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A Framework for Experience Quality

A case study at Universeum AB

Master of Science Thesis

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Abstract

The commercial experience is seen as the fourth economic offering. An experience is differentiated from other economical offerings as being something memorable. Memories are created through strong emotional engagement and can be achieved both through positive or negative engagement. It is important for organizations in the Experience Industry to create this engagement through understanding customers' expectations and exceeding them in order to achieve high experience quality. The purpose of this study is to define experience quality and create a framework for Quality Management in the Experience Industry. This purpose will be addressed through a single case study at Universeum AB. Experience quality has been defined generically as well as specifically for Universeum. The following generic definition of Experience Quality is proposed in this study:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations”

As Universeum has a mission to educate and raise interest for natural science, an addition was made to the definition above to better fit the organization. The following definition is proposed in this study in order to define experience quality for Universeum:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations and raises a desire to learn”

In order to support systematic Quality Management in the Experience Industry a framework has been created for Universeum. The framework has been developed through an iterative process linking theoretical and empirical studies. The empirical study was based on ten interviews with the management group of Universeum, a focus group with adolescents from a school class, observations of the everyday business and internal documents. The framework is built up of the enablers Committed Management, Committed Co-workers and Customer Focus. These are seen as prerequisites in order for the Quality Management activities in the framework to be successful. The activities are: Updated and Continuous Education, Internal and External Communication, Mapped and Measurable Processes, Continuous Improvements and Shared Vision, Goals and Values. Through these activities the organization will be able to deliver a high quality experience.

Keywords: Commercial experience, consumer experience, learning through experience, experience quality, Quality Management.

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1 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the thesis, furthermore it states the research questions that will be answered through the study in order to fulfill its purpose. The delimitations of the study are also elaborated on.

1.1 Background

After a rapid growth the last couple of decades, the service sector has become a substantial part of today's western economies (Grönroos, 1988; Triplett & Bosworth, 2004). The growth has different sources; one being that traditionally production companies have moved in to the service sector, offering a solution for their customers instead of only physical goods (Feigenbaum & Feigenbaum, 2005). Most of the research done regarding quality has been focusing on goods and quality from a producer perspective (Lilja, 2010). Some of the principles and tools used in the management of quality in goods can also be used in order to increase and enhance service quality, but due to the fact that there are several of characteristics that differs between a service and pure goods, it is natural that there is a need of specific approaches for service quality (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010). There are several of definitions of quality, but a common denominator is the notion that quality is depending on how well the good or service meet, and preferably exceed, the customer's expectations (Juran, 1951; Deming, 1986; Dean & Bowen, 1994).

Another business area that has grown rapidly the last decades is the Experience Industry, where businesses seek to deliver an experience. The experience is seen by Pine & Gilmore (1999) as the fourth economic offering. The authors argue that experiences differ from services and physical goods and it is unrecognized in the research field of quality (Lilja, 2005). The commercial experiences will be pivotal in the economic growth in the future (Lilja, 2005) and the interest from researchers for this field has grown over the past few years (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). The customer experience as an offering is broader than a service or good and while a good is defined by being *tangible*, a service as *intangible*, the experience is defined by being *memorable* (Pine & Gilmore, 1999; Poulsson & Kale, 2004; Lilja et al., 2011). In the past experiences might have been seen to be something that cannot be supported by a systematic quality management initiative, in the same way that services used to be (Lilja, 2010). The amount of research in this field is limited and an understanding of how to combine the existing principles, practices and techniques of Quality Management (QM) in order to fit a company within the growing Experience Industry is lacking.

Universeum is a company within the Experience Industry, they have large variation in their offering and their facility contains areas ranging from a rainforest with live animals, a large aquarium, a crime lab with technical applications to a shop that sells physical goods. They also have a rare offering compared to other companies in the Experience Industry, which is the educational part. Last year Universeum experienced their best year so far with a result that far overreached the set goal. They have now become aware of the need to secure the experience quality they are offering to their guests in order to maintain and increase the

number of guests. One of the ways that this is to be achieved is through systematic quality work, something that today is non-existing in the organization. Small initiatives have been started by separate managers in order to improve quality within their own function and an implementation of methods for working with continuous improvements has been initiated. In order to reach a future state where quality is one of the pillars of the organization, Universeum requests an understanding of how to systematically work to improve the quality of their offering and recommendations on how to achieve this.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this study is to define experience quality and create a framework for QM in the Experience Industry. This purpose will be addressed through a single case study at Universeum AB.

1.3 Research questions

To work with QM one need to know what to do and why one are doing it. The study aims to answer the following questions in order to fulfill the purpose.

1. What does experience quality mean?

2. How should a company in the Experience Industry work with experience quality in a systematic way?

1.4 Delimitations

This thesis has focused on a presentation of principles and recommendations of suitable practices regarding QM at Universeum. Due to the time frame of this work the actual implementation of the practices and follow up on the results is seen to be outside the thesis.

When defining experience quality for Universeum, focus will be on the guest meeting functions, an investigation and mapping of the whole organization would be too large-scale to be manageable under the set timeframe. The study has focused on guest meeting functions and interviews have been held with managers of all functions except the restaurant. The reason for this is that the restaurant is an outside entrepreneur which was contacted for an interview but the study period ended before the interview could be held.

2 Method

This chapter presents the methodology of the study. Starting with stating the chosen research strategy, followed by how the literature study and empirical study were conducted. Furthermore the used method for data analysis is presented followed by a discussion on the trustworthiness of the study handled.

2.1 Research strategy

According to Bryman & Bell (2011) there are two major practices to choose from when conducting business research and they are quantitative or qualitative research. They differentiate through which role theory has in the study (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

How theory is handled in the study can be explained through the role theory has in the research. If theory comes before the empirical research and thereby guides it, the research has a deductive approach. If empirical research instead is the start and theory is the outcome the study has an inductive approach (Bryman & Bell, 2011). A third option is to have a systematic combining approach, or an abductive approach, which means an alternation between the theory and empirical research in order to reach the most suitable explanation or result (Dubois & Gadde, 2002).

Bryman & Bell (2011) states that quantitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes quantification in the analysis of data and that it often entails a deductive approach. It incorporates the practices and norms of the natural scientific model and embodies a view of social reality as an external, objective reality. Qualitative research on the other hand emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data and often uses an inductive, or abductive, approach (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). This approach rejects the practices and norms of the natural scientific model, emphasizing how individuals interpret their social world (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

Yin (1994) states that the case study strategy is usable when research questions of how and why are supposed to be answered. It can for example be used in the research of situations like city and regional planning, community psychology and sociology and also organizational and management studies. When the suitable research strategy is chosen the question comes to what kind of research design that is suitable for the study. As Yin (1994) states: “*a research design is an action plan for getting from here to there*”. Where here is seen as the set of questions that are to be answered from the start of the study and there is some set of conclusions.

The purpose of this study is to define experience quality and create a framework for QM in the Experience Industry. This purpose will be addressed through a single case study at Universeum AB. In order to obtain a well working solution an abductive approach in a qualitative research strategy has been chosen. The abductive approach has been chosen because it leads to the validation of the framework through alternating theoretical and empirical study. It also leads to a framework that is customized for the organization and takes into account specificities in their case. This approach gives a more validated end product but

might also contribute to difficulties defining where theory ends and empirical findings start. It leads to an importance of presenting findings in a clear way in order to eliminate possible misinterpretations. Further the qualitative research strategy is appropriate due to the deep knowledge that will be obtained regarding the specific case of Universeum.

Though the qualitative research strategy will possibly give a more focused opinion of the subject since the main part of the interviews are with managers. With a quantitative research strategy a larger sample could have been collected and possibly given a more general view. Still it was seen as the qualitative research strategy was the best option in this case in order to gain deep knowledge. The limited resources for the study and the time limit made it suitable to design the research as a case study in order to reach a suitable set of conclusions and a the creation of a framework for QM in the experience industry.

2.2 Literature study

In order to obtain knowledge about the subject the work started with an extensive literature study. Conducting a literature study also brings knowledge about where earlier research has ended and where new research should start. Bryman & Bell (2011) states that through a literature search the research justify the research questions and help to build the research design of the thesis. The literature study also guides the selection of what methods and frameworks to use in the thesis (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

In order to find appropriate theory for the thesis, Chalmers Library Databases has been used. Key words, in different orders, synonyms to and different constellations, used in the search were: *experience industry*, *quality of experiences*, *service quality*, *experience quality*, *customer experience*, *experience improvement*, *delivering experience*, *experience*, *experience economy*. In addition to the key words advices about appropriate researchers have been given by the supervisor of the thesis and the snowball process gives further guidance to other relevant research (Hennink et al., 2011). The literature studies are most closely linked to the first research question of this thesis, to understand what quality means for companies within the experience industry. But literature was also influencing the development of the framework that serves as the answer of the second research question, to develop a systematic way of working with quality in the experience business.

2.3 Empirical Study

In order to increase the validity and reliability of the study triangulation has been used in this study (Bryman & Bell, 2001). Triangulation is, according to Yin (1994), a way of developing converging lines of enquiry by multiple methods, and in this study interviews and focus groups, observations and documentation has been used in order to collect data, see Figure 1.

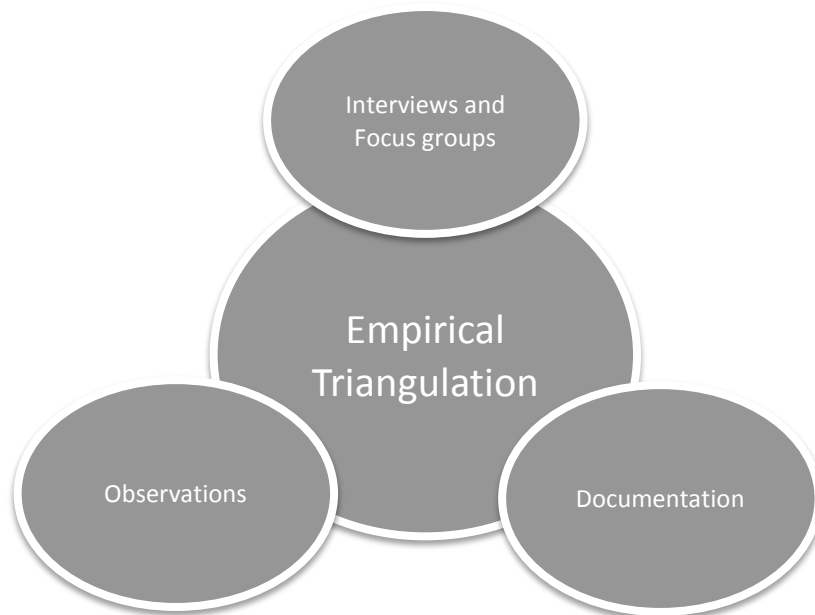


Figure 1. The Empirical triangulation of this study.

2.3.1 Interviews

Data collection through interviews is an appropriate method when conducting a qualitative research (Kvale, 1997; Williamson, 2002). There are three main types of interviews: structured, non-structured and semi-structured (Kvale, 1997). The technique to be chosen depends on the purpose of the interview and how much guidance the interviewee will have from the interviewer. In this study semi-structured interviews were conducted because the purpose was to gain a deep understanding about the organization but still keep the interview within the relevant areas. In order to give the interviewee the chance to prepare and give more thought through answers the interview questions were sent one day before the interview. However this can also lead to a more “prepared” answer in the sense that the interviewee has the chance to refresh its memory on some topics or talk to others and obtain their point of view instead of maybe answering spontaneously, which would possibly mean a slightly biased answer. According to Williamson (2002) the semi-structured technique gives a greater depth to the interview than the structured as the interviewee gets the chance to elaborate on its answers and the interviewer can ask follow up questions directly.

It is generally appropriate to record the semi-structured interviews since the answers are hard to predict and the follow-up questions often are not prepared (Williamson, 2002). Recording also has the benefit that the interview does not have to be interrupted to give clarifications which can be a problem when taking notes. It is also the complete answers that are recorded which decreases the chance of subjective interpretation by the interviewer. During all of the interviews in this study both notes and recording were done, the notes taken were thorough and no further transcriptions were done. In case of the need for clarification the recordings were used.

Interviews were conducted in this study with the managers of every function within the organization and the CEO, all together ten interviews. The functions are program, event, quality, business support, exhibitions, marketing, shop, finance, scientific management. Each interview took about one hour. In the interviews focus was on the offer, quality and improvement work at Universeum and an interview guide (See Appendix A) was created. The questions were asked in a consistent order with the difference that in the cases where the interviewee was a manager for a guest meeting function the focus were more on that function then Universeum as a whole. Extra follow-up questions were asked when needed. This gave an understanding of the current state in the organization regarding these topics and was used as an empirical base for the framework created, together with results from observations and documentation from study visits at quality departments of other organizations, which will be discussed further on in this chapter.

Further unstructured spontaneous talks with guides and educators took place when conducting observations of different tours and activities. These talks were not recorded and only notes were taken. In these cases the topic were decided on and questions asked when thought of. This provided a more natural discussion and made the guides and educators feel secure but it could also have been beneficial with more structured interviews with these employees in order to obtain more structured answers.

The answers are kept anonymous in the report and all of the interviewees were asked if follow-up for clarification when needed could be done through e-mail or telephone. This was possible in all cases but was not needed.

2.3.2 Focus Groups

This technique is used in order to develop an understanding of why people feel the way they do (Morgan, 1988). In interviews the interviewer tries to find out why the interviewee holds a specific opinion, in contrast to focus groups where the participants are allowed to find out the reasons from each other. Bryman & Bell (2011) states that an individual may answer in a certain way during a focus group, but as he or she listens to someone else's answer, they may want to modify a view. Alternatively they may want to voice agreement to something they would not have been thought of without the opportunity of hearing the views of others. These possibilities mean that focus groups may also be helpful in the elicitation of a wide variety of different views in relation to a particular issue (Bryman & Bell, 2011).

The focus group interview is preferably recorded in order to capture the different views. Since it is important for the researcher to know who says what, who acts as an opinion leader or if the opinions only comes from a couple of participants, this makes only taking notes not sufficient (Morgan, 1988). The authors also emphasizes that it is important to not only take notes on what is said but also how it is said, as with all qualitative research.

In this study a focus group were held with seven thirteen year old students, five boys and two girls. The focus group was held after they had been on a visit with educators at Universeum focusing the rainforest. All but one of the participants had been to the facility before. The structure of the activity was that one researcher was mainly responsible for asking questions

and facilitating a discussion between the participants. Another researcher took notes and the impressions were discussed directly after. The activity took all in all about thirty minutes.

2.3.2 Observations

In relation to interviews observation can give a more objective view on what is happening in the organization (Bell, 2000). While interviews capture opinions of the interviewees, observation captures specific events. Bell (2000) points out that observation can be difficult to conduct when it is hard for the observer to really know what is interesting to study from a scientific point of view. It is a good method to obtain an understanding about different behavior in the natural context (Yin, 1994). Bryman & Bell (2011) presents several different observation methods. Amongst these are the participant method and non-participant method. The difference can be seen in if the observer actively takes part in the event that is being studied.

Early during this study observations were made at Universeum. During these early observations the role of the observer alternated between being participant and non-participant. The nature of the facility makes it a bit complicated to be the one or the other for a longer period. Interaction with the facility was done simultaneously with observations of how customer and personnel acts in the facility. These early observations were made in order to get an overall view of how the facility was working and to get an understanding of the different areas the interviewees might handle in the interviews.

Later in the study more non-participant observations were made with the purpose to validate ideas and more specific study how customers behaved in certain areas of the facility. Also observations of guides and educators were carried out to study how they handled their everyday activities.

There were also observations done through study visits at Renova, Enköpings Lasarett and Liseberg. These companies were chosen by the supervisor at Universeum due their work with QM and continuous improvements. Their offers were also a factor since none of the companies deliver a pure good but services and experiences which correlates with the offer at Universeum.

2.3.3 Data analysis

The analysis of the qualitative data obtained from interviews has been along the lines suggested by Maxwell (2005). Coding has been the primary strategy but as the author (ibid.) emphasizes, reading and thinking about the collected data and analyzing narrative structure and contextual relationships are all important types of analysis. The coding conducted in this thesis was done after the ten interviews. The category used in the process of coding was, as Maxwell (2005) suggests, organizational.

Organizational categories, or topics, should be broad areas decided before the first set of interviews. In this thesis the topics are: Offer, Guest experience, Quality, Improvement and Future state. The next categories are of a substantive character. These have been developed

through inductive work during the interviews. The categories should be descriptive and include the interviewees own words and beliefs (Maxwell, 2005). The theoretical categories aim to put the data in a more general or abstract framework. These categories have been both based on existing theory and inductively developed theory.

2.4 Trustworthiness

Lincoln & Guba (1984) states that the basic issue connected to trustworthiness is regarding how a researcher can prove for his or her surrounding that the findings are worth paying attention to. In connection to this the authors' present four criteria that should be taken into account when conducting a study and these are internal validity, external validity, reliability and objectivity.

Internal validity

Lincoln & Guba (1984, p. 290) states that internal validity can be defined as: *"the extent to which variations in an outcome variable can be attributed to controlled variation in an independent variable."* According to Campbell & Stanley (1963) there are eight threats to the internal validity of a study: history, maturation, testing, instrumentation, statistical regression, differential selection, experimental mortality and selection-maturation. In order for a study to have internal validity these threats must be demised (Lincoln & Guba, 1984). In this study triangulation has been used in the empirical study in order to minimize the effect of the threats presented above and by doing so ensuring internal validity (Yin, 1994). In addition with this, two meetings have been held with the management group at Universeum in order for them to give their view and approval of the findings. This method of having the findings approved by the studied party increases the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985)

External validity

Cook & Campbell (1979, p.37) defines external validity as:

"the approximate validity with which we infer that the presumed causal relationship can be generalized to and across alternate measures of the cause and effect and across different types of persons, settings and times."

This can be achieved through using a randomized sampling from a defined population. Threats for the external validity are, according to LeCompte & Goetz (1982): selection effects, setting effects, history effects and construct effects. As external validity is regarding the generalizability of the study Yin (1994) states that it is a barrier when doing case studies. According to the author, critics' state that a single case offers a poor basis for generalizing, and leads to low external validity of the study. In a case study the sample is not randomized as it would be in a survey research. However, Yin (1994) argues, it is important to remember that in survey research there is a statistical generalization while in case studies there is analytical generalization. Meaning that in case studies the generalization is achieved through the researcher's strive to generalize a set of results to a broader theory through argumentation and thus achieve external validity (Yin, 2004). In this study the external validity has been achieved through study visits of other organizations that have implemented QM recently. This led to a possibility of analyzing the findings in this study to a more generalizable context.

Reliability

According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) reliability is a precondition for validity. They state that an unreliable measure cannot be valid and that through replication the reliability can be tested. Threats to the reliability is when care is not taken in the measurement or assessment process, by ambiguities of various sort, by too short assessments, by instrumental decay and many other factors (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Another researcher should reach the same findings and conclusions through having the same procedures and conducting the same case study as an earlier researcher (Yin, 1994). During this study a diary has been kept and activities have been thoroughly documented in order for the study to have a good reliability.

Objectivity

Lincoln & Guba (1985) states that objectivity can be seen to be present when several observers can agree on an observation. Their collective judgment is seen to remove the aspect of subjectivity. One threat to objectivity is when imperfect methodologies are used that leaves the observer the chance to angle what he/she sees in a way so that the result is an outcome of subjectivity. Another threat is if the study relies on data collected from a single observer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study observation has been conducted by both researchers and discussions of the findings have been held in order to minimize subjectivity.

3 Theoretical framework

In this chapter the theoretical basis of the study is presented. The theoretical framework works as a ground for the analysis, conclusions and recommendations presented further on. First general aspects of Quality and Quality Management (QM) are presented. After that a section about the Service Industry and the Experience Industry in which the company of this study acts is provided. Finally the theory of Attractive Quality is presented.

3.1 Quality

Quality has always been a factor when customers decide whether or not they should buy a product. The quality level is depending on the customers subjective evaluation of how well the product meets his or her expectations of it (Juran, 1951; Deming, 1986; Zeithaml et al., 1990). In today's society where the competition between companies is fierce, it is not enough to meet customers' expectations but companies need to exceed them in order to be the order winner (Zeithaml et al., 1990).

To be able to exceed customer expectations it has to be defined who the customer is. According to Zeithaml et al. (1990) the customers are those who the company wants to create value for. If there are different groups of customers, with different needs, prioritizations of who to satisfy have to be made.

The definitions of quality are often regarding quality as evaluated by the external customer. The expectation of the external customers is often hard to measure and concretize (Deming, 1986; Zeithaml et al., 1990). There are also internal customers, employees and processes, whereas processes have a more objective evaluation of quality, using specifications and absolute numbers. In the process quality, or the manufacturing based quality, the next process act as the customer of the previous. This type of quality is easy to connect to costs that occur because of poor quality, as visualized in Figure 2. If a product with bad quality reaches the customer, it probably results in a lost customer and in the long run possibly a decreased market share (Deming, 1986).

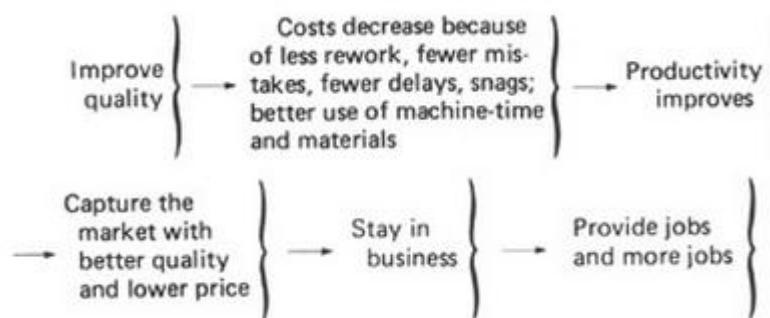


Figure 2. The impact of improved quality on organizations, by Deming (1986).

The measurability and possibility to control the manufacturing process, and meet specifications, are reasons why internal quality has been an area where a lot of research on quality has been done and a lot of different practices and tools have been developed to

improve this (Garvin, 1984). The flow diagram shown in Figure 3 is a commonly used way to identify processes and trace sources of errors. Historically, in the manufacturing industry focus has often been only at the process part, in Figure 3 labeled production, assembly and inspection. The process is within the company and easy to access. In later years the focus has broadened and become more holistic, covering the whole value chain, including suppliers, customers and potential intermediaries (Feigenbaum & Feigenbaum, 2005). Also the techniques of handling the process quality have changed from inspections of the final product to continuous controls along the value chain, this influences primarily comes from Japan and the Lean-methodology (Deming, 1986; Garvin 1984; Juran, 1994). Today quality has shifted from being technical specifications to an incorporated aspect of everyday management and a corporate mind-set. (Feigenbaum & Feigenbaum, 2005)

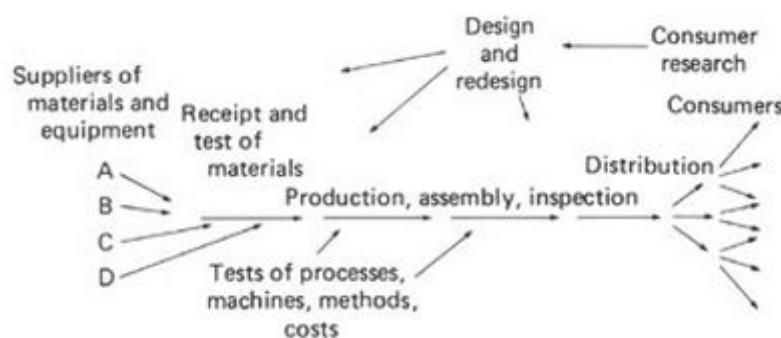


Figure 3. Flow chart diagram (Deming, 1986).

3.1.1 Quality dimensions

A product has a number of quality dimensions, these dimensions primarily concerns if the product meet the specifications and deliver what is promised, these are the dimensions that the work with process quality primary aims to improve. There are also other quality dimensions of a product as presented in Figure 4 (Garvin, 1984).

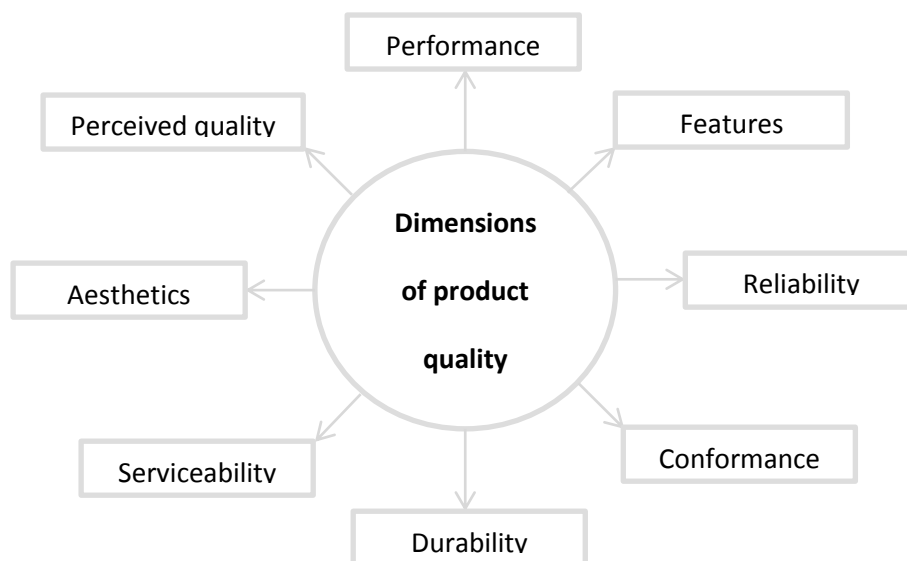


Figure 4. Model of quality dimensions of goods (Garvin, 1984).

Every dimension is contributing to the total perception of the quality of the product. The dimensions are described in the following.

Performance refers to the primary operating characteristics such as picture and sound for a television.

Features or add-ons are things that aim to make the product more attractive.

Reliability measures the probability that the product fails in a specified period of time.

Conformance is about how well the product meets the pre-established specifications.

Durability refers to the lifetime of the product.

Serviceability reflects how easy it is to repair a product and how time-consuming it is.

Aesthetics is what the product smell, feels or tastes like.

Perceived quality refers to the product's reputation and intangibles.

One product cannot be superior in all dimensions at the same time. Depending on what customer groups that is targeted for and their needs and priorities, effort is put on being extra good in some dimensions and only good enough in others (Garvin, 1984).

3.1.2 Market segmentation

When Smith (1956) studied the heterogeneity of the market needs he coined the expression market segmentation. Smith (1956) stated that by using segmentation, a heterogeneous market is broken down to several smaller, homogenous markets. These homogenous markets respond similar to what is offered and they have the same needs and wants. Depending on what segments that is supposed to be satisfied, the marketing and the offer should be adapted.

There are a couple of prerequisites or criteria that to some extent should be fulfilled in order to make the segmentation possible. There are six criteria that have been commonly accepted and most used: Identifiability, Substantiality, Accessibility, Responsiveness, Stability and Actionability (Frank, Massy & Wind, 1972; Baker, 1988; Kotler, 1988; Wedel & Kamakura, 2000). These criteria are described in the following.

Identifiability refers to the possibility to identify distinct groups.

Substantiality means that the segment has to be large enough to create profitability.

Accessibility is regarding the possibility to reach the segment through for example promotional channels is measured by the.

Responsiveness refers to the segments ability to respond similar to marketing targeted to them.

Stability is something the segment should have over time.

Actionability is connected to how easy the segment is to affect.

The segmentation is used by the organizations to be able to in detail meet the needs and wants e.g. deliver high quality to the customers that are most desirable. The offer cannot be adapted to suit all different segments, prioritizing has to be done and the needs of all segments is hard to satisfy (Wedel & Kamakura, 2000).

3.2 Quality management

The base of QM was created for about three decades ago when authors like W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, Philip Crosby and Kaoru Ishikawa developed their ideas on the subject regarding pure goods (Sousa & Voss, 2002). During the years that have followed the management philosophy has been more and more widely accepted and can today be found in all business sectors (Sousa & Voss, 2002).

Over the years the philosophy has had several definitions but one that has been widely accepted was made by Dean & Bowen (1994, p. 394 and p. 396). They define QM as:

“a philosophy or an approach to management” made up of a “set of mutually reinforcing principles, each of which is supported by a set of practices and techniques”.

One principle in QM is for example continuous improvement, which can be supported by for example process management, which is a practice that in turn can be supported by techniques like the Pareto diagram or statistical process control (Dean & Bowen, 1994).

Despite that different interpretations and definitions regarding QM, there are common denominators that can be identified throughout the literature. The most common being that top management support is needed for QM to work properly. Also to have a customer focus, a close relationship to your suppliers, high involvement of co-workers, a focus on attitudes and behavior in the organisation and a focus on processes is commonly noted (Saraph, 1989; Flynn et.al., 1995; Anderson et al., 1995; Powell, 1995; Ahire, 1996).

By using the practices supporting customer focus, organizations are able to improve all of its quality dimensions, for example ability to meet customer expectations and increase the reliability (Sousa & Voss, 2002). Lengick - Hall (1996) proposes that through the implementation of QM practices, which is supporting the management of customer resources, together with the improvement of the quality of the customer resources, organizations will see positive consequences on its processes and the specific outcome.

Lengick – Hall (1996) identifies two pitfalls when implementing QM practices that need to be avoided. One is that through the selection of customer resources, in other words segmentation, the organization risk to have negative publicity from the non-selected segments when their needs are not as prioritized. The other pitfall might be the difficulty of reducing variation. Through reaching a more uniform process where the same quality is delivered every time it becomes easier to improve the quality. For organizations with high variation in their offer this

becomes important since too much control might also affect the quality of the service negatively (Lengick - Hall, 1996).

3.2.1 Knowledge creation

Several quality gurus have pointed at the importance of the combination of quality management and knowledge creation (Linderman et al., 2004). Deming (1986) created the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) –cycle which he later modified to be Plan-Do-Study-Act in order to emphasize the importance of learning, or knowledge creation, when working with QM.

In order to gain insights on how QM leads to improved performance, Linderman et al. (2004), propose that the practices of QM should be integrated with knowledge creation. The authors state that the activities needed in order to improve the quality of an organization have to handle the creation of new knowledge. If new knowledge is not created there is the risk of stagnation regardless of how hard you try to improve your organization (Linderman et al., 2004).

There is broadly speaking two types of knowledge, tacit and explicit. Explicit is the knowledge that a person can communicate, which can also be referred to as codified knowledge. But this is only a small part of the total knowledge a person withholds, the tacit knowledge is hard to communicate and is rooted in action, commitment and involvement (Nonaka, 1994). The transformation between tacit and explicit knowledge is of great importance in order to develop new knowledge on an individual plane or in an organization. Nonaka (1994), states that there are four different “modes” of knowledge transfer, see Figure 5.

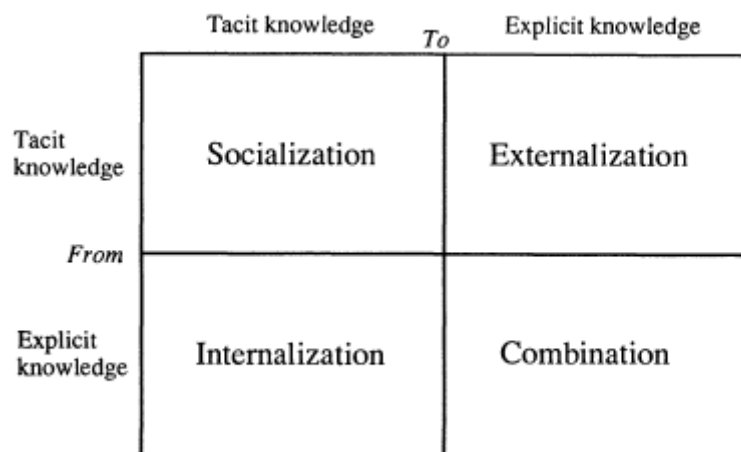


Figure 5. Knowledge transformation (Nonaka, 1994).

The tacit to tacit transfer of knowledge often takes place between individuals. This mode is not dependent on communication but rather through experience when observing a mentor or instructor, this way of knowledge creation is called *socialization*.

The mode of creating new explicit knowledge from existing explicit knowledge is known as *combination*. It can be achieved through the reconfiguration of existing explicit knowledge, for example through sorting, adding, re-categorizing or re-contextualization which can lead to new knowledge. An example of this that Nonaka (1994) presents, is the implementation or development of computer systems. They often demands that the organization goes through its existing documents and other explicit knowledge, which might lead to the creation of new knowledge.

Internalization and *externalization* relate to the transformation of tacit to explicit knowledge and vice versa. They represent that tacit and explicit knowledge both can be created through some kind of interaction, for example conversations. Internalization, creation of explicit from tacit knowledge, can be identified as what is traditionally seen as learning. Through each conversation, knowledge is transferred from an individual level to an organizational level (Nonaka, 1994).

Linderman et al. (2004) presents examples of the relationship between QM and the knowledge dimensions. When creating customer satisfaction the interaction between the service provider and the customer are central, for example showing a customer how to perform a task is a Socialization activity. Gathering and analyzing data about customer needs includes Internalization and Combination.

Regarding continuous improvements, co-workers are learning and improving by watching each other perform, Socialization is taking place. When ideas of improvements are articulated and communicated it is a question of Externalization.

In a system view, when stated vision, goals and strategies from the organization is transformed into actions in the daily work it is a result of Internalization.

Linderman et al. (2004) argues that the fundamental objectives of knowledge creation and QM are the same, namely to create organizational knowledge so that improvement can occur. Through their research Linderman et al. (2004) has reached the conclusion that the practices of QM should be incorporated with knowledge creation processes in order to improve company performance.

3.2.2 Models of Quality Management

QM is a philosophy that is built on principles, practices and techniques. There are three principles, customer focus, continuous improvements and teamwork. Each principle contains several practices and the techniques are supporting the practices in order make them effective. For example customer focus, the principle is to provide products and services that fulfill

customer needs. One practice that supports this principle is collecting information about customer needs which in its turn is supported by the technique customer survey. Customer focus is the most important principle, the other two principles is closely related to and do also aim to create customer satisfaction (Dean & Bowen, 1994).

Bergman and Klefsjö (1994) present a model they call the Total Quality Management (TQM) Cornerstone Model with focus on customer as the most important element, see Figure 6.

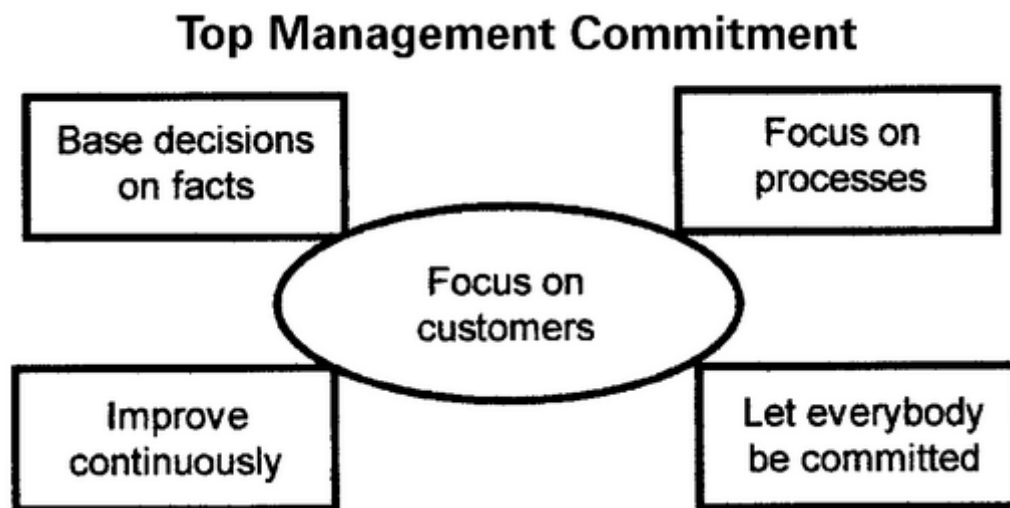


Figure 6. TQM Cornerstone model (Bergman & Klefsjö, 1994)

The cornerstone contains additional elements compared to the suggestion by Dean and Bowen (1994). The added elements are base decisions on facts, focus on customers and top management commitment. Teamwork has been renamed to let everybody be committed.

The TQM-tree

Lilja (2010) have made research on experience quality and have had TQM as a central area within his research. Lilja (2010) aims with his TQM-tree, see Figure 7, to make TQM more understandable and applicable for the experience industry. The author re-classifies and re-relates the elements of TQM from literature in order to get a deeper understanding of their correlation and influence. This model illustrates the social network of a complete organization with different levels of drivers, enablers and actions that should be taken into regard when aiming to achieve a systematic focus on, and continuously improving the customer value (Lilja, 2010).

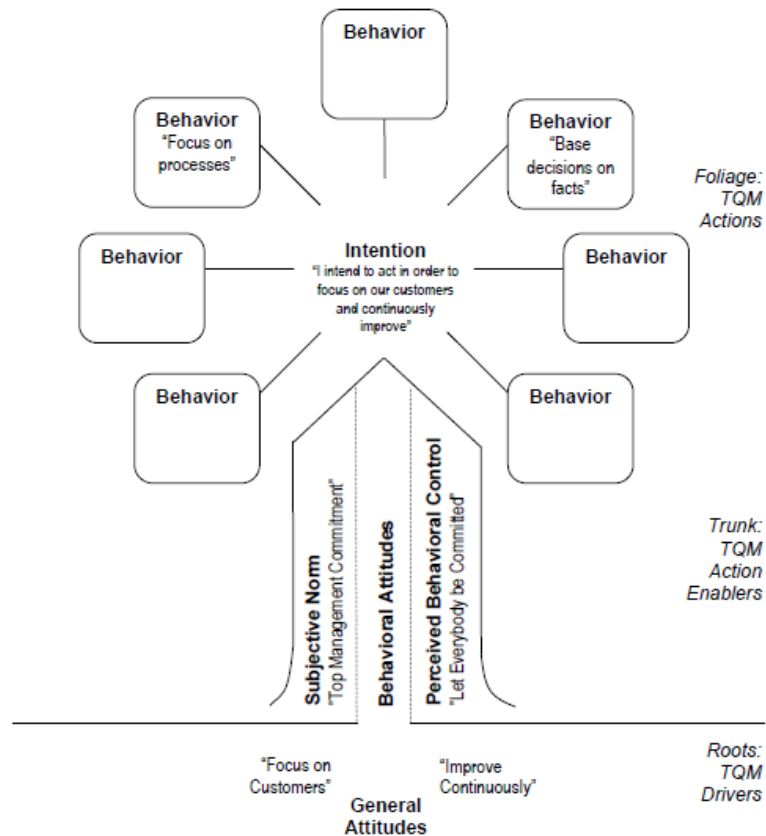


Figure 7. The TQM-tree (Lilja, 2010).

Focus on customers and **Improve continuously** are presented as drivers, meaning that they drive the attitudes within the organization towards the three action enablers **Subjective norm**, **Behavioral attitudes** and **Perceived behavioral control**. These enablers work as the stem upon which the crown of the TQM system or organization rests. In the crown the actions of behavior are presented, with emphasis on the elements of **Base decisions on fact** and **Focus on processes**.

Value - based service quality

IKEA argue that they offer more than a product and state that they offer an experience. They are using a value based service quality model created by Edvardsson et al. (2007). The model in Figure 8, is created by Edvardsson et al., (2007) in order to visualize and explain the value-based service quality for IKEA. Five dimensions of sustainable business is identified and connected to four service quality elements through four values stated by the organization itself. This model is derived from studies of the logic of value creation and logic of values earlier presented in Edvardsson & Enquist (2002; 2006). The model consists of not only functional and technical aspects that creates service quality but also the experience of the service and the corporate climate, which contributes to the total service quality.

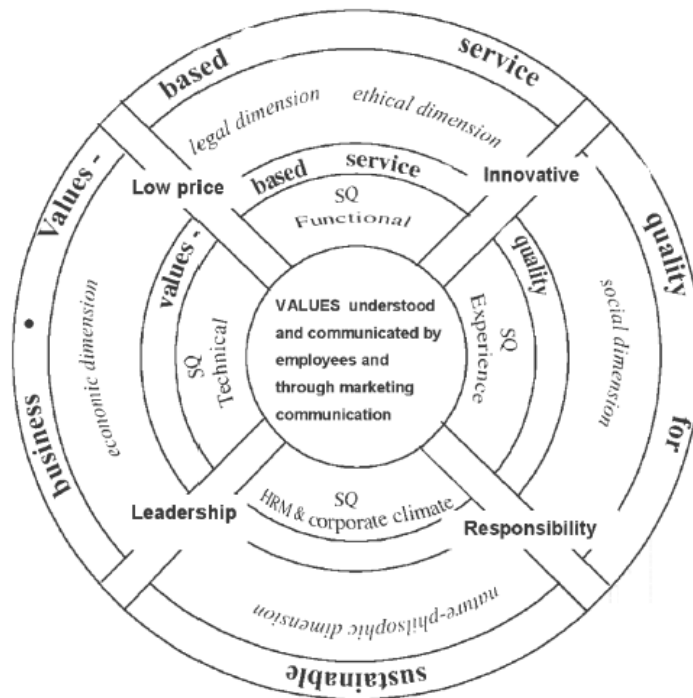


Figure 8. Value-based service quality for sustainable business (Edvardsson et al., 2007).

This model aims to create value-based service quality businesses through a combination of the logic of value creation together with the logic of values (Edvardsson et al., 2007). It is stated that if a company matches its values with the values of its customer, resonance will occur and create value. While on the other hand dissonance will develop if the values are not matched, which may lead to destroyed value.

3.3 Service Industry

Services are an increasing part of most countries' economies, the economy has transformed from a manufacturing economy to a service economy (Grönroos, 1988). This comes not only from the fact that there are more restaurants, hotels and banks, in addition many traditional production companies transform into service companies (Grönroos, 1988; Bergman & Klefsjö 2010). The services are seen as increasing the value of the product offered by the company. Nowadays, the main competitive advantage is no longer the skill of offering a unique high quality product, but to offer a holistic solution that creates value for the customer (Matthyssens et al., 2006; Kowalkowski et al., 2009).

When moving from a product based offering to a service based offering the company moves from a transactional based customer relationship to a relational based customer relationship (Grönroos, 1988). The offer also goes from an incomplete offering to a complete offering that creates value for the customer (Penttinen & Palmer, 2007). This movement has changed the view of the value offered by the companies. It has moved from the traditional product-based value, through service-based value to relationship-based value. The relationship-based value depends a lot of how well the relationship between the customer and the company is maintained (Kindström et al., 2012).

Grönroos (1988) argues for the importance of improving the “Service Know-how” within the company in order to cope with the competition. There are three ways to improve the service impact of the customer relation:

Developing new services, which is useful in order to differentiate from competitors.

Activating existing services, this is not often seen as a strategic move but is important and may be a key in the holistic offer. Such services could be telephone reception service, delivery and claims handling.

Turning the goods into service elements, which means to be able to adopt and in a flexible way be able to offer a tailor-made solution for each customer, for example if a restaurant customer wants a steak with extra spices, it can be offered to him. (Grönroos, 1988)

3.3.1 Distinction between Services and goods

There are distinctions between services and goods that should be highlighted. A common definition of a service is the so-called IHIP (Intangible, Heterogeneity, Inseparability and Perishability) characteristics (Edgett & Parkinson, 1993; Zeithaml et al., 1985). The characteristic that often is seen as the most typical for a service, compared to goods is that it is **intangible**, it is not palpable (Zeithaml et al., 1985) and the customer does not become the owner of anything (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010). The next characteristic is **heterogeneity**, which makes it hard to standardize a service (Edgett & Parkinson, 1993). It depends on that the performance often differs from different producers, customers and from time to time (Zeithaml et al., 1985). The third characteristic is **inseparability**, the service is consumed in conjunction with the creation of it and the customer often plays an active role in the service creation (Edgett & Parkinson, 1993). The last main characteristic concerns the fact that a service is impossible to store or transport, it is called **perishability** (Kotler, 1994). As a result of these characteristics it is hard to test the quality of the services before the purchase (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010). Despite the differences between services and goods, most of the tools and methodologies used to improve quality are valuable independent of whether it is applied on a service or a product (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010).

3.3.2 Service Quality

Edvardsson (1988) presents a list of propositions about how to develop and improve service quality, in this list both employees and management have a central role but there are also other areas that are highlighted. Besides employees and management Edvardsson (1988) argues about the importance of the focus and understanding of the customer, both spoken and unspoken needs have to be identified and satisfied. Further it is important to communicate a distinct picture of what the customer can expect from the service in order to avoid customer expectations that is impossible to meet. Other areas included in the list are the focus on processes and process owners, systematic measuring of service quality for owners, employees

and customers. The importance of rewarding improvements to maintain motivation for further work with continuous improvements is also emphasized.

Customer perception

According to Edvardsson (1998), it is what the customer perceives that defines the extent of the service that has been delivered. It is the customer that makes the judgment whether the service is satisfying or not, i.e. if the quality of the service is good or not. This judgment can differ between different customers even though they perceive the same service depending on what values and expectations they have.

Grönroos (1982) labels the result of the service, the outcome, technical quality. A common denominator for the service industry is that the companies do not offer a service, they offer prerequisites for a customer process to take place, and in this customer process the customer is present as a co-producer and creates the outcome of the service. This process Grönroos (1982) calls the functional quality; it is depending on several dimensions, such as Reliability and Assurance. In Grönroos's (1982) model he adds a third component, the image. If an outstanding product or company image exists, the customer could often excuse minor quality problems. These three components contribute to a total service quality perception and customer satisfaction. Figure 9 illustrates the whole model.

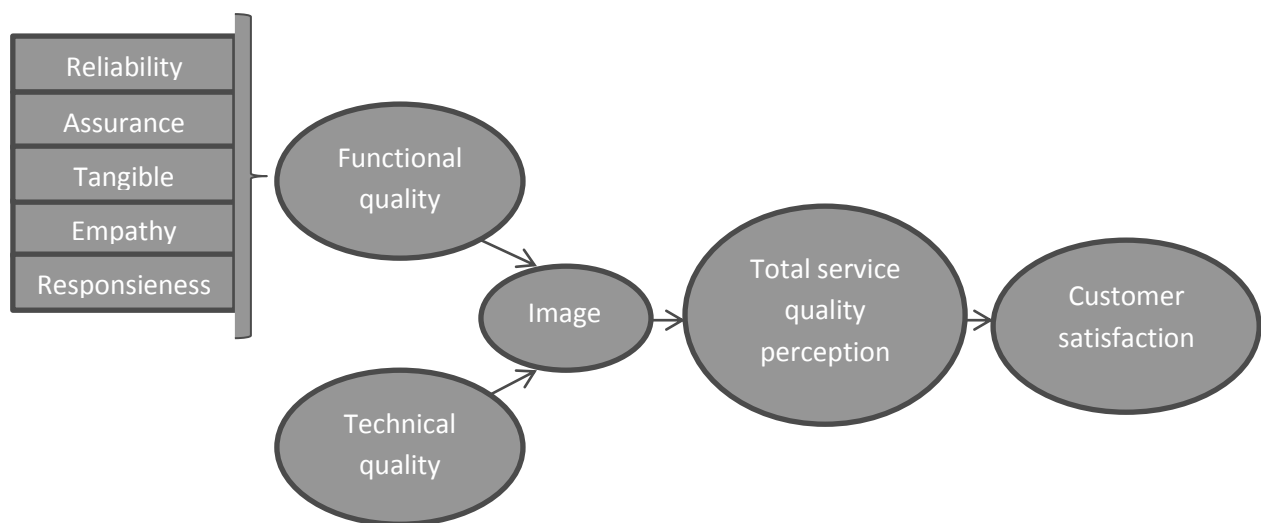


Figure 9. Model of service quality Grönroos (1982)

In order to create a good total customer perception, an understanding of the quality dimensions and what dimensions that affect the quality most is necessary. Different authors have different ideas about what quality dimensions that exist and what dimensions that is most important for services. Several studies (Lewis & Entwistle, 1990; Zeithaml et al., 1990; Thomasson, 1993) argue that the most important quality factor is trust/dependability. Other important factors are availability (Thomasson, 1993) and recovery, the ability to handle critical situations (Grönroos, 1990). In order to improve the trust/reliability factor the service companies' employees and the service providers plays an important role. If the customer gets

the impression of a service provider that is competent and have a great knowledge combined with a willingness to serve, it generates trust (Edvardsson, 1988).

The same reasoning as in the earlier paragraph is seen when Bergman & Klefsjö (2010) presents a model, see Figure 10, of their opinion about what quality dimensions that are important. They argue that most of the service quality dimensions relates to the customer's confidence to the person performing the service, such as reliability, credibility and courtesy.



Figure 10. Quality dimensions of services by Bergman & Klefsjö (2010) interpreted from Garvin (1984)

Every dimension is contributing to the total perception of the quality of the service. The dimensions are described in the following.

Reliability refers to that the service is completed and fulfills the set requirements.

Credibility is regarding factors as trustworthiness and honesty.

Access is about how easy it is to get in contact with the service provider, for example opening hours and location.

Communication refers to the information provided by the company about the service.

Responsiveness handles the willingness of the company to help its customers and providing help fast.

Courtesy refers to the service personnel's professionalism acting with respect and politeness.

Empathy is about the how much the company cares and gives individualized attention, creating a feeling of being special.

Tangibles refer to the appearance of physical surroundings such as facilities and equipment. (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010)

SERVQUAL

As mentioned above, there are also other views of what dimensions that are included in service quality. According to Zeithaml et al. (1990) who developed a method for measuring service quality, SERVQUAL, the dimensions should be Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, Empathy and Tangibles. They conducted a study of which one that is the most important dimension; the study showed that Reliability was the most important followed by responsiveness as the second most important.

Buttle (1996) criticize the universality of the five dimensions in SERVQUAL. Further he points to the lack of quantitative validity of the method. Despite the criticism, SERVQUAL is widely used in the service sector (Nyeck et al., 2002).

There are also other drivers than the dimensions in SERVQUAL that affect the customer's judgment about the quality. Such as earlier experience, what they have heard about the service from others, price and so on. These drivers together create an expectation of the service. The expectations together with the experience of the business, affects the customer in his judgment (Zeithaml et al., 1990). SERVQUAL can help organization when aiming to bridging the gap between expected and perceived service (Zeithaml et al., 1990)

Grigoroudis (2008) presents "Service quality gaps", meaning the difference between a customer's expectations of a service and the actual service delivered by an organization. This idea is the center of the SERVQUAL model.

When identifying the aspects of a customer experience that brings satisfaction it is important to be aware of the possible pitfalls that can bring dissatisfaction and have these in mind when designing and delivering your service. There are five distinct gaps between the customers' expectations and experiences that have a negative effect on their satisfaction (Grigoroudis, 2008). These can on their own, or together, lead to a dissatisfied customer:

1. *Promotional Gap*: When the expectations created in the mind of the customer from pure marketing communications are not met.
2. *Understanding Gap*: When the managers of an organization do not understand their customer needs correctly and prioritize wrong when designing their service.
3. *Procedural Gap*: When the customer expectations are translated into procedures and systems that are not correct.

4. *Behavioral Gap*: When there is a difference between the customer expectations and organizational performance, especially if procedures not are performing according to the service delivery requirements.

5. *Perception Gap*: When the subjective perception of the organizational performance differs from reality.

3.3.2 Customer relations

As mentioned earlier, service quality depends a lot on the relationship between the customer and the service provider. Trust could take a long time to build and is often related to a specific person rather than the company. When the trust is built it is important to care about the relationship between customer and service provider (Thomasson, 1993). Lilja et al. (2012) strengthen the importance of service minded employees by referring to a survey conducted at Disney. The survey showed that 68 percent of the customers that did not return felt that they had met employees with bad attitude. Grönroos (1988) presents five rules to improve the customer relations.

Rule number one is a **general approach**, when a service is performed it includes the customer and the service personnel. Then it is important that the service personnel has a service-oriented approach and gives the customer the help and advice he needs when he needs it. These actions strengthen the relationship between the customer and the service provider.

Rule number two is about **demand analysis**, the person who delivers the service is the one that can notice changes in the customer demand and has to have the competence to analyze these changes. The demand can be estimated in advance but not always accurate enough.

Rule number three refers to **Quality control**. In service business the provider of the service has to control the quality of the service on his own at the time the service is delivered. It is not as in the manufacturing industry where you often have a chance to correct things later, if the service does not have the right quality immediately the damage is already done.

Rule number four is regarding **marketing**, when a service is performed there is an interaction between the service provider and the customer. At this point it is necessary that the provider of the service is a marketer for the service. This does not mean that a strong selling approach always is required, most important is instead to deliver a skillful service without any delay which then generates trust from the customer.

Rule number five is about **organizational support**, it is important that the contact persons feel that they are supported by the managers. They have to feel that what they do is important and that they get the right tools to provide a good service.

These rules show that the traditional way of handling demand analysis, quality control and marketing, especially in the service industry is no longer accurate. Instead of having functions

within the company handling for example marketing exclusively, this responsibility has to a great extent moved to be the service-providing personnels' responsibility. To handle this increased responsibility requires a service know-how and education both by the service providing personnel and the management. The management also has to understand the importance and role of the personnel that performs the service (Grönroos, 1988). Edvardsson (1988) argues about the importance of competent and service-minded personnel, but also emphasizes the importance of that the employees have the authority and resources needed to deliver a good service.

To get the employees to understand this service know-how, it requires not only education but also a business culture where common values are imprinted in the mind of every employee (Schein, 2004). It is important already in the recruitment process that the focus is not only on knowledge and experience but also on values and beliefs of the person that is hired. Then socialization in forms of teamwork and problem solving can later be used to form the employees (Schein, 2004). Management affects the values of the employees, not least depending on how they allocate the resources, what they pay attention to and what is rewarded (Schein, 2004). Included in the process of imprinting values, top management have to allocate responsibilities among the employees to get them committed. Top management has to place quality in the center of the organization and integrate it with economy as the most important areas to control and improve (Edvardsson, 1988).

3.3.4 Value co-creation

In the business of goods and services a new concept emerging is the Service – dominant logic (Edvardsson, 2011). This is based on the notion that the exchange between consumer and supplier is not only bound by the transaction, but more in a value-in-context (Vargo & Lusch 2008) where the consumer co-creates the value after and before the transaction. Vargo (2008) states that there are two types of resources in the co-creation of value between provider and consumer, the resources that are static in nature, often raw materials of physical products, namely the operand resources and then the operant resources that are typically human e.g. the skills and knowledge of consumers and employees. Vargo & Lusch (2004) argues that competitive advantage is mostly gained from the operant resources where knowledge and skills lie. Grönroos (2011) states that in order for the co-creation of value between customers and providers there is a need for interaction between them. Without the interaction there is no co-creation, see Figure 11.

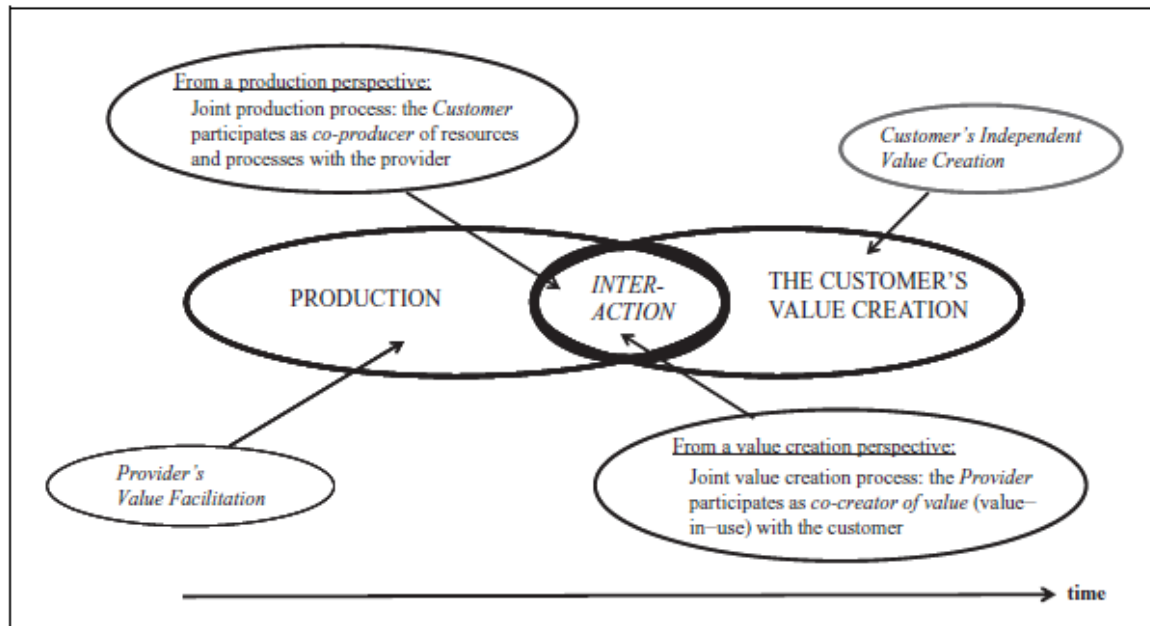


Figure 11. Value co-creation between producer and customer (Grönroos, 2011).

The model on value co-creation (figure 11) is created with the perspectives both of the customer and the provider of a good, service or experience. The value facilitation takes place on the providers side before the transaction and also individually from the customer perspective after the transaction. Grönroos (2011) further emphasizes that the model is more linear in theory than the real situation in practice.

3.4 Experience Industry

The experience business has developed and increased significantly since the middle of the 1900s. According to Pine & Gilmore (1999), Walt Disney is said to be the man who started this development. The first steps were the development with better audio and video in his movies but the real milestone was when he opened Disneyland 1955 in California. This was a theme park and not only an amusement park, people that visited the park was seen as guests, not customers. The employees were seen as cast members and had the main purpose to serve the guests at any cost and give them memorable experiences (Capodagli, 2007). Pine & Gilmore (1999) describes the phenomena of the Experience Industry by clarifying that experiences has been something that earlier was achieved by ourselves, but is now something we have started to pay companies to stage for us.

Experiences have traditionally been seen as a service when it comes to the concept capturing it as an economic offering when it in fact is a new type of economic offering (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999; Voss, 2004; Sundbo, 2004; Poulsson & Kale 2004; Lilja et al, 2010). In “The Experience Economy” Pine & Gilmore (1999, p. 97) states that:

“... experiences are a fourth economic offering, as distinct from services are from goods, but one that has until now gone largely unrecognized.”

Lilja et al (2010) state that the commercial experience is predicted to be the foundation of future economic growth. In order to understand the potential of an experience as an offering it is important to understand what makes it different from the other business offerings. Pine & Gilmore (1999) describes this difference by stating that commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible and experiences are memorable. This distinction from the other offerings is further empowered by the research conducted by Poulsson & Kale (2004) where they after interviewing ten managers from companies that offer commercial experiences state that the distinctive characteristic for experiences is that they are memorable. Lilja et al (2010) argues that the fact that experiences create memories contributes to the possibility of them creating high customer value.

From an economic point of view, customer are willing to pay more for an experience than for a service, in the same way that they are willing to pay more for a product if a service is included in the offer (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). A practical example provided by Pine & Gilmore (1999) of this is a cup of coffee, see Figure 12. The coffee producer's cup of coffee has a price of around 1,50 cents, when a customer buys coffee from the grocery store the same cup costs around 10 cents. If a cup of coffee, made from the same coffee beans is bought from a take away coffee shop the customer has to pay about 50 cents. The change in price from 1,50 to 50 cents is explained by a processing of the product, packaging and finally including a service. This explanation does not motivate how customers are willing to pay 5 dollar for their coffee if they order it in a five-star restaurant. The explanation to this is that the customer pays for an experience (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

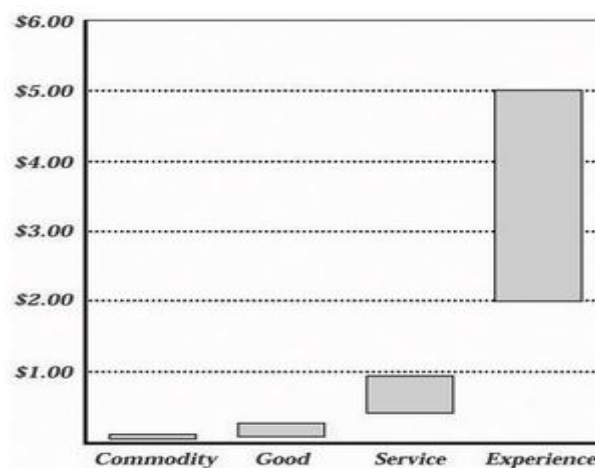


Figure 12. The difference in cost between different offerings of the same product (Pine & Gilmore, 1999).

3.4.1 Four types of experience

An experience can have many different meanings and presented below are four types. These are: *Commercial experience*, *Consumer experience*, *Learning through experience* and finally

Consumption experience. The different experiences have different characteristics and in Table 1 their relation to the different aspects of an experience is outlined.

Table 1. Overview of the characteristics and importance in different stages of experiences.

	Commercial experience	Consumer experience	Learning through experience	Consumption experience
General characteristics	Creating memories through strong engagement – negative or positive	A memorable event the consumer is willing to pay for	Past and present experiences have a central role in the learning process.	What affects an experience of a consumption situation before, during and after.
Importance of entry knowledge	Medium	Low	Low	High
Level of subjectivity	High	High	High	High
Importance of feedback	High	High	High	High

Commercial experience – creating memories

The importance, or coercion, of a commercial experience being memorable in order to create customer value leads to the importance of knowing what creates memories. The strongest reason to a vivid and persistent memory is a strongly emotional event (Christiansson, 1992). The creation of such emotional events can be derived to two different dominant and independent factors (Watson & Clark, 1997). The factors can be described as pleasantness and activation and the level of positive or negative affect deriving from them. Watson & Clark (1997) illustrates that both the negative and positive factors can create a memorable event by being strong enough. The degree of the pleasantness or unpleasantness in combination with the experienced engagement in the event will create the level of vividness and persistence of the memory. See Figure 13 for a clarification of the relationship between the factors. The authors state that strong engagement drives both the negative and positive affect of the event.

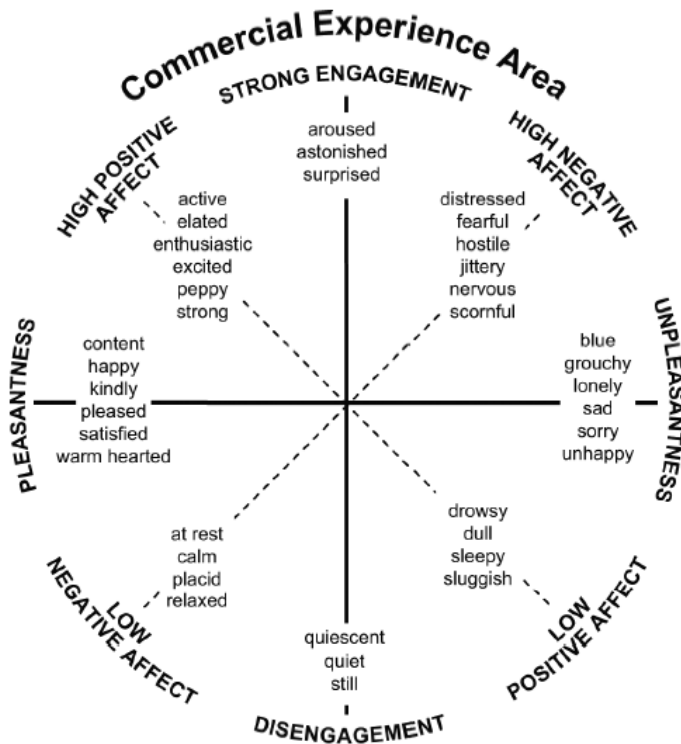


Figure 13. The commercial experience area (Watson & Clark, 1997).

Another strong contributor for a memorable event is the element of surprise (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). This is correlated with the expectations the individual has on the event and on whether or not it has been experienced before (Lilja et al, 2010). A strong memory is often created when something new is experienced which leads to the importance for companies in the Experience Industry to keep developing their offer. Pine & Gilmore (1999, p. 95) state that:

“Actually, experience stagers must constantly refresh their experiences – change or add elements that keep the offering new, exciting, and worth paying money to experience all over again.”

Another area in which novelty is important is learning (Lilja et al, 2010). With achieving something above or on the side of expectations and future experience it is a bigger chance to induce learning.

Consumer experience

Poulsson & Kale (2004, p. 270) proposes an operational definition of a consumer experience:

“Commercial experience is an engaging act of co-creation between a provider and a consumer wherein the consumer perceives value in the encounter and in the subsequent memory of that encounter.”

Lilja et al. (2010) criticizes the formulation and clarity of this definition. The authors (ibid.) means that it does not state the fact that the experience is something the customer is willing to pay for and that it seems to suggest that it is only one provider is misleading in many cases. In

order to clarify on these aspects Lilja et al. (2010, p. 270) rephrasethe operational definition for a consumer experience as:

“A memorable event that the customer is willing to pay for.”

The experience should be memorable, meaning it should deliver strong emotional engagement in one way or another and it should be something the customer is willing to pay for, see figure 14 (Lilja et al., 2010).

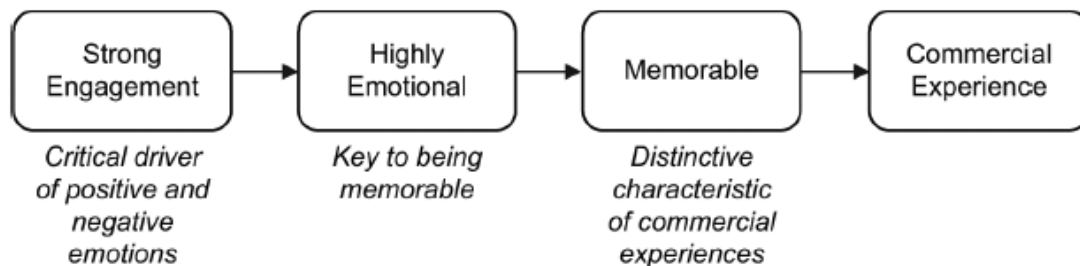


Figure 14. The creation of a commercial experience (Lilja et al., 2010).

Learning through experience

Experiences has for a long time been seen to give man something he cannot obtain in any other way (Koralek, 2010). The theory of Learning through experience, or Experiential learning as it is often labeled as, offers a different view on learning process compared to the behavioral theories of learning. These are based on an empirical epistemology or the more implicit theories of traditional educational methods (Kolb, 1984). It differentiates through that the experience is seen to have a central role of the learning process instead of in cognitive theories where the emphasis is on acquisition, manipulation, recall of abstract symbols or from behavioral theories who deny any role of subjective experience in the learning process (Kolb, 1984). It is stated by Kolb (1984, p. 29) that:

“The fact that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience has important educational implications. Put simply, it implies that all learning is relearning.”

With this Kolb (ibid.) means that no matter what topic or field that someone is exploring the learning process will be affected by past experience of that topic or field. Kolb (1984) continues to state that in all theories of learning through experience one central notion is the continuous and looping nature of learning. One model of this is presented in Figure 15.

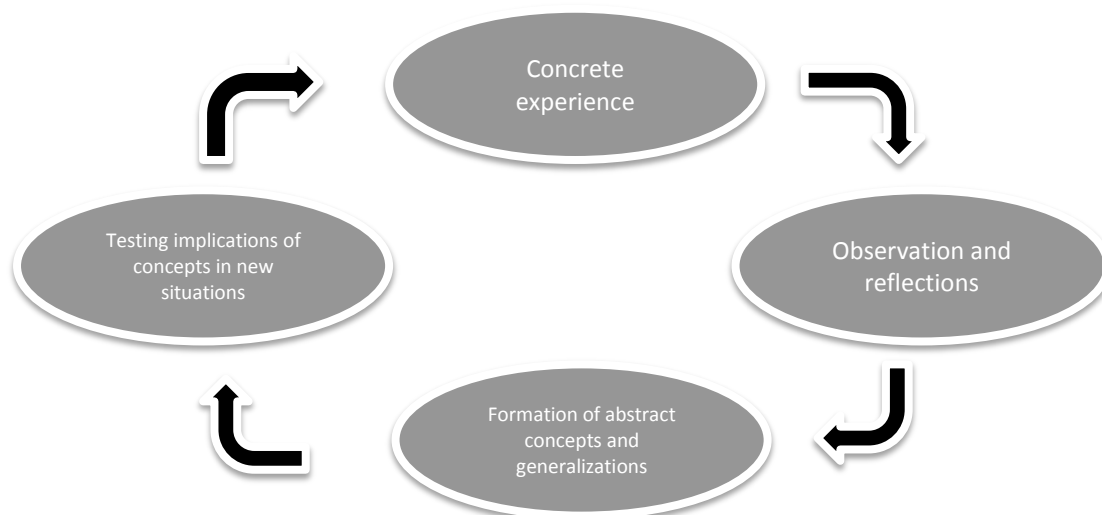


Figure 15. The lewinian model of Experiential learning through Kolb (1984).

The model above represents a four-stage cycle that is the ground for e.g. learning and change. It is seen to begin with an experience that is followed by observations and reflections about that experience. After that the data should be analyzed in order to create knowledge and theories that are then the basis on which new experiences can be formed (Kolb, 1984). Emphasis is put on that the personal experience is used to validate and test abstract concepts and that it is the focal point for learning, giving life, texture and meaning to abstract concepts (Kolb, 1984). According to Kolb (1984) the feedback of the information in this model is pivotal also in organizations as there is a lack of feedback processes. This creates obstacles for reaching desired goals for individuals and organizations.

The steps of consumption experience

According to Arnould et al. (2002) the consumption experience can be divided in to four major steps that are spread over a period of time. These steps are:

The pre-consumption experience, which means the building up of the expectations of the experience, meaning the searching for, planning of, day-dreaming about, foreseeing and imagining the experience.

The purchase experience, the choice, payment, packaging, the encounter with the service and the environment

The core consumption experience, the sensation, level of fulfillment, satisfaction, irritation, flow, transformation

The remembered consumption experience, how the memories will be and how an experience will be communicated to friends

This indicates the many levels a business must be taken into consideration when designing their experience (Caru & Cova, 2003). Csikszentmihalyi (1997) provides a model (see Figure 16), of several sub-categories that affect consumption experiences and how they correlate

with the skillset and perceived challenge for different people experiencing the same thing. The Flow category is the optimal experience and is the result when the consumer has a high skill within the experience area and the experience is challenging the consumer at that high level.

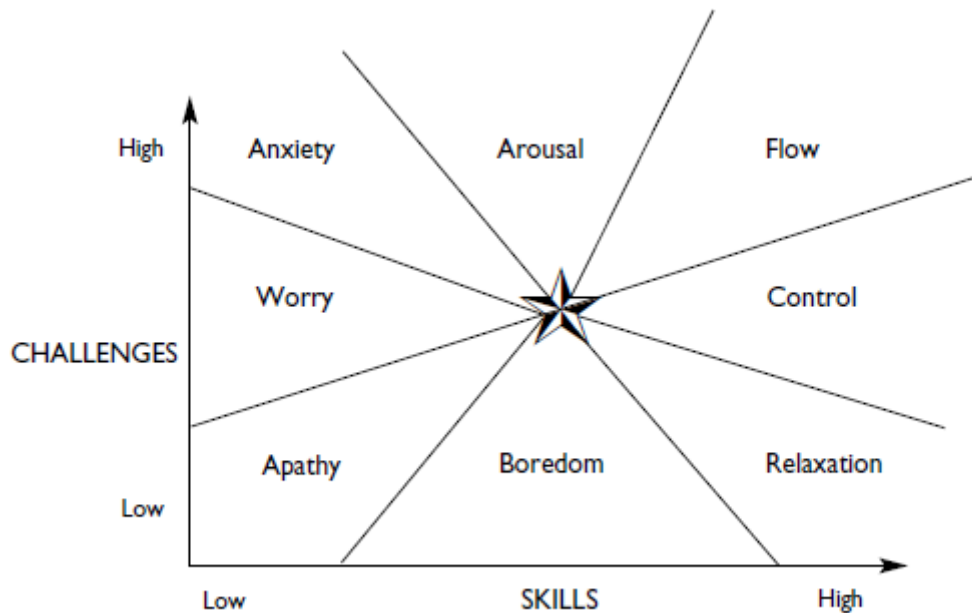


Figure 16. Csikszentmihalyi's (1997) model of experience levels.

Depending on the level of the challenges that is offered and the skills of the consumer, different experiences that can occur (Csikszentmihalyi, 1997). Everyone will not have the same experience and not everyone will land in the flow experience where both the challenge and skills are at their highest. Despite that not everyone will have a flow experience it is important to identify these consumers who do since they will represent peak experiences or extraordinary experiences. For a company in the Experience Industry the goal should be to achieve a flow experience for all of its consumers (Caru & Cova, 2003).

3.5 Attractive quality of experiences

It is five times more expensive to attract a new customer than to keep an old one (Capodagli, 2007), but still companies have problems keeping their customers and have to attract new ones instead. According to Capodagli (2007) it depends on the lack of customer focus and limited ability to delight customers. A lot of companies say that they have a strong customer focus but when their behavior is studied it is shown that many companies see their customers more as a necessary evil (Capodagli, 2007).

Walt Disney said that if you know your customers and treat them honestly and with respect, they will come back (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). In the meeting with the guests, the staff at Disney has learned to treat them as if they were guests in their own living room. In order to get experience of customer meetings and to get an understanding of the experience that the

guests gets in the theme park, every new employee have to dress up and act as Mickey Mouse for a half-day (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). By doing that, also the staffs who do not usually meet guests gets a clue of what the company's core values means. Companies in general that work within the service or experience industry have their least educated and least trained staff as primary customer meeting despite the importance of competence at these positions (Capodagli, 2007).

As the view of quality have shifted, moving from goods to services and services to experiences, the management of quality in the experience industry has been forced to shift as well. In the past it was enough to satisfy the customer; today there is a need to delight them (Chandler, 1989; Schlossberg, 1990; Deming, 2000). This has led to a search for identifying and labeling the different attributes that might provide the customers with an experience exceeding their expectations, thus leading to delightfulness, increased sales, loyal customers and a competitive edge (Kondo, 2000).

The Kano model and the related Kano survey can be used for creating a better understanding of different customer needs. It can be used to identify customer segments, even future ones by focusing on early adopters, using attributes defined as attractive (Matzler et al, 1996).

According to Kano's theory of attractive quality, see Figure 17, five types of customer perceived quality can be distinguished. *Must-be requirements* are such that if they are not accomplished the customer will be very dissatisfied, but it is not possible to satisfy a customer fulfilling only these requirements (Kano et al., 1996). Regarding *one-dimensional requirements*, customer satisfaction is proportional to the level of fulfillment. *Reverse* quality is the opposite of one-dimensional quality and results in dissatisfaction when the level of achievement is high, and vice versa, reflecting the fact that customers have different and sometimes conflicting needs. (Löfgren & Witell, 2005)

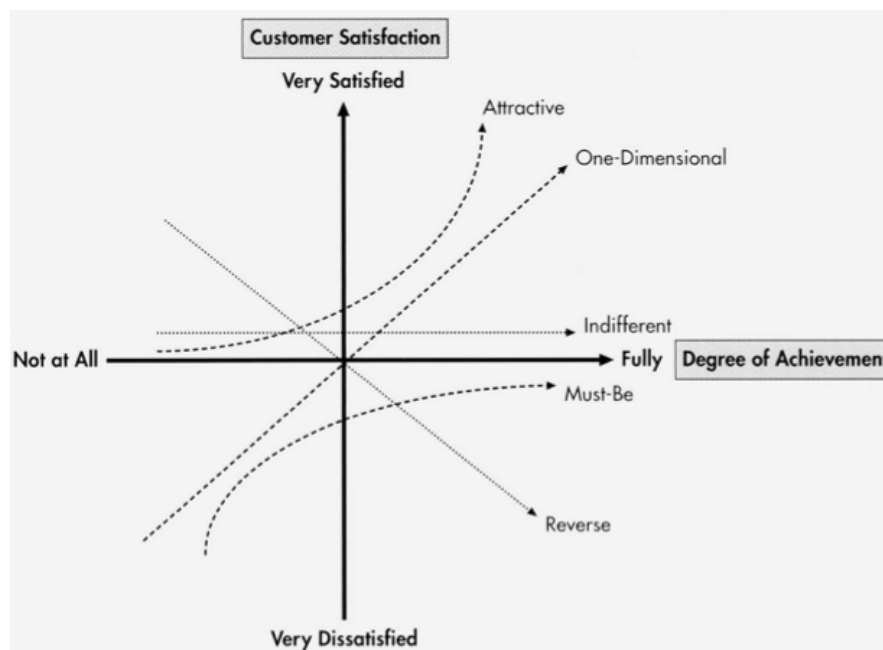


Figure 17. The Kano model (Kano et al., 1996).

Identifying and satisfying *attractive requirements* add considerable value to the customer and can potentially create competitive advantage. However, not fulfilling them will not create dissatisfaction (Bergman & Klefsjö, 2010). *Indifferent quality*, on the other hand, is perceived by the customer as being neither good nor bad, not creating any satisfaction or dissatisfaction. An important aspect of the Kano model is the dynamics of quality attributes. What is an attractive attribute today will, in the future, be one-dimensional, and later a must-be, reflecting increasing customer awareness and demands (Löfgren & Witell, 2005). Only one type of attributes, one-dimensional, relates directly to spoken customer needs, and can thus be identified through interviews, while the others are unspoken and require other methods, such as observation (Matzler et al, 1996).

Many researchers have seen the creation of attractive quality as the next natural step for research in the quality area (Lilja, 2007). Though this has not been the case and Kano (2001, p. 19), describes the situation and lack of focused research for the attractive quality as:

“... although from early times philosophers discussed the meaning of quality [...] many of today’s quality specialists have not considered this topic. Rather, quality specialists of today are developing engineering methods for how to eliminate current quality problems and meet customer requirements.”

This means that despite the potential of achieving attractive quality through higher customer satisfaction many companies instead merely focuses on how to reach an acceptable level (Lilja et al., 2010). Since attractive quality is achieved when the expectations of a customer is exceeded (Kano et al., 1996) the delivery of it is something that is hard to foresee for quality managers as customers cannot communicate it before it is experienced (Oliver et al., 1997). Kano (2001) states that the identification of what makes the difference between objective and subjective quality for customers is important for business in order to be able and deliver an attractive quality. In order to figure out these subjective aspects the Kano questionnaire can be used and enable a measurement of the expectations (Lilja et al., 2010).

3.5.1 Three different aspects of attractive quality

Lilja & Wiklund (2007) presents a two-dimensional model, see Figure 18, that contains three different sub-groups of attractive quality. One of them, Life Enrichers comes from satisfying “high-level needs” referring to for example need-hierarchy presented by Maslow (1943). Surprises is another attractive quality and was identified by Kano (2001), it derives from the exceeding of expectations and satisfaction of latent needs. Attractive Boosters, the third type of attractive quality is unexpected and satisfies both high-level needs and latent needs.

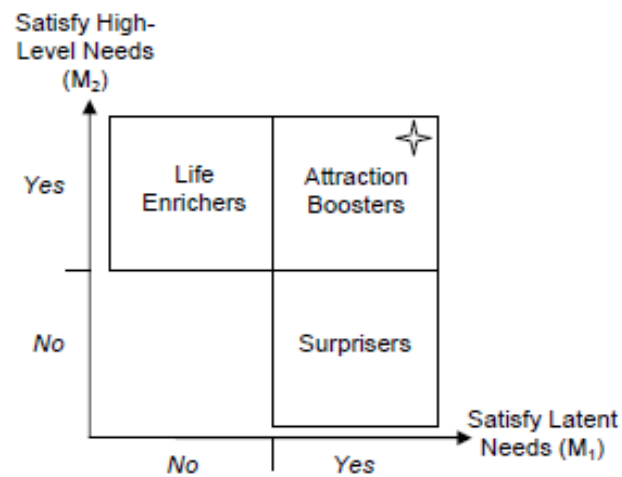


Figure 18. Model over three different aspects of attractive quality (Lilja & Wiklund, 2007).

According to Lilja et al. (2010) the distinction between the offering of a service and a commercial experience is the effect it has on its customer. It needs to be strongly emotional and customer needs to be aroused, astonished and surprised, all of which, when delivered, can be seen as creation of attractive quality.

4 Empirical study at Universeum

In this chapter the information collected from interviews, study visits and observations is combined and presented. The interviews were foremost conducted with managers but also with other co-workers within the organization and to a small extent with customers. The chapter begins with a short history of Universeum, its' organizational structure and the layout of the facilities. Following parts presents the findings regarding the offer at Universeum, the view on customer expectations and the experience, quality, improvement work and the desired future state.

4.1 About Universeum

A work group with representatives from the founders of Universeum, including Chalmers University of Technology, University of Gothenburg, “Göteborgsregionens kommunalförbund” and “Västsvenska Industri- och Handelskammaren” was given the task to develop a plan for a facility that would increase the interest for science and technology among children and adolescents in 1996. As a result of five years of preparations, Universeum, a 10 000 square meters and six floors facility was inaugurated in June 2001. During 2012, over 600 000 persons visited the facility, which was a new record. The company has 57 permanent employees; in addition to that, the company has hourly employees. Converted to full time employees (FTE), Universeum is in total employing 70 FTEs but in individuals the number of employees is around 130. The turnover in 2011 was 96 million SEK.

Universeum's task is to affect children's and adolescents' attitude to science, engineering and mathematics in a positive way, offering experiences that creates curiosity, greater understanding and a desire for further education and a profession within these areas.

Universeum's vision is:

“Universeum should be one of Europe's top science centers of experiences, knowledge and inspiration in science, engineering and mathematics”.

4.1.1 Organization structure

In Figure 19, the structure of Universeum is visualized; under the CEO the organization is divided into five areas, Business development, Education, Exhibition, Business support and Scientific management. The management group contains of the CEO and nine other managers. The management group is primarily responsible for managing the company's daily work and the development of the company. Meetings are held once a week where key decisions are made, after this each manager is responsible to manage their respective function.

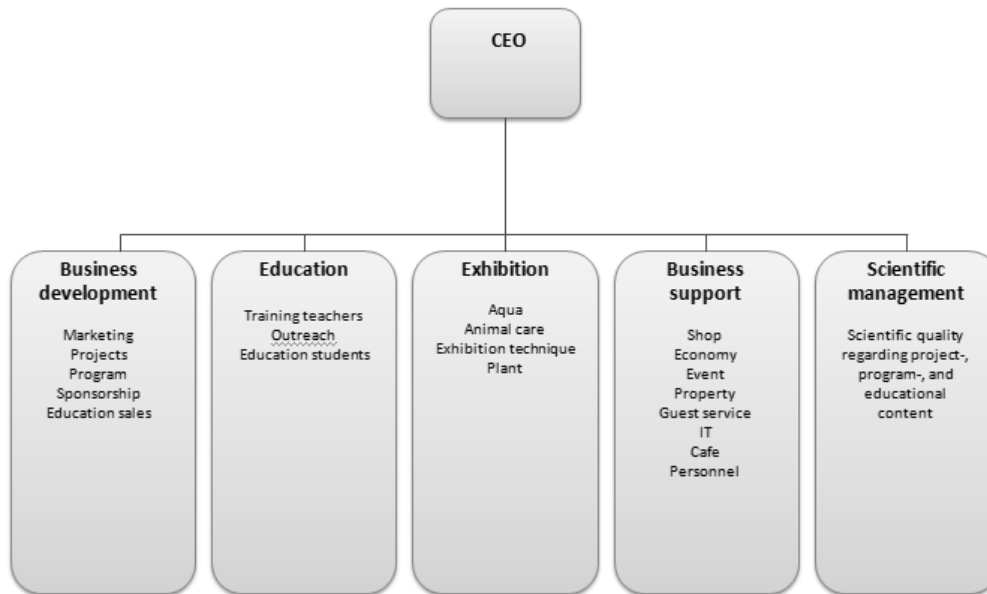


Figure 19. The organizational structure of Universeum.

This study primarily focus on the functions that directly affects the customer experience such as Guest service, Program, Event, Store and Restaurant. It is the personnel within these functions that the visitors primarily interact with.

Guest service - is the personnel that the guest meets first, they are cashiers in the entrance. The Guest service function is also responsible for answering questions by phone.

Program - consists of guides and educators. Guides are the personnel that meet the guests around the building. They answer questions from the guests and are also performing guided tours with different themes. The educators take care of the school classes that visit Universeum.

Event- is the function, for example, companies turn to when they want to have a theme based night with food and activities.

Shop - personnel that sell the products and souvenirs offered in the shop. The customers are both guests that have visited the facility and people that comes exclusively for buying toys, board-games etc.

Restaurant - is on contract, the guests are mainly people visiting the facility; taking a break or leaving after a visit.

4.1.2 The layout of the facilities

After entering the building and passing the guest service, buying the entrance tickets, the facility is divided into two main parts, the living part and the technical part. Most of the visitors start by going into the living part which could be seen as the main part and takes up most of the space, involving all six floors. The living part contains of environments with living animals. One area is called the path of water and starts with the Swedish water creatures and ends in the ocean with sharks and colorful fishes. The other area with living

animals is the rain forest where birds, snakes, monkeys and a lot of other animals can be seen and some even touched.

The technical part is the most interactive. The guest can for example try to solve practical problems, see how life in space is or be a detective for a moment. The technical part is fitted into two floors, Kaleido and Explora, this is where the visitors usually goes when they have passed the living areas.

In addition to these permanent parts there are temporary exhibitions. For example, at the moment a dinosaur exhibition is located at the terrace. Also contained in the building is the shop where the guests can buy a memory from their visit, for example a cuddly toy of an animal that they just have seen.

The shop also offers board games and technological toys that aim to increase the technological interest among the customers. The last thing that many of the guests see of the facility is the restaurant when they buy a lunch or have a coffee before leaving. All these mentioned parts of the house is what the guests sees, there are also other parts of the building where the business supporting functions are located, such as offices, animal hospital, quarantines and storage areas.

4.1.3 Target groups

Universeum's direct target group is the children and adolescents that are visiting the facility either as pupils in their school class or as a private person together with family and friends. The offer differs depending on if the visit is done by a school class or if it is private. The school classes are welcomed and introduced to the facility by the educators. Focus is on a where the educators guides and educate the class for one hour. The information given to the pupils is extensive and concentrated to a few things within the predefined theme. If the children visit Universeum with their family and friends the offer is broader, the whole facility can be visited but the information about each part is limited to the signs located by each exhibition. Private guests have the possibility to join guided tours announced at TV-screens around the facility. The guided tours involve one specific area such as sharks or dinosaurs. From time to time there are guides walking around the facility answering spontaneous questions from the visitors.

As stated above the offer differs between the different target groups. These target groups are divided into primary and secondary target groups. The primary target group is then divided into indirect and direct groups, see Figure 20.

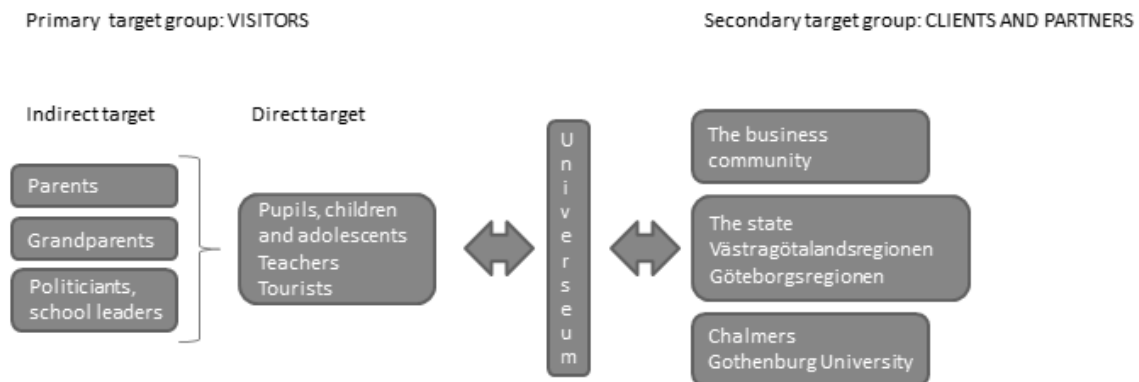


Figure 20. The different target groups identified by Universeum (Affärsplan Universeum AB 2012).

Several managers see the diversity of the target groups as a challenge for Universeum, the offer is targeted to fulfill the expectations of a wide range of stakeholders. The direct primary group is aimed to be satisfied through an interesting and fun experience. But also within this group the offer differs. A teacher has not got the same expectations and needs as its students and the tourist might have a different reason to go to Universeum. At the same time the stakeholders in the indirect group are widely different from one and other. According to a parent the reason he brought his children there was the wide range of activities that they could get involved in. Assumingly a school leader would have a different aim of why he/she would send students there. In the secondary target group the different sub-groups are also widely different with the universities, the state and the business sector. Where the universities want more students in the future, the state might have a wider goal where an increase of the general knowledge of people can be seen as enough.

As one manager puts it:

“The offer is complicated since you can be a guest, teacher and student all in the same visit. As a guest you should feel stimulated and then as a student or teacher you might want to learn something.”

Related to the many target groups there is a complicated terminology when it comes to if a person should be seen as a visitor, customer or partner. Different people in the organization have different views on the same entities and categorize them differently. Some managers feel that Universeum should label all of its target groups as customers in one way or another. They feel that their target groups have the same importance and should thereby be labeled the same way. Other feels that the visitors are guests and should not be labeled as a customer in order to stay true to the values of the organization.

4.2 The offer at Universeum

As mentioned earlier, Universeum's task is to offer an experience that inspire children and adolescents and the organization states in their business plan the following mission:

“Universeum shall positively affect children and adolescents attitude to natural science, the technical field and mathematics through experiences that creates curiosity, increased understanding, belief in the future and will for further studies and profession in these areas. Universeum shall also attract visitors and competence to the region”.

The business idea is also stated in the business plan:

“Universeum shall offer children, adolescents and adults a useful pleasure through an experience based exhibition and program content within natural science, technical field and mathematics. Universeum shall offer a foresighted pedagogical activity for students and teachers. Our content shall rest on scientific grounds and be based on interactivity where several senses are activated together with issues that creates curiosity and the will to continued search on individual level for more knowledge.”

The delivery of an experience is clearly stated and is supposed to be the core in the mission and business idea of the organization. This is something that is reflected on at management level as all of them stress that Universeum offers an experience for its visitors. The founder of the organization said:

“We are offering a unique experience, a pleasurable experience that also creates knowledge.”

The combination of delivering a fun and diverse experience combined with the learning aspect is something every manager sees as important. Some see the offer as a commercial product when others see it as something that should be completely free for children and adolescents. There is also a notion that they should be a compliment to school, it is stressed on several occasions that it should not feel like going to school when coming to Universeum. One aspect that the majority of the managers point out is that an experience at Universeum should work as a “door opener” and create the will for further learning.

The task that is given to Universeum is by the managers seen *“both as a possibility and a limitation”*. The complexity of the offer is seen in different ways by the managers. Some have the perception that it is making the offer unique and adds a competitive advantage while some feel that it can be contra productive when it comes to the goal of earning as much money as possible. An example stated by one manager is an exhibition that is seen as interesting and having potential of attracting a lot of guests, but may not be in line with the educational purpose.

4.2.1 Guest Meeting Functions

When asked who were the main supplier of the experience at Universeum nearly half of the managers answered that it is the direct customer functions. The others saw everyone in the organization as equally responsible for the offer. Guest meeting functions are as mentioned

above Guest service, Program, Event, Shop and Restaurant. The personnel in Guest service interact with most visitors, both school classes and private guests. The personnel in program are divided into educators and guides. The educators only meet pupils and teachers while guides interact mainly with the private guests. Shop and Restaurant interacts both with guests visiting the whole facility and guests that visits exclusively the Shop or the Restaurant.

Guest services task is to sell the entrance tickets and answer general questions from the customers regarding for example prices, opening hours etc. The interaction with the guest often occurs during a short period of time but takes place with most of the visitors. Often the personnel in guest service are students from a university that are educated by watching an experienced colleague before being allowed to start working.

The educators present and informs about a preselected theme to school classes. The school classes are divided into smaller groups so that each educator is responsible for six to seven pupils at the time. The small groups make it possible for the educator to have an interaction with every individual and communicate customized knowledge. The educators are educated teachers that have watched and learnt from more experienced educators before getting responsible for an own school class. The themes are developed and improved by the educators themselves.

Guides are responsible for guided tours around the facility. Each guided tour is regarding one specific area in the house, the guide is communicating a deeper knowledge than the signs to the guests and is trying to involve, and interact with, the guests. Between the tours guides are walking around in the facility available to be able to answer questions from the guests. The guides are often students from a university working extra. They get to learn about an area that they are allowed to guide within, the tours have some regulations regarding the content but is depending a lot on how the guide wants to perform it.

The shop is situated so that it is possible to access directly without going in through the other parts of the house. Recently a shop was also opened at Landvetter Airport. The personnel in the shop has their main focus on selling products, but what differentiate them from regular toy stores is that a lot of the products they are selling aim to generate an interest for science, engineering and mathematics. These types of products require that the personnel have a knowledge within the science area in order to best serve the customer.

Today the restaurant is not an integrated part in the organization. The restaurant is run by an outside entrepreneur where Universeum has limited influence on the offer and way of presenting and so on. In the contract there are some guidelines from Universeum about how the restaurant should be run.

Education

Today the guest meeting functions do not receive any extra education on how to meet customer. Guides and educators are recruited on basis of social skills and the will to provide a

good service. The educators are responsible for the school classes and are educated teachers and do not receive any further education after starting working at Universeum.

Guides get the chance to learn the different areas of the house on set occasions. The more areas a guide is capable of handling the more he/she earns. Guest Service is not educated in the different areas of the house and they do not receive any further education in customer treatment. It is the same situation for the co-workers in the shop.

One manager advocates the concern that many co-workers in the organization are young and that they do not get the support needed to help them in their decision making regarding work related problems such as complaining guests. The manager states that it is important to offer education to these young co-workers so that they can handle the different situations occurring. Another manager sees difficulties in the large amount of part time employees. The manager states:

“One dilemma is that we have so many part time employees. If you don’t work full time you might feel insecure and not be as engaged as our permanent employees.”

The belief of the interviewee is that this leads to uncertainty and that some of the co-workers that are working part time are not completely committed to deliver a high quality service.

4.2.2 Customer expectation of a visit

Today the expectations of the customers are not mapped or identified by Universeum. Once again the variety of visitors together with the diverse offer gives a wide range of possible expectations. As communicated from the focus group of students their only expectation of the facility was to see monkeys. They did not get any information from Universeum about what they were to expect and no information was delivered by the school. They had been told that they were going to see some educators at Universeum and that the tour would be on the topic “rainforest”.

Despite the lack of knowledge of what the different visitors expect there is a strong will in the organization to meet and exceed each visitor’s expectation. This is noticed in several cases when the managers are talking about what quality is at Universeum but also when stating what often leads to problem in his/her function. One manager identifies a reason to many problems being when a visitor has seen advertisement of a new project or area that are opening at Universeum and it is not completely finished when they are visiting. This is something that one of the guides also has seen proof of when conducting tours on the newly opened areas where all of the animals might not be ready for exhibition.

4.2.3 Customer experience of a visit

When managers were asked to explain what they consider constitutes a successful customer experience there was a pattern where two answers were more common than the rest, these were:

1. The customer has learned something new, e.g. a memory is created
2. The customer wants to come back

Several of the interviewees points out the importance of the customer experiencing something unexpected. There is also an overall view that it is important that the visit at the house has been nice and pleasant, and that you have had a good time with your fellow visitors.

Two out of the eight students in the focus group communicated that their interest of the science field had increased through their visit at Universeum. In both cases the interest was there before the visit but not to the same extent. Almost everyone in the focus group stated that they had learned something new and it was clear that memories had been created. One participant put it:

“It was really cool that you could feel, taste and touch stuff.”

The interactive parts of their tour activated all of the students and they became interested when asked to touch a snake or taste a roasted larva. All but one of the students stated that they would be interested to visit Universeum again.

When a family with small children, two and three years old, were asked what they thought was best they answered that the aquarium and the dinosaurs were the best parts because the dinosaurs were exciting and the aquarium contained so many beautiful fishes. They felt that they got their expectations met in these parts. After the visit one of the children said that the dinosaurs were really big; his father witnessed that the small ones almost had been scared when seeing the big animals.

Development of the experience

In the management group there are many suggestions on how to develop the experience delivered at Universeum. The suggestions can be purely physical, i.e. the expansion of the physical space at Universeum, something that goes in line with the results gathered from customer surveys where the physical space is one of the things the customer complains the most about. Other suggestions can be on a more abstract level where the interviewee expresses the vision of being able to engage the visitor more before, during and after the visit, perhaps through the webpage.

The suggestions also differ from each other on the financial aspect. Some communicates a will for the organization to become more commercial in their way of conducting business, others feel that they should support the schools more and eventually be free for all children and adolescents. One notion that several points out is that the facility must have a better unity. It should become clearer how the different parts fit together and even be able to incorporate the restaurant in the overall experience of the house. A common view is also that development of the experience cannot be allowed to stagnate. There is a shared feeling that if the experience stagnates the organization's survival will be threatened. A manager presents the concern that when working with animals and exhibitions of this kind there is a risk of becoming rigid. Many of the co-workers gets emotionally attached to their work which is seen as both positive and negative. For example co-workers develop a close relation to some

animals, the positive thing is that they then care for them and treat them well but a negative thing could be that they may oppose a change in an exhibition that would exclude this animal.

In the focus groups the students requested a more scary experience. They wanted to see more dangerous animals and in some way be more scared. All but one in the group had visited the facilities before and had the impression that not many things had changed from their last visit. More animals in general were another common request in the group. The students also stated that they thought it was more fun to come to Universeum with their school then privately since they got to learn much more when coming there with the school.

4.3 Quality at Universeum

When asked about what constitutes quality at Universeum the management was unified in their belief that it is: *“exceeding customer expectations”*. One manager also pointed out the more practical aspects of what quality is for a customer:

“Get answers to your questions, see animals where animals are suppose to be, otherwise information on why there are no animals. Friendly and correctly met by the staff and functional equipment. Deliver the same thing every day. If something is broken, inform about why it is.”

Through the findings regarding the view on quality at Universeum, four general topics have become visible. These topics are: Structure of quality work, The role of management, The role of personnel, and Customer satisfaction.

4.3.1 Structure of quality work

When interviewing the management group one common answer on what is needed when working with different areas of quality is to have a structured way of working. When talking to the educators and guides it is communicated that how to perform the daily work is up to each employee. There are loose restrictions from management and communication with management is sporadic, however communication between peers is more frequent.

Managers highlights the importance of *“common values”* and that *“everyone should strive for the same goals”*. Universeum’s vision and general goals are stated in an action plan that every employee can access, but not everyone does. When asked about goals, managers answered that:

“the goals have not been broken down to everyday actions for each individual employee.”

In what direction the different functions evolve is depending a lot on individuals within each function and their subjective view of how to improve. Some managers fear that this could generate a quite random development.

A request that appeared when discussing structure of quality work with the management was the need of identifying and mapping the processes within each function. In a pilot study performed by the quality manager the processes for the shop were identified. What became clear then was that employees had their own thought of how things should be performed and what was most important to do in order to generate value to the customer. When talking with

the managers about the different ways of performing the daily work, the importance of common goals was brought up and standardization was requested. Though it was not only seen as a good thing, a manager expressed it in the following way:

“the employees have to be able to act in a personal way and not be locked in in a too tight framework”.

The requested standardization would preferably work as a ground in order to point to the direction of the daily work and at the same time leave room for individual freedom. In close connection to the identification of processes is measurability and as one manager expressed it:

“I do not know whether we are performing good or not, I am not able to measure anything so how could I decide whether we have high quality in what we do or not?”.

The current measurement that could be seen as an indication of how well guest meeting functions perform is the customer surveys that is done a couple of times per year and also a co-worker survey.

4.3.2 The role of Management

After conducted study visits to Renova and Enköpings lasarett it was noticed that one of the most important factors for implementation of quality work is committed management. The management has to support the work, allocate resources and show that the work on quality improvements is important and appreciated. When asked about how management should encourage the right attitude towards the guests in the organization one manager answered:

“managers are bearers of culture and should be out among the personnel and serve as a good example”.

The quality manager and the CEO have spoken about the importance of a common view of how to manage with a quality focus. The lack of a common view in the management group became apparent when interviewing the managers. Some managers have started working with a quality focus in their own way, using experiences from other organizations while other managers have not. One manager spoke about the importance of consistent leadership, acting the same towards the employees,

“if one manager follows up a lot about how to solve problems etc., another manager cannot ignore a similar problem in his function”.

The communication and interactions between the different functions is sporadic, good ideas do not spread to other functions to a high extent. One manager highlights a problem that derives from the lack of communication and cross-functional work, being that there are difficulties when a project is performed that includes different functions depending on what state project is in. When the responsibility should move from one function to another, the projects often risk being a no one's responsibility and getting stuck.

4.3.3 Co-workers

Co-workers are the ones who perform the daily quality work, meeting with the guests, coming up with ideas of improvements and carrying them through. At Universeum a lot of the responsibility of what the experience looks like for the guest lays in the hands of the employees in the guest meeting functions. It is these employees that interact with the visitors and decide what is going to be communicated during the guided tours and the educational visits from school classes. The guides and educators get the facts about different animals and exhibitions from a manager and can then choose what to communicate further.

When asked about whether employees in guest meeting functions receive sufficient education to perform their work with high quality one manager admits that *“the education level of those employees could be a bit varied”*. Every new employee gets an introduction and the permanent employees get a course in how to respond to guests. The reason to the varying level of education depends on employees in these functions often being part time working students at Universeum for a relatively short period of time. The education depends a lot on the more experienced employees who educate the less experienced in the daily work. Another reason to the varying education level between functions is that it is up to each manager to send the personnel to educations; it is not standardized and occurs irregularly. Several managers have the opinion that the education could be a bit insufficient and one states that:

“the introductive education could be more extensive, regular repetition and further education should be standard in order to secure the competence”.

When asking guides about what seemed to be the most important characteristics for being hired at Universeum most of them answered: *“great emphasis is put on my social skills and ability to communicate”*. When hiring personnel to guest meeting functions, Universeum is focusing more on personal values and ability to communicate with the customer rather than subject knowledge. A manager expressed it through:

“If the recruitment process and introduction is well performed it gives a good possibility to have employees that deliver good quality.”

4.3.4 Customer

According to the managers Universeum have worked with a customer focus and are satisfied with high marks in the customer survey done two to three times per year. What is not identified is what brings this high marks, what are the drivers that generate a satisfied customer. The management is united about that *“exceeding customer expectations”* is what creates good quality.

When asked if the managers think that the personnel in guest meeting functions knows what the guests are expecting and think is important one manager states: *“No, I don’t think that even we managers know what is important for the customer, the customer surveys does not help us as much as they should regarding these areas”*. Still there are those with a different view on the subject. Another manager expressed its view: *“The guest meeting functions meet guests every day and have a good knowledge about what is important for the customer”*. When speaking with a guide we get this answer when repeating the question, *“I think I have a*

clue about what is important for the customer but it is only my own perception, I have not got any information about that from my managers. It is a lot about your own common sense”.

It gets clear that after speaking to co-workers at different levels and parts of the organization that no common picture of what the customer wants, needs and demands exist.

4.4 Improvement work at Universeum

At Universeum there is a notion in the whole management team that the organization needs to continuously change in order to keep being attractive for their customers. Stagnation is something almost everyone identifies as one of the big threats. The management team sees the need to develop their offer with new exhibitions and new fun apparatus to catch the interest of children and youngsters, to develop their knowledge in the different areas of nature science.

Initiatives for large changes come, almost solely, from the management team. It is here the ideas are created and developed to later be conducted in a project form. One interviewee states that:

“The changes come from the ones that get the mandate from the CEO and then it requires a lot of effort in order to make the change happen.”

There is a vision that every employee should feel that he/she is a part of the improvements made in the organization. However, one guide stated that there is a forum for expressing ideas but it is often not clear where the ideas go from there. A manager identifies the co-workers willingness to change as big. Others do not share this picture and feel that many co-workers do not see the whole picture and mainly focuses on their functional part when it comes to realizing what Universeum offers its customers.

The size of the organization is seen as positive when it comes to change. It is stated by one manager that the organization is flexible and a change is easy to implement when the need for improvement is identified. Another manager sees the organization as rigid and states that changes are hard to implement in some areas. The same manager also believes that the lack of consensus within the management group is one of the biggest challenges for the organization.

4.4.1 Systematic improvement work

Today the functions in Universeum work in their own way with improvements and how these are developed and implemented. One manager stated that there are two different ways of suggestions regarding improvement work at the function he/she is responsible for. Firstly it is spontaneous improvements, the smaller ones that take place on an everyday basis, these are done when time is available and sufficient. The other way is that customers or employees see something that is broken and reports this. If the improvement is of major nature it is brought up within the apartment or, if it is big enough, in the management team for discussion. This way of working with improvements is shared with some of the functions in the organization, while others work in a different way. At one function the responsibility for improvements completely lays on an individual level. When guides and pedagogues introduce new tours or activities it is up them to develop and customized it. They create it from their own mind and it

is rarely influenced by outside factors such as customers and employers. As one interviewee puts it:

“For improvements everyone talks with everyone and then it’s the person with the most will and energy that goes through with it and makes it happen”.

At another function the manager feels that the improvement work is mainly run by his/her. Through her initiatives the improvements are identified and conducted; it is up to him/her if any evaluation is to be done in her function. One manager states that in the cases of new temporary projects there are evaluations done to see whether or not the project was successful. Still there is no systematic way of doing the evaluations, and the evaluation may be subjective because it is performed by the people involved in the project. If there is time enough for everyone, they sit down and talk about what was good and bad.

Kaizen

As of today there is no systematic way of working with improvements within Universeum, though an initiative has been taken to introduce continuous improvements within the company. Today the initiative includes one function but it is not yet routine. The manager of this function can already see the benefits the systematic way of working was contributing with. The initiative conducted by the organization is called Kaizen and includes the mapping of processes, the introduction of a systematic way of identifying possible improvements and a systematic way of handling them from start to finish. It combines the idea of small continuous improvements with the Plan, Do, Check, Act (P/D/C/A) cycle in order to get a clear process of the stages of the improvement.

The systematic way of working with improvements is something all of the managers request, especially a systematic way to evaluate the improvements that are being done. None of the other interviewees stated that their function have had a systematic way of identifying improvements and carrying them through.

4.4.2 Customer survey

Today there are customer surveys conducted two to three times a year at Universeum. These are according to two managers used to identify the customers view on what that could be improved. The survey consists of eight questions were three of them are open ended and the others are closed and focuses on how the overall impression and experience of Universeum were. One manager states:

“The customers cannot tell us exactly what they want but they can tell us what we are doing wrong.”

There is a unified view amongst the managers that the customer surveys can be used to a larger extent then today. There are those who feel that the lack of feedback of the gathered information makes them obsolete. An interviewee presents the notion that the diversity and high variance in the experience of each customer makes it complicated to measure quality through a survey.

In a focus group with students it was stated that they did not talk about the visit or connected the visit to the education in the classroom after the visit at Universeum. There are no initiatives from Universeum or the school to capture what the students thought about the visit. Also when talking to customers that had spent a day in the facilities they said that they did not see any place where they could mediate their thoughts and views on the visit.

In contrast to Universeums work with surveys it has been seen during a study visit at Liseberg, an amusement park in Gothenburg, that they are continuously gathering customer surveys and can due to this obtain much more updated information. They distribute their surveys on a regular basis in the parks different parts and the customer is given a small reward if he/she returns the survey.

4.5 The Vision of Universeum

When asked how the managers imagine what will characterize the organization in the future there were many different thoughts but five major headlines could be identified. These were Consistent leadership, Competition, Technique, Improvement and Evaluation.

4.5.1 Consistent leadership

A majority of the managers communicated the need for a management group that bases decisions of consensus. There is also a need in the group for a more unified picture of how to achieve the mission of the organization. One manager says:

“We don’t have a joint picture of the future, it feels divided. It exist a clear mission and vision but how we shall achieve it is not as clear.”

Another says:

“Due to that we today don’t have a common view on things, a lot of what we do is unnecessary.”

This lack of unity is something many feel is a threat for the organization and the belief exists, at managerial level, that through a more consistent leadership the organization would be stronger.

4.5.2 Competition

Another threat identified by several managers is the hardened competition in the Experience Industry. New sites opens up with a similar offer to Universeum, today there is no business with exactly the same offer but several has parts that can compete in the same area. To deal with this increased competition the need for being self-providing is stated by some managers. Self-providing in this context means to not rely on financial contributions. They feel that this is needed in order to develop their offer to the extent that is needed to have a more competitive organization. On the other hand other managers already see Universeum as self-providing. They state that the way the organization receives funds from the state is not without a counter achievement, meaning that Universeum needs to achieve something in order to receive money in contrast to, for example, a museum. No matter which opinion the managers have, a shared picture exists that the organization needs to become more

competitive in order to withstand the change in economy and hardened competition in the Experience Industry.

4.5.3 Technique

Some of the interviewees see the need for the organization to be able and incorporate new technique to a wider extent in their offer. Today it is foremost represented in the newer projects where i-pads are installed to deliver the information about animals. This provides more information than the past information signs. A manager says:

“We must become better to connect to the adolescent way of living. Today they live a big part of their lives on the internet and we need to be there as well.”

This is supported by working on Universeums presence in social medias together with a more developed web-page that can support involvement of customers.

4.5.4 Improvement work

As stated before it is a common view of the managers that they need a more systematic way of working with improvement. This is also something they foresee that the organization will have in the future. It is also believed that together with a systematic way of working there will be engagement in every co-worker to be a part of the improvement work.

In order to avoid the threat of stagnation, several managers identifies the need of continuously improving their offer and the organization. A future view of Universeum expanding its physical form is something one manager identifies as important when talking about improvement work in the future. The view is that through learning of past mistakes, such as that every part of the offer affects the perceived quality, the organization will be able to avoid some of the pitfalls when expanding to be able to deliver a more qualitative and complete offer.

4.5.5 Evaluation

Together with the view of a systematic improvement work in the future the idea of continuous evaluation is one of the most common notions in the management group. It is assumed that clear measurements can be a way for the organization to gain frequent and detailed feedback on improvements and changes. This is also envisioned as a part of the systematic quality work that the managers want in Universeum in the future.

5 Analysis

In this chapter the analysis of the empirical findings is presented. First the customer experience and offer of the organization is analyzed. The section of the offer is divided into the different functions that have been studied. Later the topic of experience quality is handled and finally a framework for QM at Universeum with links to practices is presented.

As presented in the empirical study there is no formal and common way of working with QM at Universeum. Initiatives have been taken in different functions but there is a demand for a more systematic way of managing quality. The models presented by Lilja (2010) and Edvardsson et.al. (2007) fulfill some of the demands stated by the managers at Universeum. From the managers a demand for measurability and a creation of a shared view on quality within the organization is eminent. These demands are strongly connected to the terms used in the TQM-tree by Lilja (2010), **Base decisions on fact, Behavior and Let everyone be committed**. The managers want to exceed customer expectations, which can be connected to Liljas (2010) **Focus on customers** and the notion of being an organization that not stagnates can be correlated directly to **Improve Continuously**. Through the study visits, where examples of several quality initiatives have been showed, it has become clear that without a strongly committed management the quality initiative is likely to fail, which is another aspect presented by Lilja (2010). The model of value based service quality presented by Edvardsson et al. (2007) responds to the managers' demand of a shared view on quality; the core of the model is understood and communicated values.

One aspect in managing the quality of the experience at Universeum, which differentiate Universeum in the market, is the aspect of education which is strongly connected to the offering. Still it is possible to see this as a general aspect of companies in the experience industry. They all deliver something that is more than just a service in order to create a memory.

5.1 The experience offered at Universeum

What Universeum offers is rare, the combination of learning about natural science and to get an experience of it is hard to find elsewhere. The offering is different for different guests, depending on what target group they belong to. Within each target group the offer also differs depending on what parts of the facility the guest chooses to visit. The experience is formed all the way from entrance to exit and by all parts of the facility the guest visits. How good the customer experience is, depend a lot on the provider (Grönroos, 1988). The experience provider has to adapt to the guest not only depending in terms of what target group they belong to but also individually within each target group.

5.1.1 Co-creation of the experience

Grönroos (2011) states that it is in the interaction between the producer and the customer that co-creation take place. It can be argued that in the Experience Industry this interaction takes place for a longer time than for services and goods. The interaction regarding goods is primarily connected to the transaction. The interaction regarding services is connected to the time the service provider actively is performing the service while the interaction regarding experiences includes also the customers actions, for example in the facility. This extensive

interaction should be taken into account by the producer in order to create a high quality experience. Kolb (1984) states the effect previous experiences have on learning and the importance to reflect upon these experiences. Through the empirical findings in this study it has become evident that co-created development of the offerings is not an idea in focus at Universeum. Most of the offerings are solely developed by the co-workers and managers of the organization without any regard to the perception or demand of the customer.

5.1.2 Target groups

The diverse offer at Universeum derives partly from the willingness to satisfy the needs from the different target groups. As stated by Wedel & Kamakura (2000), all segments or target groups cannot be fully focused on and prioritizations have to be made. The primary target group at Universeum is visitors, including the direct target groups pupils, children, adolescents, teachers and tourists.

Some of the managers witness a need for improvement of what is offered with focus on the school classes, the target group pupils. Another manager instead speaks about the broadening of the offer as most important in order to satisfy everyone visiting Universeum. Depending on what segments Universeum wish to satisfy the most, a prioritizing could be done by which resources are allocated to improve the offer for one specific target group.

5.1.3 Program

Program is the function that by several managers is seen to deliver the main part of the experience at Universeum. From the interviews it was found that there is a belief that a majority of the guides and educators lack knowledge about what is generating a quality experience for the customer. As one manager put it:

“Everyone does not know what the customer values and expects, there is a need of consensus about that”

As Grönroos (1988) and Lilja et. al. (2012) states, in service business the responsibility for delivering a good quality service lies to a great extent with the person that interact with the customer, in this case primarily the guides and educators. The lack of knowledge about the customer could depend on a lack of communication with the customer. After conducting a focus group and talking to a customer it is clear that the problem is not only that Universeum does not have sufficient knowledge about their guests, the visitors do not have sufficient knowledge about Universeum either. The lack of knowledge and understanding from both sides lead to the occurrence of several of the service gaps presented by Grigoroudis (2008), especially the *Understanding gap* which derives from when an organization does not understand their customers’ needs correctly and prioritizes wrong when designing the offer and the *Promotional gap* which refers to the expectations created in the mind of the customer from marketing communication.

Guides

If the guides would get more extensive information of the customers’ wants and needs, for example by increasing the communication and interaction, the development of guided tours could be more customized. A standardized process of how to develop guided tours, with

influence from, and in interaction with the customers, could lead to the possible demise of several of the service gaps. It would also possibly lead to a stronger engagement from the customer and thus a better experience.

When conducting the focus group, the general opinion of what Universeum should change in order to be more attractive to revisit was to have a more shifting offer. The nature of the facility makes it difficult for the organization to continuously change the main exhibitions. It is not possible to add a new fish tank or a new technical machine every other month. The offer provided by the guides is seen as more flexible and their activities could change with a shorter time-interval. This could lead to a surprising experience for revisits and is in line with the work by Lilja & Wiklund (2007) which implies that in order to have attractive quality the experience should contain surprising elements. The smaller exhibitions are shifting more often than the big ones but working with a shifting offer is not a part of the daily work and the changes are not always made often enough. Further, managers identifies a non-shifting offer as maybe the biggest threat for Universeum, a notion that is supported by Pine & Gilmore (1999) who presents the dangers of being an experience stager, which makes it harder for the company to attract visitors to return.

Educators

Universeum states that they should be a complement to the ordinary classroom. The task is to increase the interest for science, engineering and mathematics, according to the focus group they do succeed with that. The main task is to create a memory and an interest that motivates the students to learn more about the areas concerned. Memories and interests are not typically generated by education in a traditional classroom. Memories and interests are more often created in an environment where participants are emotionally touched, involved (Watson & Clark, 1997) and where what is shown is a novel or surprising (Lilja et al., 2010). The surprising part of creating memories is an aspect that is generating attractive quality; exceeding customer expectations (Lilja & Wiklund, 2007).

The number of school classes visiting Universeum has been at the same level every year since Universeum opened. One of the managers sees a need of developing the offer in order to attract more classes. Today the development of the themes is up to the educators, who are regular teachers working at Universeum. There are no connections between the themes and what the students are studying in school at the moment. The students in the focus group had no idea what to expect when visiting Universeum, there was no information about the content before the visit and no feedback afterwards. As a result of the poor communication with the students and their teachers about what is studied in school, the educators does not have enough information about costumer demand in order to develop the offer in line with that demand. If the themes was more connected to the classroom education it would be easier for the students to follow up the interest that is often woken during the visit at Universeum. As Kolb (1984) states there is a risk that the increased interest disappears fast if it is not followed up after the experience

5.1.4 Event

Event is one of the functions that have started working with quality control, using checklists and surveys. The checklist ensures that the same offer is delivered every time, a standardization is built into the offer. In addition to the checklist a survey is given to the guests at the event in order to get more detailed information than from the regular guest survey. In relation to the other functions Event is seen to have more experience from quality work. For example they have started to map and standardize their work and also collect more extensive primary data. This experience from Event should be taken as an advantage in the organization's further quality work. This can be done through the suggested ways of knowledge creation within an organization proposed by Nonaka (1994), first an externalization process in the Event function followed by an internalization process in the other functions. This knowledge creation could be performed by the use of cross-functional groups where personnel from Event could interact with and influence other functions; one way of doing that could be to move personnel across functions.

5.1.5 Restaurant

Edvardsson (1998) states that it is the customers' total perception of the service that is the basis for the evaluation of the service. Some of the managers highlighted, in line with Edvardsson (1998), the importance of all parts of the facility having high quality, if one part fails the complete customer experience is affected negatively.

The managers' impression from the surveys conducted by Universeum was that the restaurant often was the focus of customer complaints. The situation now is that the restaurant is on contract and Universeum does not have much influence on its offer. However, the contract was recently renegotiated which resulted in the possibility of more influence from Universeum. One manager had the idea that the restaurant should be closer connected to the educating aspect that permeates Universeum. For example the foods way to the plate could be illustrated. In order to create a holistic offer with a better experience a closer cooperation between Universeum and the restaurant would be beneficial.

5.2 The concept of quality

Experiences is a new type of business offering (Pine & Gilmore, 1998, 1999; Voss, 2004; Sundbo, 2004; Poulsson & Kale 2004; Lilja et al, 2010). In "The Experience Economy" Pine & Gilmore (1999, p. 97) states that: ". . . experiences are a fourth economic offering, as distinct from services as they are from goods. . ." Experiences are differentiated from services and goods, there are also other quality aspects connected to the experiences than to services and goods. This leads to the notion that also in terms of quality, it differs between experiences and the other offering.

5.2.1 Experience quality

As seen in the empirical study there were a common view in Universeum that the offering is an experience, when asked what quality meant words like "*exceed customer expectations*" were frequently used. Other statements in the context were also "*when the customer plans a revisit*" and "*creation of word of mouth*" and which are statements that can be seen as

something that are achieved after delivering a high quality experience. One manager gave a more concrete view on what quality meant for Universeum:

“Get answers to your questions, see animals where animals are suppose to be, otherwise information on why there are no animals. Friendly and correctly met by the staff and functional equipment. Deliver the same quality every day. If something is broken, inform about why it is.”

This is more focused on how to deliver the experience and not on how the experience itself is perceived. There are clear parallels to be drawn from this notion to the concept of service gaps presented by Grigoroudis (2008), for example the *Perception gap* which refers to the difference of how the customer perceives the experience and how the organization think that the customer perceives it. When not being able to handle the expectations created by marketing and not being able to deliver what has been promised the managers see a direct negative affect on the quality of the experience. This situation correlates to another of Grigoroudis' (2008) gaps, the *Promotional gap*, which represents the difference of the customer's expectations created from marketing and what is delivered by the company.

As stated by Pine & Gambler (1999) an experience is differentiated from the other economical offerings as being memorable. Further, a memory is often created through strong emotional engagement (Watson & Clark, 1997), which according to the authors (ibid.) often occurs when expectations are exceeded. There are definitions on what a commercial experience is, by Lilja et.al. (2010, p. 81): *“A memorable event that the customer is willing to pay for”*. This definition is seen as the most appropriate to this study because Universeums business model is to sell an experience. It is though harder to find a suitable definition for what experience quality is, in Table 2 quotes from authors and managers at Universeum about what quality means is presented.

Table 2. Quotes regarding experience quality from theory and empirical study.

Source	Quote
Manager	<i>“Exceed customer demands”.</i>
Manager	<i>“Customers are planning revisits when leaving for the day.”</i>
Pine & Gilmore (1999, p. 95)	<i>“Actually, experience stagers must constantly refresh their experiences – change or add elements that keep the offering new, exciting, and worth paying money to experience all over again.”</i>
Poulsson & Kale (2004, p. 270)	<i>“Commercial experience is an engaging act of co-creation between a provider and a consumer wherein the consumer perceives value in the encounter and in the subsequent memory of that encounter.”</i>

When combining the definitions given in Table 2, the following definition of what experience quality is can be proposed:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations”

In order to make the definition more suitable for Universeum, the learning aspect has to be included, in Table 3 quotes and explanations from authors about focus on learning is presented together with Universeums mission.

Table 3. Quotes and references regarding the focus on learning.

Source	Quote
The mission of Universeum (Universeum AB business plan, 2012)	<i>“Universeum shall positively affect children and youngsters attitude to nature science, the technical field and mathematics through experiences that creates curiosity, increased understanding, belief in the future and will for further studies and profession in these areas. Universeum shall also attract visitors and competence to the region”.</i>
Manager	<i>“We are offering a unique experience, a pleasurable experience that also creates knowledge.”</i>
Kolb (1984, p. 29)	<i>“The fact that learning is a continuous process grounded in experience has important educational implications. Put simply, it implies that all learning is relearning.”</i>
Csikszentmihalyi (1997)	Depending on which level it is on the challenges that are offered and the skills of the consumer, different experiences can occur, the goal is to get everyone to have a “flow” experience.

When merging the previous definition for experience quality with the findings about learning, presented in the empirical study and theoretical part, this definition of experience quality at Universeum is proposed:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations and raises a desire to learn”

This definition takes into account the importance for the organization to have a clear idea of what the customer expects. As stated by Watson & Clark (1997) it is not only positive engagement that creates a memory and it can be argued that negative emotional experience in general creates a stronger memory. This is further supported by the focus group where it was communicated that more “scary” or “disgusting” animals and activities were demanded. It is notable that no one requested more cuddly or cute animals, though that can depend on the age of the students participating in the focus group, younger students might already be scared of the current animals. The fact that negative experience can be a good part of an event in order to create memories can be seen as a difference from more traditional views on quality of goods and services where quality of course should be something positive.

5.2.2 Attractive Quality

The notion that it is important to deliver an experience that exceeds customer expectations is closely connected to the concept of attractive quality presented by several authors e.g. Kano (2001), Bergman & Klefsjö (2003), Lilja (2007), Lilja et.al. (2010). As stated by Lilja et.al. (2010), there are three different attractive quality aspects **Life enrichers, Attractive boosters and Surprises**. **Life enrichers** comes from satisfying “high level needs”, **surprises** derives

from exceeding expectations and **attractive boosters** are a combination of the other two aspects. In the following, these aspects will be used as a basis for analysis of Universeum.

Since **life enrichers** are connected to the needs' hierarchy presented by Maslow (1943) they are present all over the facility. In the restaurant the physiological needs can be fulfilled, also in the different parts where the customer can sit and eat and of course the bathrooms. Safety is also present due to that a customer does not want to feel unsafe around the animals, though still be able to be scared by them. Love and belonging are strongly eminent when coming to the experience of families that come to Universeum. They want to have an experience that is enriching for the whole family. Self - esteem and finally Self-actualization are maybe the most relevant enrichers for Universeum regarding their offering with its focus on education and creating an interest for natural sciences.

Surprisers are also important for Universeum when it comes to deliver an experience that exceeds expectations (Kano et al., 1996). Watson & Clark (1997) also states that the element of surprise is connected to the creation of a memory. This leads to the important question for Universeum on how much to communicate in their marketing and what to focus on. One manager feels that when the marketing has been promising something extraordinary that cannot be offered; the customers are not as satisfied. For example, there have been times when it has not been possible to deliver what has been promised in the marketing due to animals in quarantine. The manager feels that it would be better to limit what is marketed and then instead surprise the customer. This is of course something that has to be balanced carefully since the customers as well need to be attracted through advertisements in order to come to Universeum.

Attractive boosters are the hardest to achieve and for Universeum it might be hard to identify them because of the differentiated customers and groups, something that is a booster for one customer could be of no importance for another. The attractive boosters should be unexpected and still be something that fulfills a high-level need, which makes it the hardest aspect to achieve (Lilja & Wiklund, 2007). One manager identifies a possible area for this through the incorporation of the restaurant to a larger degree. It is proposed that through offering food that is in some way connected to the other parts of the house and where the customer can get a learning experience at the same time as they are eating a delicious meal Universeum would have created an attractive booster.

As presented by Csikszentmihalyi (1997) the complication of matching challenges with skills in order to create a flow experience is complex. This is very much the case at Universeum. Through their business plan and also through the findings in the empirical study it can be seen that they have the will to create a flow experience for every customer. Their big variation in customers creates a difficult situation where their offering must be able to match the skillset of everyone with suitable challenges in order to create an interesting and learning experience.

It can be argued that Universeum should aim to deliver an experience that can create arousal, control or flow (Watson & Clark, 1997). Meaning that through an identification of what each target group feels about every offering in the facility creating a flow experience for one group, where the challenges are optimally fitted to the skillset of the group. A group with lower

skillset will have an experience of arousal and a group with higher skillset will have an experience of control which might also lead to satisfaction.

5.3 A framework for QM at Universeum

The TQM- tree presented by Lilja (2010) and the model presented by Edvardsson et.al. (2007) regarding value-based service quality was the first sources of inspiration for the framework created for Universeum. From the models important areas for QM were identified and became the focus of the interviews with the managers at Universeum. The answers in the interviews were coded and analyzed in order to identify which areas and parts that were most important for the organization. After this step the first draft of a framework were created. This framework were revised after meetings with the management group and the following areas were identified and agreed upon in the management group to be part of the framework:

- **Committed Management**
- **Committed co-workers**
- **Customer Focus**
- **Processes**
- **Continuously Improvement**
- **Measurability**
- **Communication**
- **Vision, goals and Values**
- **Education**

These areas were revised once more in order to be more understandable and have a more logical interrelation. The areas were then modified to:

- **Committed Management**
- **Committed co-workers**
- **Customer Focus**
- **Mapped and Measurable Processes**
- **Continuously Improvement**
- **Shared Vision, Goals & Values**
- **Internal and External Communication**
- **Updated and Continuous Education**
- **High experience quality**

The terminology used by Lilja (2010) in order to explain the relationship of the different areas is adapted and modified in order to better suit this study. He uses the terms drivers, enablers and activities to visualize the different levels of his model. In the framework created here three areas are seen to be enablers, which empower the other parts and the overall initiative of QM and there are five areas that are seen to be activities through which the organization should strive to achieve **High experience quality**. The classification is as follows:

Enablers

- **Committed Management**
- **Committed co-workers**
- **Customer Focus**

Activities

- **Continuous Improvement**
- **Mapped and Measurable Processes**
- **Shared Vision, Goals & Values**
- **Internal and External Communication**
- **Updated and Continuous Education**

Below first the enablers and later the activities are presented. Each enabler's and activity's role is explained and analyzed. Together the enablers and activities creates the framework that is labeled the QM-Nucleus.

5.3.1 Enablers of QM

The enablers in the framework are seen to be aiding and supporting the activities through which the experience quality is to be achieved. These are on an organizational level and are fundamentals to QM at Universeum, see Figure 21.

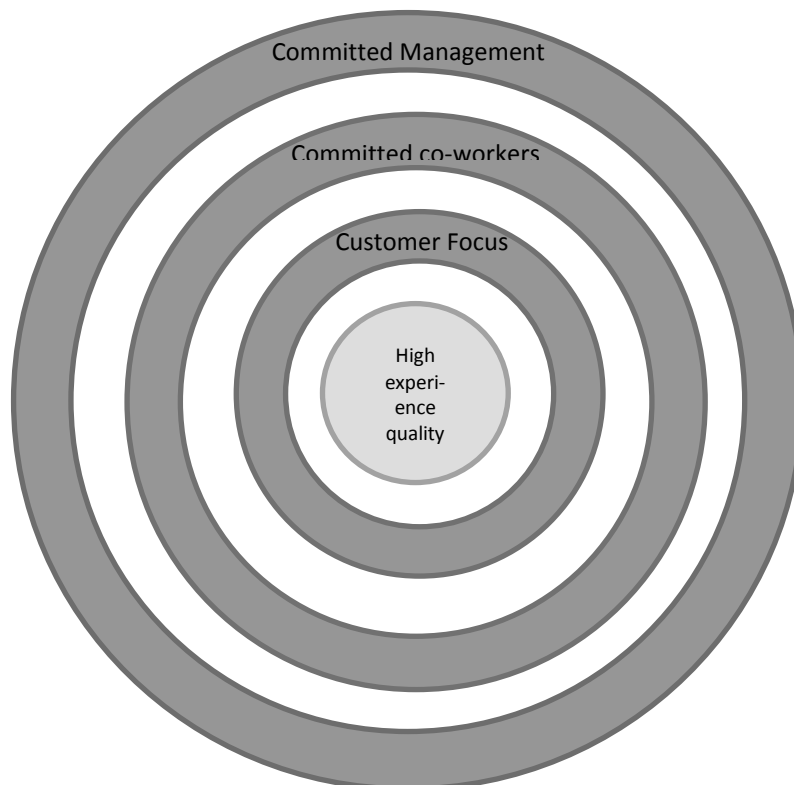


Figure 21. The layers of the QM-Nucleus working as enablers.

Committed Management

From the study visits performed at Renova and Enköpings lasarett, it was evident that the implementation of quality work is heavily depending on **Committed Management**. Even though it is the co-workers that perform the practical work with quality tools, it is the management that has to be motivating and guiding the activities in the right direction. The importance of committed management is in line with previous research on QM and it has, for example, been a central part in all of the models presented earlier by Lilja (2011) and Edvardsson et.al. (2007). Schein (2004) argues the importance of managers to show their appreciation of the performed work. Through setting up clear goals and rewards, management can show their commitment as well as increase the commitment of co-workers. Though it is important to have in mind that this goal focused reward system can create a negative competitiveness between co-workers if it becomes their only motivation. From the study visits it was also seen that it is positive if managers act unified. When interviewing the managers the requirement for a common view on how to work with QM was stated. Today the managers have different views of how to work with quality and they see benefits in being unified in such matters.

From the interviews with the managers most of them points out that a problem is that the goals of the organization are not broken down to an individual level. This can lead to a lack of knowing in what direction and how co-workers contribute to fulfill the vision of the organization. The vision and goals have not either been taken into account when new changes of the exhibitions have been made.

One manager spoke about the importance of managers to serve as a good example when introducing the quality initiative. A good way for managers to do this is to spend time on the quality work, participate in meetings with co-workers and try to create an understanding about the importance of quality in the organization.

Committed co-workers

The importance of **Committed co-workers** can be seen in all of the service quality models presented by Lilja (2010) and Edvardsson et.al., (2007). Grönroos (1988) presents five rules about the role of the service provider and how to nourish the customer relation. The conclusion that could be drawn from the rules is that the person that provides the service, in the case of Universeum mainly guides and educators, has a great responsibility. Traditionally there have been functions within companies that exclusively handles marketing, demand analysis and quality control. When a service is delivered, or in Universeum's case an experience, these responsibilities to a great extent is held by the person who provides the service. When interviewing the managers and talking to guides it is identified that there is a lack of education about marketing, evaluation of demand and quality control. The role the guides have is not corresponding to the education and training offered to them. Not only the introductory education should be extended but also continuous repetition on the topics and further education should be standard.

It is not only knowledge that is required for delivering a service with good quality, one of Grönroos (1988) rules handles the importance of being service minded. Service mindedness,

as well as the responsibilities and importance of being motivated to perform a good job. The interviews at Universeum showed that one of the company's strengths are the motivated co-workers, most of the personnel have a great interest in what they are doing. By creating the right knowledge and create a service know-how the service meeting functions at Universeum could have the ability to handle the customer relationships in a high quality way.

There are several ways to support commitment for the co-workers. Entrust co-workers with responsibility and authority along with education is some of the methods proposed by Edvardsson (1988). What is also important is the recruitment process where the future employee should have values in line with the company (Schein, 2004). Several of the managers interviewed feel that it is important to have common values within the company and that they are communicated to each employee. With explicit values it is easier to recruit the right people and the employees have something to fall back on as a guidance of how to act in different situations. In close correlation to the common values the breakdown of visions and goals to an individual level in order to guide the everyday work is of importance.

When the framework in this study was developed it was shown for the management already in an early stage in order to be influenced by their opinion about what the framework should look like. From the first review the primary opinion of the managers was that committed co-workers have to have a prominent role. After a revision of the framework the management team was satisfied with having committed co-workers as an enabler in the framework and agreed upon that the framework would be suitable for the organization.

Customer focus

A general principle for all QM theory is **Customer Focus**. Through high customer focus it is seen that an organization can deliver a high quality product or service. Lilja (2011) has in his TQM – tree customer focus as a part of the roots. This is also in line with the empirical study when the managers at Universeum communicated what they thought were important in order to achieve high quality.

The experience that is offered by Universeum and the aim of educating their customers contributes to that the organization in one sense has customer focus. In another sense the organization might not have as strong customer focus. There is more work to be done regarding understanding what the customer expects and capturing the perception of the customer regarding what parts of the experience that is positive and negative. Through reconstructing the customer survey to capture the voice of the customer and see what parts of the offer that contributes to the experience positively and negatively the organization could create a more customer focused offer. It is also believed that the customer survey must be conducted on a more continuous basis in order to support Universeum in becoming an organization that is up-to date with its customers' beliefs and thoughts.

As stated above customer focus pervades the vision, goals & values of Universeum. This is also identified through the empirical study. The organization has the customer in the center to a large extent which is well in line with models on QM, for example Dean & Bowen (1994)

and Lilja (2010). There is, however a gap in the organization when it comes to identifying what the customer really expects, perceives and experience from a visit.

5.3.2 Activities of QM

It is seen that through the activities the organization moves towards a higher experience quality. Activities take place on an individual as well as organizational level and are empowered by the enablers, see Figure 22.

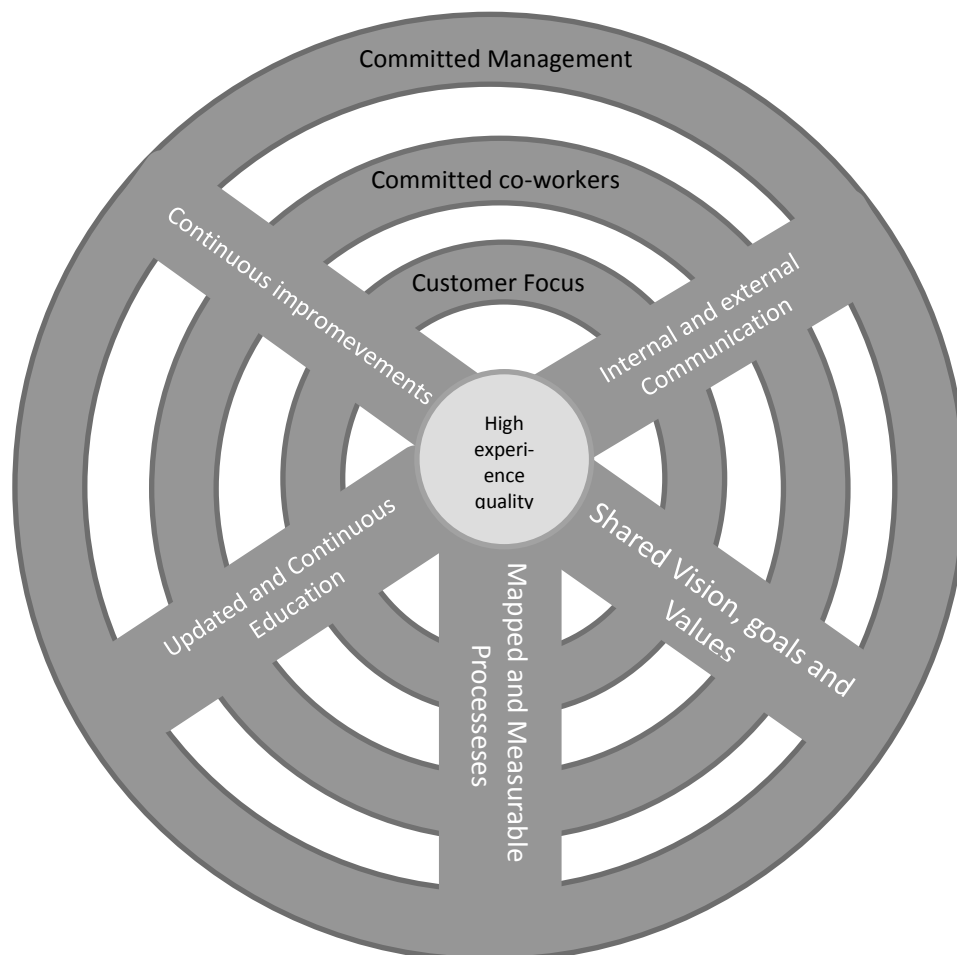


Figure 22. The QM-Nucleus with enablers and activities.

Continuous improvements

Lilja (2010) emphasizes the importance of **Continuous improvements** by having it as a root in the TQM- tree. The author also states that continuous improvements are seen as a driver that aims to drive the attitudes within the organization towards what is seen as the stem of the TQM-tree. A difference can be seen in The QM – Nucleus where continuous improvements are also seen as an activity, while customer focus has a more central and overseeing role. Here the view is that continuous improvements should preferably have a customer focus in order for the organization to deliver a greater experience in the end. As seen in Dean & Bowen (1994), customer focus is the most important principle of QM and through having

customer focus in the work of continuous improvements the organization will strive towards delivering an experience that continuously exceeds customer expectations at every visit.

The managers at Universeum also requested a more systematic way of handling improvements and change in their organization. This is seen as a pivotal part of the organization due to the fact that they also feel that stagnation is a threat. In order to attract customers to come back to Universeum the offer needs to be changed and improved on a continuous basis in order for a new memory, a new learning and hence a new experience to be created. The more flexible parts of the exhibition might be the most suitable to improve continuously in order to create a feeling of novelty for the customer. Lilja et. al. (2010) also states that novelty is an important aspect of learning.

Communication within the organization would benefit from a more systematic work with continuous improvements throughout the organization. It would make co-workers feel they have a greater chance to affect and improve their own situation together with the organization. This can lead to more commitment and create a better work situation. It is also important to have in mind that implementing a systematic work for continuous improvement is not easy and it has been seen in, for example, the study visits that such initiatives need great support and commitment in order to be successful.

Mapped and Measurable Processes

Mapped and Measurable Processes have been identified as a requirement of a majority of the managers. As stated in the empirical study Universeum has started an initiative for implement Kaizen in the organization. This initiative has also lead to the mapping of processes and an examination on the attitude of the co-workers towards each other and customers. The mapping of processes is a requirement for measurability in order for the results of the improvements to be visualized.

Lilja (2010) puts emphasis on that all decisions should be based on fact and in order to be able to do this there is a need for mapped and measurable processes. It contributes to the knowledge about what is done, together with that it brings indications of what should be improved and enables evaluation when improvements and changes have been implemented. An understanding of the processes also brings a possibility to focus more on what really matters for the organization.

Shared Vision, Goals and Values

Shared Vision, goals & values aims to highlight the importance of having consensus within the organization regarding what is to be achieved, how it is supposed to be done and by whom in order to benefit the organization the most. It has become evident in the interviews that there is a need for greater consensus within Universeum regarding several important subjects affecting the experience the organization is delivering. For example one manager identifies the issue of that some co-workers might only focus on their part of the facility instead of looking to the bigger picture and the best for the whole organization.

A lack of unity exist amongst the managers regarding aspects such as terminology of the visitors, today some managers name the visitors guest and others name them customers. A

difference in the perception regarding if the main goal of the organization is to be profitable or educating has also been identified. This can lead to that different functions are managed towards different goals and directions, creating a fragmented organization. This is critical as the corporate climate is stated to affect the service quality and it is seen as pivotal that every co-worker has an understanding of the organizations values (Edvardsson et. al., 2007).

Internal and External Communication

Internal and External Communication is of great importance for an organization in the Experience Industry and, possibly, especially important for Universeum to take into regard. This as there is a large degree of knowledge transfer between Universeum and its customers, making the external communication becomes central. The transfer of both tacit and explicit knowledge, explained by Nonaka (1994), occurs from co-worker to co-worker and also from co-workers and the facility to the customers. What is communicated to the customer needs to be fulfilled in order for them to be satisfied and in order to delete the existing service gaps presented by Grigoroudis (2008).

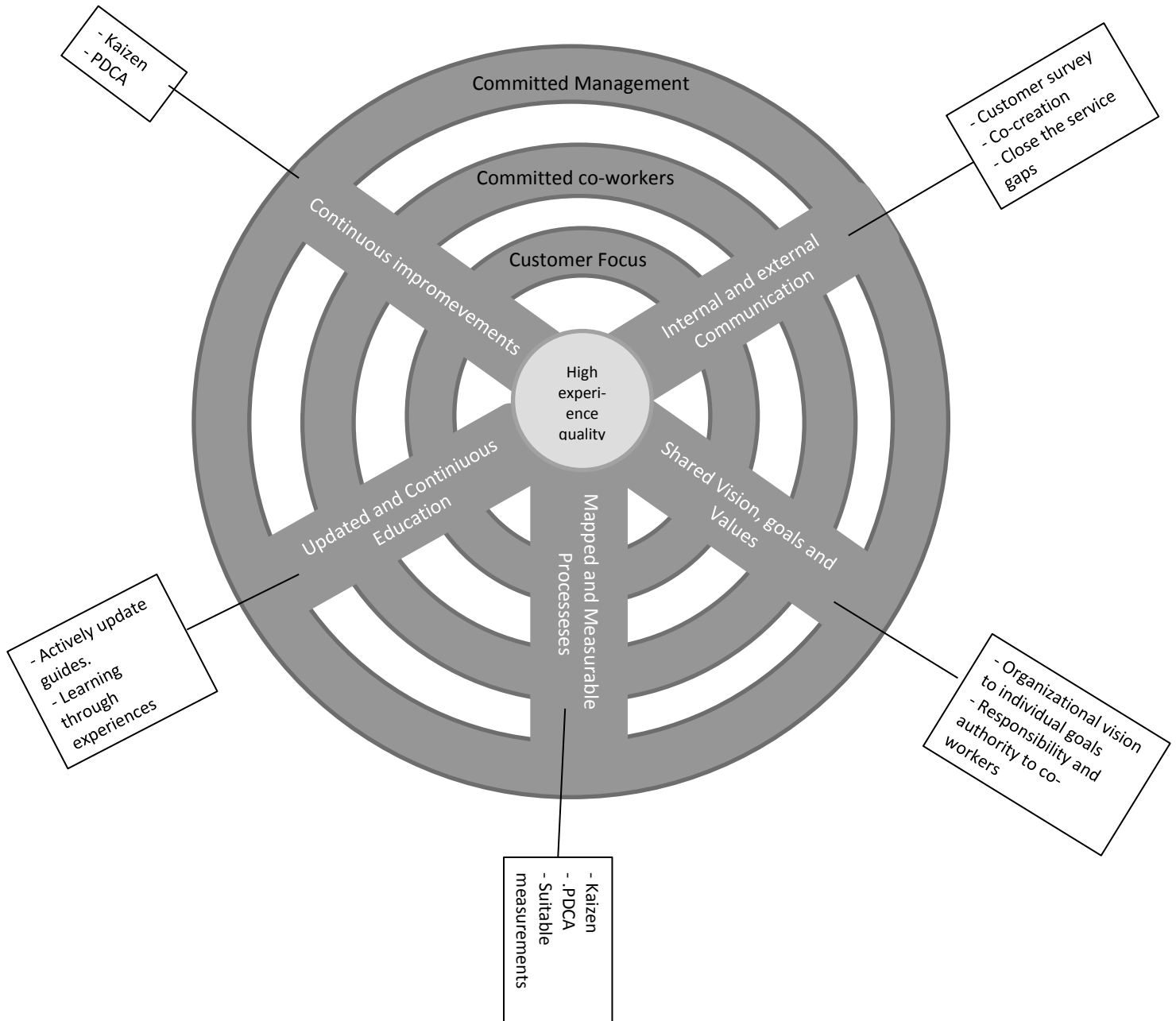
The internal communication is also important as it is a part of the culture, so everyone can feel that they can influence the organization and in that way feel more committed. As Nonaka (1994) states, the internal communication is important in order to achieve knowledge transfer from explicit to explicit , combination, and also regarding the transfer of explicit to tacit knowledge, internalization. It is also important that it is possible to communicate between the different functions of the organization in order for everyone to have a common goal towards which everyone strives. This is seen in the empirical study when examples of positive projects put forward often concern a cross-functional project with a high level of cooperation.

Updated and Continuous Education

Updated and Continuous Education of both co-workers and customers is an important aspect for Universeum. Competent and knowledgeable co-workers will deliver a greater experience to the customer, both regarding service in general but also the more specific part of learning. Kolb (1984) states that experience has a central role in learning and the quality of the experience can be directly connected to the quality of learning. As Watson & Clark (1997) argues a strong memory is created when strong engagement is experienced. This is in line with the notion of the managers who see Universeum as a compliment to the school and should be more fun and should not feel forced. Here it becomes important that the guides and educators are able to create this strong engagement and deliver an experience for the customers that induce learning.

5.3.3 Examples of practices for QM

Below are examples of practices connected to the activities in the framework. These are seen as ideas on how to operationalize QM into daily practice, see Figure 23.



Figur 23. Practices and tools connected to the activities in the QM-Nucleus.

Continuous improvements

Universeum aims to start working with Kaizen as the main driver of continuous improvements. Kaizen is depending on the co-workers willingness to find possible improvements in the daily work and carry them through. It is important that there are incentives for the co-workers to make the required effort to work with kaizen in a good way. Applying Kaizen gives the co-workers a possibility to affect their own work environment and carry improvements through, something that is an incitement in itself. In Kaizen they would also work with the PDCA-cycle presented by Deming (1986) which would lead to generation of knowledge creation within the organization. It is seen that the practices in continuous improvements will lead to **Mapped and Measurable processes**, which is the reason why no own headline exist for this activity.

Shared Vision, Goals and Values

The need for shared vision, goals and values were identified in the interviews with the managers. It is important that co-workers agree with and understand the organizational mission as well as feel that they themselves have a big part in the deliverance of it. Edvardsson (1988) points out that this can be achieved through entrusting co-workers with responsibility and authority regarding the creation and fulfillment of goals that are in line with the organizational mission. Schein (2004) emphasizes the importance during the recruitment stage of new co-workers that these should have values and an attitude that are in line with the organizational values.

Updated and continuous education

As Grönroos (1988) and Lilja et al. (2012) states, in service business the responsibility for delivering a good quality service lies to a great extent with the person that interact with the customer. At Universeum, it is the guides that primarily interact with the customers. Some managers thought that the level of education among the guides is not always sufficient. When being employed at Universeum, everyone gets an introductory education but besides that there is no standardized education for refreshing or expand the knowledge of the guides. Further the guides express a lack of knowledge about what the customers expect and needs, this is an area that should be included in the refreshing education, customer needs can be changing Kano (2001).

As stated by Watson and Clark (1997), Lilja et al. (2010) and Lilja and Wiklund (2007), memories and interest is created when the participants are emotionally touched, involved, and surprised. The focus group was fascinated of dangerous animals and requested more of them. Further, the focus group appreciated the dimension of touching and tasting things in the offer. To accomplish the vision that Universeum has, to create an interest and a will for further learning, Universeum should identify what is creating emotions and involvement of their visitors. For the pupils participating in the focus group, the dangerous animals may create an emotional engagement because of the fascination for them but for other guest, for example younger pupils the dangerous animals may be too frightening. Different guests require different drivers for emotional engagement. One aspect at Universeum that was highly appreciated in the focus group was the involvement of all senses when learning. It can be seen

that using all senses automatically generates a sort of involvement, even from the pupils that earlier showed little interest.

Internal and external communication

According to Juran (1951) and Deming (1986), the quality of a service or product is defined by the customer. In line with this, the interviewed managers defined quality at Universeum as exceeding customer expectations. When managers and guides answered the question about what the customers want and think is important they answer that they do not know but probably have a clue. One reason of this is the way thoughts from the guests are taken care of. When comparing with the information collected from the study visit at Liseberg about how they use their customer surveys it is clear that the customer surveys at Universeum, which is today's main source of information about their guests' thoughts and opinions, is not conducted in an optimal way. The survey is quite brief compared to Liseberg's, it is not investigating what is generating quality and the analysis of the data is not that extensive. As the survey is formed it acts more as a grading system for some areas in the facility. Quantitative and qualitative information from the surveys could both contribute to action plans with both a short and a long timeframe. One option would be to adapt the questionnaire and analysis method proposed by Kano (2001). In this way the organization would not only identify what creates a great experience for the customer but also identify the parts of the facility that might not contribute with any value or parts that have a negative effect on the experience.

Another way of increasing the value for the customer in general would be to continuously take the chance of evaluation from school visits. As identified in the focus group and when talking to the educators no connection to the school is done before or after the visits. This leads to that the students do not know what to expect and might lead to a lesser learning experience when it is not reconnected afterwards (Kolb, 1984). In line with the theory of Vargo & Lusch (2008) and Grönroos (2011) the value co-creation between producer and consumer takes place both before and after the transaction. In the case of Universeum this idea becomes important as the quality of the experience they offer depends both on how well the customer's expectations are met and preferably exceeded, as well as how strong the memory of the experience is after the visit. With connection to the school both before and after Universeum have a chance of obtaining input on these aspects.

This increase in interaction and knowledge from both sides would also lead to a closing of the different service gaps that might be present between Universeum and its customer. Especially the understanding gap and perception gap would likely be closed (Grigoroudis, 2008).

6 Discussion

This chapter presents the discussion which is divided into three parts. The first part is theoretical implications where our contribution to the field of experience quality is discussed. The second part is the managerial implications where generic explanation of what elements the managers within the experience industry should focus on in order to achieve high experience quality. The last part of the discussion is future research where the choice of research strategy is discussed and areas for future research are presented.

6.1 Theoretical implications

The purpose of this study is to define experience quality and create a framework for QM in the Experience Industry. This purpose will be addressed through a single case study at Universeum AB. The main aim of the framework is to provide a company in the Experience Industry with a customized and structured way of working with QM. Furthermore different practices are connected to the framework in order to visualize how these relate to the principles in the framework. It was understood that no conventional definition for experience quality could be found in existing literature and that there did not exist a framework for QM adapted for the Experience Industry. This gap was addressed by combining previous research with empirical findings in order to create an understanding of, and framework for, experience quality.

The existing literature on experience quality is limited. The most substantial research has been done by Pine & Gilmore (1999) on Disney, which are working with experience quality. However, the findings in their research might in some regards mostly focus on the specific case of Disney and might not be seen as directly transferable to other companies in the experience industry. The different definitions of experience found, all handled the experience itself but no one connected it to the concept of quality. When combining the theories of experience and quality with empirical findings regarding what a company in the experience industry identifies as quality, the following definition of the concept experience quality could be proposed:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations.”

This is seen to be a suitable definition for experience quality since it is based on the empirical findings in this study alongside definitions presented by Watson & Clark, (1997); Pine & Gilmore, (1999); Poulsson & Kale, (2004) and Lilja et. al. (2010). The definition also provides an understanding for the concept experience quality through the combination of how an experience is created and the notion of exceeding customer expectations in order to deliver quality.

However the mission Universeum has of delivering an experience that is educational for its customer provided a gap between the organization and the definition above. In order to better explain experience quality at Universeum the following definition is proposed:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations and raises a desire to learn.”

This definition also covers the mission of the company creating a definition the company can use in their future QM work when communicating to co-workers and customer what experience quality means at Universeum.

The models presented by Lilja (2010) and Edvardsson et.al. (2007) were used as a foundation for the QM framework developed. The model by Lilja (2010) were chosen as it have been developed from earlier models of QM and that it takes into account many of the aspects that are important for this study, such as committed management, customer focus and continuous improvement. One important factor was that Lilja (2010) also focused on the aspect experiences. However the layout of this model felt a bit straggly, we wanted the model to look more uniting and coherent. The model presented by Edvardsson et.al. (2007) were chosen as it was created for a company claiming to deliver an experience to its customers. The model also takes into account the value co-creation that we believe is a critical part of the offer at Universeum.

Through a merger of the frameworks in Lilja (2010) and Edvardsson et.al. (2007), the first draft of the framework was created. In this first draft empirical findings were also taken into regard when deciding on which parts should be included in the framework. The layout of the framework was mostly influenced by the model by Edvardsson et.al. (2007), as it was more in line with what we felt would provide the right level of comprehensibility about the role of the different elements in the framework.

The framework created here has some parts that are different from the models presented in Lilja (2010) and Edvardsson et.al. (2007). The activity *“Updated and Continuous Education”* cannot be found in the earlier models and have an important role in the framework created here as it concerns a central aspect of the offer of Universeum. It also has a complex character as Universeum strive to educate its customers and therefor have the need of having pedagogical personal that meet the customers. It is also central for the company to deliver an experience, which implies that the co-workers should be able to create strong engagement for the customers and therefor needs to be educated in how to achieve this. The core of the framework is *“High experience quality”*; it is seen as the overall aim that is supported by the enablers and activities in the QM framework.

Another aspect that differentiates our framework from the model presented by Lilja (2010) is that *“Customer focus”* is seen to be an enabler and *“Continuous improvements”* is seen as an activity. In the model created by Lilja (2010) both these are seen to be drivers of QM. The different interpretation by us is due to that we believe that customer focus is more abstract than continuous improvements and that it is something that should be in the mind-set of every co-worker no matter what they are doing. Further, in the continuous improvement activities customer focus should have a central part and a driver of the improvements.

Practices have been included in the framework in order to more concretely see how Universeum could work to achieve to obtain high experience quality. These have been

connected to the activities but it is important to emphasize that not only the activities are present when conducting the practices but also the enablers. It is the enablers that support and empower the practices and give the drive needed. The organization will in the future be able to connect new practices and tools to the framework in order to see how they would improve the organization and help them achieve higher experience quality for their customers.

6.2 Managerial implications

It has through this study become evident that in order to deliver high experience quality, managers in the Experience Industry has to pay special attention to a number of aspects. There are similarities to QM regarding services but there are also extensions and additions to it since offering an experience differ from offering a service.

Pine & Gilmore (1999) identify the need for an experience offering to be memorable and that it is what differentiate it from general services. This is also the first implication managers have to have in mind when creating the offer of an experience that will satisfy its customers. This leads to the implication of how to create memories. Through this study it has been identified that it is through strong engagement memories are created. Strong emotional engagement can both be created through negative or positive feelings (Watson & Clark, 1997) and it is important for managers to decide on how the experience should be formed.

For example it could be seen in the focus group at Universeum with 13 year olds that they demanded more scary animals and it is then reasonable to assume that this might have a strong emotional engagement through them being scared, but create a strong memory and an appreciated experience that they will talk to their friends and family about. This example also points out the importance for managers to keep in mind that what might be requested by one segment of their customers and create an appreciated experience for them might on the other hand create a not so good experience for other segments. This is an aspect that is general for all organizations.

For companies delivering an experience it can be reasoned that the aspect of value co-creation between provider and customer is especially important. As presented by Grönroos (2011) the co-creation takes part in the interaction between provider and customer. Since the interaction time is long and significant during delivery of an experience offer, it is not difficult to understand the importance of the notion of value co-creation.

In order to enhance value co-creation it also becomes important for companies in the Experience Industry to reconnect to their customer before and after the deliverance of the experience. This would increase the level of value created and give a higher experience quality. Through identifying and understanding the expectations and perceptions of the customer a company would have easier to deliver an appreciated experience.

Another implication that has been identified is the importance of a shared vision, goal and values. Since the experience is created through a high level of interaction between customer and provider it is important that all co-workers have the goal of delivering an experience and an understanding of how it is created.

6.3 Future research

The research strategy used in this study was a qualitative approach with an iterative process of combining the theoretical study and the empirical study. The research design used was a case study design due to the character of the premises and the time limit for a master thesis. The qualitative research strategy were used in order to obtain a deeper understanding of what managers of a company in the Experience Industry perceive as quality and how this is to be achieved. A danger with data case study is that the result is rather specific to this one case. However, this has to some extent been counteracted through study visits at other companies that recently have implemented QM in their organization.

Since a framework for QM were to be developed the choice of have an iterative process was logical. This gave the possibility to go back and forth between theory and empiric findings, validating the framework. This approach also gives the possibility to create a more customized framework for Universeum which increases the possibility of it being used in the future.

Since this study has focused on the principles of QM a suggestion for future research would be to have a quantitative research strategy to see how customers experience different offers. This could with benefit be done at Universeum due to the high level of variation in their offer in combination with their mission of being educating provides an interesting premises. It would be beneficial for Universeum as a company to see what aspects that affect the experience quality in their offer.

Another identified possibility for future research would be to see how general the framework is for companies in the Experience Industry. We believe that it is probable that the importance of the aspect education is rather unique for Universeum. In this line of reasoning it would be interesting to perform other case studies to see if aspects with the same level of uniqueness, equivalent to education for Universeum, can be identified in other organizations in this industry. This would enhance the notion that though being in the same industry all companies delivering an experience in some way is delivering something unique. If it is identified that every company within the experience business have their own unique element in their offer but the other aspects are the same, it could bring a greater understanding of experience quality and how it is to be managed.

7 Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to define experience quality and create framework for QM in the Experience Industry. This purpose was addressed through a single case study at Universeum AB. A conclusion that is drawn from our study is that experience quality is depending on the ability to create memories for the customer and exceed the customer's expectation. The responsibility for creating this lies to a great extent with the provider who is co-creating value together with the customer. There are several aspects that affect the experience and to be able to deliver a high quality experience these aspects have to be understood and managed. The framework presented in this report aims to support QM in the Experience Industry. The framework consists of enablers and activities that make it easier to work with QM in a structured way. However, it should be noted that this framework is adapted to Universeum and is not universal for all companies within the experience business even though most elements are assumed to be useful also in other companies. The purpose of the study was decomposed to the research questions below.

1. What does experience quality mean?

Based on literature on experiences and literature quality we proposed the following definition for experience quality:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations”

This definition serves as a definition for experience quality in the Experience Industry as a whole. For this study a more customized definition for Universeum was desirable. What primary differentiates Universeum from most other companies within the experience business is the learning aspect. The customized definition:

“Experience quality is when a strong memory is created through an emotionally engaging event that exceeds customer expectations and raises a desire to learn”

2. How should a company in the Experience Industry work with quality in a systematic way?

The framework developed in this study aims to guide the quality work. The framework includes three layers on a principle level that acts as enablers for QM. The enablers empower five activities through which a company in the Experience Industry is meant to achieve high experience quality. The activities then consist of practices, divided into the different activity areas. These practices aim to be used by managers and co-workers in the practical work with QM. The framework created in this study is assumed to be generic for the Experience Industry with one activity that is more focused on Universeum, i.e. updated and continuous education.

8 Recommendations to Universeum

As stated above the focus of this study has not been to develop detailed instructions of how to perform the daily work with QM at Universeum but rather develop guidelines on a principle and practice level. Even though it has not been the focus during the study and the development of the framework, some desirable actions on a detailed level have been identified. These actions could be valuable in Universeum's further work with QM.

Continuous improvements

Continuous improvements are an activity that pushes the quality work forward. The focus is on gathering ideas about improvements and solving current problems through the implementation of these improvements. Kaizen is a concept that Universeum aim to implement. This concept is gathering improvement ideas from the employees. It requires committed co-worker, if it is a problem on a smaller level, the co-worker solve the problem themselves. The commitment could make them feel more involved and able to affect their work environment which could generate an eager to perform well. Kaizen may not be enough to solve all problems, especially not those of a complex character. Six Sigma is a concept for problem tracing which could be sufficient to use in these cases as a complement to Kaizen. The main idea about continuous improvements is still to develop and improve in order to handle the competition and satisfy the customers. Therefore it is important to connect to the customer needs. Kaizen and Six Sigma do not automatically improve in line with customer needs and therefor it is important to remember that the customers should be involved in the development. The involvement from customers could for example be achieved through surveys or focus groups.

Shared Vision, Goals and Values

The activity Shared Vision, Goals and Values is meant to act as unifying, to get everyone within the organization to work towards the same direction. In order for the organization to move against a common goal, the managers have to be consistent of how to accomplish this. A key for this is to agree upon the vision and goals on an organizational level and then break them down to individual goals. By doing that the co-workers know how they should contribute to the vision and goals which could be seen as abstract if not connected to their work. These values should act as guidance for the co-workers both in the daily work but also when conducting improvements. Universeum has a well stated vision and mission, the problem is that it has to be broken down to everyday activities.

Internal and External Communication

Internal and External Communication aims to address both internal communication within the organization but also external communication with the customer. Universeum's external communication to its customers is in some cases quite offensive, the commercials could be seen in a lot of places and it paints up a picture that promises a lot. One of the drawbacks with the marketing is that it sometimes promises things that are hard to deliver and if it is not delivered it is affecting the customers' perception of the experience. Attractive quality is achieved when customer expectations are exceeded (Kano et al., 1996), which is hard when

expectations are set very high. At the same time, in order to get people to visit at the first time, the marketing have to attract them and catch their curiosity. The marketing regarding the big exhibitions is not tailor made and specific to each target group but aims to attract everyone. The students participating in the focus group did not know what to expect from the visit.

The way to gain information of what the customers expects and appreciates is concentrated to surveys conducted a few times a year. By using for example a Kano survey (Matzler et al, 1996), Universeum would gain knowledge about the needs of the customers. The needs would be categorized so that Universeum would know what needs that are most important to meet and what is needed to delight the customer. The survey should be done continuously in order to have updated information, due to the fact that needs and demands change over time (Kano, 2001). In the surveys conducted now the questions are not specific enough about what the customer experiences or expects. These surveys provide a grading of the general impression of the experience which is not enough when trying to identify possible areas of improvement.

Furthermore, there should be a lot of interaction between Universeum and the school classes. For example as mentioned about improved learning, when a school class is visiting, let them have customized information before the visit so they know what to expect and after the visit they could have an evaluation in the classroom where they fill in a survey and maybe have a discussion about the visit. These actions would increase not only the students learning but also increase Universeum's knowledge about their customers.

The internal communication at Universeum could be improved, both regarding specific exhibitions and regarding knowledge transfer about general ways of working. When talking to managers there was a notion that exhibitions where several functions was involved in different periods tend to be no one's responsibility as a result of poor communication. Another notion that occurred when talking to the managers was that there was a lot of knowledge within the organization that was isolated; it should instead be transferred to the rest of the organization by improved communication. This communication would partly come automatically if introducing cross-functional groups where co-workers from different functions work together and exchanging experiences.

Updated and Continuous Education

Updated and Continuous Education is meant to support the education and knowledge of the co-workers as well as the education of the customers. The criticality of competent and service minded providers has been highlighted (Grönroos, 1988). At Universeum there is a lack of education within the service areas for the guides and educators, who are the primary service providers. The employees are recruited a lot depending their social skills but do not attain sufficient information of how to deliver a high quality experience. The knowledge about the customer is crucial; Universeum as an organization have to gain knowledge of customer needs before educating the service providers about it. In the end it is the customer who is evaluating the service provided.

Educating the customers is one area that is seen to differentiate Universeum within the Experience Industry. The fact that the number of school classes has been stable while the

number of private customer has increased a lot points to a need of reviewing the offer provided to the school classes. First of all Universeum should, in line with Kolb (1984), connect their offer more to the classroom education so that the classes could prepare for the visit and the knowledge gained at Universeum could later be repeated and given the opportunity to be deepened. Also the aspects that affect learning should be considered. It is crucial to create an environment where the customers are surprised, are creating memories and are challenged at their level (Christiansson, 1992; Csikszentmihalyi, 1997).

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Appendix A

Intervjumall

Demografi

1. Berätta om dig själv, bakgrund, tjänst, ansvarsområden osv.

Erbjudande

2. Vad erbjuder Universeum sina besökare enligt dig?
3. Vilka funktioner inom företaget är det som främst levererar detta?
4. Beskriv en lyckad kundupplevelse.
5. Hur påverkar din funktion erbjudandet?
6. Hur vill du utveckla erbjudandet?
7. Vet gästbemötande funktioner vad gästerna förväntar sig och tycker är viktigt?
8. Får dina medarbetare utbildning och ledning angående gästbemötande?
9. Vad är det som oftast leder till problem inom eran funktion?
10. Hur ser tillvägagångssättet ut för att lösa dessa problem?

Kvalitet

11. Vad är kvalité på Universeum för dig?
12. Skiljer sig den kvaliteten från den inom din funktion?
13. Hur arbetar ni med kvalité?
14. Vad är enligt dig viktigast för att upprätthålla kvalité på Universeum?
15. Hur skulle du vilja utveckla kvaliteten inom din funktion?
16. Hur skulle du vilja utveckla kvalitén inom Universeum?
17. Hur förmedlas vision och mål till era medarbetare?

Övrigt

18. Hur kommer ni fram till förändringsförslag, vad baseras förslagen på?
19. Hur utvärderas förändringar inom din funktion?
20. Tror du personalen är motiverad att utföra sina arbetsuppgifter?

21. Styrkor för din funktion?

22. Svagheter för din funktion?

23. Möjligheter för din funktion?

24. Hot för din funktion?

Vad tror du var den stora skillnaden 2012?