient as possible so that the customer can use the channels or locations most convenient for them. Thirdly, the simplicity is also important so that the use of the product or service is as simple to use as possible as the more difficult the use gets the more effort both mental and physical is needed. The ways to achieve effortless customer experience is by mapping out the features and remove the non-essential ones. The essential features need to be prioritised and the most commonly needed ones should be made easy to use. Also way to simplify the customer experience is to map out the tasks that the customer needs to do when interacting with the company or using the product or service and then search for the tasks that are repetitive and eliminate those and also if there are tasks that can be performed by the company on behalf of the customer those could be identified and eliminated. (Watkinson 2013: 114-115). The simplicity is usually a trade-off between the customer control and an effortless use of a product or a service. This means that the more choices there are for the customer to choose the less effortless the use is.

The third of Watkinsons' principles which relate to design is the seventh part of great customer experiences which is *indulging the senses* and this can be divided to five categories first being the vision. The vision is the most variable one as and that has usually been concentrated on with the traditional design. The vision consists of geometric properties as well as textures and colours. The visual experience should not only be about the product itself but also the advertising and interface and the package should be aligned so that the customer will get a consistent experience. The second part is the touch and customers can sense multiple qualities by touching. The shape of the product, texture, weight, hardness, size and temperature can all be sensed trough touching and this is important to realise so that the parts that the customer can touch will be identified and the best experience can be created to the parts that the customer is more likely to touch. Additionally, the customer can be given hints about the product through touching as there are properties that are associated to a certain quality. (Watkinson (2013): 144-145) For example, heavy weight is usually associated to sturdiness.

The third part of the sensing is the scent which can easily make customers to associate a product or a situation to something that has been long gone. The problem with using the scent for creating a great customer experience is that there are not many universally charming scents and people get used to a different smell quite rapidly, so the effect will not be long-lasting. The fourth part is hearing and as the sound is quite difficult to block it tends to be quite important part of the customer experience. If the sound is pleasant or interesting the experience can be good but if the noise is unbearable the experience cannot be great even though the other senses would take into a consideration. The fifth sense is taste. The key of using senses to create the great customer experience is to be consistent throughout the customer journey as it strengthens the brand image as well as enhances the message that the company is trying to put through. (Watkinson 2013: 146-152).

Gianfortes' sixth step *design seamless experiences* and it is also related to design discipline. This basically means that the company should seem unified in the eyes of the customer instead of having different teams communicating with the customer. The customer interface should have few parts in the organisation and they should have the same knowledge and ways of handling the cases, so that customer would receive similar services regardless of the department or customer servant. (Gianforte 2013: Part 2).

Diller et al. (2006) also has three meanings which should be put under the discipline of design. The twelfth meaning which is *security* means that the customers want to be free from the worry about the loss of something. (Diller et al. (2006): 35). The third meaning is *creation* which means that the customer wants to feel that they have produced something new and original and thus made a lasting contribution. This meaning is the driving force of customization in which customers are willing to customize their purchases and do not see that as extra work but more as a desirable attribute. (Diller et al. 2006: 33). The eighth meaning is *harmony* which is about the balanced relationship of parts to the whole. This means that the different parts of an experience should be in harmony with others so that none of them would be overpowering. (Diller et al. 2006: 34). All of these attributes requires active design from the company side to provide good customer experience and even though these cannot be done in isolation from the customers the design work is more done by the company and the customers views are more of an input.

The fourth discipline is the *measurement* and this part means that the company should be able to measure its customer experience in order to identify the potential drawbacks in the customer experience and enables the company to concentrate on the most critical aspects and prioritize their actions accordingly. This discipline also helps to ground the significance of the customer experience as it will allow the customer experience metrics be shown in a same manner as the more traditional business measures such as sales and profitability. (Manning et al. 2012: 69).

Watkinson (2013) has one principle for this category which is the fourth principle great customer experiences *set and then meet the expectations* which is considered as the most important part of the customer experience as if the customer has an expectation of a product or service and the actual product or service is not delivering according to the expectation the customer will feel disappointed no matter whether the expectations has been realistic or not and whether the expectations has been set by the company or not. This is mostly because of the dopamine neurons in our brains which controls our emotions in correlation with our expectation. (Watkinson 2013: 98) If a reward from a certain action is expected but not received, or received less than anticipated, the dopamine neurons respond little or not at all. On the other hand, if the value of the reward is higher than anticipated, the dopamine neurons get activated and the customers get positive emotions. (Fiorillo et al. 2003: 1898). This means that the expectations are not to be let down at any circumstances and, if possible, the expectations should be exceeded.

Noteworthy is that if expectations are exceeded repeatedly that will become the new norm and therefore the company will end up in a spiral of continuously over serving the customer which of course in a long run will be impossible. Therefore the exceeding of the expectations should be sporadic and should keep the customer surprised as it happens. (Watkinson 2013: 106). Watkinson divides these expectations to two main categories which are the existing expectations which are the ones that the customer has before the interaction and which comes from the prior experiences. The second category is set expectations and these are the ones that are created through interaction (Watkinson 2013: 101).

Gianforte (2013) suggests the steps which fit into this measuring and the fifth step, with *Listening your customers* being the first of them. This also means that the company should gather the unsolicited feedback and be present in modern communication

channels such as social media and get the ideas from there too. (Gianforte 2013: Part 2). Additionally, the eight step, *Measure and improve continually*, fits into this category (Gianforte 2013: Part 2). Additionally, as suggested by Dillers et al. (2006), the second meaning, *Beauty*, relates to this section and covers not just the physical looks but also the sense of its pure functionality and that it has been created correctly. (Diller et al. 2006: 33).

These attributes requires constant measuring to achieve and therefore they go naturally under measurement discipline.

The fifth discipline is called *governance* which is a set of practices that gives the company its guidelines towards customer centricity (Manning et al. 2012: 70). The third step of Gianfortes' (2013) framework relates to this governance and it is that the company should *empower its frontline staff* and it means that the staff should be driven to exceed the customer expectations (Gianforte 2013: Part 1). Thus, the company should create a set of practises that supports the front line staff's ability to deliver the best possible customer service. Additionally, as suggested by Dillers et al. (2006), the sixth meaningful experience, *Enlightenment*, means that the customers want to have a clear understanding of the offering through logic or inspiration (Diller et al. 2006: 34).

The sixth discipline is *culture* which can be divided into a three sub categories first being the hiring of new employees. Second sub category is socialization and the third sub category is rewards and this includes the formal monetary rewards as well as the informal rewards (Manning et al. 2012: 71).

Watkinson (2013: 165) demonstrates three principles that relates to company culture first of which is the eighth principle, great customer experience, is *socially engaging*. The second principle for this category is the ninth principle great customer experiences *put the customer in control* (Watkinson 2013: 172). The third principle for this discipline is Watkinsons' tenth principle which is great customer experiences *consider the emotions*. This means that it is not enough that the product or service is only functional but it also needs to raise emotions. On the other hand, different emotions can have different action tendencies and cause customers to act differently. In the beginning of customer life cycle the first impression is the key and it should evoke interest and excitement and further on in the path when the product or service is being used it needs to create positive feelings so that the customer is feeling satisfied and ending up creating

a emotional tie to the brand or product and stays as a customer. (Watkinson 2013: 188).

When considering the emotions it is not just about bringing the positive emotions to the front but it is also about minimising or eliminating the negative ones. The negative emotions can be caused by the interaction with the company but the other equally important issue is to identify the emotional state that the customer has before the interaction and modify the service to be suitable to that state and slowly working the emotional status up. Usually the good customer experience comes from these difficult situations when the customer is already having negative feelings and the company is able to change the mood of the customer towards the positive side. (Watkinson 2013: 193).

Gianfortes' seventh step which is *Engage proactively* with customers relates to company culture. Usually companies tend to give customers effort when they take the first contact that something is broken and then try to fix the problem but instead of this the companies should focus on the factors that dissatisfy the customers before the actual point of contact. It is also important that the information is only delivered to the customers that need this particular information and the communication should be personalized. The company culture should steer the frontline staff towards being enthusiastic about helping the customers and create a climate where the proactive engagement is desirable. (Gianforte 2013: part 2).

Diller et al. (2006) argue for three meanings which are culture related. The fourth meaning which is *community* and this means that the customer want to feel a sense of unity with others around them and in more general level a connection with other human beings especially with the ones that tend to be interested in similar matters. Also the fourteenth meaning *validation* which means that the customer wants to feel as a valued and respected individual can be achieved through company culture. This part is about the status of the objects that the customer purchases but also how the company is treating the customers. The last culture related meaning is the eleventh meaningful experience which is *redemption* and this is about the compensation of the past failure. Even though the roots of this experience are in a negative event the actual redemptive experience can be highly positive. (Diller et al. 2006: 33-35). All of these attributes can be affected trough a company culture and in order to create good customer experience the culture should support the improvements of these attributes.

Therefore, different attributes identified by the existing frameworks should be taken into consideration and grouped together when creating the framework for this study.

3.8 Attributes of Customer Centricity

If summarized, the attributes of customer centricity identified from the existing frameworks can be combined together for building a complete and detailed view on customer centricity. The framework presented by Manning and Bodiac (2012) can be taken as a basis for this construct since it has a good overview of the company practises for creating a good customer experience. The rest of the attributes are positioned under the related discipline. When combined, the attributes of customer centricity looks as shown in Table 3 below.

Manning and Bodiac	Strategy	Understanding	Design	Measurement	Governance	Culture
Watkinson		Reflect the customer's identity	Leave nothing to a chance	Set and meet the expectations		Socially engaging
		Higher objectives	Effortless			Put customer in control
		Stress free	Indulging the senses			Consider emotions
Gianforte	Empower Customer	Multichannel Support	Design Seamless Experience	Listening Customers	Empower Frontline Staff	Engage Proactively with Customers
	Knowledge Foundation			Measure and Improve Continually		
Diller	Justice	Accomplishment	Security	Beauty	Enlightment	Community
Shedroff and Rhea	Truth	Duty	Creation			Validation
		Freedom	Harmony			Redemption
		Oneness				
		Wonder				

Table 3. Attributes of customer centricity combined under the disciplines.

As seen from Table 3, the attributes are positioned under the related discipline. The grouping might have been done irreverently, but this categorization is based on the logic of the previous discussion on customer centricity.

Diller, Shedroff and Rhea (2006) tend to highlight the customer emotions and feelings needed to achieve for creating the good overall experience and Watkinson (2013) as well as Gianforte (2013) has combined the two different approaches. Attributes such as design, socially engaging, empower customer and creation imply that the first of the main similarities is that most of the different attributes requires input from both, the company and the customer, so that the basic foundation of customer centricity is laid in the interaction between the customer and the company. This interaction enables the

company to achieve the second common nominator in these attributes, which is customer understanding or listening and knowing the customers. This part can also be found from all the different frameworks as there are attributes such as measurement, put customer in control, listening customers and oneness. Thirdly, by interacting with the customers and understanding the needs and desires of the customers, the company should be able to provide the solutions for the customers that they truly want or need, which then enables the customer to have a good customer experience. Additionally, in this part there can be found attributes from all the customer centricity frameworks discussed, such as culture, set and meet expectations, empower front line staff and security which seems to be quite similar.

Based on these attributes, the case specific conceptual framework of customer centricity can be created.

3.9 Conceptual Framework

For synthesizing a conceptual framework for building a proposal in this study, it gathers the key elements of customer centricity selected from the previously mentioned different frameworks. This is done in order to create a framework how to achieve the customer centricity specific to the case company context.

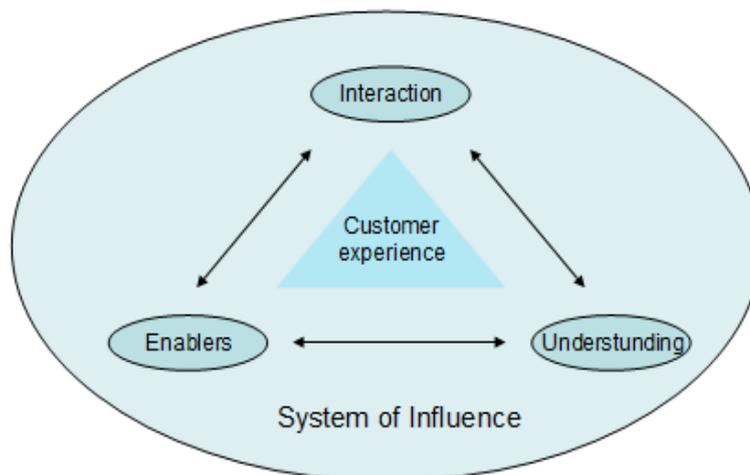


Figure 4. The system of influence as a framework for this study.

Figure 4 shows the system of influencing customer centricity as seen in this study and based on the existing frameworks. It consists of three individual parts which are inter-

twined with each other, so that they become systemic parts of the approach and adjusting something in one part would affect the other parts. On the other hand, making improvements in one part would not make the company customer centric.

The first part, *Interaction*, represents the customers' perspective, and it requires that the customer journey would be *designed* to create the good customer experience. The second step requires that the customer journey would be made as *effortless* as possible by providing the best suitable *channels* to the customer. In the creation of the customer experience, the key issue would be that the *staff should be empowered to meet the expectations* of the customers. The expectations of the customers should not be left up to a chance but *designed* and *steered* towards the advantageous direction. This part also requires that the company have a solid *culture* in which the customer is respected and acknowledged to be a professional of their own field. Once this is realised, it becomes just a matter of communication to make interaction is useful for both parties.

The second part, *Enablers*, represents the company's perspective and consists of the attributes which enable a good customer experience. In this part, the core questions are the attributes of the product or service as well as the company internal *strategy* and *governance* policies. This means that is these different attributes, such as image quality up to the competition and the *design* and *user experience*, should communicate that the use of the product or service is as good as it should. Additionally, the brand and image are the object of interest as well as the completeness of the service portfolio. The product itself needs to fulfil not only the customer's basic needs, but also address the *higher needs*. In the context of the case company, it means the image needs to enable the doctor to make the right diagnosis.

The third part is *Understanding* which means that in order to be successful the company needs to know its customers and their needs and desires. In this part, the customers view and the company's view are tried to be aligned by *measuring* and *listening* to the customer and adjusting the company's offerings according to the customers' views. This part can be divided into two main areas which are the *active knowledge transfer* and the *passive knowledge transfer*. The *active knowledge transfer* means that the company is actively asking about the customers' views. The *passive knowledge transform* means that the company is listening to various channels of customer feedback which is initiated by the customer and not necessarily intended directly for the company but may also be information to other potential customers. This means that the

vast amount of information about the company, its products or competition in the *social media* should be tapped as well as the *reviews*. Also the *customer service contacts* which are initiated by the customer should be systematically extracted to an information system and analysed in order to create better customer experiences.

	Interaction	Understanding	Enablers
Manning and Bodiac	Understanding	Measurement	Strategy
	Design		Governance Culture
Watkinson	Reflect identity	Put customer in control	Effortless
	Socially engaging	Higher needs	Stress free
		Consider emotions	Indulging the senses
		Leave nothing to a chance	Set/meet expectations
Gianforte	Empower Customer	Multichannel support	Knowledge Foundation
	Engage proactively with the customers	Listening customers	Empower frontline staff
		Measure and improve continually	Design seamless experience
Diller, Shedroff and Rhea	Beauty	Accomplishment	Freedom
	Creation	Duty	Harmony
	Community	Oneness	Security
	Enlightment	Wonder	
	Justice		
	Redemption		
	Truth		
Validation			

Table 4. Attributes of customer centricity for the case specific framework.

Thus, Table 4 combines the individual features of the different frameworks under the customer centricity framework specific for the case company context.

Interaction

In the interaction part, the *understanding* of the customers' needs is vital and the company needs the help of their customers to fully understand what they need, therefore it has been positioned in the interaction part. Additionally, the *design* is positioned here as the company needs to do it in cooperation with the customer. It also requires knowing the customer but it is more about the cooperation than just measuring and listening to the customers. The *reflect identity* is in this part as the value in use and the value in exchange is created together with the customer as the theories of the value co-creation is stating. The *socially engaging* is also positioned in the interaction part as the personalization of the unit or experience needs to be done in interaction with the customer. Additionally, the treating of the customer as an individual needs to be done in interaction with the customers as it usually happens when the frontline staff and the customers are interacting.

Empowering the customer needs to be done in interaction with the customer as the ways of letting the customers resolve their problems by themselves requires that the customers and the company is identifying the tools such as frequently asked questions which would help the customer to solve the problems by themselves. *Engage proactively with the customer* is positioned in the interaction part as the engaging cannot be achieved without customers' willingness to let the frontline staff to know about the situation before something has gone wrong. This has a close connection to the know the customer part too, as this feature defines that the company should focus only to the factors that dissatisfy the individual customer and deliver the individualized information for the customer so that the company should know quite accurately about the customers interests.

The *beauty* is positioned in interaction as this is quite subjective and therefore in order to create a sense of beauty requires input from the customer as well. Next point, *creation*, makes the end result of the company providing customizable products or services and the customer using them requires interaction. *Community* is part of interaction which makes this meaningful experience comes from the sense of unity with others around so it is interactive. *Enlightenment* comes from the interaction between the information provided by the company and the interpretation of the information by the customer. The *justice* is part of interaction as this is about how the customer feels to be treated and the company need to make the customer feel fairly treated. *Redemption* requires interaction as the customer need to let the company know about the past failures and company needs to provide the corrective actions in order to make the customer feel positively. *Truth* is also part of interaction as the company needs to provide the culture for the front line staff, and the front line staff needs to live up to their promises so that the customer feels that the company is a trustworthy partner. Thus, the interaction comes from the promises that the company creates and the customer's evaluation of those promises. *Validation* is also positioned in the interaction as the company needs to provide the products or services and make the customers feel as valued and respected individuals and at the end the customers define the status value of these products and services.

Understanding

The *measurement* as well as *measure and improve continually* is in this section as the measurement is one way of getting the knowledge of customers and identifying the drawbacks of the customer experience which allows the company then to fix the possi-

ble problems. *Put customer in control* is positioned in this section as the control should be relative to the competence of the customer in order to avoid the stress and excessive effort needed to take advantage of the control. This then means that the company should know the competence level of the customers in order to provide them with a suitable amount of control. The *higher needs* also require from the company to know their customer as the company cannot fulfil the higher needs unless they are identified. *Consider emotions* has also been positioned here as the emotions affect the customer behavior, and it is the relations between the emotion and the action that triggers the needs to be identified and be used for creating a better customer experience. *Leave nothing to a chance* is also part of knowing the customers as this feature is about the consistent customer journey and it needs to be mapped first in order to make it better. This feature also has connection to the interaction part as in the mapping of the customer journey the customer insight is valuable. Next feature in this section is *multichannel support* which means that the customer should have the suitable channels to contact the company and resolve the problems and in order to provide customer with the suitable channels the most wanted channels should be identified. Additionally, the *listening customers* have been positioned in this section as the listening of the customers helps company to know the customers insight.

Accomplishment is positioned in this section as in order to make the customer feel like they are achieving their goals the customer needs to be known by the company so that the right offerings can be made. The *duty* is also in this part as the level of responsibility is proportional of the customers' competence and also to their individual qualities. Thus, in order to provide the convenient level of responsibility the company should know their customers. *Oneness* is also positioned in know the customer section as the company should identify what drives its customers and align their offerings accordingly. *Wonder* is positioned in know your customer as in order to create the awe the company needs to understand what is taken for granted in the customer base and then trying to exceed it in order to create the feeling of surprise.

Enablers

The different features in this section are more about the company internal aspect and the attributes that enables the good customer experience. *Strategy* is positioned in this section because either the customer experience strategy or the company overall strategy should enable the company to provide a good customer experience. The *governance* and *culture* has been added to this category, as they also let the company and

the front line staff provide a good customer experience. Otherwise the *effortless* and *stress free* as well as the *indulging the senses* are more about the ease of use and the ease of purchase, so that they are counted as an attributes. *Set and meet the expectations* is done in cooperation with the customer as the customer usually has some expectations but this feature has been positioned in the enablers as the company needs to derive those existing expectations in the desirable direction. The *knowledge foundation* as well as *empower the frontline staff* is also the company's internal matter by which it can help the frontline staff to better serve the customer. Additionally, *design seamless experience* is part of the enablers as if the whole customer journey has been designed it enables the customer to have a good customer experience. The *freedom* and *harmony* is positioned as a enabler as both the freedom of unwanted constraints and balanced and pleasing relationships enables the good customer experience. *Security* is positioned in this section as the feeling of being secure enables the customer to enjoy the customer experience more and therefore it enables the better overall customer experience. Figure 5 shows the final conceptual framework for achieving customer centricity in the case company.

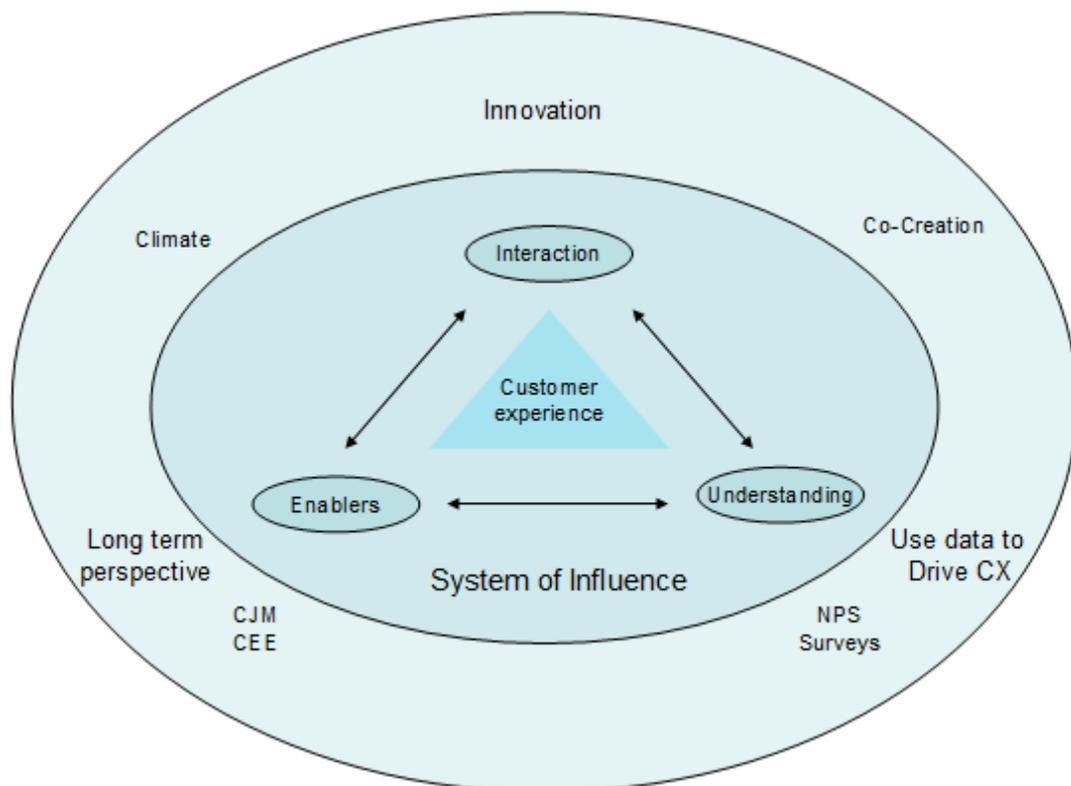


Figure 5. Conceptual framework on customer centricity.

Figure 5 defines the practices by which the customer centricity can be achieved. Firstly in order to get the best possible outcome on customer centricity the company should

have a *climate* which would enable the interaction with the customer and the concentration on enhancing the customer experience. Secondly the *long term perspective* should be the driving force as the nature of customer centricity projects are quite time consuming and it tends to take quite a long time before the benefits can be seen. Thirdly tools like *customer journey map* and *customer experience ecosystem* should be used to map the current customer experience which enables the improvements to the parts that are not up to a par as the overall experience is the driving force for the customers. This enables the company to reach the first step of the customer centricity maturity.

The fourth part of achieving customer centricity is to *use data* to understand the customers and to drive the customer experience and for this tools such as *Net Promoter Score* and different *surveys* could be utilized. Fifth part is in accordance with *service dominant logic* and it means that by understanding the customers and interacting with them the company could *co-create* the maximal value together with the customers which means that by offering the customers solutions that allows them to get the maximal benefits tends to lead to longer and more profitable customer relations. And the sixth part is *innovating* together with the customers to create the best possible customer experience for the customers which tends to result in longer customer relations and lower costs of maintaining the customer relations.

The system of influence can be compared against the current state of customer centricity in case company. After the differences has been identified the proposal can be built by combining the differences and the ways of achieve customer centricity

4 Current State Analysis

This section discusses the results of the current state analysis on the case company's way of operating. First, it presents the results of evaluation of the current practices from the company's internal instructions, and secondly, analyses the data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews.

4.1 Different Layers of Customers

The case company is a medium sized manufacturer of medical imaging equipment and has long traditions of being a product centric company. It is owned by a larger manufacturer of dental healthcare products and it is producing mammographic and orthopaedic imaging equipment as well as the supportive products.

As the market of mammographic imaging devices is highly diffused it is quite normal to sell the equipment via multiple ways. One of the most common ways for case company is selling through dealers worldwide. The second option is to have a subsidiary in different countries and in case company's case there is a subsidiary in United States to cover the North American sales. This can be viewed as a selling through dealers as even though there are some differences the main idea is that the subsidiary would purchase the unit and sell it onwards to the end customer. The third option is to sell directly to hospitals or clinics as case company is doing in domestic market as well as in cooperation with the dealers some key hospitals which are thought as partners in providing research and user experience data. In some of these partner customers there is also a possibility to make R&D projects and clinical evaluations.

Dealers are usually small or medium sized medical device retailers who also have other representations as well as case company's products and that is of course quite challenging to get them aligned with case company's view of selling the equipment. This also makes the acquisition of customer satisfaction data more challenging as case company might not know the end customer, so that the customer satisfaction surveys should be delivered through the dealers to the end customer in order to obtain the needed information.

There should be a survey done also for the dealers as they usually install the unit to the end customer, so that at least case company could get the information whether the installation went as planned or there were problems during the installation and calibration. Additionally, as they are case company's first line of customers, it would be meaningful to measure their satisfaction also in order to get the knowledge of how to improve the company's image in the market of medical device retailers. The majority of the equipment sold is sold through the dealers, therefore, they should be taken into account as well as the end customer. The key dealers should be identified in order to keep them satisfied and possibly even special deals to try to help them get more sales.

The second level of customers are hospitals and clinics who actually buy the equipment from the dealers or on a few occasions directly from case company and their view of the equipment is the one that matters most. If case company could satisfy this second level of customers and get them loyal to company's products the selling of the equipment would be easier and the power of dealers would be lesser. In order to get the satisfaction data from hospitals and clinics case company should get the knowledge from the dealer that who is the actual end customer and that could be done, for example, during the acquiring of the software licence. The equipment is sold to dealer with a test licence only and when the final installation takes place the dealer or customers' technician asks for permanent licence and with this customer contact company could ask contact information of the customer and send the survey afterwards.

The radiologists and nurses are the third level of customers as they are the ones that actually uses case company's equipment and would be most suitable to answer the questions about the usability of the equipment. Thus, in order to design better or more suitable solutions this level should also be involved in the customer satisfaction survey, but to get through to this level of customers is even harder than the hospitals and clinics.

The actual patients are the fourth level of customers as they are the ones that have to feel the actual operation and they would be most suitable to answer questions concerning the comfort of the patient. The patients are naturally the hardest level to get through as there are multiple intermediaries before the actual patient could be reached.

As the different layers of customers are quite complex the way of collecting, organising and sharing the data should be made easy. Therefore the IT-systems of the company are in a key role in storing and sharing of the customer data.

4.2 Current IT-systems

PMNET is a feedback collection system where basically all the feedbacks are documented. The main idea is to document the feedbacks that requires some additional information or work and are not solvable with current instructions. The main type of feedbacks that is documented is the errors in deliveries in which the aim is to get statistical data and identify the main problem areas in order to fix the possible problems in delivery practises. The second main area of feedbacks documented in the PMnet is the product complaints and all the written complaints need to be documented. Additionally, the customers claim notes should be documented and handled as a complaint. Third main area is development suggestions and positive feedback in order to identify the areas in which the product or service is working better than expected. In the development suggestions it do not need to have an answer right away but it is useful to have a list that should be taken into account once the new development project is started. (PMnet FAQ)

The second IT-system that is currently used as a customer service tool is a PMCRM and it is an IT system which is intended to be used as a tool for sales and after sales personnel. The system has a multiple features and it can be used to store different data from different customers. It can also be used to organise different tasks to a certain individual and keep track on the progress of the open tasks as well as a communication tool for the company to be able to send out bulletins and other information to a wide range of recipients at one time. Currently it is used to store the contact data and sales leads as well a tool for mass marketing. It is also in use in after sales environment to keep track of the service activities.

4.3 Current Communication of the Customer Feedback to Stakeholders

As the first step to the customer centricity is the actual collection of the data, the other equally crucial step is to transfer the collected data to the relevant people so that the data will be taken into account instead of just gathering it in the system. In this communication of the customer feedbacks there are several key tools in use in case company which when used correctly would able the customers views to end up in actual product or service development ideas.

Travel Reports

Case company has in use the system of travel reports and they are good way of sharing the knowledge of customers views of the unit as well as possible faults in the piece of equipment. There are a report template in which the most critical points is covered and the template itself is good for the purpose but the actual travel reports that are written by the employees are currently a bit vague in format as there tends to be too much concentration on the not so important issues, and therefore the actual piece of information needed by different personnel has to be filtered from a long report.

Feedback

Feedback are communicated through the Pmnet system to relevant people and the responsibility is divided through coordinators. The person who documents the feedback into the PMnet assigns responsible personnel from the group of coordinators who are manager level personnel in different departments and that coordinator then assigns a responsible person to actually deal with the feedback. This PMnet feedback system allows to have email alerts to responsible personnel so that none of the feedbacks would left unanswered, and it also provides possibility to organize the feedbacks by departments so that only the relevant people needs to take actions. (PMnet FAQ)

Current Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The current customer satisfaction survey conducted in case company is mainly the self-evaluation for which the front line staff fills in every year. There are twelve questions in a wide range of areas related to customer satisfaction, making it quite a rough estimate how the company is doing. Additionally, the fact that it is done as a self-evaluation limits its reliability. The other customer satisfaction survey done in after sales environment 2013 but it was conducted only once and it had 23 questions which might have too much for some participants. There are some key elements which could be utilised but it needs to made constant process instead of one time action. The summary is shown in Appendix 1.

4.4 Customer Centricity Reality Check Questionnaire

The customer centricity survey was conducted as a questionnaire and there were 10 people answering it. There were two product managers, three area export managers and after sales manager as well as export assistant and three technical specialists who

work in after sales in close proximity to the customers answering this questionnaire, so that the overall picture should represent quite closely to the company as a whole. The idea of the questionnaire was discussed and then people could answer the questionnaire by themselves. The summary is shown in Appendix 2.

There were six metrics that scored lower than 2,3 out of 4 in average and the importance was over 2,3 out of 3 in average. These limits were chosen in order to get the most critical questions highlighted.

The first of the problem points was a question number 1.3 Customer metrics are regularly reported to leadership teams and monitored as part of scorecards. This got an average of 2,2 and its average in importance was 2,4. Thus, it seems that this should be high in the priority lists as majority of the participants scored the highest in the importance. The low score in the actual question is probably due to a fact that there is quite a limited knowledge of the leadership team's metrics that what they are monitoring on and it seems that there is no real scorecards in use of the daily decision making. The interesting part is that the after sales team gave it a highest score so that implies that in the after sales department there is some metrics that is gathered and evaluated. The second noteworthy part is that the sales department giving this 1,33 which indicates that in the sales department these numbers are not collected or at least the information coming from those customer metrics is not distributed wide in the organization. Thus, it seems that the problem has two dimensions. Firstly, the customer data should be collected through out the customer interface and secondly the information should be distributed widely. Additionally, it might be that the data is there but that the leadership team is not utilizing it in the decision making process.

The second question that was brought up is the 2.1 the customer journey has been mapped and this got 2,18 on average and importance was 2,36. This is probably due to a fact that the idea of customer journey map is not well understood in the company and therefore it has not been made. The biggest problem that this causes is that the consistent customer journey cannot be made unless all the touch points of the customer journey are identified. This would be the first step to take in order to create more customer centric company and move up in the customer centricity maturity. This question got the highest score from the product managers so it implies that the knowledge of the product managers could be utilized to create the map.

The third question which seems to be the problem point is the 2.4 Both quantitative data (scores) and qualitative feedback (opinions, reasons behind the scores) are collected and this got an average of 2,27 and importance 2,45. The main reasons for this score is the fact that there has not been any consistent active data collection from the customers and the customer satisfaction has been rated through a self-evaluation. Noteworthy in this question is that the travel reports are good way to gather the customer data but the distribution and use of that data has been limited. Additionally, there should be more channels through which the needed customer data would be collected. It should also be done in a consistent way of handling and storing the data needed and, more importantly, the use of the data should be systematic in order to get the best possible results from the collected data.

The fourth question that got raised from the questionnaire is number 3.3 Issues behind the numbers are understood. This scored 2,18 and 2,55 and the problem is probably result of the fact that there is really limited knowledge in the organization that what numbers if any are used in the decision making process and at least in the production and the supportive function of production it seems that there is no numbers about the customer experience other than delivery accuracy in use and therefore it is quite difficult to tell if the issues behind the numbers are understood. Additionally, the low score from the sales department 1,25 implies that they do not have a clear idea of the numbers used in decision making. Interesting part was again that the after sales department scored this higher than the rest of the group, therefore, it seems that they have some customer feedback analysis in place. This would be important to widen to the company level in order to understand the customers' needs better and to be able to give them better or more suitable offerings.

The fifth problematic question was the 4.4 employees know where to find customer insights and it scored 2,27 in average and 2,36 in importance. This question scored again highest in the after sales department, therefore, it seems that they have tools to store and share the customer data. This is as important to the sales staff and product managers as for the after sales personnel, therefore, the customer insights should be collected and shared through out the company. Additionally, this information would be highly important for the product development team in order to take the customers' insight into consideration before the product is launched.

The sixth question in the list was number 5.4 the results and impact of improvements are communicated internally and it scored 2,27 and 2,73 in importance. This question got the lowest score of 1,75 from the sales department and they ranked the importance to 2,75; therefore, it seems that there would be room for improvement. In the case company, the culture of communication has been quite minimalistic, thus it seems that this problem is coming directly of the organizations way of communicating and informing its employees.

On the positive side the customer feedback and claim process seem to be organised correctly as the questions 2.3 Customers have an easy mechanism/channel to give feedback to the company, 4.3 Relevant communication channels (e.g. intranet, reporting tools, newsletters, info sessions) for customer insights have been created and are continuously maintained and 5.1 Customer feedback used as input for defining improvement/development actions was scored 3,00; also the importance of these were ranked above 2,6 so that this part is well covered. The fact the people might see these as a plain claim channels and the improvement being just a product development can be distorting the results as the questions 2.2 The feedback collection points during the customer journey have been defined and 2.4 Both quantitative data (scores) and qualitative feedback (opinions, reasons behind the scores) are collected got relatively low scores.

4.5 Customer Centricity Maturity Questionnaire

The customer centricity maturity questionnaire was filled in by two members of the board. The questionnaire was shortly described and then the results were discussed in order to avoid misunderstanding as the number of responses was low. The number was intentionally kept low as the reason for this questionnaire was to get the view of the board of directors that work in close proximity to the customer interface. The summary of the results is shown in Appendix 3.

The questionnaire had forty questions and four different answering options lowest being *missing* which means that the action is not performed at all. The second lowest rating was *ad hoc* which mean that the action is performed occasionally without a formal plan. The second best was *repeatable* which means that the action is performed occasionally but the formal plan of systematically performing the action has been introduced even though it is not been obeyed. And the highest rating was *systematic* which

means that action is performed systematically according to the formal plan. The most of the responses were in ad hoc rating which implies that there are plenty of improvements to be done in the customer experience context but even though there is a lot of work to do there is also a lot to gain as well. And even though the average rating were close to 2 there were three questions which were rated as 3,5 out of four.

First of these were that *is unasked feedback about the customer experience collected* and this is probably quite fair score as the feedbacks and claims are collected systematically even though other aspects of the customer experience is not systematically collected. The second high scoring question was that *are iterative ideation, prototyping and evaluation used as a part of experience design process*. This is also due to the fact that the customer experience is more than just the piece of equipment and in other parts the feedback collection is not systematic even though in the product development and improvement projects the different aspects are used systematically. The third question scoring the 3,5 was the *is the experience proactively redesigned to reflect the change whenever a change is approved to a policy, business process, product, technology or other system that affects the customer experience* and in this question too the difference between the systematic and repeatable comes from the fact that the actual equipment design is very systematic but the other aspects of the customer experience is not so well attended. Thus, the common nominator to the success part seems to be the systematic way of handling the changes in the product or technology which seems to be in good order.

There were four questions that were ranked as missing as they were averaging one, so according to this questionnaire, these questions should be attended most urgently. First of these questions was that *is the customer understanding shared with all the employees* and as this practice is missing it is quite difficult for the personnel to provide the best possible service and solutions to the customers and as it has been stated all the employees are responsible from the customer experience and not just the front line staff, thus, it would be desirable that the knowledge about the needs and desires of the customer would be systematically shared trough out the company.

The second question that was marked as missing by both of the respondents was that *is the relationships between the drivers of customer experience quality, customer perceptions of their experiences and business outcomes been modelled*. If these customer experience quality and the customer perceptions of their experiences has not been

modelled and if there is no straight link to the business outcome it makes the developing of the customer experience more difficult as there is no results to show that what could be achieved through a customer experience development project. It also means that the relations between the drivers and results are not known in the company.

Third question that *are these customer experience metrics and models shared trough out the company* was also rated as missing and this leads to a poor knowledge of the importance of the customer experience for the employees as there is no indication that the customer experience would be high on the company's agenda.

The fourth *question is formal reward structures connected to performance on customer experience metrics* was rated as a missing and this is also related to the communication of the importance of the customer experience as if there is no formal rewards from fulfilling the objectives in the customer experience metrics it might suggest that the matter is not that important and the employees might give it less attention or at least prioritising the metrics which are being monitored. The common factor in these problematic areas is that they are all loosely connected to communication as all of the questions have a communicational dimension by which the importance of the customer experience is shared trough out the company.

4.6 Customer satisfaction survey

The self-evaluation based customer satisfaction survey has been conducted in seven years from 2007 to 2014 and the number of respondents has varied from 7 to 14. The same questionnaire was sent to 232 dealers in which 24 answered until deadline. The similarity of the average ratings were quite astonishing as the average difference in score was 0,46. The biggest gap was in the question 2 the speed of handling enquiries in which the self-evaluation score was 0,86 lower than the average rating that the dealers gave. Smallest of the gap was in question 3 the recognition of the different customer needs and customization and the self-evaluation rating was 0,23 lower than the dealer score. Noteworthy in this comparison was that for all the questions the self-evaluation gave lower scores than the actual dealers but as the self-evaluation survey does not take into account the importance the dealer survey is informative in prioritizing the different questions. The comparison is shown in Appendix 12.

The most urgent question that needs to be addressed was the question 10 sharing product knowledge systematically which scored 3,67 in average and 4,00 in importance giving it a priority score of 5,33. The second highest in priority was the question 6 informing proactively about changes and matters that concern you and it got a rating of 3,86 in average and importance of 3,95 resulting 4,51 in priority score. The third most urgent question was the question 4 seeking solutions to your requests and issues which got an average score of 3,90 and importance 4,11 which leads to priority score of 4,50. Noteworthy in all these questions is that they are still above average score which would have been 2,5; therefore, it seems that for these aspects the customers are feeling quite satisfied although it would be better if the lowest scores would have been in the questions that got the lowest ratings on importance as well. On the positive side the contact persons' level of product knowledge seemed to be in a good level as the average for this was 4,57 which was highest average score and it was thought as important also as the average importance was 4,35 which is the highest of the group. The summary is shown in Appendix 4.

The NPS score for the dealer environment is not preferable as the score in this small population was 79,17% which is considered as excellent. In the score itself there is no problem but the number of respondents were too small and as a comparison to the overall atmosphere the score was too high. The reason for the failure in NPS in dealer environment is probably due the fact that the dealers are trying to sell the same equipment; therefore, it is quite natural that they are advocating the product in question. The confirmation to this came from one of the open answers as one of the respondents who gave a score of 10 into the NPS question grounded his choice as "Because we sell Verity - I am the product manager so recommend to everybody". This of course does not mean anything from the product or service point of view but more about the fact that the dealer has to promote the unit in order to sell it. Additionally, the fact that when calculating the NPS score from the whole population of 232 and using the constant Reichheld describes gives the NPS score of -18,71 indicates that the result is not valid. Of course that constant varies from industry to industry and therefore it might not be suitable for medical imaging manufacturing but it is good illustration that the validity of the NPS in this environment cannot be guaranteed. Therefore the NPS score cannot be thought as a reliable.

The NPS follow up open question on the other hand seems to have some good input and the most positive comments were in quality and product with 16 positive comments

on that and the second most common positive comment were about the quality of service which got 6 positive comments. On the negative side the most negative comments three all together came from high pricing of the product and companies such as Hologic and Siemens were mentioned to be more price competitive. The two negative comments from product or quality of the product related not to the whole system but it was specified that some parts are not reliable which indicates to the low life expectancy of the detector and the second one was due to the lacking of 180° rotation. The only detractor from the respondents had a open comment that “excellent quality but prices out of the market's reality” which indicates that even though higher prices can be justified with the exceptional quality and service the quality in this case is not that exceptional or the pricing is way off the target. The summary is shown in Appendix 13.

4.7 Current State of Customer Centricity

The measurements of the current state of customer centricity in the case company show a correlation between the attributes in the customer centricity frameworks and also point to the current problem areas. These measurements were done using the questionnaires, and the summaries of the identified points are presented below.

Interaction	CSA
Reflect identity	Not identified
Socially engaging	Not designed
Empower Customer	Partial, Dealer support
Engage proactively with the customers	No active customer data collection
Beauty	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Creation	Sporadic, Verity + feedbacks/Travel reports
Community	Dealer support, not really a forum
Enlightment	Customers do not see the correlation between the price and quality
Justice	Partial, not in the company instruction so it is dependable on employees own view
Redemption	Partial, PMnet, PMCRM but should be consolidated
Truth	Partial, not in the company instruction so it is dependable on employees own view
Validation	Not designed

Table 5. The current state of interaction.

Table 5 describes the current state of interaction. Even though there are a few points which are not in accordance with the framework, only one point, the current pricing, came out of the questionnaires as not correlating with the quality of the unit. The pricing issue was only brought up by 12,5 % of the respondents in the dealer survey but it indicates that either pricing should be more aggressive or the quality should be better. The third option is that the price is in accordance with the quality but the message is not gone through to the customer and therefore the offering is not understood.

Understanding	CSA
Understand needs and wants	PM net, PMCRM, Travel reports, no active customer data collection, Sharing of the information also a problem
Measurement	Not measured, some hints from the travel reports and feedbacks
Put customer in control	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Higher needs	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Consider emotions	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Leave nothing to a chance	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Multichannel support	Not identified
Listening customers	PM net, PMCRM, Travel reports, no active customer data collection
Measure and improve continually	PM net, PMCRM, Travel reports, no active customer data collection
Accomplishment	Not known accurately
Duty	Colour choices, Few optional features
Oneness	Dealer support not really a forum
Wonder	Not identified

Table 6. The current state of understanding.

Table 6 describes the current state of understanding and the seven attributes which were identified as problems also in the questionnaires. First of these problematic areas is that the company should understand the needs and desires of the customer, and the limited customer data collection is the main reason for not succeeding in this part. Also it is a fact that the knowledge is not efficiently shared throughout the company, which also points to this problem area. There is some data stored in the PMnet and in PMCRM systems as well as travel reports, but this information reflects only the passive customer data collection, which tends to focus on the problems instead of the needs and desires of the customer.

The second problem point that was also found from the questionnaires is the measurement. The problem in this is that the customer views are not actively collected and even though there are some hints to this in travel reports and in feedbacks it is sporadic at best and the true benefits would be achieved through a constant monitoring of the chosen metrics and acting up according to the measurement.

The third part was the higher needs and this relates to the same issue of not collecting the data in a consistent manner and therefore knowing what the customer wants to achieve is problematic.

The fourth part is listening to the customers and even though this part has some positive elements such as PMnet, PMCRM and travel reports this is only a passive listening and the actions and results tends to vary randomly. This part came out of the questionnaires from the questions such as quantitative and qualitative feedback is collected which got a low score.

The fifth part of understanding seemed to be measure and improve continually which is also has the passive element in place, which means that the improvements are made from customer feedbacks but the measurement is missing and therefore the continual improvement based on customer metrics is missing also.

The sixth part was accomplishment which means that the customers' goals should be identified and they should be helped to achieve those goals but as the customer data collection is sporadic the understanding of the customers' goals is also dependable from the front line staff customer relation. Table 7 below shows the current state of the enablers in the case company.

Table 7. The current state of enablers.

Enablers	CSA
Strategy	Strategy is Ad Hoc
Governance	Governance is missing/Ad Hoc
Design	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Culture	Culture partially Ad Hoc. The importance of customers is understood but not necessarily the whole concept of customer experience
Effortless	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Stress free	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view
Indulging the senses	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view and it is not covering everything (Scent, lead rubber sheet; Noise, Compression motor)
Set/meet expectations	Not Identified
Knowledge Foundation	Partial, PM net, PMCRM but should be consolidated
Empower frontline staff	Partial, PM net, PMCRM but should be consolidated
Design seamless experience	Not designed
Freedom	Not designed
Harmony	Not designed
Security	Partial, Customer experience designed only from the product point of view

Table 7 shows the current state of the enablers and the four parts which came out from the questionnaires. The first point, strategy, was brought up in the management questionnaire where it was rated between missing and *ad hoc*. Thus, it seems that the missing customer centricity strategy is identified on the board level, and it was mentioning in the front line staff questionnaires as well. If the customer centricity strategy is missing and it is not mentioned in overall strategy, the front line staff do not have any systematic guidance how to tackle these issues and the company cannot seem unified towards the customer.

The second part was governance which could be a partial substitute for the strategy. As there is no formal customer centricity strategy, the governance could highlight the

importance of customer centricity together with the culture and give some guidelines how to solve issues in the front line.

Third, the culture emphasising the customer centricity was evaluated as *ad hoc*. It means the importance of the customers is understood, but there are no regular practises aimed at improving customer centricity. Additionally, the informal rewards were mentioned to be *ad hoc* as well, and the formal rewards are missing altogether.

The fourth part, enablers, demonstrates that the customers' expectations are currently neither defined nor met, and this relates to the problem of not gathering the customer data systematically. As a result, the knowledge of customers' expectations is limited, and thus it cannot be steered towards the desirable direction.

If presented in the context of the conceptual framework, the results of the current state analysis have the following outlook.

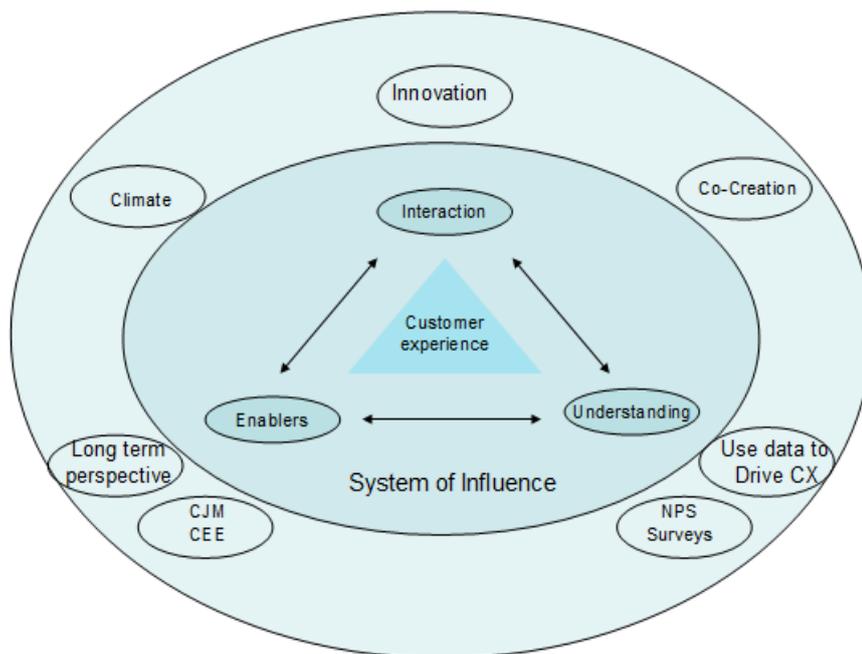


Figure 6. The current state against the full conceptual framework.

Figure 6 summarizes the current state of customer centricity in the case company, and according to the results shown in the framework of the system of influence, there are some parts that could be utilised more thoroughly. Firstly, the climate of the company is currently not emphasizing the customer centricity, and there are no formal or informal reward structures in place or at least they are not systematic. Additionally, the findings from the front line staff questionnaires imply that the customer metrics are not con-

stantly monitored or reported, or at least they are not shared throughout the company. Finally, the findings from the management questionnaire to the questions about the relationships between the drivers of CX quality, customer perceptions of their experiences and the modelled business outcomes, got low ratings.

Secondly, the tools such as customer journey map and customer experience ecosystem are not currently utilized, and therefore the understanding of the customer behaviour might be flawed. This was also mentioned in the front line staff questionnaire in which the question about the customer journey mapping got a low score.

Thirdly, the understanding about the customer insight is not actively gathered which was seen in many responses, mainly from the low scores to the question in both quantitative and qualitative data collected. Therefore, the data is not used in driving the customer experience and the projects considering the customer experience improvement is sporadic at best. The tools, such as NPS and different kind of surveys, are not yet utilized effectively.

Fourthly, the co-creation and innovating together with the customers has not yet become a systematic way of working and even though there are some great examples of the idea generation on the customers' side, the co-creation is yet *ad hoc* at best. This was highlighted in the management question about the customers, partners and employees engaged as part of the experience design process. The reason for this could probably be the fact that , in the case company context, the smaller product development actions can be triggered by customer feedback, but the larger scale development action is rarely based on customer feedback. Additionally, the customer experience development projects are not done in cooperation with the customers, as these issues are rarely thought as individual projects. This can be seen from the management questionnaire in which the question about a dedicated queue of customer experience improvement projects got a rating between *ad hoc* and repeatable.

As the customer centricity is not currently thought of holistically, it has led to a situation in which there are good attempts to make the customer experience better but the attempts has been more from the product development side and not so much in the other aspects of the customer centricity. Therefore, a holistic proposal is needed how to achieve the customer centricity and aim at fully providing good customer experience.

5 Building the Proposal

This section builds the proposal based on the case specific framework combined with the information from the current state analysis. It also develops the case specific roadmap how to achieve a more customer centric culture for the case company.

5.1 Overview of the Roadmap Building Process

In this study, the proposal of the roadmap to customer centricity was built by comparing the different aspects of the customer centricity found from the existing frameworks to the results of the current state analysis. The prioritisation was also conducted in accordance with the results of current state analysis.

Modern research and business literature suggests several concepts which, according to the current state analysis, are not applied in the case company. The climate of the company according to Fischer is quite essential in creating good customer experience and it means that the company should create a customer centric climate in which the personnel are all aware of the importance of the matter. Therefore customer metrics should be monitored and the results should be shared as it tends to raise interest on the matter. When the metrics are defined the formal and informal reward structures should be tied to these metrics to further tie efforts towards customer centricity. The other aspect in creating a customer centric culture is that tools such as customer journey map and customer experience ecosystem should be used to map the current customer experience and identify the problem areas and then start improving on those as suggested by Manning and Bodiac (2012). The third aspect according to Hayes (2011) is that the data should be used to drive the customer experience and in order to do this the data must first be collected. Tools such as surveys or NPS should be utilised to gather the data actively. Additionally, the passive data collection should be used to get the full picture of the customer base and their views about the product or service.

For becoming a customer centric it is also important to understand that the value is co-created together with the customer and in order to succeed in that the customer supplier relationship should be lot deeper than before. In value co-creation the customer

relation should be in a level where the manufacturing company would understand the customers' needs and goals and would try to provide the best possible solution to their individual needs. This of course cannot be achieved without incorporating the customers' views as a part of the company's decision making process as suggested by Manning and Bodiac as well as segmenting the customer base in order to provide the key customers the most of the resources. The second part of the co-creation is that the customer should be empowered to make suggestions and demand new and needed features from the manufacturing company and if their competence allows they should be incorporated to the whole product development project in order to get the best results. Therefore a culture in which the co-creation would be highlighted should be created and a forum where the company would actively search for new partners as well as customer needs and ideas should be pursued.

This is closely related to the fifth part in which the company should innovate together with the customer in order to create a better customer experience and if needed better solutions for the customers' problems. The last part of practicing customer centricity is the part that the company should have long term perspective in order to succeed and benefit from the customer centric culture as stated by Hayes. The short term winnings tends to be in conflict with the customers interest but in a long run if the customers come and stay the profits tends to come and stay as well. These conceptual concepts are the force which allows the company to success in individual attributes and thus needs to be noticed.

5.2 The Roadmap to Customer Centricity

The roadmap was built from the individual attributes found from the existing framework and as the complete roadmap which is shown in Figure 9 is wide it was mentioned in data 3 that it needs to be simplified and from the need of the simplification as well as from the suggestions from the company internal interview and the external interview the simplified roadmap was built. The idea in this roadmap is that the company should travel through three different lines to achieve customer centricity. After the roadmap is defined the actions needed in each station can be defined as shown in Figure 8.

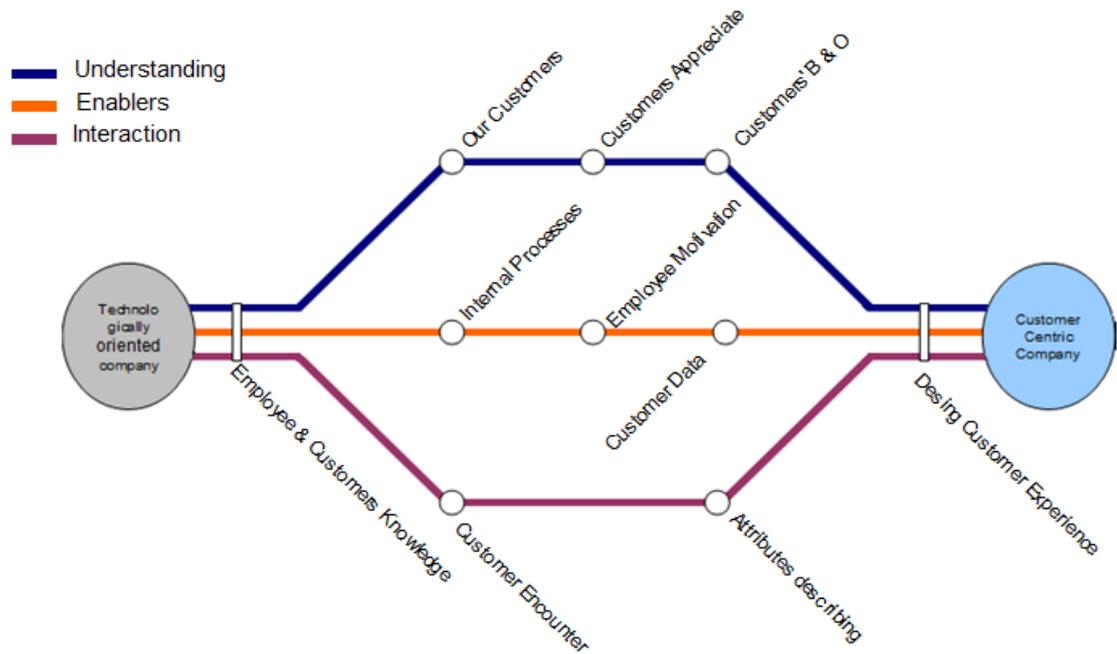


Figure 7. The simplified roadmap to customer centricity.

In Figure 7, the blue line is the understanding of the question who the case company customers are. This can be identified by segmenting the customers. Secondly, the question what our customers appreciate should be addressed and this can be done by defining the brand attributes. Thirdly, the question of what the case company knows about its customers' behaviour and opinions is addressed. This can be done by consistent data collection.

The orange line, the enablers, needs to address the question of which company internal processes produce the enablers. This can be done by defining the brand attributes and then identifying and improving the different company processes which lead to customer centric culture in the company. Secondly, the question how the employees are motivated towards customer centric actions and behaviour should be answered. This can be resolved through highlighting the customer centric culture and by using customer metrics as the company's key performance indicators and binding the employee incentive programs to the customer metrics. Thirdly, the question how the customer data is utilized as input to the key processes should be looked into. This can be resolved by defining the responsibilities of collecting and sharing the data to the corresponding stakeholders and then monitoring the results.

The lilac line is interaction and in this the focus is defining how customers encounter the company. Firstly, the way customers interact with the company should be identified. This can be done by creating customer experience ecosystem illustration as well as the customer journey map. Secondly, the question what attributes describe the target state for the interactions should be addressed, and this can be achieved by defining the brand attributes and working towards achieving those. Thirdly, the brand attributes should reflect to the customer encounter and that can be achieved by identifying and eliminating the gaps between the brand attributes and the customer journey map or customer experience ecosystem illustration.

In addition to the line specific questions, there are two questions which relate to all of the lines. First, this is the question of how the company employees as well as its customers would have the most up-to-date data to have the best possible knowledge to work with. This can be done by consolidating the current IT systems and creating a data bank for both the customers and the front line staff. Second, this is the question of how the customer experience can be maximized. The way to resolve this is to comprehensively design the whole customer experience, instead of concentrating solely on the research and design of the actual product. When combining these different actions, the roadmap will look like shown in Figure 8 below.

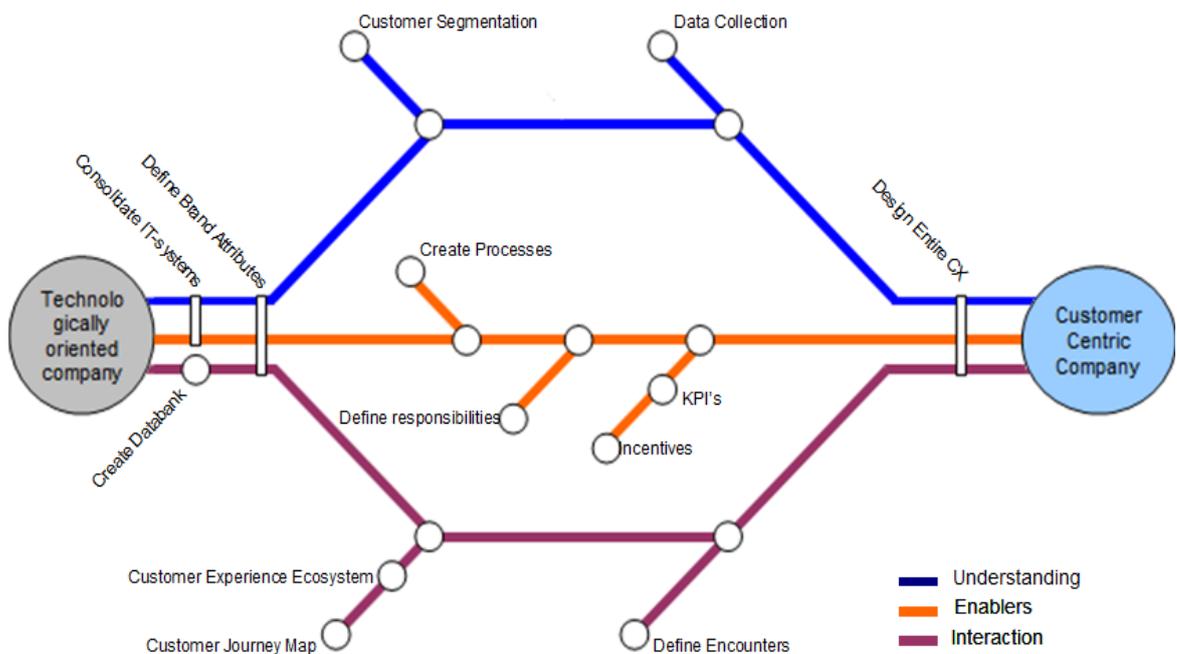


Figure 8. The simplified roadmap of actions.

are the corner stones of customer centricity the orange line being the enablers, blue line understanding and lilac line is the interaction.

In Figure 9 the section that has been completed within this study is marked with green box and as the roadmap describes the Net Promoter Score, surveys, customer journey map and customer segmentation has been completed. The next section where is light green E/P boxes at the end of the lines are the sections that has partially existed already in the company. The actual roadmap starts from the red P1 boxes which mean priority one and therefore these sections should be covered most urgently. The second most urgent section is the yellow P2 which means priority two and there are parts that are not seen as important as the priority one or they can be done only after the priority one is done. The last section in the priority list is the light orange P3 which means priority 3 and in this section there are the least urgent and partially existing attributes. The actions needed for achieving success in every attribute can be found in the next section where the actions to interaction, enablers and understanding are shown.

5.4 Interaction

Interaction should be in highlighted as in order to understand the customer the company should interact with the customer in order to achieve the understanding. The actions come from the differences between the existing frameworks and the current state analysis.

Interaction	Action
Reflect identity	Identify the value in use and enhance it, stand out from competition
Socially engaging	Design customer experience to be personal by personalizing communication, differentiate orthopaedic and mammographic customers, create a system that allows the frontline staff to know the customer and previous contacts
Empower Customer	build databank in which the customer can find information about products and services as well as problems and solutions (Wiki, FAQ, Member forums)
Engage proactively with the customers	Create a culture to proactively taking contact to customers, identify the factors that dissatisfy the customers
Beauty	Design customer experience
Creation	Create a set of practises that allows customer to create together with the company (Customization, feedback channels)
Community	Create tools to allow customers to create a community (Member forums)
Enlightment	Create tools to allow customers to understand the offering (create understandable pricing levels trough customization, create understandable terminology, create understandable option portfolio)
Justice	Create a set of practises to allow customers to be treated fairly
Redemption	Create databank in which the frontline staff can easily find the previous interactions with the customer, create a set of practises that allows the frontline staff to make quick corrective actions
Truth	Create a culture In which the honesty is highlighted (Create a climate where employees feels that they are treated honestly)
Validation	Design customer experience to be personal by personalizing communication, differentiate orthopaedic and mammographic customers, create a system that allows the frontline staff to know the customer and previous contacts

Table 8. The actions for the interaction related attributes.

Table 8 suggests the actions needed for succeeding in different interaction related attributes to improve the interaction with the customer. The most urgent attribute in this part according to the current state analysis was the enlightenment which got highlighted from the dealer survey. Therefore, a set of tools should be created by which the customers could be helped to understand the quality price relationship and, if possible, the pricing should be done so that the customer would know exactly what the item or feature would add to the total sum. In this way the customer could decide by themselves how much they are willing to pay for the different options and therefore the negative surprises from the price quality relation could be lessened which should result in a better customer experience.

Also the customer experience should be designed from start to finish as there were three individual attributes which would require the designing of the customer experience. And thirdly the creation of a databank for both customers and front line staff should be created as it would be solution for succeeding in two different attributes. The data could be from just one databank but with the interface the differentiation of the visible data could be achieved in such a way that the customers would have their own databank and the employees would have their own.

Designing of the customer experience should start by creating the customer journey map and customer experience ecosystem and then identifying from those the most dissatisfying touch points. The knowledge of the problematic points should be collected from the customers and when that identification is done the solutions to the problem points should be created and new round of problem identification should be conducted. The case company should also start to evaluate that how to make the journey and responsibility handovers as smooth as possible to customer.

The consolidated database would help as it would enable all the customer servants to have access to all the data that company would have about a certain customer in order to lessen the knowledge gaps between different customer servants. As the case is according to the dealer survey that the price quality relationship is not understood by the dealers a price list with more clarity should be created. Noteworthy in this part is that the prices may or may not need to be altered but the offering should be created so that the customers would see the benefits that justify the price.

5.5 Understanding

When the interaction practises are in place the next step would be to analyse the data coming out of the interaction and generate an understanding about what the customers are thinking about the products and services and what they would expect from those. The actions come from the differences between the existing frameworks and the current state analysis.

Understanding	Action
Understand needs and wants	Create tools to gather and share customer knowledge, surveys, social media, reviews, one on one interviews, place to save and share the data
Measurement	Create tools to measure customer experience
Put customer in control	Create a set of practise to allow customers to have freedom of choice relative to customer competence (Customization, identify the competence level, create a online tools to let customer be in control when, create understandable pricing levels trough customization)
Higher needs	Create tools for understanding what the customer wants to achieve trough the product and create the offering accordingly
Consider emotions	Design customer experience to minimize negative emotions and emphasise positive
Leave nothing to a chance	Design customer experience
Multichannel support	Identify the required channels and create the ones that are missing
Listening customers	Create a set of practises to gather customer data and use it in a decision making (surveys, being present in social media, one on one interviews, one on one interview)
Measure and improve continually	Create tools to constantly monitor the customer experience, create a set of practise to allow the continuous improvements
Accomplishment	Identify the customers goals
Duty	Create a set of practises that allows customers to take responsibility (Customization)
Oneness	Create tools to allow customers to create a community (Member forums)
Wonder	Identify the current expectations and surpass those

Table 9 The actions for the understanding related attributes.

Table 9 suggests the actions required for the attributes in the understanding of the customers and there the main focus is in creating tools to monitor customer experience and for understanding their needs and desires as well as goals. This was brought up in the customer centricity reality check survey which had low scores on both customer data collection as well as the employees' knowledge about where to find the data. Additionally, tools by which the customer knowledge could be gathered and shared should be created. In addition to collecting this data there should be a way of sharing it trough out the company and especially trough out the front line staff.

The way of gathering this data could be done by different surveys and one on one interviews as well as being present in social media and collect the data from there as well as from reviews. This data should be stored in a databank which would be acces-

sible to the staff. When this data is present then a set of practices should be created in order to embed the customer data into daily decision making. Thus, this part is mostly about the customer data collection, analysing it and then using it in decision making.

One way to actively collect customer knowledge would be to create a survey and conduct it consistently so that the customers' views would be constantly monitored and the suggestions from the customers would be collected. In this survey there should be data collected from all the levels of customers to get the full view of the customer base and from the questions should be different to different groups. For example, if the question would be about the usability of the product and the person who would be answering it would be a purchaser or a dealer then the response might not be reliable. Therefore, the usability questions should go to a nurses or radiologists.

In this data collection there could also be utilized the NPS or similar metrics to identify the advocacy level of the customers. The key part of this survey would be that it would be consistent and continuous so that the customer data would be up to date all the time. The surveys would be preferably conducted after an interaction between the company and customer has taken place so that the customers would have the fresh knowledge about the product or service and not have to look back and try to remember about how things had gone.

5.6 Enablers

When the company has gathered the understanding of the customers' needs and desires they should provide enablers that are aligned to the customers' views which enable the good customer experience. The actions come from the differences between the existing frameworks and the current state analysis.

Enablers	Action
Strategy	Create a strategy for customer centricity
Governance	Create a set of practises that gives company guidelines towards customer centricity
Design	Design customer experience
Culture	Create a culture which highlights the customer centricity, create hiring practises that emphasises customer centricity, communicate the importance and create reward structure that highlights customer centricity
Effortless	Design customer experience to minimize the time on task, Identify the required channels, simplify the usage of the product
Stress free	Design customer experience to minimize the errors/breakdowns, indentify the competence level of customer, educate about the usage of the equipment
Indulging the senses	Take customer experience part of the design process by educating R&D, identify parts that can irritate senses (scent, lead rubber sheet in scattered radiation shield is repelling, noise from the compression motor is irritating)
Set/meet expectations	Identify the current expectations and steer those to desirable direction by advertising and designing the customer experience
Knowledge Foundation	Create databank for frontline staff to quickly find the needed information when communicating with customers, for customers to find out about products and services
Empower frontline staff	Create databank in which the frontline staff can easily find the previous interactions with the customer, create a set of practises that allows the frontline staff to make quick corrective actions
Design seamless experience	Design customer experience
Freedom	Design customer experience allow customization, identify the competence level, create online tools to let customer be in control when, create understandable pricing levels trough customization
Harmony	Design customer experience
Security	Design customer experience to minimize the errors/breakdowns, educate about the usage of the equipment

Table 10. The actions for the enabling attributes.

Table 10 shows the actions required for succeeding in enabling attributes, and the most quintessential one is the creation of the customer centricity strategy either as part of the overall company strategy or through individual strategies which would be aligned to the company overall strategy. The lack of customer centricity strategy was identified in the management questionnaire where the questions considering the strategy aspect got rated ad hoc. Without the strategy the front line staff will not know what is the company's view on customers and they tend make the choices on their individual beliefs which tends to result in incoherent way of treating customers which leads to uncertainty in the customers views about the company. Additionally, the governance practices as well as culture would be more easily created to be more complete if the instruction would come from a distinctive strategy.

On the other hand if the company would have exceptionally strong customer centric culture as well as good and complete governance practices considering the customer centricity they could lessen the uncertainty of the front line staff caused by the lack of strategy. Thus, after the strategy the governance practices and culture for customer centricity should be created to strengthen the front line staffs' commitment to the cus-

customer centricity. Additionally, another important part which seems to be missing according to the current state analysis is that the customers' expectations should be steered to a desirable direction, and in order to do this, the current expectations should first be identified and, second, affected actively into the direction of the desired expectations. This was brought up by the management questionnaire in which the customer understanding related questions got relatively low scores in average.

5.6.1 Combining the IT Systems

The current way of having multiple overlapping IT-systems according to the literature suggest that the needed information to provide good customer experience is hard to find which leads to a situation where the frontline staff needs to rely solely on their own abilities tends to result incoherent customer experience as it varies depending on with who the customer is doing business. Therefore the CRM database in the company should be broadened to contain all the necessary information about the customers and not just the contact information. There could be basic information about the units sold to the customer and a history base of the problems and previous contacts from the customer as well as pricing information. All of the data should be available but at the moment it seems that it needs to be searched from multiple databases and spreadsheets all around to company. Thus, basically all the data should be gathered into one database which could be used by the personnel working in a customer interface. This means that if the data would be consolidated to the PMCRM system the PMnet should be ran down. The other option would be that the data from PMnet would be imported to PMCRM system by transmission software so that the data would be automatically updated to the PMCRM system which would be the master database.

The next step after consolidating the data is that there could be a FAQ- or wiki styled page in the company's web site in where the needed information about the products and services would be. There could also be a section in which the customers could try to find the answers by themselves to the most common problems or they could discuss the problems with the after sales personnel or other customers facing similar challenges. Additionally, they could follow the conversations of other customers if they find it interesting or relevant. This last section probably should require registration with a unit serial number or customer number in order to keep it in the hands of the actual customers and not letting the competition interfere with the discussion.

5.6.2 Customer Metrics as Part of the Key Performance Indicators

The theory aligned with the current state analysis suggest that there should be metrics to measure the customer satisfaction and in this context the measurement should be about the feelings instead of time or other tangible metrics as it seems that the tangible metrics within the context of a customer satisfaction might lead to misinterpretations about the actual customer satisfaction. For example, if the company measures the time from the first contact to the solution of the problem. The first contact might be different in customers view than the view of the company if the customer has first tried to find the solution by themselves from manual or from the website.

Therefore the company should create a set of advocacy or loyalty metrics which would be made as a part of the company's key performance indicators and also they should share the results for the whole company in order to make the employees realize about the importance of the matter. In this case I think the relatively simple and easy to follow Net Promoter Score could be utilized but it needs to be conducted in end user environment as the dealers might advocate the products as a part of their job. Additionally, there should be more than one key performance indicator and especially as the level of customer has an impact on Net Promoter Score. Thus the dealer level should have own and distinctive metric which could be monitored.

5.6.3 Customer Metrics as Part of Employee Incentive Program

When the metrics would be created and defined as a key performance indicators they should be tied into a employees' personal goals as well and this could be done by creating an incentive program in which the part of the salary or possible yearly bonus would be defined by the success rate in the customer metrics. This would highlight the importance of the customer centricity and it would help the front line staff to prioritise their actions towards the customer centric ways.

This could be done, for example, through Net Promoter Score so that the 100 percent of promoters would result the maximum amount to be shared trough the incentive program and 100 percent of detractors would result that the amount shared would be zero. After the number of shared incentives would be defined, the level of achieving the personal targets would define how to share this load between employees. This way every-

one would understand that where the incentive comes from and by doing what they could affect the number of incentives they would get.

5.7 The Customer Centricity Summary

The customer experience in case company seems to be quite positive overall but the main concern is that there is not overall understanding about the customer centricity. Therefore the knowledge of the overall customer experience is limited and it makes developing it more difficult. Additionally, it is a fact that in some cases there is not enough information and when the information is to be found it is not distributed efficiently so the case company does not utilize the customer knowledge to its full potential. Therefore the holistic roadmap was built to enable the company to have a full understanding about the customer centricity and also suggestions on the foundations on which the customer centric actions can be built was introduced.

If the customers do not feel like they have been listened might affect the customer motivation to share ideas how to make products better and more competitive as well as in some cases get a totally new ideas to capitalize on. Therefore the combining of IT systems were introduced as if the customer knowledge is to be found by the decision makers it is more likely that it will have an effect on the decisions. In order to use the data in the decision making the active data collection needs to be in place and therefore the implementation part of the study is concentrating on creating a model for active customer data collection.

5.8 The Validation of the Proposal

This section of the study reports on the validation of the proposal. The study was validated through two interviews by which the usefulness of the proposal was evaluated.

The practical validation was done by interviewing the after sales manager and the customer journey map was seen useful as a tool to educate different stakeholders about the customers overall journey. The other aspect of the customer journey map is that the understanding of which parts the customers contact the company was seen beneficial as well as illustrating all the aspects that affects the sale. Additionally, the customer

journey map was seen as useful if in the renewal part of the map more touchpoints could be created by which more sales could be achieved. The other practical outcome of the study was the customer data collection which was piloted during this study and that was seen as important future step to take in order to identify the needed development areas as well as identifying the parts which are functioning properly and use them as an example for the development actions or to be used as a focus in marketing. It was also mentioned that it would be good to have factual evaluation of the product or service which drives the future development. The idea of the illustrative roadmap to customer centricity was also seen as a useful tool to highlight the different aspects that need to be taken into account. Also the simplified map was thought of being useful as the attributes related roadmap is quite complex and hard to understand at the beginning.

The expert opinion about the roadmap came from Vesterinen who was interviewed and according to her the roadmap is nice and illustrative way to show the different aspects of the customer centricity. The simplified map was seen as an internal communication tool which could become a frame to which the employees would refer. Additionally, the relation based customer journey map was seen as a good idea and it was said to illustrate nicely the different relations that the different touchpoints have.

6 Implementation

This section presents the results of the evaluation of the case specific roadmap and reflects on the feasibility and practicality of the roadmap as well as the theoretical validity of the outcomes. It also describes the actions for implementation and discusses the most urgent points of the customer centricity roadmap 6 and presents the implementation plans for the future.

6.1 Relation Based Customer Journey Map

This section reports on how the customer journey map was initiated for the case company. The chosen customer journey map was a traditional four dimensional map in which there are parts of the systems thinking approach to reveal not only the different parts but also the relations of different touchpoints. The relations from one touch point to another were mapped as succeeding or failing in one touchpoint might affect the other point as well.

The different parts of the customer journey were defined as shown in Figure 10. The status of the brand was seen having an effect on most of the other parts of the customer journey. The actual segments of the customer journey were defined and first of these was the awakening or prior to purchase. In that section the touchpoints which happens before the potential customer actually becomes a customer were identified. The second section that was defined was choosing and buying or purchase and in this section the parts in immediate proximity to the point of sale such as quotation and billing were identified. The third section which was defined was use or after the purchase and there were found touchpoints such as installation and use. The fourth section which was defined was loyalty or renewal and in this section the touchpoints which affects the renewal of the customer relationship was identified. The influence of the systems thinking is visible in the customer journey map as the relations between the different parts of the problem are as critical as the parts of the problem themselves. This approach was chosen due to the systemic nature of the customer experience in

which everything affects everything and the identification of the root causes is critical. Therefore, the relations also need to be identified.

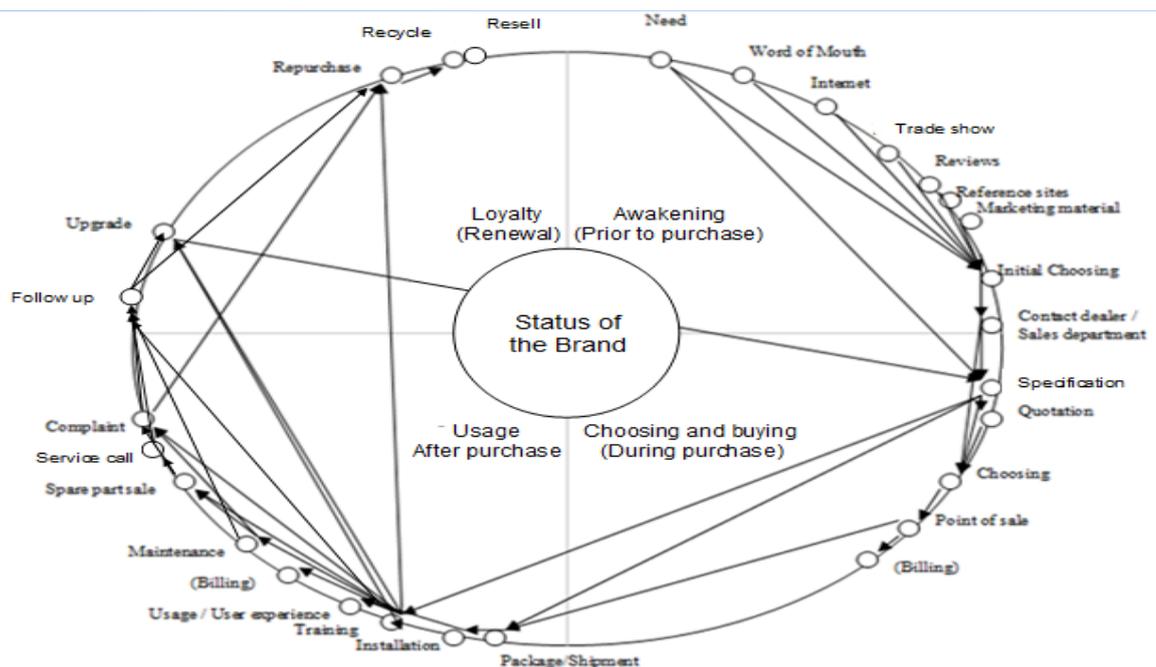


Figure 10. Customer journey map in the systems thinking context.

In Figure 10, the customer journey map is shown and the main categories are the five sections of the customer journey.

All the touchpoints prior to purchase will affect the initial choosing of vendor which then affects, in turn, the contact of the dealer or sales department. The contact of the dealer or sales department then makes an effect on specifying the stage which is also influenced by the original need. The specifying on the other hand has an influence on the final choosing as well as packaging or shipment by making a different set up options available, and identifying the options that will require a transportation. These choices will also affect the training because the customer will choose the one that meets their demand best, therefore the training is dependable of the setup of the system. It makes the training different if the unit is analogical or digital as well as is there a Computer Aided Detection system incorporated in the purchase. The final choosing on the other hand is directly related to the point of sale which is of course related to the billing. The point of sale also makes influences on the package and shipment depending on the terms of delivery.

The package or shipping exert influence on the installation as if the package is not correct to the ordered or it has been damaged during the delivery it makes the installation more difficult and in some cases impossible. The installation, in its turn, is important, since in case the unit is not properly installed and set up, the image quality might not be adequate. The training on the other hand influences the use in such a way that if the training of the personnel is not adequate the image quality can be non-adequate and acquisition of the images might be impossible. Training also influences the maintenance, spare part sales, service calls and complaints as if the operator is not well trained they might end up using the equipment in a wrong way which might lead to a problems which then can result as a contact to after sales department. The user experience influences the upgrading of the unit as well as the decision of a repurchase as if the experience is good the customer might have a high barrier to change the supplier and on the other hand if the experience is bad then they probably do not want to upgrade the unit or buy again from the same supplier. The maintenance affects the spare part sales as well as service calls and complaints as if the unit is properly maintained it will last longer. Maintenance also affects the follow-up part as the maintenance as well as other fault situations should be followed up so that it can be made sure that the unit is up and running. Additionally, the complaints can influence the re-purchase as there are a lot of problems, for example, the downtime, and therefore the customers with complaints from these parts might not want to re-purchase from the same supplier even though the rest of the journey would be sufficient.

The follow-up, in its turn, can affect the upgrade or repurchase as if the follow up has done properly and the customer are satisfied with the service they might be more interested in using the same manufacturers equipment. Upgrade, on the other hand, has an effect on the specification which needs to take place again if the customer decides to upgrade the unit. The re-purchase affects the need for recycling or re-selling the old unit.

6.2 Customer Segmentation

The segmentation of the customers through the number of the transactions and the view of the customer is vital in order to give the best possible solutions to the key customers. If the company try to serve all the customers the same way and give all the customers the same priority the risk that none of them will receive truly the service they need is high. Therefore the segmentation was done and the monetary segmentation of

the customers is shown in Appendix 15. The other dimension was not incorporated as Net Promoter Score was not reliable in the dealer environment but as the actual end customer NPS is gathered the table should be filled in.

	Promoter	Passive	Detractor
Key Customers	Customer group A1 - Keep satisfied	Customer group A2 - Move to promoter	Customer group A3 - Move to Passive
Normal Customers	Customer group B1 - Move to Key Customer	Customer group B2 - Move to Promoter, Move to Key Customer	Customer group B3 - Move to Passive
Transactional Customers	Customer group C1 - Move to Normal	Customer group C2 - Move to Promoter, Move to Normal Customer	Customer group C3 - Move to Passive

Table 11. Customer segmentation by advocacy.

Table 11 shows the segmentation of the customers. The monetary division of the customers were done by calculating the cumulative percentages of the number of purchases the customer had. First of the category is the key customers in which are the customers that brings cumulatively 80% of the yearly revenue. The second category is the normal customers which brings the rest 20%. The last category is the transactional customers which do not have purchases from the company every year. The other dimension in this segmenting is the advocacy level which come from Net Promoter Score as there tends to be more revenues expected from the promoters than the passives. As the dealer NPS was not trustworthy the segmentation of the dealers needs to be done differently. One way would be that the monetary division is the same as in advocacy segmentation but the other dimension would be divided by the likeliness of purchase within next six months

6.3 Model for Measuring Customer Satisfaction

During this study the model for measuring the customer satisfaction was done and it consists of several different parts. Firstly the customer satisfaction survey was defined to be made in a systematic way and it will be delivered after a purchase to all the customers that have more than twelve months from the last survey. The time limit was chosen in order to not to agitate the customer with the questionnaires and still receive relatively sufficient data to affect the decision making of the company. The survey will be automated through the CRM program which compares the date of the last sent questionnaire with the date of the sales occurrence and, if the time limit is over, it will send

an invitation to a website in which the questionnaire will be filled in. The questionnaire will be divided into themes which then will be selected by the program from the triggering event that which questions will be sent to which questionnaire. This has been chosen because in order to attain a holistic picture of the customer experience there will be a vast set of questions needing to be answered and if every customer would be required to answer to all the question the time to complete the questionnaire would be too long and the percentage of the completed surveys would be too low. On the other hand there is about 250 sales occurrence in the unit level and in spare parts and different features or options has the sales occurrence number in their thousands and with several hundred active customers, the total number of surveys done would mean that all the questions will get enough answers to get a solid and trustworthy data out of it.

The themes in this questionnaire were divided into five and first theme is communication. In this theme the aim is to get the knowledge whether the communication between the company and the customer is satisfactory on the customers point of view or should that be developed further in terms of the content or channels through which the communication is shared. Additionally, the amount of the communication should be questioned. The second theme of the questionnaire is about the product itself and it should determine the strong points of unit as well as the weaknesses. In this part, the future development ideas could be collected. The third theme is about the service, and it covers the areas of the satisfaction with the current services, whether it is in after sales or in the service portfolio overall. It also addresses if something needs to be done differently or if there are some services missing. The fourth theme is documentation and this part is concentrating on the level of documentation received during the interaction and the aim in here is to determine whether the documentation is accurate and adequate enough for the customer or is there something missing or something that is not useful to the customers. The fifth theme is the brand, and in this section the idea is to find out what is the status of the company's brand in the market and to compare it against the competitors.

During this study, the pilot survey was conducted and it was automated through the CRM-system. The pilot study was about comparing the company self-evaluation against the actual dealer view and to prove the concept of automated customer data collection. The automation of the surveys is shown in Appendix 16.

The second part of the measuring is Net Promoter Score and in this the aim was to get the holistic view of the customer base that what is the company's status in the market and also that why this is the case. This was conducted in such a way that the single question is that how likely would you recommend case company to your friends and colleagues and then there will be an open text question that why did you choose that. Net Promoter Score will be asked after all the purchase occurrences from the people who have not answered this question within the six month period. This time limit was chosen in order to get sufficient number of answers and not sending the question to same person too often. This will also be automated through the CRM system. The key in this NPS questionnaire is to get through to the end customer level because as the dealer survey showed the NPS in dealer environment is not reliable.

The measurement in long run will be divided to different questionnaires in order to keep the questionnaires short but still have enough data to cover as many of the different aspects as possible. It is also important to have several different questionnaires for the different layers of customers. These questionnaires will be themed as mentioned earlier in order to gain the actual knowledge of the targeted group of customers. The themes will be grouped according to the triggering event in the CRM-system. For example, when there is a service request through the CRM system it will automatically create a task out of it and when the technical specialist has resolved the request and marks it done the system automatically waits for a few days and then sends the questionnaire dedicated to the service matters.

The problem of selling through dealers will be overcome by using the user training as a contact collection for the product related questionnaire. This will be done so that when the user training is held the evaluation for of the actual training is send to the participants and as they respond they will be automatically tracked as end customer and after four months the product related questionnaire will be sent to them. This is important as if these questions will be asked from the person who has only used the equipment for couple of days they will not be able to say anything about the workflow or possible problems in it. Therefore there needs to be relatively long time in order to gain the experience and identify the possible problems. The documentation and brand related questionnaires will be triggered by sales event in the LEAN ERP-system which should create and close the tasks automatically in the CRM system and that could be used as a trigger for the delay of couple of weeks and eventually to the sending of the questionnaire. All of these questionnaires will have an advocacy question and open ques-

tion to explain the chosen rating and the themed questions will be rated from one to ten with probing open questions for the extremely low or extremely high ratings. The theme based survey questions are shown in Appendix 17.

The data analysis was automated as much as possible and within this study an excel sheet was created in which the data could be analysed just by exporting it to excel and then organising the data by VBA-code to highlight the points which needs to be addressed more carefully. The human judgement is not preferable to delete all together because usually people are better on interpreting the spoken language than the software but there is no single person who could go through all the data organising and analyzing; therefore, the automation was created to only show the critical points of the surveys. The automation of the analysis is shown in Appendix 14 and it highlights the NPS percentage as well as the detractors and their open answers. It also rates the questions with the priority score which was calculated by multiplying the difference of the average answer from full score with the average of importance. This was done in order to create a view of which of questions would need to be addressed most urgently.

6.4 Reflecting on the Implementation

A reflection session was conducted by interviewing company internal manager as shown in Appendix 11. From the implemented parts the active data collection was seen as the most useful part of the study by the interviewee and that will be used once the different surveys has been inserted into the CRM-system which will be done during the next couple of month and to which a summer trainee is hired. The automation of the data collection was seen as a prerequisite for succeeding in collecting the customer data. Additionally, the automation of the organizing the data and the required calculations was seen as a mandatory. The usefulness was seen to come from the use of the factual knowledge of what the customers would need and using that as the basis of the development actions.

The other useful aspect of the implementation was that the customer journey map could be utilized as a tool to educate the front line staff and to illustrate in which parts of the journey the actual problems might occur. Additionally, the correction of the problem areas once they have been identified would help to improve the customer experience. It was mentioned by the interviewee that if the loyalty part could be filled in based on more touchpoints that could help to gain more sales.

7 Discussion and Conclusions

This section discusses the results and conclusions from the study; evaluates the outcomes against the objectives initially set for the investigation, and reflect on the validity and reliability of the research process and results.

7.1 Summary

Presently, the customer centricity and the customer experience are playing an ever more vital role in modern business, as the information is getting widely available and comparison is easier to make. Therefore, the companies need to consider utilizing a new competitive advantage from better customer service and retaining the existing customers as it is cheaper to maintain the existing relationships than acquire new ones. Also the fact that the loyal customers spread a good word-of-mouth and, therefore, help the company with advertising, is the reason why customer centricity seems to gain vital importance for businesses today.

The objective of the study was to develop a roadmap for customer centricity and to build the basis on which more customer centric actions can be built. The case company of this study operates in the field of medical imaging which is highly regulated. It leads to a situation in which the technological way to be distinguished is ever harder to achieve, and therefore other ways of succeeding in the competition need to be considered. As other ways of succeeding in the industry are quite limited, the customer centricity and good customer experience are vital to keep the customers interested and create more loyal and long lasting customer relationships.

This study was carried out using the action research approach. The data collection was carried out in four different rounds. The rounds that required a wide range of response were conducted by using questionnaires; and the rounds which needed deeper understanding were carried out either by conducting interviews or discussions with customers and in the case company. Additionally, the current state analysis evaluated the company's current operations towards developing a roadmap for becoming more customer centric. The proposal for the roadmap was created by comparing the frameworks currently discussed in business and research literature and the findings from the cur-

rent state analysis in the case company, as well as suggestions from the customers. Based on that evaluation, the practical aspects of the proposal and its implementation were developed.

The study discovered while conducting the current state analysis that the case company had a few problem areas, and a majority of them seems to be related to gathering the customer data, as well as the information flows and the culture of not sharing the necessary information widely. This was especially true for the customer metrics as most of the personnel do not know the results of monitoring the customers and the metrics used for that, and how they affect the decision making process. Also the lack of holistic approach to customer centricity was indicated as a challenge, since the company aims at providing the best possible customer experience, with all the aspects covered and the actions towards it being consistent and continuous.

Customer centricity is a complex system incorporating various aspects mutually dependent and influencing each other. Therefore, a holistic approach to building a roadmap was necessary. The outcome of the study was a more simplified roadmap built as an illustrative example. The other result of the study is identifying the foundations on which the customer centric actions can be later built. These foundations include the active data collection model which was specified and piloted. The other parts of the outcome were the relation based customer journey map and the customer segmentation which were also completed. Finally, the use of Net Promoter Score was piloted and evaluated in order to target the improvement actions to the most critical parts.

Since the outcome of the study can be considered as quite abstract, and the proposed roadmap is quite wide, the proposal for the practical development actions was limited to the very first steps on the road to customer centricity. The study proposes the actions needed to achieve more customer centricity by applying priority levels and addressing the most critical areas first. After the model for active data collection is in place, the proposed roadmap could be followed and the first priorities such as creation of the customer centricity strategy should be developed, as well as the methods of implementing the customer data into decision making specified. The next step would be the emphasis on the importance of the customer centric actions highlighted through introducing the customer metrics and by using those as a base for the incentive programs.

7.2 Evaluation of the Results

This sub-section discusses the results of the study and evaluates the reliability and validity of the research process.

7.2.1 Outcomes vs Objectives

The research question was how to achieve customer centricity in a technologically oriented company. The outcomes of the study were, first, the roadmap for customer centricity and, second, the basis for the customer centric actions and the active data collection model. The *roadmap* describes what parts in case company customer centricity are currently missing, and what are in place. In addition to the hard attributes, the roadmap highlights the importance of the soft issues such as company climate and understanding of the evaluation of the product from the customer point of view. Therefore, the roadmap can be considered as addressing the original research question, and the research was responded to in a way that it was intended to be.

From the sub-questions, the first one, related to the benefits that can be achieved through a true customer centric way of operating, it was not fully answered. The research has touchpoints to it every once in a while, such as the mechanisms of growth and the difficulty of being distinguished, but the holistic picture was not achieved. The second sub-question related to the customer centric way of operating and how the customer knowledge can be gathered, was answered as the passive data collection was introduced to the company and the active data collection tools were developed. The study also suggested how the data collection could be made as a constant and continual process.

The proposed surveys and the active data collection model could be taken into use in the case company already now, so that in those parts the research triggered a change and made a first small step towards the customer centricity. The whole roadmap on the other hand cannot be not taken in use immediately, nor it will be possible in the near future. However, the data collection model also makes a good step data gathering from the customer base and suggested as the core drive for the case company towards applying the roadmap in wide scope. In the after sales environment, the automated

surveys will be implemented in the near future, and a summer trainee was already appointed who will start utilizing it in this department.

Thus, the study is significant for the case company as a starting point on the road to becoming more customer centric and as the guidelines how that can be achieved especially in the long run.

7.2.2 Validity and Reliability of the Research

The *internal* validity of the research can be considered as the research question was mostly addressed, with the exception of some aspect in the sub-questions, as discussed above.

The *external* validity, on the other hand, might be considered as achieved only partially, as the research was solely concentrating on resolving the research question within the case company. Therefore, the outcome is only describing the needed actions for the case company and the implemented parts were also done in the context of the case company. As the customer base and therefore the segmentation and customer journey are dependable on the company context, the results in this way are not applicable outside case company. The active data collection is applicable as an idea, but the building of the surveys and defining the questions are dependable on the context of a particular company. The conceptual framework and the attributes of customer centricity, however, are applicable to other companies, as well as they tend to not to be company or field specific. Especially the simplified roadmap which highlights the three main paths needed for developing customer centricity could be applied elsewhere, as Interview 4 in Appendix 10 shows.

The *construct* validity, in its turn, is valid as the data sources used in the study covered the whole front line staff as well as part of the board of directors, as shown in Appendixes 1, 2 and 3. Also the theoretical aspect and customer input was ensured so that the use of multiple data sources could be considered as wide enough, which can be seen from Appendixes 4, 7 and 8. Also the chain of events in the research process was specified and clear enough as all the data collected and the methods used were shown within this study, with the advancement of the study being quite slow but thorough. Fi-

nally, the key informants were monitoring the progress of this study and evaluated the draft of the proposal and made the amendments accordingly.

The *reliability* of the study was enhanced by incorporating multiple data sources. These sources included the 10 people from the frontline staff, as shown in Appendix 2; then 2 people from the board of directors, as seen in Appendix 3; 24 customers, shown in Appendix 4; and one outside consultant, shown in Appendices 7, 8 and 10. Also the triangulation of data sources was used to get a more holistic view on the matter. There were three different ways to triangulate, first, there were three surveys conducted covering customer centricity, namely the customer centricity reality check, the customer centricity maturity and the customer satisfaction survey. Secondly, there were three different tools used for the data collection, first, the questionnaires for the mass data collection, second, the interviews for in-depth but narrow data collection and, finally, discussions for widening the understanding about the issue. There were three various perspectives incorporated in this study. First, the managements view, secondly, the front line staff's views, and thirdly, the theoretical view. This aimed to further strengthen the reliability by incorporating the customers view, even though that was more about their views on the product and company overall, rather than the customer centricity of the case company. The triangulation of data sources can be seen from Table 1 in Section 2.

According to the other classification of the reliability, the research also needs being trustworthy whilst collecting the data, which was also addressed in this study. The transferability was also considered as the acquired data is rich and ensures multiple views collected from multiple sources. The dependability was also thought about, as the proposal was validated against its theoretical accuracy as well as against its practicality, as seen from Appendices 9, 10 and 11. To contribute more to the trustworthiness, the automation of the surveys was piloted in the after sales environment.

The researcher's bias was also minimized by extending the number of respondents in order to get an unbiased view on the customer centricity. To achieve it, the whole front line staff was incorporated in the research as well as the whole dealer base, even though the percentage of the respondents was limited. Thus the conformability should be contributing to the trustworthiness of the research, and as all of the parts which create the trustworthiness are considered, the research can be seen as trustworthy.

The authenticity was also addressed in the course of the research process, as well as the educative authenticity as the level of knowledge about the matter researched at the beginning, but it was widened during the research process, and these learning capabilities were quite significant for the case company. The catalytic authenticity, on the other hand, was quite limited as the change that has been triggered by the study is limited at this point to the active data collection model only. The tactical authenticity was also achieved but partially, as the board of directors at least has become interested in the customer centricity and in the after sales environment the automated surveys will be implemented.

As the final words for this study, it can be said that customer centricity has become more important than before as the regulations get tighter and the technological way to be distinguished is more difficult to achieve. Therefore, the company can be distinguished by providing the best possible customer experience. It is also an established fact that providing superior customer experience tends to lead to a situation in which the customers are advocating the products and thus, the company means that the cost of acquiring new customers tends to get lower. At the same time, the number of customers changing the supplier tends to get lower as well. Also the promoters tend to be less price sensitive and complaint less, which means that the cost of the customer will be lower. It was with these benefits in mind that the study has proposed the roadmap for achieving more customer centricity. The roadmap created during this study provides a holistic view on how to become customer centric and suggests the guidelines in transformation towards becoming more customer centric.

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