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# **CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY AT GRANITOP OÜ**

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I hereby declare that I have compiled the paper independently and all works, important standpoints and data by other authors has been properly referenced and the same paper has not been previously presented for grading.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The author of the thesis conducted a customer satisfaction survey at Granitop OÜ, since no such survey had been made before in that enterprise. Furthermore, it was believed that their service quality had to improve, because the number of incoming orders received confirmation was less than one third. This problem gave the survey paper its purpose: to find out, how satisfied are customers with the service quality the employees at Granitop OÜ provide for them and which aspects should the company and its employees improve in order to improve customer satisfaction.

In order to achieve the objectives of the thesis, a survey was conducted using an integrated model based on the SERVQUAL and IPA models. The survey also included few demographic questions, the Net Promoter Score and an open ended free form question for suggestions.

The author has taken into consideration the different factors given values on satisfaction and importance and has made the conclusion that the company should focus on improving the visual quality and interior of their showroom. To increase the satisfaction the author suggests conducting another survey specifically designed to find out what aspects of a showroom customers feel are important and how it should be designed.

The company should also conduct a similar survey about the competitors of Granitop should be conducted. Using the results gathered the management could start planning a marketing strategy with the help of marketing communication in order to form a clear competitive advantage to separate Granitop from its competitors.

Considering the market position compared to its competitors, Granitop is in a position where they could increase their liabilities to offer some extra benefits to customers. Following the upgraded showroom, the company can also try viral marketing to promote the new interior.

## **INTRODUCTION**

In the constantly changing and always toughening competitive environment, it is important for a business to ensure its competitive edge. In order to succeed a company must set as one of its goals a high customer satisfaction. To achieve this, an effective communication with its customers postpurchase or after offering their services is necessary. It is important to analyse the feedback to take into account the wants of the customer and implement changes accordingly.

The author of the thesis has decided to conduct a customer satisfaction survey at Granitop OÜ, because no such survey has been made before in this enterprise. Furthermore, the number of incoming orders that reached confirmation was less than one third. For example, of the 515 orders started in February only 147 were finalized (29%). The management of Granitop OÜ was unsure if the low acceptance rate of the offers could be caused by low customer satisfaction. This problem gave the survey paper its purpose: to find out, how satisfied are customers with the service quality the customer agents at Granitop OÜ provide for them and which aspects should the company or the customer agents improve in order to raise the customer satisfaction.

In order to achieve the objectives of the thesis, a survey was comprised based on the SERVQUAL and IPA models. The survey also included some demographic questions and the Net Promoter Score and an open ended free form question for suggestions. The questionnaires were given to the company's employees to hand out to the customers upon receiving their purchase. The questionnaires were asked to be filled out during the installation of their purchased products. In the period between 01.03.2019 – 01.04.2019, 208 surveys were handed out, of which for different reasons only 184 filled out forms were returned.

The first chapter of this survey contains the theoretical basis of customer satisfaction, the importance of its measurement and the integrated customer satisfaction measurement model used in this survey and its differences from the pure models.

The second chapter provides an overview of the company used for the survey, Granitop OÜ and its market overview and comparison with competitors.

The third chapter provides the results of the survey, the analysis of those results and the author's conclusions and suggestions.

# **1. THE THEORETICAL BACKGROUND OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

The first chapter of the survey will provide an overview of the theory of customer satisfaction, describing the nature, development and the importance of measuring customer satisfaction. This chapter will also explain the theoretical background of the integrated customer satisfaction model used in this survey and its differences from the pure models it consists of.

## **1.1. The nature of customer satisfaction**

Customer satisfaction is one of the main goals of what marketing aims to do and serves to link processes that culminate with purchase and consumption to postpurchase phenomena such as attitude change, repeat purchase and brand loyalty. The centrality or the nature of the customer satisfaction concept is reflected by its inclusion in the marketing concept that profits are made by the satisfaction of consumer needs and wants. This philosophical statement of the marketing concept needed translation into more pragmatic operational guidelines, which then directed the attention to the development and measurement of consumer satisfaction. (Gilbert A. Churchill, Jr. 1982)

During the early 1970s customer satisfaction began to develop into a legitimate field of inquiry. The first study on the subject was the U.S. department of Agriculture's Index of Consumer Satisfaction, which reported the direct information on consumer satisfaction to policy makers. Two researches at the time made by Olshavksy and Miller (1972) and Anderson (1973) studied the disconfirmed expectancies and the influence they had on product performance ratings. Both of these papers along with the previous experiment by Cardozo (1964) formed the foundation for most of the research on customer satisfaction to be made in the coming years. (Gilbert A. Churchill, Jr. 1982).

Consumer satisfaction has been variously defined throughout the different literature on it, but according to Ralph L. Day, the conceptualization that appears to have received the greatest support

is the view that satisfaction is a postchoice evaluative judgment concerning a specific purchase selection (Westbrook 1991). Despite most definitions having favored the notion of consumer satisfaction as a response to an evaluation process, researchers have yet to develop a consensual definition of consumer satisfaction (Giese, Cote, and Professor 2002).

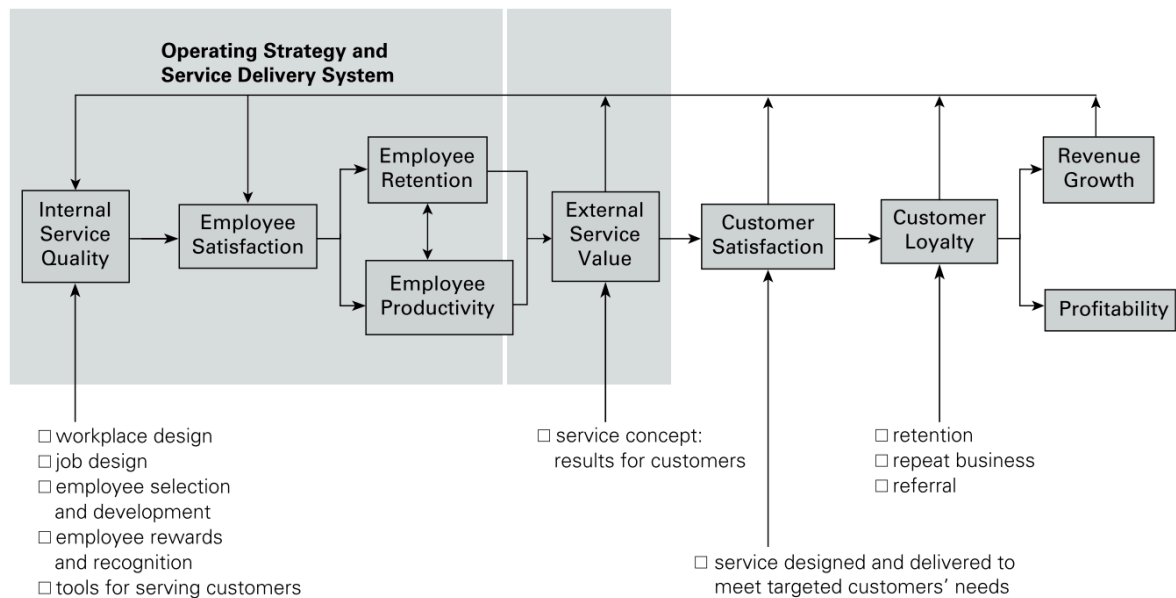


Figure 1. The links in the Service-Profit Chain

Source: (Heskett et al. 2008)

Customer satisfaction can also be viewed as a part of the service-profit chain seen on figure 1. The service-profit chain establishes the relationship between a profitability and productivity. The chain is made up of different links. Profit and growth are mainly stimulated by customer loyalty, which in return is a direct result of customer satisfaction. The main influencer of satisfaction is the value of services provided to customers. The value of those services is created by satisfied and productive employees giving us the last link of employee satisfaction, which, is the result of high-quality support services and policies that enable employees to deliver results to customers. (Heskett et al. 2008)

The service-profit chain tells us that the higher the value of the services provided to customers, the higher the customer satisfaction. Higher customer satisfaction means a larger number of satisfied customers. This is directly related to the success of the company, since satisfied customers will continue to purchase, but dissatisfied customers will stop purchasing and are likely to share their



experiences with their friends. This is why smart and successful companies work to make sure their customers are satisfied in every stage of the buying process. (Kotler 2000)

The nature of customer satisfaction therefore is an important part of any company. It defines the value of the service the company provides and provides the necessary basis for customer loyalty and profitability. Often becoming more profitable over time, loyal customers account for an unusually large proportion of the sales and profit growth of successful companies. Many companies find that their most loyal customers who account for the top 20% of all customers usually provide all of the profits and also cover any losses that come from dealing with less loyal customers. (Heskett et al. 2008)

## **1.2. The development and importance of customer satisfaction**

In the classic craft-production system, the workforce was composed of highly skilled craftsmen who carefully hand-built almost anything. No system was more responsive to the customer than craft-production. Craft-production businesses still exist today in many sectors of the economy, however they now focus on the luxury end of the market, where consumers want an unique image and the opportunity to deal directly with the factory in ordering their products. (Reis, Pena, and Lopes 2003)

The drawback of craft production was high production costs that did not decrease with quantity. Only the very rich could afford cars and other products of craftsmanship. It was when Henry Ford found a way to overcome the obstacles to higher efficiency and lower costs posed by craft production. His new techniques of mass production reduced costs dramatically while increasing product quality and reliability. More importantly, his techniques were rapidly transplanted from car manufacturing to other industries with the same spectacular results. But in the process, the customer was downgraded. (Ibid.)

The success of mass production has been so geared to the needs of the manufacturing system that the customer and suppliers have tended to come last. Ford's system clearly signaled that the production needs of the factory came first. The dealer and the customer were expected to make any necessary accommodations. It is easy to comprehend why sellers had the upper hand in their relationship with customers. An unrelenting demand for goods and services, at home and abroad,

shaped the economic environment of the time. Deprived of material goods, first by the Great Depression, then by the Second World War, customers were more than happy to buy whatever companies offered them. Rarely did they demand high quality and service. Customers and their feedback became an ignored set of faceless statistics that bubbled up through the layers of enormous bureaucracies. (Ibid.)

Consumer expectations soared in the USA when foreign competitors, notably Japanese, entered the market with lower prices combined with much higher quality goods than American made ones. Moreover, Japanese companies introduced new products and levels of service that American firms could not match. This was mass customization, a new system that would satisfy the existing segmented and global market better than Ford's mass production. This showed how mass production can be combined with good quality, price and service by making customer satisfaction a priority while keeping costs down. (Ibid.)

Increasing customer satisfaction and loyalty is becoming more important as the markets competitiveness increases. The growth rate of markets and new customer inflow are decreasing. This is also why existing customers are valued more each day. An example of this is the increasing number of customer satisfaction measurements conducted. (Eensalu 2002)

One of the main goals of the measurements is to understand, where the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of customers comes from. Achieving higher customer satisfaction does not necessarily mean attending to all wishes of the customer, which would in most cases mean the top product with the lowest prices, rather than making the right decisions on which aspects to focus first. The research provides answers about what is the most important to the customer and help on deciding for example whether to invest in the interior of the showroom or the training of the employees. (Ibid.)

Systematically conducted satisfaction surveys are a part of managing process. Measuring the critical factors constantly will provide operative feedback on whether the implemented changes based on the customer satisfaction research have been successful in increasing customer satisfaction or not. Constant measuring will also help detect possible problematic areas before losing any customers. (Ibid.)

### **1.3. Integrated customer satisfaction measurement model and its difference from pure models**

Different models have been developed for measuring customer satisfaction. In recent years researchers have started to integrate these models with each other. The following subchapter will at first provide the theoretical background for the two base models for the integrated model used in the survey as pure models – SERVQUAL and IPA – as well as the pure model NPS. Next the subchapter will provide an overview of the integrated model based on SERVQUAL and IPA.

SERVQUAL is a concise multiple-item scale used by companies for receiving trustworthy feedback from customers about their expectations and perceptions in order to improve the service quality provided. This method is applicable across a broad spectrum of service markets. The originally developed questionnaire can also be modified to fit the particular research or company. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988)

The concept for the service quality measurement model was a research conducted by Berry, Parasuraman and Zeithaml which resulted in defining the ten core dimensions of SERVQUAL (Parasuraman *et al.*, 1985):

1. Reliability – ability to perform the service consistently and accurately.
2. Responsiveness - readiness of employees to provide timely service.
3. Competence - possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service.
4. Access - approachability and ease of contact.
5. Courtesy - politeness, respect and friendliness of employees
6. Communication - keeping customers informed, explaining the service and price, assuring the customers that problems will be dealt with
7. Credibility – trustworthiness and honesty
8. Security – freedom from danger, risks and doubts, confidentiality
9. Understanding/Knowing the customer – understanding customer needs, providing individual attention
10. Tangibles – physical representations of the service, its facilities and employees.

Further research prompted scale purification, which left the the final model with just five dimensions:

1. Tangibles

2. Reliability
3. Responsiveness
4. Assurance
5. Empathy

Assurance contains the original competence, courtesy, communication, credibility and security. Empathy contains the original understanding of the customer. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988)

Measuring the quality of the previously stated five dimensions is done by using a standardized 22-item questionnaire. Each statement will measure the customers expectations of companies within a specific sector and their perceptions of a particular company within that sector. A Likert scale from 1-7 is used to grade each statement. Grade “1” meaning “Strongly disagree” and grade “7” meaning “Strongly agree” with the grade “4” being a neutral midpoint. (Ibid.)

For analysing the data, the mean values of each factors will be calculated and the expectation compared to the perception. If the expectations exceed the perception values, the company will know where to improve the service quality. If there is no gap between the mean values, customer satisfaction has been achieved. If the perceptions exceed expectation values however, then the company has been successful in surprising the customers. (Ibid.)

The importance-performance analysis (IPA) was first introduced in 1977 by Martilla and James. The model was created for companies to evaluate which aspects of a product or service should be further developed to be more effective in their market. (Martilla, John, and James 1977)

The IPA can be interpreted by graphically presenting a grid divided into four quadrants as shown on figure 2. The *Y*-axis shows the perceived importance and the *X*-axis shows the performance. The four quadrants can be identified as follows (Chu and Choi 2000):

1. Concentrate Here – Customers feel this is important, yet indicate low satisfaction
2. Keep Up the Good Work – Customers feel this is important and indicate satisfaction
3. Low Priority – Customers indicate satisfaction, but do not feel that this is very important
4. Possible Overkill – Customers feel overly satisfied, but don’t think it’s important at all

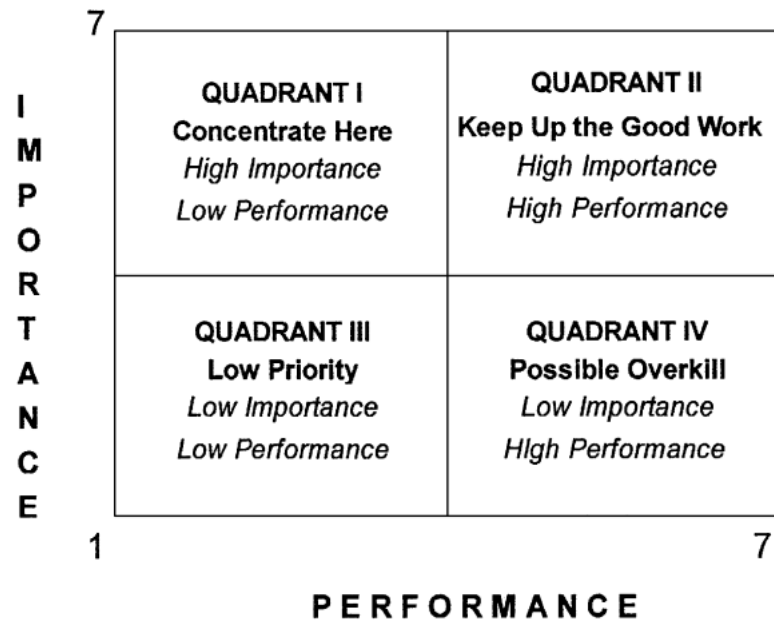


Figure 2. Importance–Performance Analysis Grid.

Source: (Chu and Choi 2000)

Importance-performance analysis offers numerous advantages for measuring customer satisfaction. The technique is low-cost, easily adaptable and can provide beneficial insights into which aspects of the marketing strategy a company should focus more attention to. It can also identify which areas might be too resources-consuming. Presenting the results on the IPA grid can help the management in data interpretation. (Martilla, John, and James 1977)

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a customer satisfaction measurement tool used to evaluate customer experience and predict business growth. Created in 2003 after an extensive research by Satmetrix, Bain & Company and Fred Reichheld, NPS can be used to measure the overall perception of a brand. (Net Promoter...)

The NPS model is calculated using answer data to the key question: How likely is it that you would recommend X brand to a friend or colleague? Using an 11-point scale the NPS divides the respondents into three groups (Ibid.):

1. Promoters (score 9-10) - loyal customers who keep buying and refer to friends, fueling growth.
2. Passives (score 7-8) - satisfied customers who are unenthusiastic and vulnerable to competitive offerings.

3. Detractors (score 0-6) - unhappy customers who can damage the brand and impede growth.

The value of NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of Detractors from the percentage of Promoters as shown on figure 3. The result may vary from a low of -100 to a maximum of 100. (Ibid.)

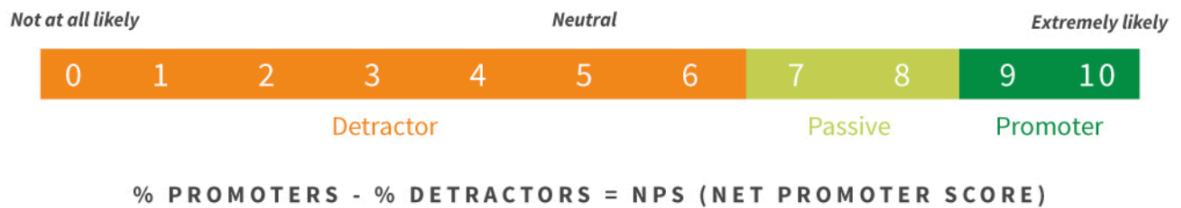


Figure 3. NPS calculation

Source: (Net Promoter...)

To understand the NPS value, it should be compared to the values of competitors. Companies that have higher scores than their competitors tend to grow faster. (Ibid.)

The integrated customer satisfaction model used in the survey part of this paper is a combination of the SERVQUAL and IPA models. The author took notes and from Lidia Danilova's 2014 graduation thesis titled "Evaluating Customer Satisfaction at Academic Hostel".

In the research, Danilova stated that the SERVQUAL model alone might confuse the respondents, since they might evaluate the fulfilment of expectations and satisfaction simultaneously. Because of this, they replaced the questions about expectations from the SERVQUAL questionnaire with questions about importance derived from the IPA model. These questions were all used to evaluate the factors derived from the SERVQUAL model as seen in appendix 2. (Danilova 2014)

The integrated model used in this survey differs from the pure SERVQUAL model by inquiring the customers of the importance about the chosen factor instead of expectations.

#### **1.4. The possibilities of increasing customer satisfaction**

The customer satisfaction is directly related to the performance of the company. Measuring satisfaction will help position the company in its market. To increase the position of the company in the market and measure the satisfaction the following steps must be taken (Szwarc 2005):

1. First gather information about the products and services that the customers value and then analyse the results, provide conclusions.
2. Secondly the resulting data must be shared across the whole organization.
3. Finally the resulting data should be used to further develop the service quality resulting in improved competitiveness, customer satisfaction, loyalty and profits.

In order to gain an advantage over the competitor the three most popular methods are as follows (Kotler 2002):

1. Offering a lower price – aggressive pricing can be afforded only by very successful companies, who manage lower operating costs than other firms in the same sector. The costs are kept low mainly due to experience, favourable location and better relationships with suppliers.
2. Helping customers reduce costs – the customer may have to pay more for the same product than at a competitor firm, but long-term costs will be lower due to better quality, lower maintenance cost or better warranty terms.
3. Offering extra benefits – companies can try to make their product more attractive by offering extra benefits such as individual ordering, fast service, adding extra services, consultation or loyal customer program.

In addition, marketing communication is growing in importance among today's businesses. Several different new marketing methods have been adopted to introduce the companies, their brands and offers to the customers such as:

1. Lifestyle marketing – based on people's individual lifestyles considering their personal preferences, behaviour, social life, fashion style, place of residence and other consumer related factors (Dacko 2007).
2. Engagement marketing – based on offering the customer the kind of service quality they would independently want to share with others, while encouraging customers to share their positive experiences through social media, e-mail or newsletters (Groves and Goodman 2012)

3. Viral marketing – Mostly existent on social networks, where customers are encouraged and supported in passing on the marketing message creating exponential growth in the number of recipients ((Investopedia n.d.).

In addition to the aforementioned methods, managing customer portfolios has been gaining popularity. Enterprises have started creating customer databases in order to monitor the consumer preferences and send out directed ads, messages or offers. (Mitchell 2004)



## 2. WORKTOP INDUSTRY MARKET OVERVIEW AND GRANITOP OÜ AS AN EXPORTING SME

This chapter will give a brief overview of the industry sector Granitop OÜ operates in and will also provide an introduction of the company itself.

### 2.1. Stone worktop fabrication market overview

Currently 46 companies are active in the granite, marble or other stone products fabrication sector ((Äripäeva Infopank n.d.). According to the manager of Granitop OÜ, most are micro enterprises, while Granitop and its major competitors qualify as small enterprises. The five largest competitors of Granitop are Nerostein OÜ, Diapol Granite OÜ, Liidukivi OÜ, Kivisepad AS and Marmi Futerno OÜ. When comparing Granitop OÜ to its competitors it should be noted that Granitop OÜ is a subsidiary of Granitop Grupp OÜ and together they form a corporate group whose financial values should be accounted as one. (Manager of Granitop OÜ 2019)

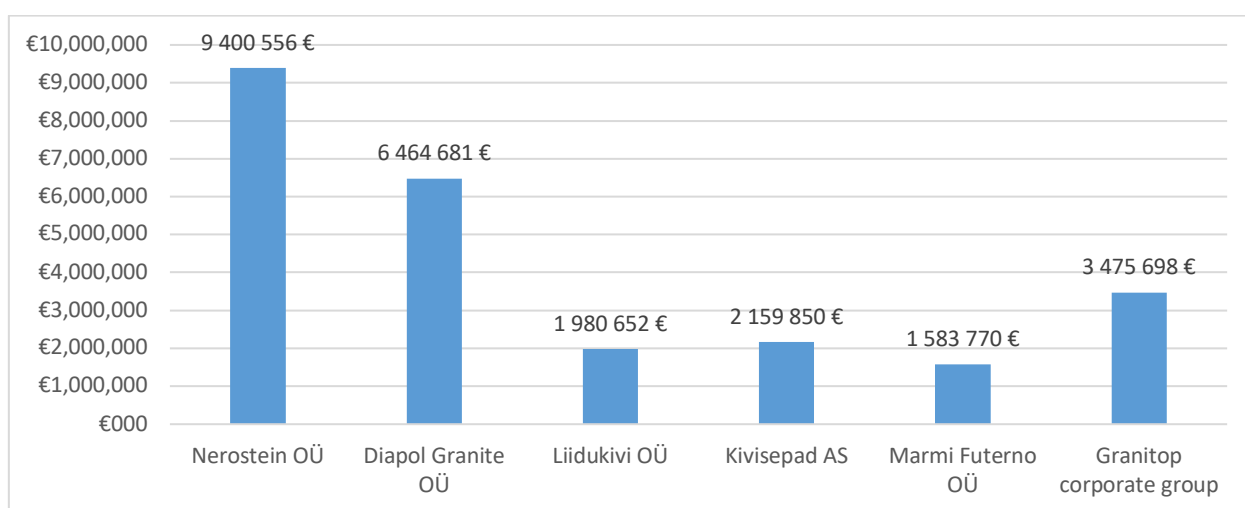


Figure 4. 2017 revenues of Granitop corporate group and its competitors

Source: (Äripäeva Infopank 2017)

On figure 4 the revenues for the year 2017 can be seen for Granitop and its five main competitors. The revenue of Granitop corporate group is the sum of Granitop OÜ and Granitop Grupp OÜ revenue values. The data shows, two firms had larger revenues, while three had lower revenues. While revenue can be a good indicator for the volume of sales, it is not enough to determine the success of a company.

Figure 5 compares the profits or losses occurred by the end of the year 2017. Only Nerostein OÜ has a larger profit, the other 4 companies all perform lower than Granitop. These figures show why revenue is not a good indicator of the performance of a company. Diapol Granite OÜ, which had the second largest revenue of the six companies had a loss of 265,827€ by the end of the year.

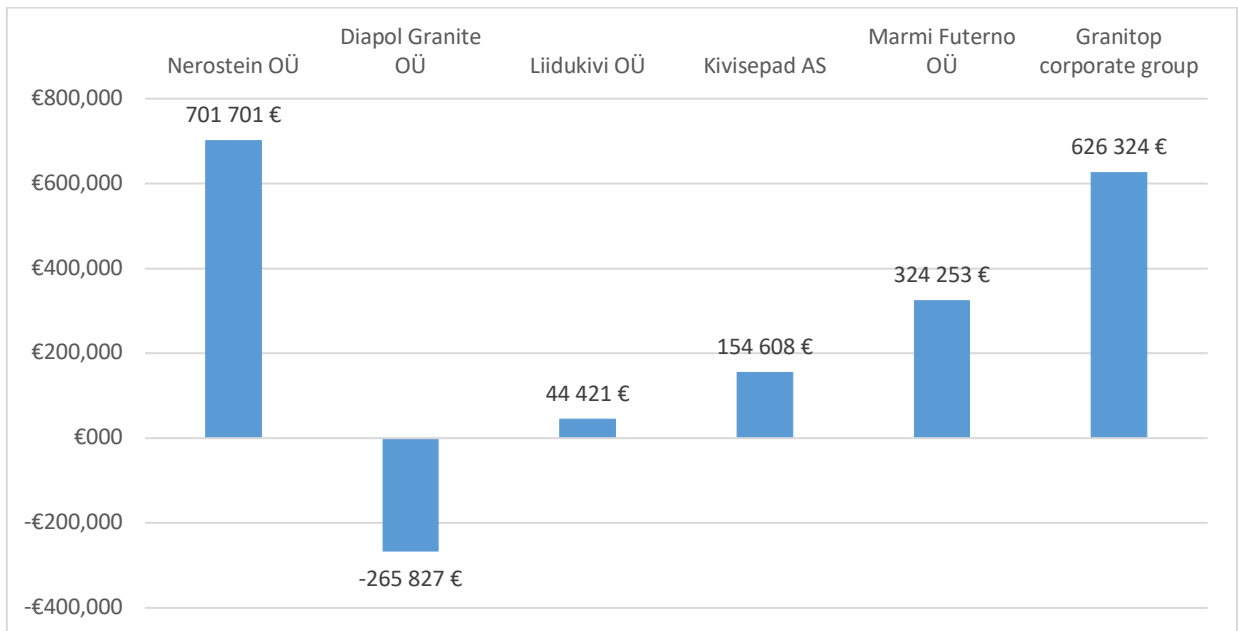


Figure 5. 2017 profits (-losses) of Granitop corporate group and its competitors

Source: (Äripäeva Infopank 2017)

Table 1 shows the information from balance sheets of Granitop corporate group companies and its competitors. Comparing these values together with the previous data gives a better outlook on performance. While Nerostein OÜ has a larger revenue and profit, it also has over 373% larger liabilities, which allow more aggressive actions on the market.

SME name	Assets	Liabilities	Equity
Granitop OÜ	€235 189	€229 084	€6 105
Granitop Grupp OÜ	€1 206 699	€578 480	€628 219
Granitop corporate group incl. Grupp OÜ, incl. OÜ.	€1 441 888	€807 564	€634 324
Nerostein OÜ	€4 591 891	€3 016 131	€1 575 760
Diapol Granite OÜ	€12 024 795	€6 379 053	€5 645 742
Liidukivi OÜ	€2 246 871	€851 800	€1 395 071
Kivisepad AS	€1 476 369	€429 507	€1 046 862
Marmi Futerno OÜ	€1 288 476	€473 975	€814 501

Table 1. 2017 balance sheet values of Granitop corporate group and its competitors

Source: (Äripäeva Infopank 2017)

Larger liabilities also increase risks however, which is why Granitop corporate group aims to reduce the amount of liabilities each year (Manager of Granitop OÜ 2019).

Considering the data above, the two strongest competitors of Granitop OÜ are Nerostein OÜ and Diapol Granite OÜ.

## 2.2. Introduction of Granitop OÜ

The definition of small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) states that the number of employees should be between 10 and 49 for small and 50-249 for medium enterprises. Turnover should not exceed 10 million for small and 50 million for medium enterprises. Companies who employ less than 10 people and have a turnover under 2 million qualify as micro enterprises. (OECD Statistics Portal 2001)

By the definitions previously stated Granitop OÜ can be defined as a small enterprise. The market sector Granitop OÜ operates in is very specific. The company fabricates products, mostly kitchen worktops from different types of stones. The materials can be natural (granite, marble, limestone) or man-made (pressed quartz, glass, granite and color pigments). (Manager of Granitop OÜ, 2019)

The major difference that separates Granitop OÜ from its competitors is the structure of the companies. This becomes clear when starting to compare the firms financially. Granitop is formed from Granitop Grupp OÜ, the parent company and its subsidiary Granitop OÜ, while its competitors all form just one enterprise. This was done due to many reasons, but mostly to keep the sales and production in separate entities, handle bookkeeping with more ease and keep one company for local business and one for export. As previously stated however, these two companies form one corporate group, which should be kept in mind, when comparing the financial numbers with the competitors. (Ibid.)

### **3. MEASURING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AT GRANITOP OÜ**

This chapter will give an overview of the methodology, results and analysis of the survey the author of the thesis has conducted. The analysis is a continued development of the survey paper “Customer satisfaction survey at Granitop OÜ”. The author will also provide conclusions and suggestions based on the results.

#### **3.1. The aim and methodology of the survey**

The aim of the survey was to measure how satisfied are the customers of Granitop with the service quality the company offers and find out which aspects should be further developed to meet the expectations of the customers and increase the overall satisfaction.

In order to fulfill the aim of the thesis the author decided for the quantitative method and conducted a survey in order to find answers to these questions:

- Did the customers feel satisfied after receiving service from Granitop?
- Which areas do the clients feel could be improved?
- Would the clients recommend Granitop to their friends?

To measure the level of satisfaction at Granitop the author conducted a survey combining the Servqual and IPA models. The author chose 19 factors using the SERVQUAL model to ask the customers about their perceived satisfaction from Granitop. The first section from SERVQUAL about the expectations of the customer was replaced by questions derived from the IPA model. These questions were used to ask the customers about the importance of the 19 factors chosen by the author. A question about the Net Promoter Score was also added. The author chose this method because of a previous survey paper conducted on a similar topic, which raised questions if the original SERVQUAL models expectation section would be easy to understand to all respondents and not confuse them (Danilova 2014).

The final questionnaire was comprised of 24 questions, the first three being demographic. The following 19 questions formed the integrated model between the SERVQUAL and IPA models.

The remaining two included the Net Promoter Score question and a free form where respondents could add their own comments or suggestions.

The paper survey forms were being handed out to all customers receiving the installation of their purchase from Granitop OÜ over a period of one month, from 01.03.2019 - 01.04.2019. During that period there were 208 clients who were supposed to receive the survey, however only 184 filled out forms were obtained. In some cases the customers were not present themselves and in some cases the language barrier was an issue. The survey was created in english, but most of the respondents were not native english speakers.

The author used Microsoft Excel for entering the data from all the surveys and calculate the necessary group percentages and mean values for different questions.

The first demographic questions of the survey formed the basis for the profile of the survey sample. After analysing the data seen in appendix 4, the author found that 83% of the respondents were men and the remaining 17% women. The largest number of respondents belonged to the age group 31-40 years old (58%). The next group in descending size was 21-30 years old who made up 24% of the sample. The last group was 41 years old and above comprising 18%.

### **3.2. Survey results and analysis**

The respondents were asked about their country of residence. This was important for defining where the purchase came from and where the products are being exported to. Figure 6 shows that 41% of the respondents were from Sweden, 23% from Finland and 20% from Norway. The remaining 9% and 7% came from Estonia and Denmark respectively.

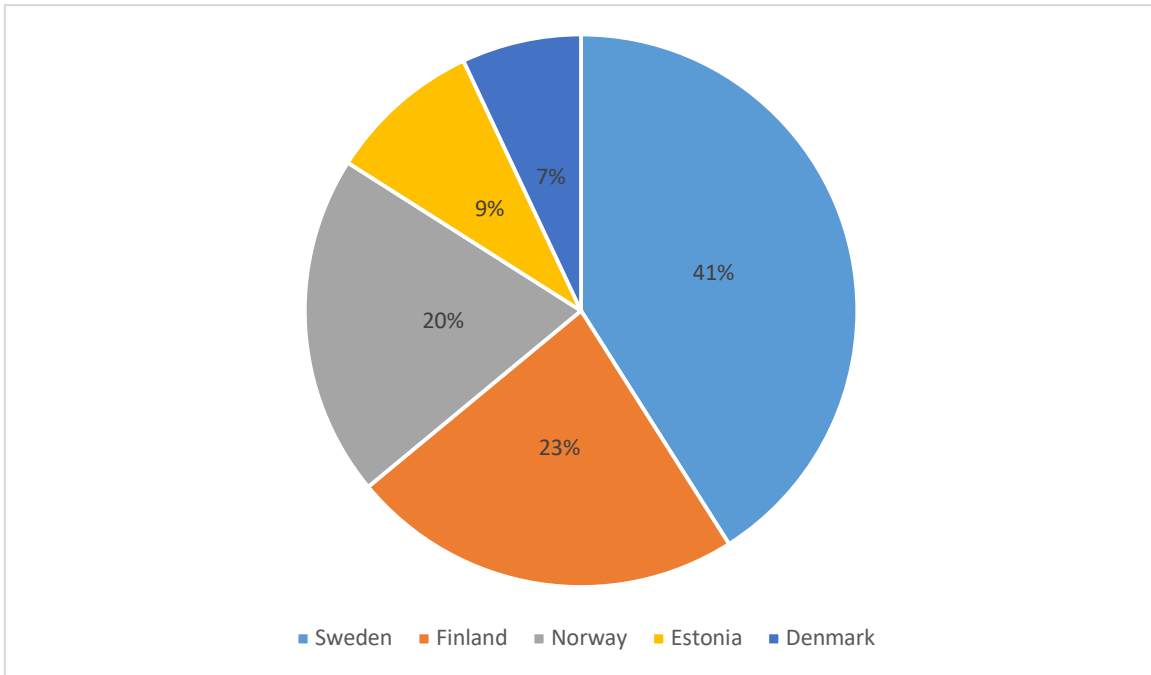


Figure 6. Respondents distribution by country of residence

Source: Author's survey

The second part of the survey contained the integrated customer satisfaction measurement model. The SERVQUAL method divides the factors the customers give their opinion on into five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy. There are 22 statements divided into each of these dimensions. The author of the survey used factors reworded from these statements by a previous researcher on a similar topic. The reworded factors are easier to understand for the survey taker than the more complicated statements. The author of the survey left out 3 statements that were unnecessary or unfit, which left 19 factors about the importance and satisfaction for the respondents to evaluate. In appendix 2 all the factors derived from the original statements from SERVQUAL model are presented along with the dimension they belong to. The original statements are presented in appendix 1.

The Importance-Performance Analysis provided the basis for asking how important each factor was to the customer and calculating the mean value of each answer. The mean values of the factors importance are shown in orange on figure 7.

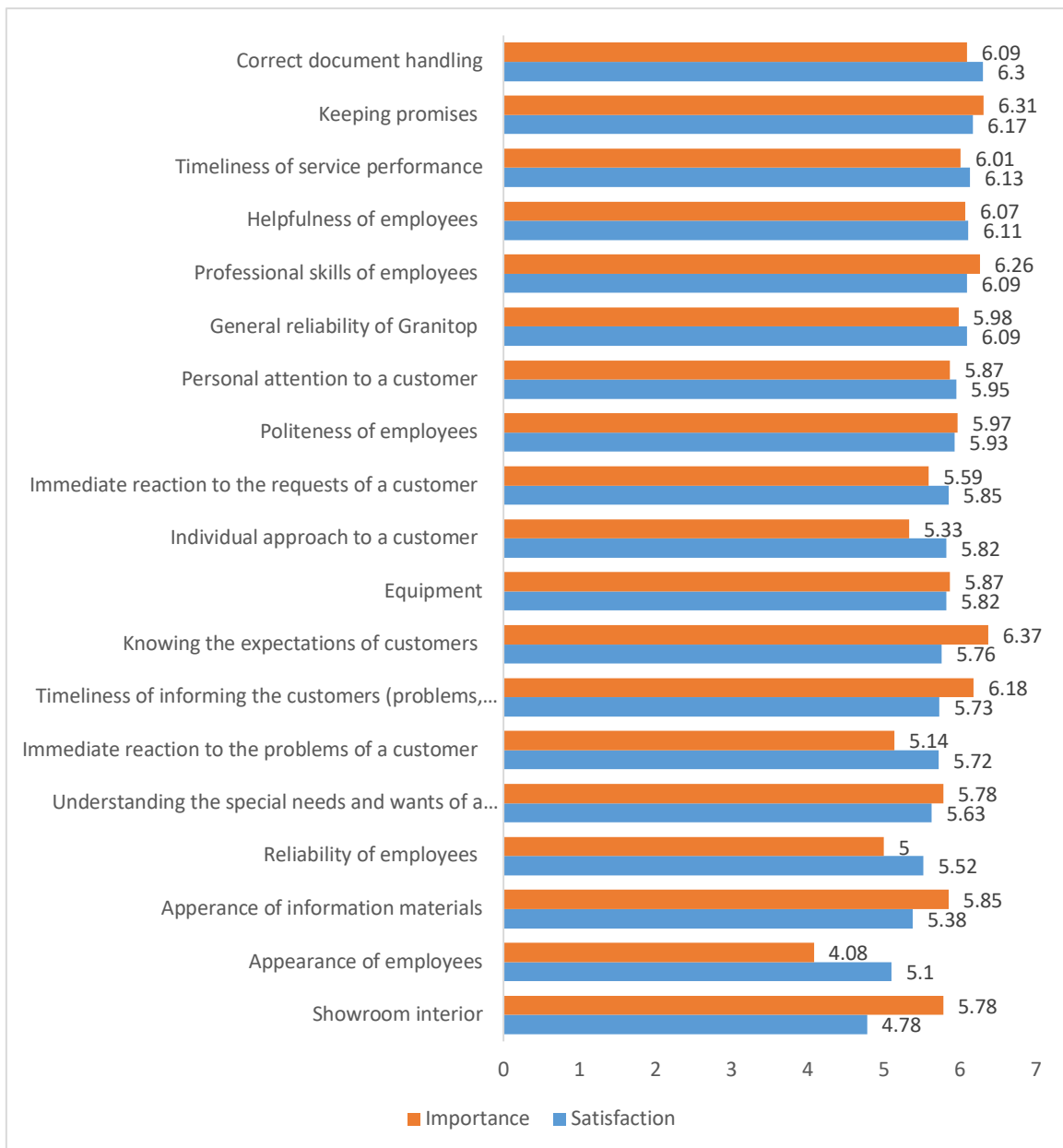


Figure 7. The mean values of importance and satisfaction factors

Source: Author's survey

The customers of Granitop think most of the factors are important, since no mean values were under the average on the scale. The least important factor was the appearance of the employees with a mean of 4,08, followed by 5,00 on the reliability of employees. The first belongs to the tangibles dimension, while reliability of employees belongs to the assurance dimension.

The most important Granitop customers believe to be knowing the expectations of customers with a mean of 6,37. Followed by that is keeping promises with a mean value of 6,31. These factors belonged to the empathy and reliability dimension respectively.



By looking at the importance mean values, there is very little fluctuation. Since there are neither very low or very high values, it can be deduced that the customers don't believe any of the factors to be not important or something that should be less focused on.

Next the customers were asked how satisfied they were with the perceived service on those same factors. The results are shown in blue on figure 7.

Correct document handling was valued with the highest satisfaction with a mean value of 6,3, followed by keeping promises with a mean of 6,17.

The least satisfaction was received for showroom interior with a mean of 4,78, followed by 5,1 for appearance of employees.

By looking at figure 7, it can be seen that the importance and satisfaction values are almost equal. The satisfaction values were higher than the importance on 10 factors, while for 9 factors the mean value for importance was higher. From this can be concluded that on average the customers are satisfied with the perceived service from Granitop, but there are factors, where the perceived service underperformed compared to the expectations of the customers and those are the factors on which the company should focus more.

Figure 8 displays the gaps between the ratings given by the customers on the importance and satisfaction factors. This will later help position the factors to the integrated model. When the importance mean was greater than the satisfaction mean, then the gap value would be negative. If the satisfaction mean was greater, the gap value would be positive.

The largest positive gap in for the appearance of employees with 1,02. The next largest gaps were in immediate reaction to the problems of a customer and reliability of employees with the gap values of 0,58 and 0,52.

The largest negative gap was in showroom interior with -1. The next largest negative gap showed in knowing the expectations of customers and appearance of information materials with values of -0,61 and -0,47.

All the factors had a gap to some extent. Very close to zero, helpfulness of employees had a positive gap of 0,04, while politeness of employees had a negative gap of -0,04. The third factor with a gap closest to zero was equipment with a value of -0,05. All the gap values stayed between -1 and 1.02 not showing any significant difference between importance and satisfaction.

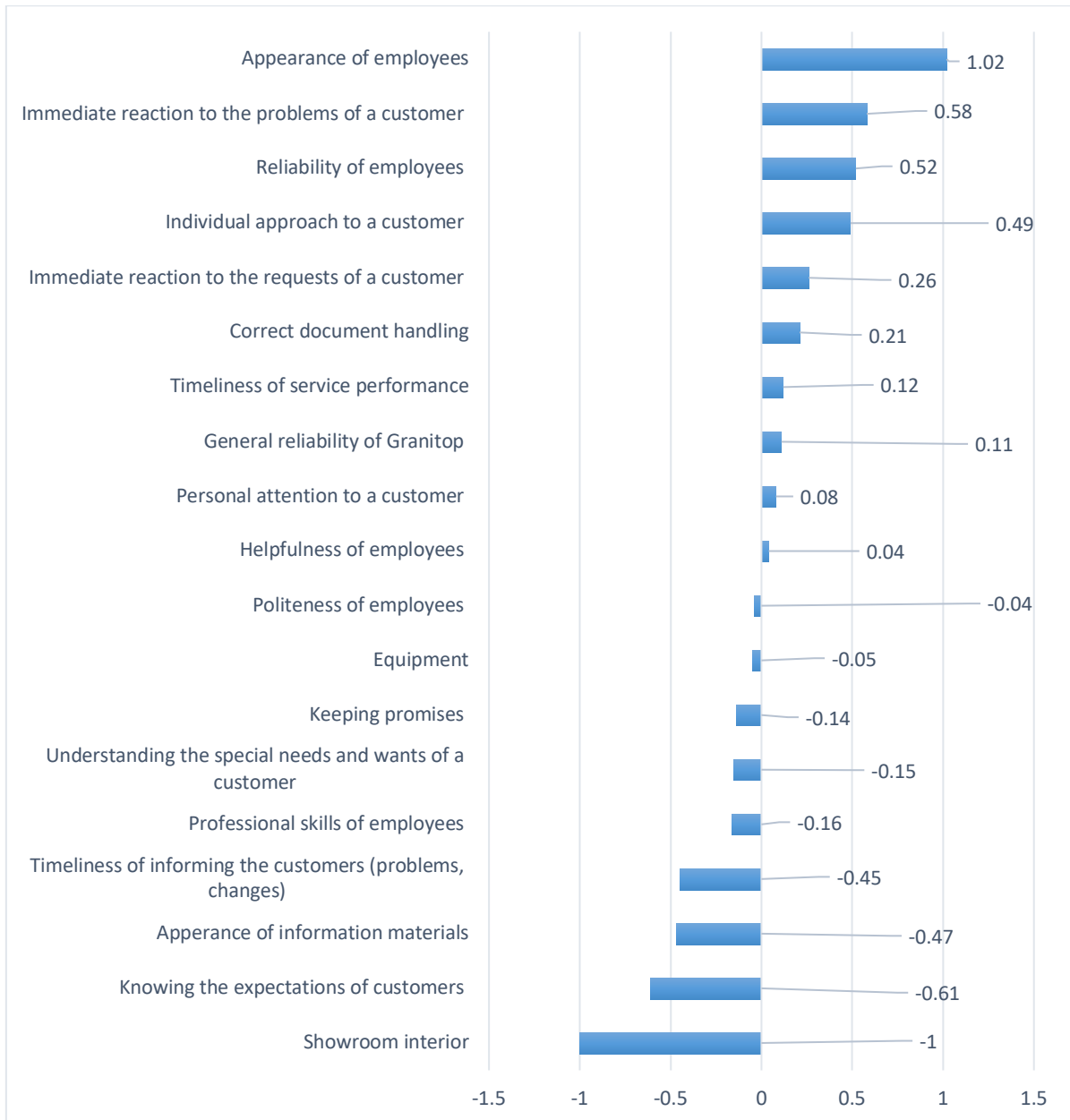


Figure 8. The gaps between importance and satisfaction mean values

Source: Author's survey

The gaps between the five SERVQUAL dimensions can be seen on figure 9. The largest negative gap was in the responsiveness dimension with a mean of -0,97 followed by the tangibles dimension with a mean of -0,13. The largest positive gap however, was in the reliability dimension with the

value of 0,19 followed by the assurance dimension with a mean of 0,11. The empathy dimension had almost no gap between its importance and satisfaction values with 0,01.

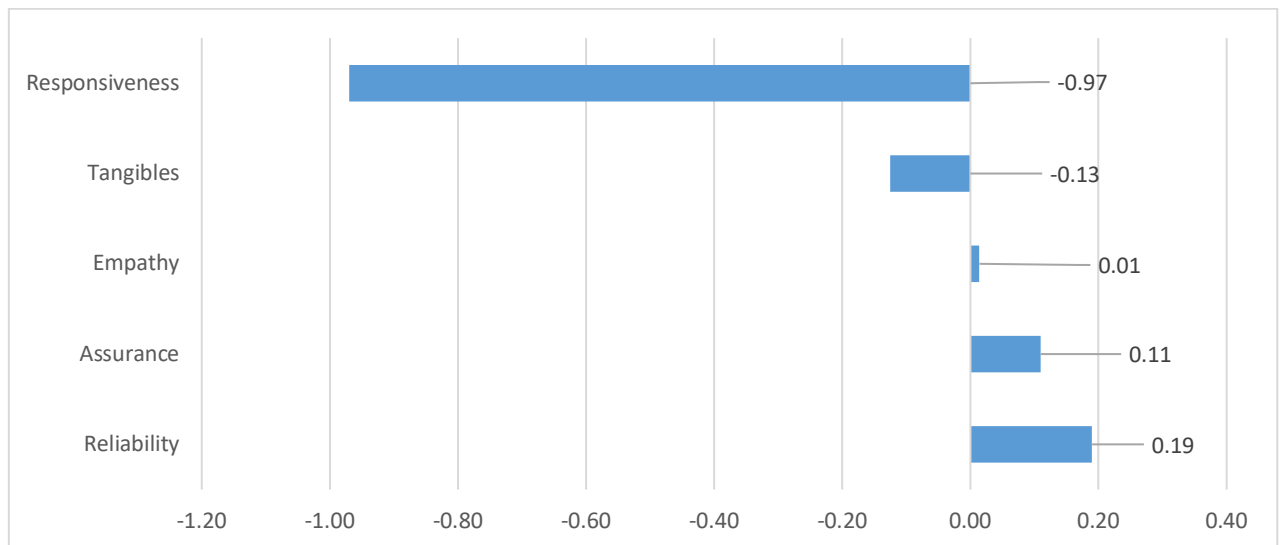


Figure 9. The gaps between SERVQUAL five dimensions importance and satisfaction values

Source: Author's survey

Figure 10 shows which factors belong to which quadrant. Most of the factors stayed in the “keep up the good work” sector, which represent the factors customers feel are as important as they are satisfied with them:

1. Showroom interior
2. General reliability of Granitop
3. Keeping promises
4. Timeliness of service performance
5. Correct document handling
6. Timeliness of informing customers of problems
7. Helpfulness of employees
8. Professional skills of employees
9. Politeness of employees
10. Personal attention to a customer
11. Knowing the expectations of customers
12. Understanding the special needs and wants of a customer
13. Individual approach to a customer
14. Immediate reaction to the problems of a customer

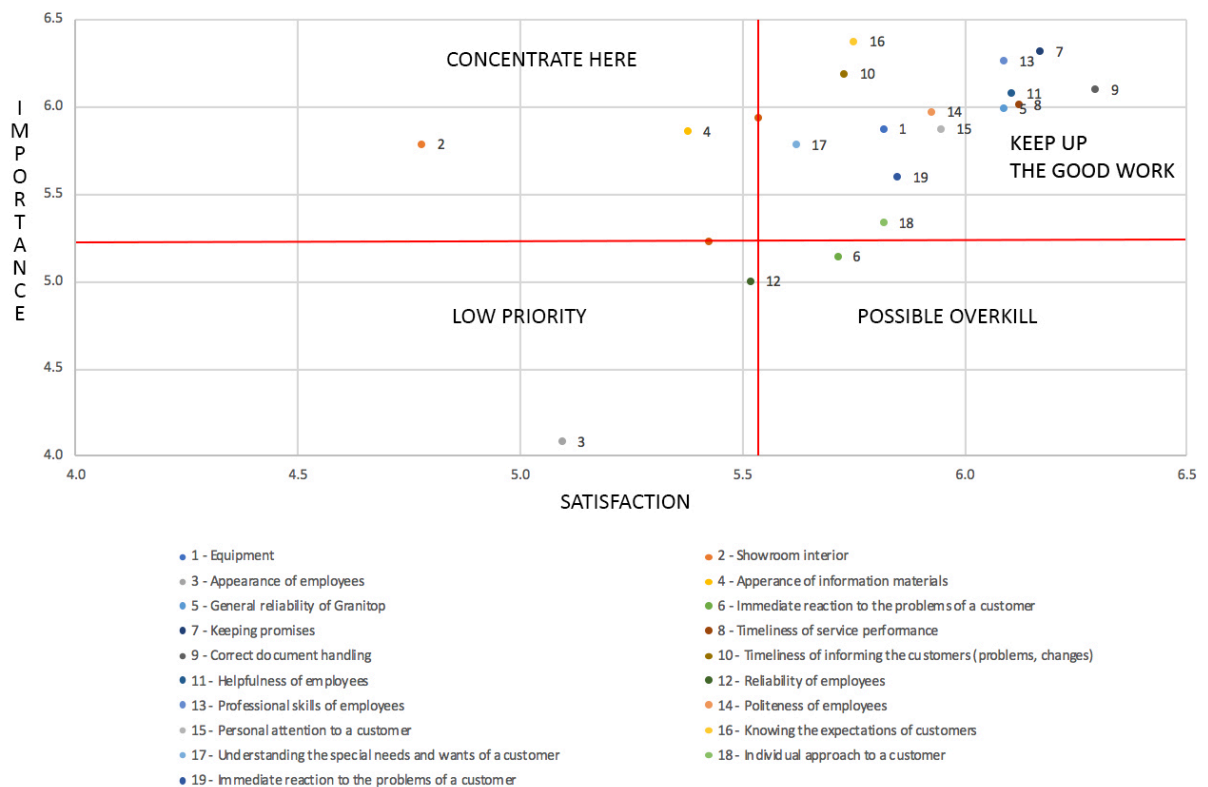


Figure 10. Integrated customer satisfaction model

Source: Author’s survey

The medians of importance and satisfaction were used to divide the factors into two separate groups. Because of this it cannot be interpreted with certainty that all the factors in the area “keep up the good work” correspond to the area in the meaning of the IPA model. However any factor that is higher on the scale of satisfaction than the previous or lower factor belongs to “keep up the good work” with more probability. The practical conclusion can be that the six factors with the highest satisfaction values that can visually seen as the furthest on the scale can be considered as strenghts of the company and should be kept this way. The rest of the factors, closer to the middle point may actually correspond to one of the other areas of the IPA model, because unlike the NPS scale, it is not possible to differentiate exactly where on the 7-point scale the line between “good” and “bad” is drawn.

The figure above also shows two factors, reliability of employees and appearance of employees in the “low priority” area. The customers did not feel satisfied with these, but also don’t think these

factors are very important. The company should not invest resources in solving these issues first, but the problematic factors in this sector should not be overlooked as well.

The most critical sector “concentrate here” contains just two factors – showroom interior and appearance of information materials. These two factors were very important to customers, yet they did not feel satisfied enough with them, which is why the management of Granitop should focus their attention on increasing satisfaction on these factors.

Immediate reaction to the problems of a customer is a factor that is placed in the sector “possible overkill”. This means the customers are very satisfied with this, however they don’t feel it to be very important.

The final question about how likely would the customers recommend Granitop to their friends or colleagues was used to calculate the NPS. There were 55 promoters, people who replied with the answer 9-10, making up 29,9% of all respondents. The 30 detractors, respondents of score 0-6, made up 16,3%. The rest 99 respondents were considered passive. The author subtracted the detractor percentage from the promoter percentage to obtain the Net Promoter Score of 13,6%. The result is positive, but the goal should be to reduce the passive respondents and increase the promoters.

### **3.3. Author’s suggestions**

The author has taken into consideration the different factors given values on satisfaction and importance and has made the conclusion that the company should focus on improving the visual quality and interior of their showroom. By looking at the integrated model, it is clear that the showroom interior factor is the farthest from the middle point on the “concentrate here” area, which means customers considered this very important, while being unsatisfied. To increase the satisfaction the author suggests conducting another survey specifically designed to find out what aspects of a showroom customers feel are important and how it should be designed.

The company should also focus on the factors, which are most clearly in the area of “keep up the good work” to maintain the satisfaction levels there. The factors around the middle should also need more focus and if possible then resources. To help with the decision of which factors to

allocate resources to, a similar survey about the competitors of Granitop should be conducted. Factors that have very high satisfaction from the competitors, must be important to the customers, which mean they are also factors Granitop should focus on. Factors that have higher satisfaction from Granitop should be considered as “keep up the good work”, since concentrating more may not produce further results.

When enough data about Granitop and its competitors have been gathered the management may start planning a marketing strategy that focuses on one factor or a group of factors that are important to customers and where Granitop has a better position compared to its competitors. With the help of marketing communication this could form a clear competitive advantage to separate Granitop from its competitors.

Considering the market position compared to its competitors, Granitop is in a position where they could increase their liabilities to offer some extra benefits to customers. Following the upgraded showroom, the company can also try viral marketing to promote the new interior.

## CONCLUSION

The author of the thesis decided to conduct a customer satisfaction survey at Granitop OÜ, since no such survey has been made before in this enterprise. Furthermore, it was believed that their service quality had to improve, because the number of incoming orders reaching confirmation was less than one third. For example, of the 515 orders started in February only 147 were finalized (29%). This problem gave the survey paper its purpose: to find out, how satisfied are customers with the service quality the employees at Granitop OÜ provide for them and which aspects should the company and its employees improve in order to improve customer satisfaction.

In order to achieve the objectives of the survey, a survey was conducted using an integrated model based on the SERVQUAL and IPA models. The survey also included a few demographic questions, the Net Promoter Score and an open ended free form question for suggestions. The surveys were handed out to the customers upon receiving their purchase to be filled out during the installation of their purchased products. In the period between 01.03.2019 – 01.04.2019, 208 surveys were handed out, of which for different reasons only 184 filled out forms were returned.

The first chapter of this survey contained the theoretical basis for customer satisfaction, the importance of its measurement and the integrated customer satisfaction measurement model used in this survey and its differences from the pure models.

The second chapter provides an overview of the company used for the survey, Granitop OÜ and its market overview and comparison with competitors.

The third chapter provides the results of the survey, the analysis of those results and the author's conclusions and suggestions.

The author has taken into consideration the different factors given values on satisfaction and importance and has made the conclusion that the company should focus on improving the visual quality and interior of their showroom. To increase the satisfaction the author suggests conducting another survey specifically designed to find out what aspects of a showroom customers feel are important and how it should be designed.

The company should also conduct a similar survey about the competitors of Granitop should be conducted. Using the results gathered the management could start planning a marketing strategy with the help of marketing communication in order to form a clear competitive advantage to separate Granitop from its competitors.

Considering the market position compared to its competitors, Granitop is in a position where they could increase their liabilities to offer some extra benefits to customers. Following the upgraded showroom, the company can also try viral marketing to promote the new interior.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. 22 statements about satisfaction from the SERVQUAL model

- P1. XYZ has up-to-date equipment.
- P2. XYZ's physical facilities are visually appealing.
- P3. XYZ's employees are well dressed and appear neat.
- P4. The appearance of the physical facilities of XYZ is in keeping with the type of services provided.
- P5. When XYZ promises to do something by a certain time, it does so. P
- P6. When you have problems, XYZ is sympathetic and reassuring.
- P7. XYZ is dependable.
- P8. XYZ provides its services at the time it promises to do so.
- P9. XYZ keeps its records accurately.
- P10. XYZ does not tell customers exactly when services will be performed. (-)
- P11. You do not receive prompt service from XYZ's employees. (-)
- P12. Employees of XYZ are not always willing to help customers. (-)
- P13. Employees of XYZ are too busy to respond to customer requests promptly. (-)
- P14. You can trust employees of XYZ.
- P15. You feel safe in your transactions with XYZ's employees.
- P16. Employees of XYZ are polite.
- P17. Employees get adequate support from XYZ to do their jobs well.
- P18. XYZ does not give you individual attention. (-)
- P19. Employees of XYZ do not give you personal attention. (-)
- P20. Employees of XYZ do not know what your needs are. (-)
- P21. XYZ does not have your best interests at heart. (-)
- P22. XYZ does not have operating hours convenient to all their customers. (—)

Source: (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry 1988)

## Appendix 2. Factors derived from the SERVQUAL model

Factor number	Original model response	Dimension	Factor
Q1.	P1.	Tangibles	Equipment
Q2.	P2.		Showroom Interior
Q3.	P3.		Appearance of employees
Q4.	P4.		Appearance of information materials
Q5.	P5.	Reliability	General reliability of Granitop
Q6.	P6.		Immediate reaction to the problems of a customer
Q7.	P8.		Keeping promises
Q8.	P9.		Correct document handling
Q9.	P10.	Responsiveness	Timeliness of informing the customers (problems, changes)
Q10.	P11.		Timeliness of service performance
Q11.	P12.		Helpfulness of employees
Q12.	P14.	Assurance	Reliability of employees
Q13.	P15.		Politeness of employees
Q14.	P16.		Professional skills of employees
Q15.	P17.		Individual approach to a customer
Q16.	P18.	Empathy	Personal attention to a customer
Q17.	P19.		Understanding the special needs and wants of a customer
Q18.	P20.		Knowing the expectations of customers
Q19.	P21.		Immediate reaction to the requests of a customer

Source: (Danilova 2014), modified by the author

## Appendix 3. Survey questionnaire

# Granitop Customer Satisfaction Survey

Dear customer,

With the following we kindly ask you to fill in this customer satisfaction research. Participating in this survey will help us improve the service quality of Granitop.

All participants will remain anonymous and your opinions are greatly appreciated. Completing the survey will take about 3-5 minutes.

Please hand the filled form back to our employees.

Thank you in advance!

Best regards,

Stenver Suurkütt  
Granitop OÜ

**1. Gender:**  male  female  other: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Country of residence:**

- Finland
- Sweden
- Norway
- Denmark
- Estonia



19. Knowing the expectations of customers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Understanding the special needs and wants of a customer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Individual approach to a customer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Immediate reaction to the requests of a customer	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

23 ) How likely would you recommend Granitop to a friend or colleague?

0	1	2	3	4	4	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

Not  
at all  
likely

Extremely  
likely

24 ) Your comments, advices:

Source: (Danilova 2014), modified by the author

## Appendix 4. Survey questionnaire with result percentages

# Granitop Customer Satisfaction Survey

Dear customer,

With the following we kindly ask you to fill in this customer satisfaction research. Participating in this survey will help us improve the service quality of Granitop.

All participants will remain anonymous and your opinions are greatly appreciated. Completing the survey will take about 3-5 minutes.

Please hand the filled form back to our employees.

Thank you in advance!

Best regards,

Stenver Suurkütt  
Granitop OÜ

**1. Gender: male (83%) female (17%) other (0%)**

**2. Age: 21-30 (24%)**  
31-40 (58%)  
41-... (18%)

**3. Country of residence:**

**Finland (23%)**  
**Sweden (41%)**  
**Norway (20%)**  
**Denmark (7%)**  
**Estonia (9%)**



Factor	Please define on the scale of 1 to 7 how important are, in your opinion, the following factors for countertop producers in general:							Please define on the scale of 1 to 7 how satisfied you are personally by the following factors provided by Granitop:						
	Not Extremely important at all						important	Not Extremely satisfied at all						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Equipment	0%	0%	4%	7%	23%	29%	36%	0%	0%	2%	7%	28%	34%	29%
5. Showroom Interior	0%	0%	9%	2%	18%	42%	28%	0%	0%	13%	24%	35%	28%	0%
6. Appearance of employees	4%	18%	11%	17%	35%	14%	2%	0%	0%	7%	28%	24%	31%	10%
7. Appearance of information materials	0%	0%	0%	6%	28%	40%	26%	0%	0%	2%	10%	48%	28%	12%
8. General reliability of Granitop	0%	0%	0%	2%	29%	38%	32%	0%	0%	0%	4%	21%	36%	39%
9. Immediate reaction to the problems of a customer	0%	2%	3%	25%	29%	33%	8%	0%	0%	0%	11%	28%	38%	23%
10. Keeping promises	0%	0%	0%	2%	11%	41%	46%	0%	0%	3%	2%	9%	45%	41%
11. Timeliness of service performance	0%	0%	7%	3%	10%	43%	37%	0%	0%	5%	3%	8%	45%	40%
12. Correct document handling	0%	0%	0%	2%	23%	39%	36%	0%	1%	2%	1%	7%	42%	47%
13. Timeliness of informing the customers (problems, changes)	0%	0%	0%	7%	8%	45%	40%	0%	0%	0%	18%	25%	23%	34%
14. Helpfulness of employees	0%	0%	0%	7%	20%	32%	41%	0%	0%	0%	2%	23%	39%	37%
15. Reliability of employees	0%	0%	0%	17%	19%	43%	21%	0%	0%	3%	18%	24%	30%	23%
16. Professional skills of employees	0%	0%	0%	5%	7%	45%	43%	0%	0%	0%	8%	17%	34%	41%
17. Politeness of employees	1%	0%	2%	9%	13%	42%	34%	0%	0%	0%	17%	13%	30%	40%

18. Personal attention to a customer	0% 0% 0% 2% 34% 41% 24%	0% 0% 0% 4% 26% 41% 29%
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19. Knowing the expectations of customers	0% 0% 0% 2% 4% 51% 44%	1% 0% 3% 15% 11% 41% 29%
20. Understanding the special needs and wants of a customer	0% 0% 1% 7% 29% 41% 23%	1% 2% 0% 13% 30% 29% 27%
21. Individual approach to a customer	0% 2% 7% 7% 41% 26% 17%	0% 1% 2% 11% 18% 35% 32%
22. Immediate reaction to the requests of a customer	0% 0% 2% 24% 12% 37% 25%	0% 0% 7% 13% 5% 39% 36%

23) How likely would you recommend Granitop to a friend or colleague?

0(0%)	1(0%)	2(0%)	3(0%)	4(0%)	5(9%)	6(8%)	7(13%)	8(41%)	9(17%)	10(13%)
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Not  
at all  
likely

Extremely  
likely

24) Your comments, advices:

Source: Author's survey

**Appendix 5. The mean values of the importance and satisfaction level of the factors**

Factor	Importance	Satisfaction
Equipment	5,87	5,82
Showroom interior	5,78	4,78
Appearance of employees	4,08	5,10
Appearance of information materials	5,85	5,38
General reliability of Granitop	5,98	6,09
Immediate reaction to the problems of a customer	5,14	5,72
Keeping promises	6,31	6,17
Timeliness of service performance	6,01	6,13
Correct document handling	6,09	6,30
Timeliness of informing the customers (problems, changes)	6,18	5,73
Helpfulness of employees	6,07	6,11
Reliability of employees	5,67	5,52
Professional skills of employees	6,26	6,09
Politeness of employees	5,97	5,93
Personal attention to a customer	5,87	5,95
Knowing the expectations of customers	6,37	5,76
Understanding the special needs and wants of a customer	5,78	5,63
Individual approach to a customer	5,33	5,82
Immediate reaction to the requests of a customer	5,59	5,85

Source: Author's survey