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Organizational silos at the workplace of an ICT service provider

Master's thesis

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Organisaatiosiilot ovat edelleen ajankohtainen murheenaihe yrityksille, sillä siilot vaikuttavat työyhteisöön negatiivisesti.

Tutkimus tehtiin kohdeyritykselle missä siilojen olemassaolo oli itsestäänselvyys henkilöstölle. Tämän tutkimukset tarkoituksena oli selvittää miten, mihin asteeseen ja missä siilot vaikuttavat kohdeyrityksessä. Tavoitteena oli löytää menetelmiä, millä kohdeyritys saisi siilot rikottua.

Tutkimus tehtiin suorittamalla kirjallisuuskatsaus ja datankeräys kohdeyrityksellä. Dataa kerättiin kyselyn kautta, missä selvitettiin miten kohdeyrityksessä tehdään yhteistyötä ja jaetaan tietoa, myös asiakkaan suuntaan. Kyselyyn vastasi yhteensä 106 henkilöä. Data kerättiin, muodostettiin visuaalisiksi taulukoiksi ja analysoitiin.

Tärkeimmät löydökset olivat että siiloja on olemassa ja ne ovat vahvempia tietyillä alueilla kohdeyrityksessä, eikä siilot ole välttämättä symmetrisiä. Monessa tapauksessa tieto liikkuu paremmin yhteen suuntaan kuin toiseen. Huomioitavaa on myös, että siilot saattavat aiheuttaa suuremman ongelman yhdelle kohderyhmälle kuin toiselle. Vastaavanlaisesti toinen ryhmä saattaa tarvita kommunikaatiota eri tavalla kuin toinen.

Tulevaisuudessa siiloja voitaisiin tutkia yrityksissä, minkä avulla siilojen vaikutuksia ymmärrettäisiin ja niihin voisi puuttua. Siilojen rikkominen auttaisi yrityksiä rakentamaan parempaa henkilöstösitoutuneisuutta ja asiakasuskollisuutta.

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ABSTRACT OF THE MASTER’S THESIS

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Organizational silos are still a relevant concern for companies today, with silos impacting the work environment negatively.

The research was done for a case company where the consensus was that silos exist and is a problem for everyone. The purpose of this thesis was to research how, to what extent and where do silos manifest themselves at the case company. The aim was to find ways to help the case company break down silos.

The research was done through literature study and by collecting data at the case company. Data was collected through a survey addressing collaboration and information flow within the company and how they interact with customers. Survey responses were collected from 106 responders. Data was summarized, formed into graphical tables and then analyzed.

The main findings were that silos exist and are stronger in certain areas at the case company and that the silos are not necessarily symmetrical. In several cases the information flows better one way than the other. It should also be noted, that silos may pose more of a problem to one party than the other and similarly the level of communication that is necessary may be different and unsymmetrical.

In the future silos could be researched at companies to determine their effect and significance so that they could be addressed. Breaking down silos could help companies to build better relationships and increase loyalty with their own employees as well as their customers.

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Espoo 23.4.2018

Henriikka Toikka

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CEM	Customer experience management
CRM	Customer relationship management
ICT	Information and communications technology
KPI	Key performance indicator
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprises

1 Introduction

The term silo has been used in organizations of all sizes for over 30 years, to describe a phenomenon where business units work in isolation from one another (Gleeson 2013). Silos have been talked about also at the case company examined in this study, their existence being so prominent in the minds of its employees that everyone takes their existence as a given.

This research was done for an international ICT (information and communications technology) service provider from the point of view of an offering life-cycle manager. The job involves understanding the market and making decisions about how different products and services (offerings) should be developed to address the current market situation. Often, however, offering life-cycle managers do not fully comprehend how their choices affect other offerings and product areas as their expertise is usually mainly focused on solely the offerings they are working with. As with many large organizations, much of the work happens in silos, a situation where there is not proper visibility to what other people and teams are working on. The motivation of the study was to find out the current level of isolated working conditions present in the case company. This knowledge could help understand what is being done right and could be learned from and what could be improved to promote collaboration and teamwork. Understanding the situation could help to explore how the corporate culture could be changed for better transparency, coordination, customer focus and ultimately business success.

The thesis seeks answers to the following questions:

1. Is there evidence of a silo mindset at the case company?
2. Is the silo mindset more prominent in certain employee groups?
3. How could the case company act to break down silos?

The scope of the study is limited to evaluating the silo phenomenon within a specific ICT service provider company, using information collected from the enterprise division at the case company. The enterprise division was selected as corporate customers and consumers are handled by separate departments, since corporate and consumer customers are offered completely different goods and services. Interviews from experts was limited to personnel from within the company, working in different roles and departments.

Research methods include a literature study of previous research focusing on the silo phenomenon, ICT service provider business, as well as customer experience. Knowledge of the case company was gathered through working at the case company and through knowledge gathered from experts at the case company. A survey was created and conducted at the case company to gather information from a wide audience. The information gathered from the survey was then analyzed through calculations and comparisons from different angles.

Prior to the current introduction section 1, the thesis includes an abstract, the table of contents and an abbreviations and acronyms section.

The study starts with the introduction to the research subject which summarizes the background, motivation, objective, scope and methods of the research.

The next part, section 2, is the literature review that introduces different organizational structures, explains the concept of silos and silo mentality, what customer experience is about and finally exploration of the business of an ICT service provider.

Section 3 gives the reader background information on the case company used for this thesis. While the same theories could apply to other companies, the research was done for a specific ICT service provider using information collected there and thus the results reflect the case company’s situation.

Section 4 explains how the research was conducted at the case company. The research was done through a survey and this section also explores the results, including the analysis.

The final section 5 of the study explores the results through reflecting and drawing conclusions from observations made in section 4. The section also includes recommendations for the case company; what and who to pay attention to for reducing the level of silo mentality, as well as for promoting a healthy and cooperative work culture and environment. Finally, the study includes ideas for future research that could be used as guidelines if someone wishes to explore the subject more thoroughly.

Sources used in this study can be found in the bibliography at the end of the thesis. A copy of the conducted survey is also included and can be found in Appendix A.

2 Literature Review

Existing literature on concepts revolving around organizational silos are analyzed in this section. Organizational structures are first evaluated as the thesis was conducted at a large and organized company. The concept of silo mentality and how it fits into the organizational structure is then clarified. Finally, retaining the customer and keeping them satisfied is, if not the main goal, an important target for any company and therefore customer experience and how it is related to organizational silos is explored.

2.1 *Organizational structure*

According to the Business Dictionary (2017a), the organizational structure of a company defines how authority and responsibilities are assigned and arranged. The organizational structure also determines how information flows between different hierarchical levels. The organization's structure is usually determined by the company's objectives and strategy. The structure of the organization can be depicted by a chart, such as seen below in Figure 2, where connecting lines show who is accountable to whom, where the leader is shown at the top of the chart and the subordinates on the bottom. Often organization charts can also include labels with manager's positions, a highly detailed chart can also include names and photos of the employees in the given positions.

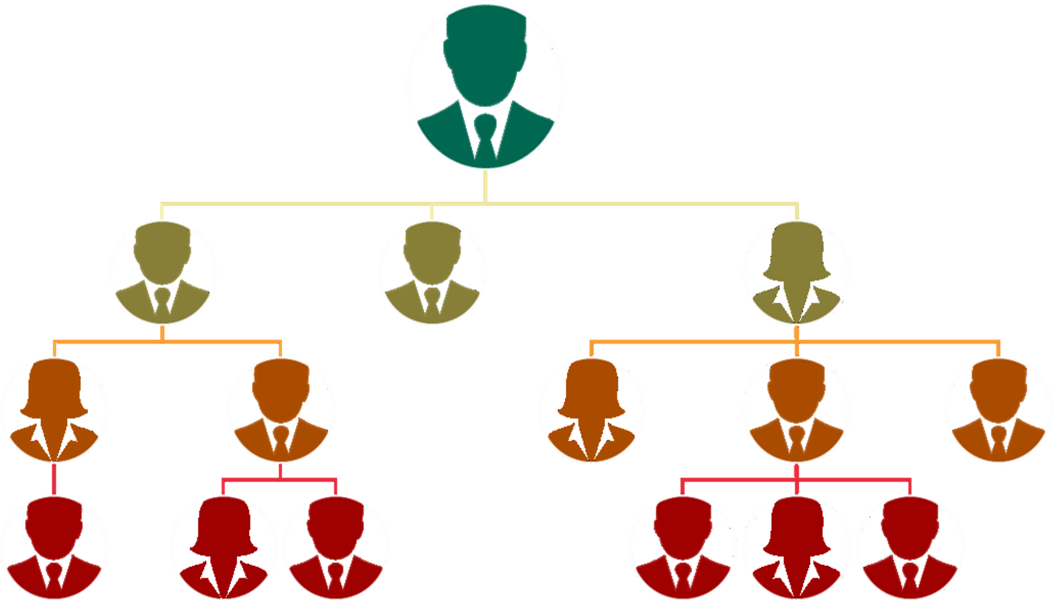


Figure 1. A hierarchical organization

An organization where activities are grouped around essential functions, such as sales, product and marketing, finance, technology and so on, is known as a functional organization. An example of a functional organization is illustrated below in Figure 2. Advantages of the functional organization include its simplicity and obviousness, and it can facilitate both managerial hiring and training, as well as facilitating the top manager's control. However, this type of organizational structure can increase the workload of the manager to whom functional departments report and it can reduce awareness of customer wants and needs. (Crandall, 2006)

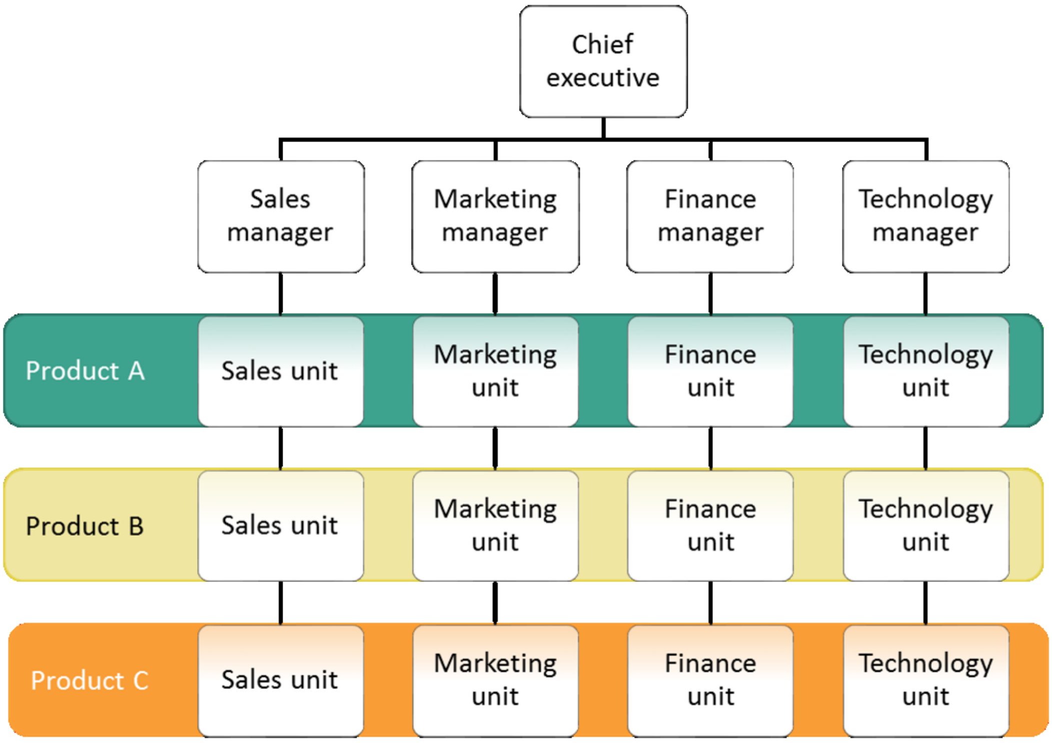

Chief executive
Sales manager
Marketing manager
Finance manager
Technology manager
Product A
Sales unit
Marketing unit
Finance unit
Technology unit
Product B
Sales unit
Marketing unit
Finance unit
Technology unit
Product C
Sales unit
Marketing unit
Finance unit
Technology unit

Figure 2. A functional organization

A divisional organization is when departments are grouped into self-contained units according to the company's products and services. Advantages of a divisional organization include facilitating coordination around the product or service, often resulting in more responsive service towards the customer. Disadvantages of a divisional organization are that the structure creates the need for similar activities in different departments, thus causing duplication of effort and requiring more managers with managerial abilities. The divisional organization structure can also breed compartmentalization, which as discussed earlier is a fundamental cause for silos developing within a company. (Crandall, 2006)

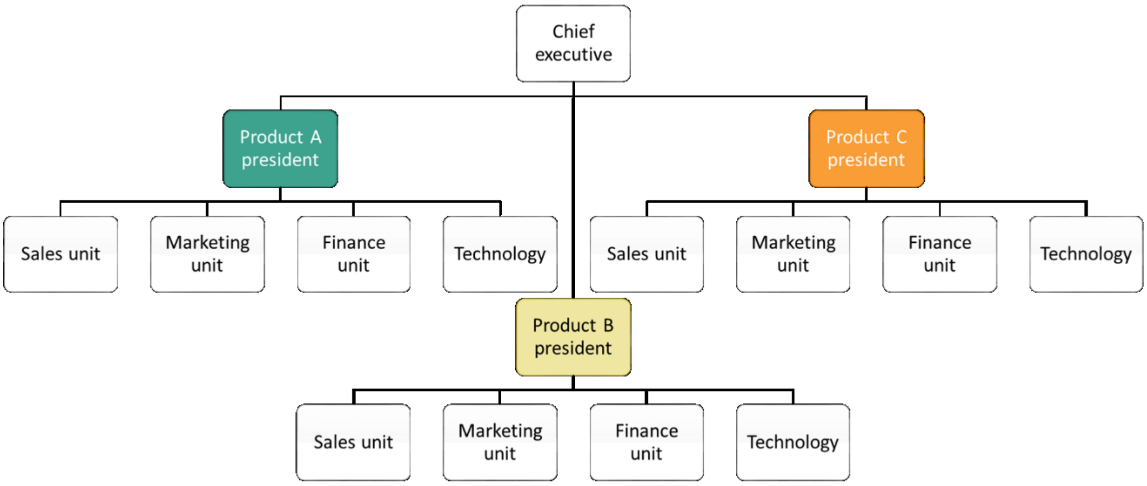

Chief executive
Product A president
Product C president
Sales unit
Marketing unit
Finance unit
Technology
Sales unit
Marketing unit
Finance unit
Technology
Product B president
Sales unit
Marketing unit
Finance unit
Technology

Figure 3. A divisional organization

An organization is considered a matrix organization, when employees are part of a functional department but are also simultaneously participating in assignments where they report to project, customer, product or geographic units. The advantages of a matrix organization include the easy access of expertise, stability through employees' permanent department assignments, as well the opportunity to focus on specific projects, products or customers. On the other hand, matrix organizations can cause inefficiency through lost time in coordinating and through power struggles, which can be due to conflict or confusion. (Crandall, 2006)

Another way to define the structure of an organization is through the span of control as well as how tall or flat the organization is. The span of control is defined by the number of subordinates who are reporting directly to a manager; a wide span means there is a large number of direct reports, while a narrow span means fewer number of direct reports. A tall organization, on the other hand, means that there are more management layers and a higher amount of hierarchical controls, while a flat organization has fewer management layers and less hierarchy, meaning that decision making is usually closer to the customer (Crandall, 2006). As Kastelle (2013) concludes, a tall organization has a higher level of hierarchy, which often leads to slower reactions to market changes, while a flatter organization structure breeds innovation and is able to satisfy customer needs faster. As Bragg (2017) argues, a hierarchical structure in the organization can have advantages: When an organization has a hierarchical structure, it becomes clearer who to report to and who has authority to make decisions; it is also easier to build a coherent brand image due to the higher level of control over the organization's activities. The hierarchical structure allows for a deeper level of employee specialization in their respective fields which can be an advantage when utilized properly. The downsides to hierarchical structures are slower decision making due to bureaucracy, information flow becoming more restricted, as well as costs associated with the different levels of management. As Bragg (2017) highlights, a trend can be seen where organizations are in general moving away from the hierarchical structure towards a flatter structure in order to respond faster to market changes and to address competition

The structure of an organization affects how well information flows within a company, which in turn is a factor in the level of cooperation within the company and has a role in how well and with what speed customer wants and needs can be met. The organization structure can be a factor in hindering information flow and breeding a silo mentality, a concept that is discussed in the next section.

2.2 *Silo mentality*

Traditionally a silo is known as a structure used for storage, but today it is also a term that describes a part of a company, organization or system that operates in isolation from others (Cambridge University Press 2017). The silo mentality is defined by the Business Dictionary (2017b) as a mindset where departments or sectors within a company do not wish to share information with others within the same company. Silo mentality will reduce efficiency and morale in the organization, and can hinder a productive company culture.

The phrase "functional silo syndrome" was coined by Phil Ensor in 1988. Thus, the term silo has existed for over 30 years in the business world, but it is still a current issue in organizations of all sizes (Gleeson 2013). As a recent study by Rotize (2015) shows, 73% of companies surveyed with over 1000 employees reported silo mentality to be an issue, also smaller companies reported having issues from silo mentality.

Silo mentality occurs when the mindset within an organization is one where there is resistance to share information and resources, where individuals may feel like it is not their problem or responsibility to coordinate their work and activities with others. Often this mindset also means that employees are not interested in understanding their role in the success of the organization they work at. Silo mentality is partially a part of human nature, and while silo mentality is present in companies of all sizes, some organizations have been more successful in breaking down the silos than others, suggesting that silos can be managed to some extent. (Perception Dynamics Ltd. 2017)

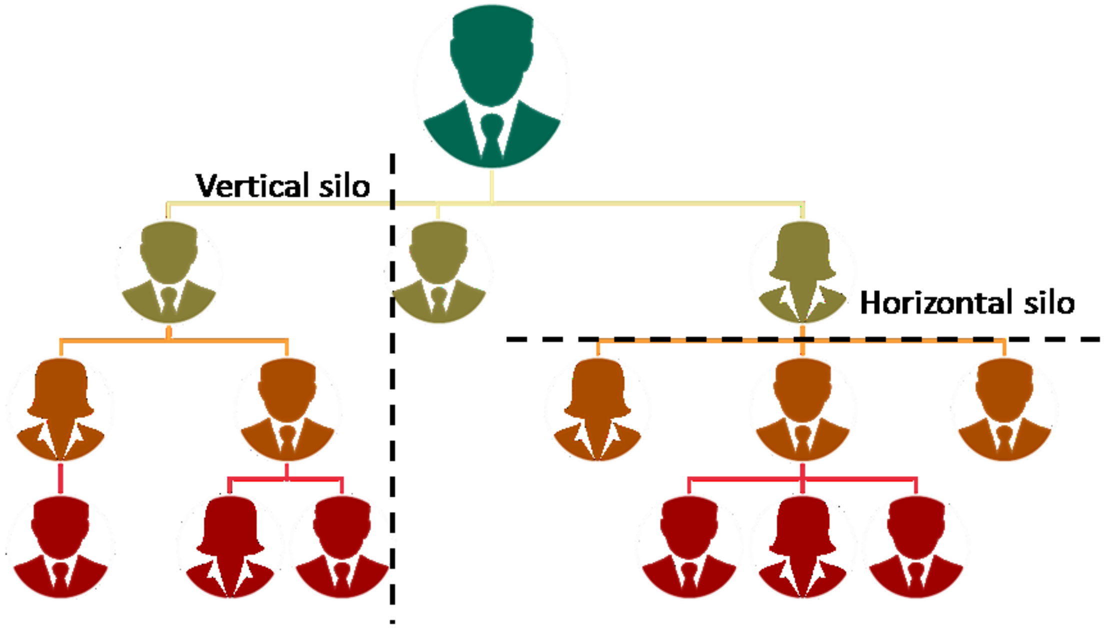


Figure 4. Organizational silos

Above in Figure 4 is the same example of an organizational structure as seen before, but with the addition of lines depicting organizational silos. Organizational silos can be vertical or horizontal silos. A horizontal silo is when information does not flow between the different levels of the organizational hierarchy, for example, as depicted by the horizontal black line in Figure 4, when a manager is unable to share their knowledge and information with their subordinates. Similarly, a vertical silo is when information is not freely shared between different departments and is illustrated with the vertical black line in Figure 4. This means that while information may flow through the different levels of organizational hierarchy a whole section of the organization may end up isolated from the rest of the company.

When departments are siloed, in that they are unable to effectively cooperate, executives may pin the fault on the employees. The employees may seem like they lack training or have a bad attitude and are unable to behave in collaboration with others, but often these observations are a symptom of a silo mentality, not the underlying cause.

Placing the blame on the employees may result in organizational-wide harm as it can create resentment between teams, and frustration towards employees' departments and the organization as a whole. Employees may be able to identify the problem but cannot do anything about it, as it is often a result of conflicts between leadership teams, and the problem needs to be tackled by the leaders. (Gleeson 2013)

To get rid of silos, everyone in the organization should be heading towards a common goal. This requires the leadership to agree on common goals and objectives. A unified front from the leaders promotes create trust among employees and helps for the work culture to move away from just thinking about each one's own team or department, instead considering the organization as a whole. (Gleeson 2013)

Once a common goal is set, all employees should be made aware of the goal and understand how they can themselves have an impact on achieving it, as well as giving them an incentive to work towards the common goal. (Gleeson 2013)

Progress should be measured along the way to achieving the set goal and regular follow-ups helps momentum going as individuals are made accountable for their assigned tasks (Gleeson 2013). Progress is measured by key performance indicators (KPI), defined as a measure used to evaluate the success in meeting performance objectives (Oxford University Press 2017).

Finally, cross-departmental interactions should be encouraged for shared knowledge and cooperation. It is suggested by Gleeson (2013), that management should work on reducing long and frequent meetings and instead focus on giving access to small meeting rooms and joint training processes, as well as encouraging cross-departmental feedback.

2.3 *Customer experience*

Customer experience is defined by Gartner (2017) as the customers' perception of interactions with a brand throughout the customer life cycle. Customer experience includes all points where a customer interacts with an organization, where interacting can mean anything such as viewing an advertisement, using the product or service or a support or service activity to solve a problem (Thompson 2006). However as pointed out in an article in the Harvard Business Review, customer experience is not only defined by focusing narrowly on customer interaction at critical moments or key touchpoints, but a sum of all interactions over time: the customer’s end-to-end journey with the organization (Rawson, Duncan & Jones 2013).

Customer experience management is managing customer experience and interactions “to build brand equity and improve long-term profitability” (Thompson 2006). Customer experience management (CEM) is defined by Gartner (2017) as “the practice of designing and reacting to customer interactions to meet or exceed customer expectations and, thus, increase customer satisfaction, loyalty and advocacy.”

Customer relationship management (CRM) is closely related to customer experience, as it is defined as a strategy used to both optimize business revenue and simultaneously promote customer satisfaction and loyalty. CRM technology and software is used to manage customer relationships. (Gartner, 2017)

Gartner surveys from 2015-2016 reveal that customer experience has become a key focus area in private- and public-sector enterprises (Raskino 2016). Yet studies show that customers are often engaged via disconnected silos, despite the common knowledge that the practice degrades customer experience (Phifer 2016).

2.3.1 Measuring customer loyalty

Customer loyalty has been recognized as a key factor for promoting growth in a company. Loyalty, however, should be distinguished from a customer that makes repeat purchases. Retention rates and other conventional customer loyalty metrics may have some merit for promoting growth in a company, but have their shortcomings also. A metric called Net Promoter Score was invented by Reichheld (2003) together with Satmetrix and has since been recognized as a simple but concise measure for estimating loyalty and growth, and is today used and measured by widely. Many companies, including the majority of the fortune 500 companies, measure and utilize NPS scores themselves. In addition, external companies such as Satmetrix (2017), the company that helped coin the concept of NPS, measure NPS of several companies in order to create a comparison and benchmark of NPS of companies from different fields.

As Reichheld (2003) highlights, customer loyalty should be distinguished as different from a customer who makes repeat purchases. A customer who makes repeat purchases may do it for reasons such as indifference or exit barriers, where the barrier could be for example a vendor lock-in or switching costs. A loyal customer, on the other hand, can be loyal even if their purchases become less frequent since it can be due to a reduced need for the product or service. Loyal customers can reduce the costs for customer acquisition as they tend to stick with the same products and services to which they are loyal to, and they usually buy more over time. In addition, loyal customers can become advocators of the brand by recommending the products and services to friends and family, thus putting their own reputation on the line and as such making a personal sacrifice of some kind. Customer loyalty can bring new customers, through recommendations, to the company at no extra cost and can be a very effective method for profitable growth.

Reichheld (2003) argues that measuring retention rates does not accurately reflect the level of customer loyalty. Retention rates do not address customers who may be stuck with the product or service or customers who no longer purchase the product or service due to changed needs. Customers may keep purchasing the product or service without being loyal to them, such as due to high costs associated with switching to another product or service; in this case retention rates would stay relatively high despite a lack of customer loyalty. Conversely, loyal customers may stop purchasing products and services due to their needs changing, such as due to outgrowing the product or service with age or wealth; in this case the retention rate may seem lower, despite the existing customer loyalty. Retention rates only give a measure of how fast existing customers are leaving, despite it arguably being more valuable information knowing how the customer base is developing and increasing, and as a result nurturing business growth. Reichheld (2003) concludes that companies should not make considerable investments solely based on retention rates as they may not be correlated to customer loyalty.

Conventional customer-satisfaction metrics may have flaws in measuring customer loyalty. Surveys can be manipulated in which case their results are unreliable, long and complicated surveys often result in significantly lower response rates, and results are not necessarily even correlated to growth. Instead, Reichheld (2003) found that only a few relevant questions were enough to form an estimate of customer loyalty, and these could be used for predicting business growth. In most cases, asking customers if they would recommend the brand to their friends and family correlated the best with spending patterns and growth. In some industries the question about recommending others was not relevant, such as in industries dominated by monopolies, or in cases where the product or service being used by the customer was not their own choice but had been chosen for them: In these cases, question of whether the customer felt like the brand was deserving of their loyalty and if it was an example of excellence were more suitable for the industry in question.

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is a metric first introduced by Reichheld (2003), which is used to measure customer loyalty. To measure NPS customers need to first be segmented into customer groups known as promoters and detractors, as well as neutrals or passives. Customers who answer to the question of whether they would recommend a brand or good are classified as either “promoters”, “passives” or “detractors”, depending on the answer. Most commonly the question is posed so that it can be answered on a scale from zero to ten, where ten means “extremely likely” to recommend, five is neutral and zero is “not at all likely”. Customers giving the highest scores of nine and ten are classified as promoters, scores of eight and seven are considered passives, and finally customers giving scores from six down to zero are all interpreted as detractors. The question can also be answered on a different scale but the theory is the same. Promoters are the most loyal customers who will keep buying the products and referring others, thus advocating growth. Passives are those who are satisfied but not enthusiastic, these customers may switch to a competitor. Detractors are unhappy customers who may hurt the brand through negative word-of-mouth and they can also hinder growth. (Reichheld, 2003)

NPS is calculated by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. The score can range from -100 (if all customers were detractors) to 100 (a situation where all customers are promoters). As Reichheld (2003) has proven, and other researchers since have confirmed, NPS is strongly related to growth. Thus, any companies striving for growth should be aiming to increase their NPS scores, where the key is to produce loyal customers.

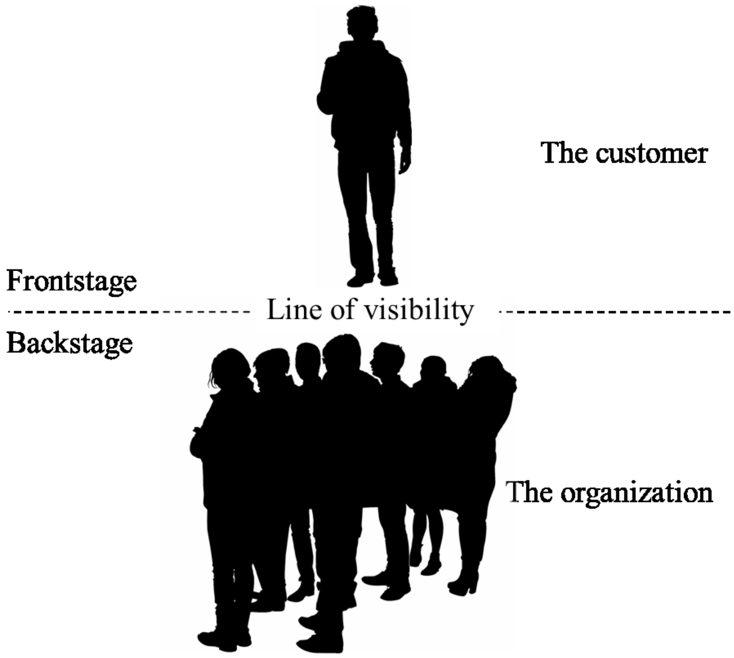


Figure 5. Customer interaction with the organization

When a customer interacts with an organization they are interacting with the brand and should not need to be concerned with the organizational structure behind the brand. Throughout the customer journey a customer interacts with several touchpoints which may, however, be linked to completely different departments. For example, when the customer purchases a product they may be in contact with the sales department, whereas when the customer has already bought the product and needs assistance the customer service department may be the one that is contact with the customer. This is depicted in Figure 5 above where the customer only sees the frontstage of the organization and cannot see what is happening internally in the organization, in the backstage. The customer interacts with the organization and brand, not with the different internal departments and teams within the organization. As such, it is important for customer information and knowledge of the customer to be available across different departments regardless of possible internal silos, so that the customer may have a cohesive customer journey and a unified image of the organization and brand regardless of which unit or department the customer's current interaction, or touchpoint, is related to.

3 Case company

The case company is an international ICT service provider, which provides products and services to both consumers and corporate customers. The organization has operations in several countries, but this study focuses on the local operations in Finland, where the company has over 4000 employees. The company is organized in a hierarchical structure with several layers of hierarchy. Also, the company is split into divisions, two of the largest ones being one for consumer customers and another for enterprise customers. This study focuses on the enterprise division, which has its own departments. The departments are for sales, product and marketing, technology and customer channels. In addition, two of the company's subsidiaries working with enterprise customers were a part of the study.

The sales department is furthermore split into three units, SME (small and medium-sized enterprises), large and public sales, depending on personnel size and sector. Key performance indicators (KPI) for the sales department include among others revenue, especially first year revenue, new customer acquisition, number of sales cases and number of customers contacted.

The sales unit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) is defined at the case company as companies with personnel sizes under 250. SME sales focus mostly on selling standardized solutions, and some of the companies that fall into this category have their own account managers, who act as the primary contact person for these companies. Companies without account managers typically interact with the case company through online channels or by phone or email.

The large sales unit focuses on large companies with a personnel size of over 250. These companies can also include multinational corporations (MNC). Almost all of these large companies have a named account manager who is in charge of finding out what solutions would help the customer and handling the sales. The large companies often require a level of customization for different solutions, so more work is needed per customer, but potential revenue is often greater, as a larger personnel count usually means more users and larger capacities for the service.

The public sales unit focuses on companies in the public sector, companies controlled by the state. The public sales unit is similar to the large sales unit, in that most of the companies have a high personnel count and often need a great deal of customization. The public sector, however, consists of mostly the large majority and laggards in terms of technology adoption lifecycle. The public sector is typically very conservative and not ready to adopt new technology as fast as companies in the private sectors, also due to older personnel on average.

The product and marketing department consists of teams working on market research, marketing and communications, product lifecycle management, including making business decisions about the product portfolio, product and service development and testing. The department oversees training the sales departments, customer service and other teams that need to understand how the product works and how and why it should be sold. The department also coordinates product development projects, working as the primary contact for technology, sales and other involved departments. KPIs for product and marketing include how fast new product ideas are developed into sellable products, as well as the revenue and profitability of products and services.

The technology department oversees ensuring background systems stay operational, including systems for ordering, delivery, billing, service assurance and service support. When new products are added to the product portfolio or when existing products are developed, the technology department makes the necessary changes into the systems to ensure that they correspond to the desired changes. Typically, technology gets information about customer needs for new or changed products from the product and marketing department and work together to ensure that the technical changes will correlate to the business needs. Technology also designs solutions for complex sales cases, such as cases for products and services with a high degree of customization, where they get involved by the request of the sales department. KPIs for the technology department includes the level of automatization for delivery processes, number of production incidents and system downtime.

The customer channels department consists of all interaction channels through which the customer can be in contact with the company. This includes the different customer service channels, including customer service for billing, key customers, technical support and so on. KPIs in the customer channel department includes customer queue time, number of unwanted calls, number of lost calls and so on.

Finally, two of the company's subsidiaries, Subsidiary A and Subsidiary B, that provide solutions to corporate customers were also part of the study. In some cases, business customers are directly in contact with the subsidiaries, and in other the customer contacts the case company, who then involves the subsidiary when needed. The products and services offered by the subsidiaries are not identical with those of the parent company, but include complimentary goods and some substitutes.

4 Survey creation and conduction

To collect current information about existing silos in the case company, a survey was created aimed for the company's employees. The idea was to establish insight about cross-departmental collaboration, and the extent to how well individuals understand company goals and customer wants, and how well the individual can contribute to common goals. The survey was designed with considerations such as survey length, structure and communication to collect enough responses through superior completion rates.

In the first part of the survey the responder specified what department they belong to within the company. The company's organizational structure and department names are well documented internally at the case company's intranet, so the departments were listed by name to make sure responders could give more consistent results. There was also the option to answer "other" in case the responder was unsure of their department, was from a different part of the organization, or was from higher up the organization hierarchy, in which case they wouldn't belong to any of the given specific departments. The next questions were about specifying how well the responder felt like their department currently collaborates with the other given departments. Another question focused on if the current cooperation with each of the given departments is currently sufficient.

The second part of the survey was thirteen questions typically seen in employee satisfaction questionnaires, but in this case the questions were aimed more at finding out how well individuals understand different company and customer goals and how well they can themselves contribute to meeting these goals.

Finally, there were demographic questions for background information about the respondent. Information included whether the respondent is a manager or not, gender, age, years of service at the case company, and employment location. Questions about demographics were brainstormed together with analysts at the case company and narrowed down to the information that seemed most relevant. An expert from the case company, who works with data analysis and demographics, suggested that it was better to collect more demographic information than what may be needed, as any irrelevant information could be filtered out later. However, asking too many questions in a survey could be offsetting for responders, so these questions were limited to the aforementioned five. Experts also highlighted that instead of giving for example age ranges to choose from in the survey, it would be better to collect discrete numbers for the number of years of age, that could be split into ranges later depending on the data set collected; the same concept could be applied to the years of work at the company.

The questionnaire was compiled as an online survey using google forms, as well as a printable PDF version which could be returned on paper. The questions were identical and in the same order in both versions. The digital version, however, was slightly different since it could be sectioned into parts in such a way that the responder had to fill the first section before proceeding or even seeing the next section. This gave the option to leave the demographic questions to the end of the survey, a practice that can improve survey response rates since by the time the demographics questions show up, the respondent has already committed to answering to the other questions in the survey (Lindemann 2016).

Google forms (Google 2017) was selected as the tool for conducting the survey due to ease of use, clear user interface, customizable color and logos, ready models for the questions including multiple choice, short and long answer, as well as multiple choice grid. Built-in optimization for smartphones, and different screen sizes in general, was also important as many people prefer to read their emails on the go from their phones. Real time response information and automatic creation of response charts helped keep track of response rates and gave some early insight about respondent opinions. The charts also helped in early analysis of results as it is a more visual representation of the collected survey data, the charts were also used as models for further analysis such as department-specific results.

Sharing current information about which departments had the highest response rates to the respondents in conjunction to sending a friendly reminder to fill the survey seemed to incentivize the departments with smaller response rates

The survey was open for two weeks. Information about who was collecting information and for what purpose was sent along with the link to the online survey as well as an attached printable PDF file on the day the survey was opened for answers. A friendly reminder of the survey was sent in the morning the last day responses were being collected. To make the survey more interesting for the respondents, a current chart of which departments had the highest response rates was sent along with the survey reminder. After the reminder was sent new responses were received, all from departments that didn't have the highest response rate at the time.

4.1 *Questionnaire results*

The questionnaire generated a total of 106 responses during the two-week survey period from a target group of around 300 employees. Figure 6 below shows the percentage of responses from the given departments. As the responses were not distributed evenly among the departments and some departments did not have almost any responses, departments can be grouped together for analysis, such as the different sales departments and subsidiaries. The small number of responses from some departments needs to be considered critically when drawing conclusions, as the few responses may not reflect the opinions of the department in general.

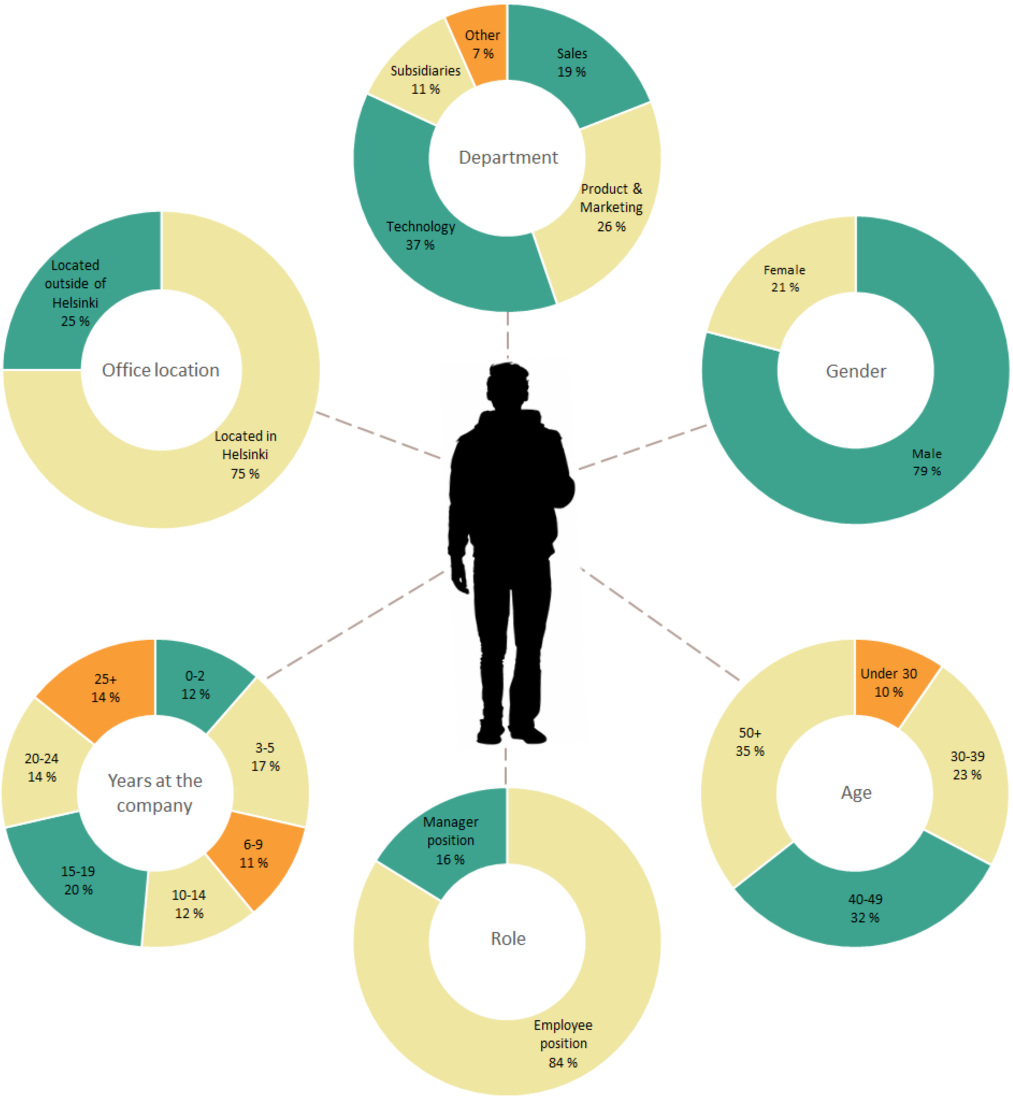


Figure 6. Survey responses

Responses of which department employees were from were split into four distinct units with a fifth category for responders from other departments. 19% of responders were from the sales department, including sales teams for small and medium enterprises, companies consisting of 0 to 250 employees, large enterprises, companies with over 250 employees, and public sales, which are companies owned and operated by the government. The product and marketing department represented 26% of the total responses, where the department consists of product managers, marketing functions as well as customer analytics to name a few. 37% of the responders were from the technology department, which is the department for research and development, monitoring and maintaining systems, and making sure that information technology initiatives support business goals. 11% of responders were from two different subsidiaries of the company; these subsidiaries have their own specializations, as well as some of their own products and services, in comparison to the parent company. The remaining 7% of responders were from different departments, such as from human resources, finance and customer service.

As the case company is a hierarchical organization with several management layers and teams consisting of around four to eight employees, it was not surprising that 16% of the responders were in a managerial position. This percentage reflects well the ratio of employees to managers in the case company.

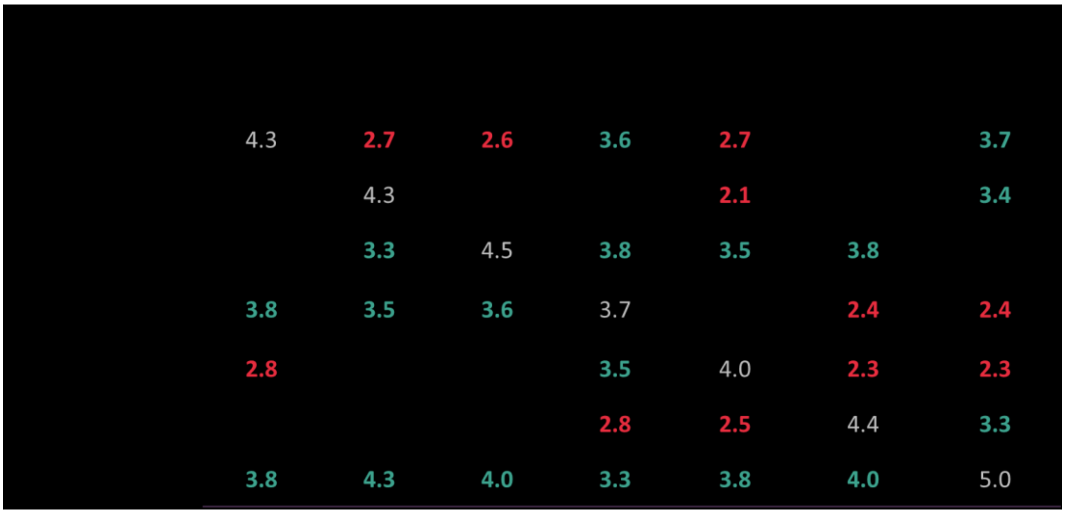
Of the respondents, 21% were female and the remaining 79% were male. This also reflects well the gender divide within the case company, where the divide can be partially due to ICT service providers being in a relatively technical field, which often does not attract as many female as male employees in today's job market.

The average, as well as median, age of the responders was 44, which corresponds well to the average age at the case company. Only 10% of the responders were under 30, 23% were between the ages of 30 and 39, 32% were between ages of 40 and 49 and the remaining 35% were 50 years or older.

The number of years served at the company ranged from a few months to 40 years, where the average time at the company was 13,8 years and the median was 14 years. For data analysis the responses were categorized into age ranges that were set, so that the age ranges would have a reasonably similar sample size of the total responses. Relatively newer employees were distinguished by setting the year ranges from 0 to 2, from 3 to 5, and from 6 to 9. The remainder of the ranges were set in increments of 5 years, with the final range being from 25 years and up as answers over 25 were few and ranged over 15 years. The age ranges could also have been split into fewer categories, but this would have inhibited a more detailed look at especially the responses of very new workers (0-2 years at the company) in comparison to more experienced responders.

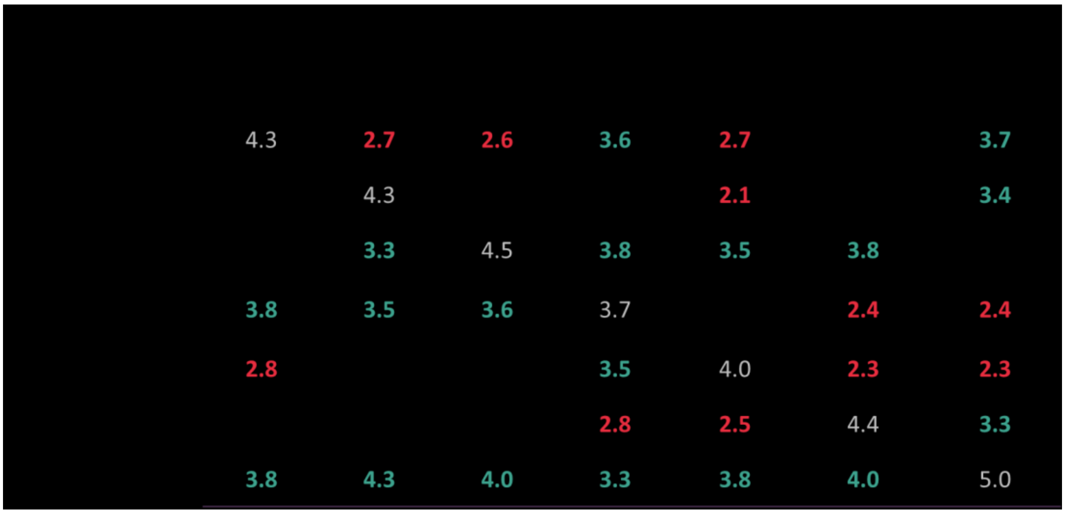
Finally, the location of the offices that responders worked at was split into whether responders were situated in Helsinki, the location of the case company's main office, or elsewhere. There were not enough responses from any other single office location or from geographically close offices to form a comparable third category. The results, however, reflect well on how the case company's employees are very centered in Helsinki, the capital city of Finland, and others are spread across the country quite isolated from one another.

Cross-department cooperation



4.3	2.7	2.6	3.6	2.7		3.7
	4.3			2.1		3.4
	3.3	4.5	3.8	3.5	3.8	
3.8	3.5	3.6	3.7		2.4	2.4
2.8			3.5	4.0	2.3	2.3
			2.8	2.5	4.4	3.3
3.8	4.3	4.0	3.3	3.8	4.0	5.0

Table 1 and Table 2 below show the results to the survey question “rate how well your department cooperates with the other departments on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very poor and 5 being very good)”



4.3	2.7	2.6	3.6	2.7		3.7
	4.3			2.1		3.4
	3.3	4.5	3.8	3.5	3.8	
3.8	3.5	3.6	3.7		2.4	2.4
2.8			3.5	4.0	2.3	2.3
			2.8	2.5	4.4	3.3
3.8	4.3	4.0	3.3	3.8	4.0	5.0

Table 1. Current level of cross-departmental cooperation

		Collaborator department			
		Sales	Product & marketing	Technology	Subsidiaries
Respondent's department	Sales	3.4	3.4	2.7	3.3
	Product & marketing	3.6	3.7	3.1	2.4
	Technology	2.9	3.5	4.0	2.4
	Subsidiaries	3.3	2.9	2.9	4.0

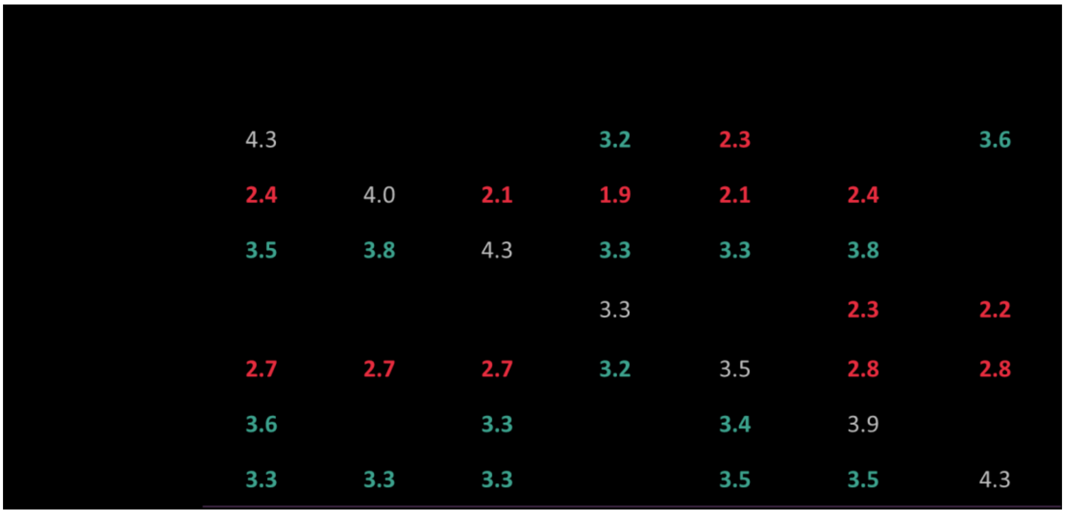
Table 2. Summary for the current level of cross-departmental cooperation

The summarized Table 2 combines the three sales departments into one and subsidiaries into one. Also, the customer channels department was removed from the tables due to low response rates from this department as there were not enough responses to draw well informed conclusions.

The results show that while some departments feel like the level of cooperation with others is currently satisfactory or good, the opinion is not necessarily mutual when viewed from the point of view of the other department. For example, SME sales' opinion is that cooperation is somewhat poor with large and public sales and technology. Large and public sales, on the other hand, feel like cooperation is decent with SME sales.

The most notable asymmetries can be found in cooperation with technology and the subsidiaries. The large sales department feel like cooperation with technology department is quite poor (rated 2.1), SME rated the cooperation at 2.7, while public sales' opinion is that cooperation is good (3.5). Technology, on the other hand, feel like the current level of cooperation is at a neutral level (2.9 average) with very little variance in the answers regardless of which of the three sales division is in question. The product and marketing and technology departments view that the current level of cooperation with the subsidiaries is somewhat poor, without making a distinction of which subsidiary is in question. In fact, out of 66 responses, 64 respondents gave identical ratings for both subsidiaries. Conversely subsidiary A shares a similar view in that cooperation is somewhat poor with the aforementioned departments, while subsidiary B rated cooperation as somewhat good with a rating of 3.3 or more for all departments. On average the subsidiaries together rated the cooperation levels as 2.9 with both the product and marketing and the technology departments, while they rated cooperation substantially lower at 2.4 and 2.3 respectively.

The second survey question was "on a scale of 1 to 5, is the current level of cooperation sufficient (1 being very insufficient and 5 being very sufficient)", and the results are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below.



4.3			3.2	2.3		3.6
2.4	4.0	2.1	1.9	2.1	2.4	
3.5	3.8	4.3	3.3	3.3	3.8	
			3.3		2.3	2.2
2.7	2.7	2.7	3.2	3.5	2.8	2.8
3.6		3.3		3.4	3.9	
3.3	3.3	3.3		3.5	3.5	4.3

Table 3. Sufficiency of cross-departmental cooperation

Respondent's department	Collaborator department: Sales	Product & marketing	Technology	Subsidiaries
Sales	3.3	2.8	2.5	3.1
Product & marketing	3.0	3.3	2.9	2.2
Technology	2.7	3.2	3.5	2.8
Subsidiaries	3.3	3.1	3.4	3.6

Table 4. Summary for the sufficiency of cross-departmental cooperation

The ratings for Table 4 have been summarized in the same way as for Table 2 previously.

The sufficiency of cross-departmental cooperation splits opinions even more distinguishably than the previous question about the current level of cooperation, most notably so regarding large sales, product and marketing and technology.

SME sales rated the current level of cooperation with technology at 2.7, which is according to the answers less than sufficient with the rating of 2.3. Also, while SME rated cooperation levels with the other sales departments at 2.7 and 2.6, SME sales rated the level of cooperation to be sufficient with 3.0 and 3.1 ratings respectively.

Large sales' opinions about the sufficiency of cooperation levels, on the other hand, were alarmingly low. While the current level of cooperation was only notably low for cooperation with technology, the opinion was that cooperation with all departments is less than sufficient, especially with product and marketing (1.9), the other two sales departments, SME (2.4) and public (2.1), technology and subsidiary A. Conversely, other respondents felt that the level of cooperation with large sales is relatively sufficient, with ratings above 3.0 with the only exceptions of 2.9 from the product and marketing department and 2.7 from technology.

Public sales gave ratings of 3.0 or greater for the sufficiency of cooperation with all departments, indicating that they are relatively satisfied with the current level of cooperation. The opinion was also shared in the other direction also, with the exception of large sales, as discussed with a rating of 2.1, and technology with a rating of 2.7.

Product and marketing rated current levels of cooperation with the sales departments relatively high with an average of 3.6, but the rating of 2.9 for the sufficiency with large sales indicates that there could be some room for improvement, especially as large sales felt the same way.

The technology department gave ratings (2.7) that reflect that they feel that collaboration with the sales departments is not sufficient enough, an opinion which is reflected by the SME and Large sales also with their ratings of 2.3 and 2.1 respectively.

While the subsidiaries gave ratings of over 3.0 for the sufficiency of collaboration levels with all the given departments, especially large sales, the product and marketing and the technology departments felt like cooperation is insufficient with ratings of 2.2 and 2.8 respectively. This is also reflected in the low ratings from Table 2 for the current level of cooperation 2.4 and 2.3 respectively.

4.1.1 Opinions about the workplace

The second part of the survey was about giving opinions through ratings about working at the company. Ratings were given on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was for totally disagree, 2 for somewhat disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for somewhat agree, and 5 was for totally agree. These questions were designed to address factors that could affect employee satisfaction and relationships with the customer, as well as to explore if these have any correlation with silos within the company. For each question there is an explanation for the purpose of the question and expected results, then the actual results for each question will be presented along with an analysis. Each question's results have been analyzed according to the following categories: department, managerial position, gender, age, years of service at the company, office location, as well as the total average of answers. It should be noted, that in most cases the other department group is not comparable to the other results, as no reliable conclusions can be drawn about the underlying reasons for their answers, given the variation in roles and functions, as well as the low number of responders in this category. The group has been included in the results nonetheless.

a) I clearly understand the company's main strategy

This question was aimed to find out if the employees felt like they understand what the company's goals are. If the company had strong silos between the different hierarchical organization levels the strategy may not be so clear for employees. Understanding the company's main strategy is usually more a case of knowledge needing to flow in one direction, from the top down in the organization. The Figure 7 below illustrates the average responses given by department, whether the respondent is a manager or not, gender, age, years of service at the case company, and employment location.

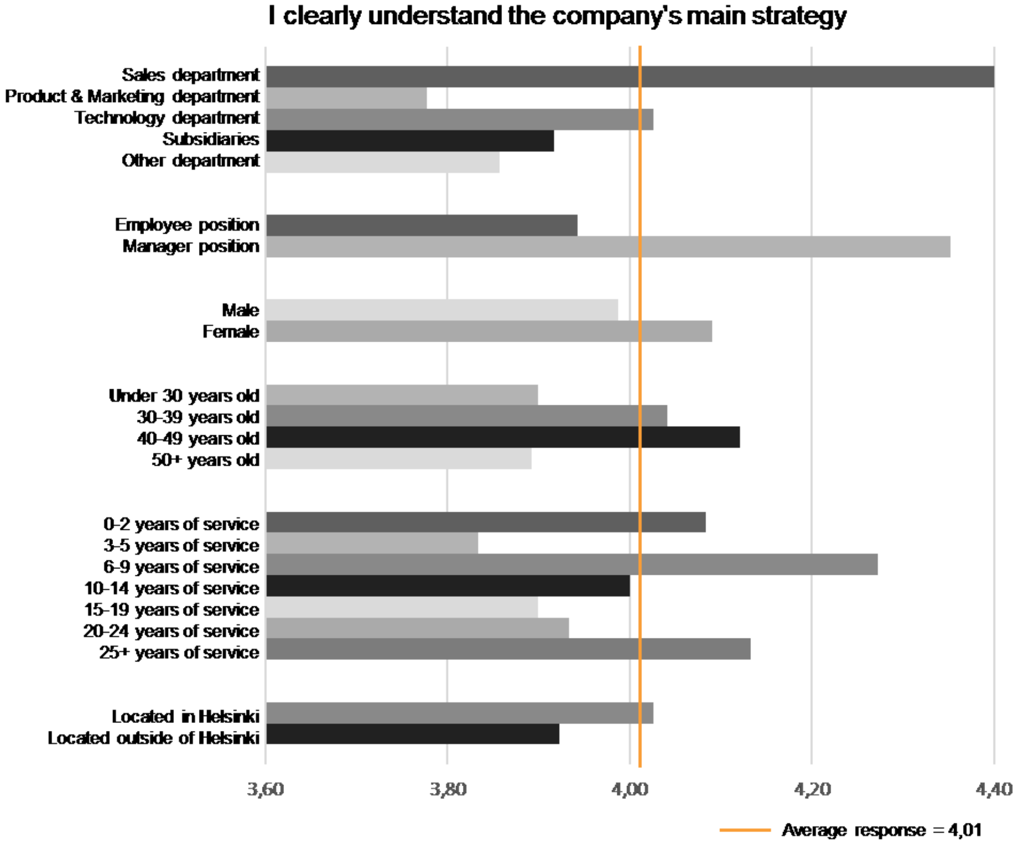


Figure 7. I clearly understand the company's main strategy

The average response for the question was 4.01, meaning that on average employees somewhat agree that they clearly understand the company’s main strategy.

A notable, although expected, difference in answers was between the average response of employees (3.94) versus those in a managerial position (4.35). This could be explained by the fact that the company’s main strategy is one determined by the top levels of management, so the employees at the bottom of the organizational structure are the furthest away from the source of the information while those in managerial positions are closer, and as such they may have better opportunities to understand the main strategy and gain more information. Often it is the manager’s role to communicate this kind of information to their subordinates, so it is also mandatory that the managers have a sound understanding of the company’s main strategy if they are to pass the knowledge down. While the difference between employees and managers is to be expected, the company could still make efforts to minimize the gap in understanding between the layers of the organization structure.

The most surprising result from this question, however, was the difference in the responses from the sales department, with an average response of 4.40, in comparison to the product and marketing department, with an average response of 3.78.

The product and marketing department is in charge of making business decisions on how to manage the product portfolio. As such, it is critical to understand the company's main strategy in order to make sure that the products and services being offered are in line with the company's strategy. In addition, the product and marketing department has influence over both sales and technology departments. It is the product and marketing department's role to communicate upcoming changes while sales and technology departments should react to these changes. The technology department makes necessary adjustments into the company's systems to support the given changes, while the sales department may need to educate themselves on new products and features and align their sales with possible marketing activities. On the other hand, the sales department can also influence the product and marketing department as they can bring relevant market information as well as customer cases that could be significant enough to necessitate changes in the product portfolio or marketing activities. Similarly, the technology department can influence the product and marketing department by introducing new possibilities from a technical perspective, which may have been previously unknown to the product and marketing department, thus creating interest in these new possibilities and sometimes resulting in measures to introduce these technological advances into the product portfolio.

The average responses were in all cases positive, in that the responders agreed with the statement rather than disagreed, but out of all responders it seems that the sales department feels like they understand the company's main strategy significantly better than the product and marketing department. This could suggest that the sales department has had better information available, but the difference could also be due to a different attitude between the departments, such as more confidence in the sales department or more skepticism in the product and marketing department, to name a few. Reasons aside, the message does not seem to be trickling down to the different departments equally well, suggesting that communication could be improved from the top towards the different department. This could be achieved with a focus on finding practices specifically used in the sales department and utilizing their best practices to better communicate the company's main strategy in the other departments as well.

b) I can clearly see how my own work affects higher-level goals

This question was aimed to find out if employees feel like their own work somehow has an impact on the company as a whole. Similarly, as in the previous question a), this question requires some sort of understanding of higher-level intentions, but this question differs in that it includes the responder's own role in the organization. Vertical silos, meaning silos between different hierarchical levels, could in theory cause for employees to not understand their role in the organization in terms of higher-level goals. This understanding can result from a flow of information from the top down, but it could also improve when information flows from the bottom up. For the employee to understand how their work affects higher-level goals they need to understand the goals first, which are communicated from the top. Sometimes the work employees are doing is so specialized that higher-level managers may not even fully understand the specialists' work and may not know how to utilize this expertise effectively. In these cases, it may be necessary for information to also flow from the employee up to the managerial levels, for them to be able to more clearly communicate how this work is making a difference in reaching the higher-level goals. As such, understanding how one's own work affects higher-level goals is also part of employee satisfaction: when an employee understands how their role makes a difference it gives their work meaning, which can be a cause for more content and motivated employees. The results of this question are illustrated in Figure 8 below.

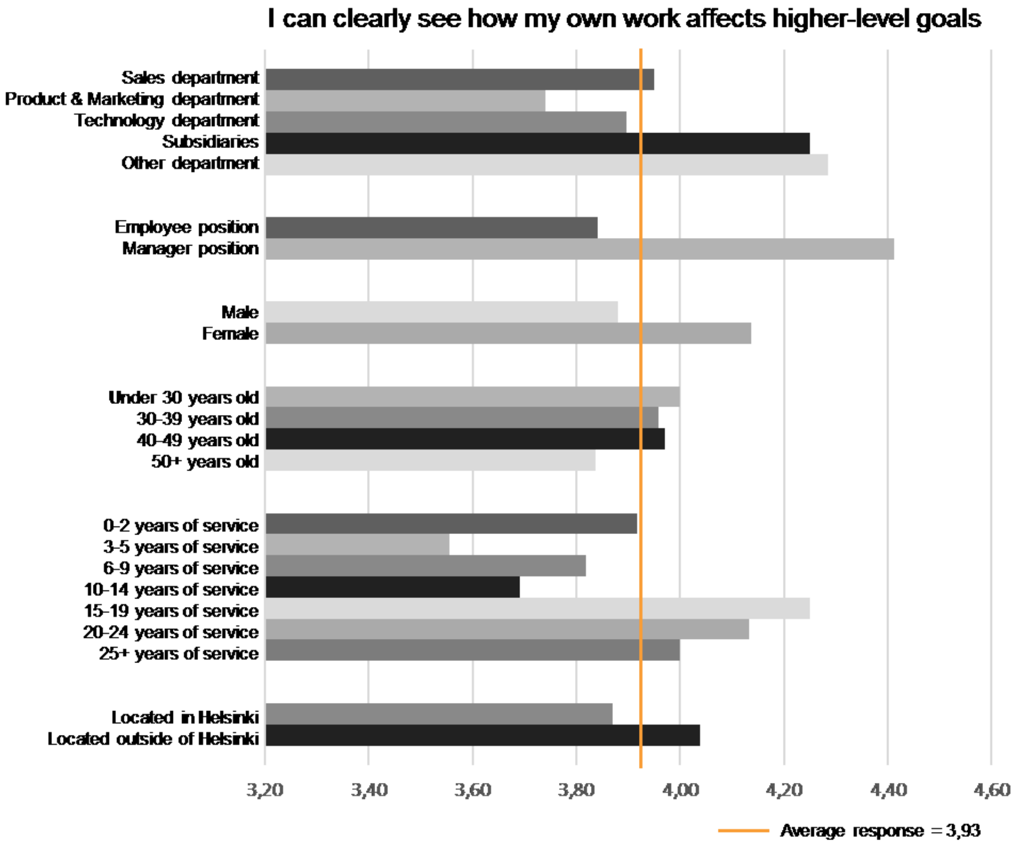


Figure 8. I can clearly see how my own work affects higher-level goals

The average response for this question was 3.93, meaning that on average responders feel like they somewhat agree that they can see how their own work affects higher-level goals. Interestingly, the results of this question, illustrated in Figure 8, were somewhat similar to those in question a) shown in Figure 7 with average responses being very close, but with some notable differences, such as differences according to department and office location.

As in the previous question, those in managerial positions agree more with the statement compared to employees, with average responses of 4.41 and 3.38 respectively which can, similarly, be due to a lack of information flowing from top to bottom. However, in this case the question isn't simply an understanding of the same concept, but more a case of understanding higher-level goals, which may not be those of the highest level in the organizational structure, as was in the case of the company's strategy in question a).

In this question, similarly to the previous question a), the sales department answered with a greater average response (3.95) compared to the product and marketing department's response (3.74). The technology department, again, is between these two departments with the average response of 3.90. Interestingly, however, the subsidiaries and other departments answered significantly higher than the aforementioned departments, whereas in question a) their answers had been between that of the technology and product and marketing departments, below the average response. In this question, the subsidiaries answered with an average response of 4.25, while the other department's average response was 4.29, which were both well above the average response.

Comparing to the results from the previous question a) shown in Figure 7 there are some significant similarities as well as differences. It seems that while those in the sales department are confident in their understanding of the company's main strategy, they are more on par with the average responders in terms of how their role affects the higher-level goals. By further comparison it seems that while the subsidiaries were not as confident in their understanding in the company's main strategy, they are conversely well aware of how their own work affects higher-level goals; the same seems to hold true for those in other departments. A similar observation was made of responders from within Helsinki and those from outside the capital: in question a) those located in Helsinki were more confident in their understanding of the company's main strategy in comparison, while in this question b) those located in Helsinki are less aware of how their work affects higher-level goals.

c) We regularly discuss about our customers and their wants and needs

This question was made to explore if information about customers is shared in general, or if the knowledge of customer wants and needs are more kept to ones' selves. As the customer should be the focus in all operations at the case company, it should be essential to share information, but this does not necessarily happen in practice.

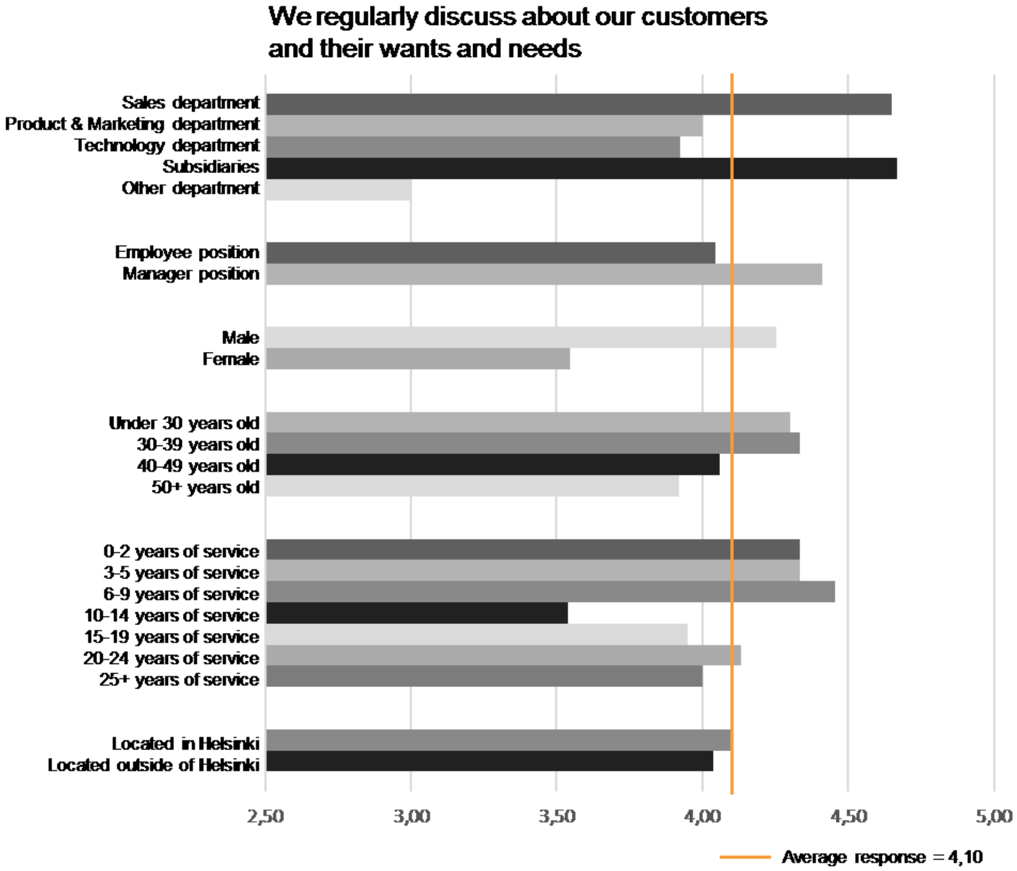


Figure 9. We regularly discuss about our customers and their wants and needs

The average response of this question was 4.10, meaning that responders felt that they quite regularly discuss about their customers and their wants and needs. The sales department and subsidiaries responded higher than others, which was to be expected as sales are directly in contact with customers, while the subsidiaries are sales oriented organizations and constantly working directly with customers.

The most surprising result in this section was the difference in answers from men and women, where the average for male responses was 4.25, while the average for females was 3.55. Upon further inspection, it was discovered that of the female responders, under 10% were in either sales or one of the subsidiaries, which were the departments that gave a relatively higher rating for this question. As such, the difference between male and female responses is most likely due to the uneven representation of the different departments between the genders.

d) I understand how my work impacts the customer experience

Understanding how one’s work can create value for the customer may improve employee satisfaction as it is understood how their input is significant. In a siloed environment, employees may not know what customer needs and wants are, or may not understand how their work affects the bigger picture and the way customers interact with the company.

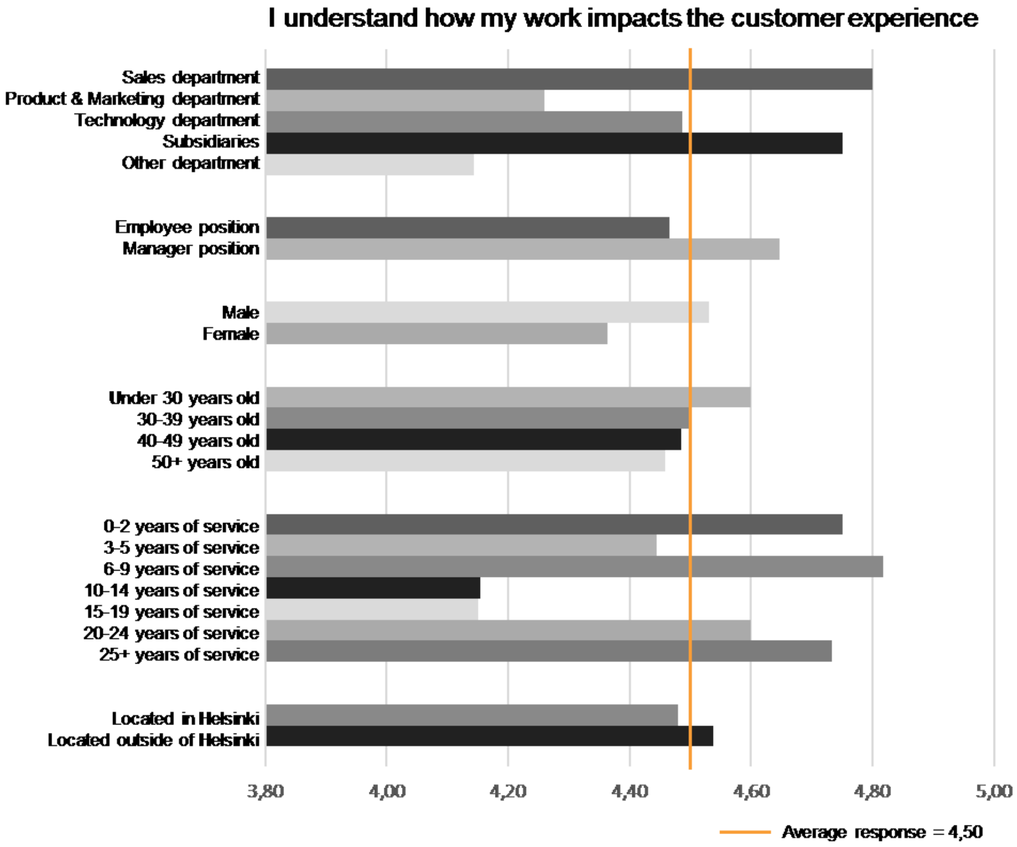


Figure 10. I understand how my work impacts the customer experience

The average response for this question was 4.50, which indicates that responders feel like they understand quite well how their work impacts the customer experience. As expected, similarly to results from question c), both the sales department and subsidiaries, who are working more closely with the customer, responded with a higher average response in comparison to the other departments: the sales department had an average rating of 4.80 and the subsidiaries answered 4.67, while the product and marketing department gave the rating of 4.26 and the technology department had the average response of 4.49, just below the total average response.

The most surprising result from this question was the significantly lower average response from employees who had been in the company for 10 to 19 years, with an average response of 4.15 for both categories of 10 to 14 years of service and for 15 to 19 years of service. Upon further inspection, it was discovered that just under 18% of these responders were from the sales department and subsidiaries, in contrast with the total 30% of the total responders representing the sales department and subsidiaries. Thus, it seems natural that these responses were relatively low as on average these groups are not so closely in contact with the customer, compared to the other categories which have a higher percentage of responses from customer-centric roles.

e) I would like a better understanding of how my work impacts the customer experience

This question is directly linked to the question d) about current understanding of how work impacts customer experience. Some employees may like a better understanding of how their work is significant, and the aim of the question was to explore whether there is a type of responder who have a greater demand for better communication about the impact of their work on customer experience. The results for these questions are depicted below in Figure 11.

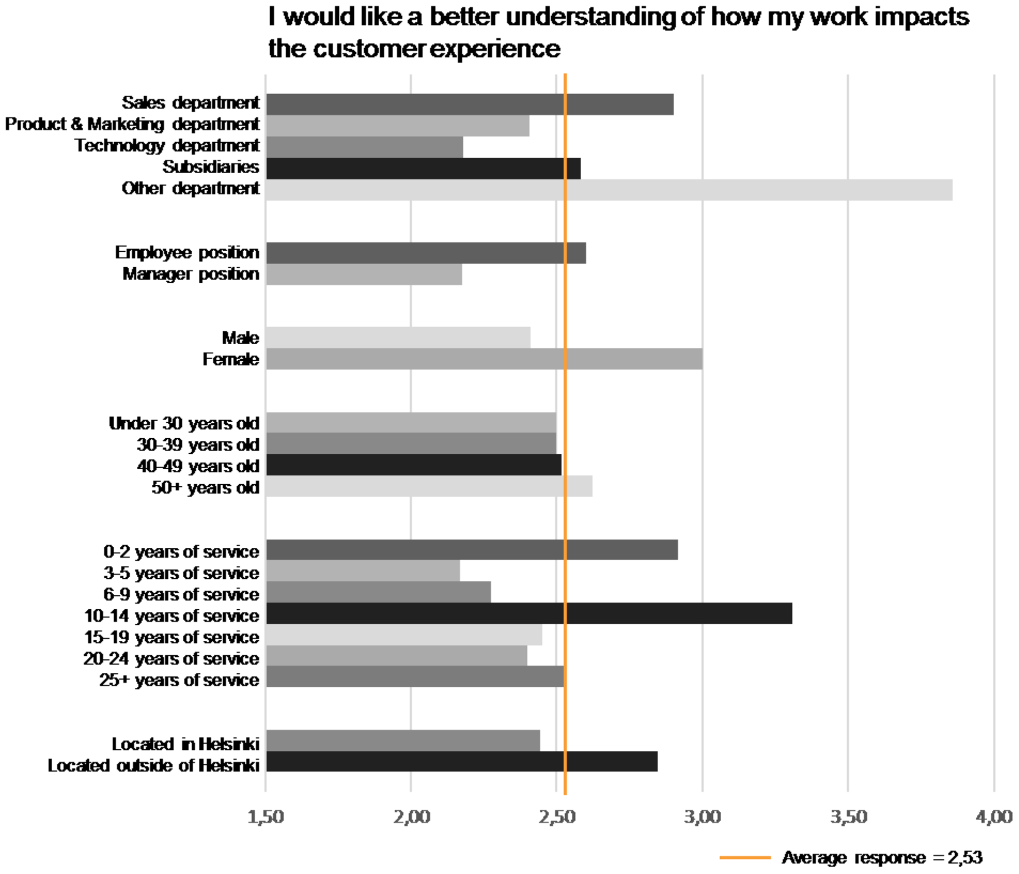


Figure 11. I would like a better understanding of how my work impacts the customer experience

The average response for this question was 2.53, implying that the majority of responders are not interested in having a better understanding of how their work impacts the customer experience. Those from the other departments and those that have been at the case company for 10 to 14 years were, on average, slightly interested in understanding how their work impacts the customer experience, with ratings of 3.86 and 3.31 respectively. Female employees were keener on understanding their role in customer experience in comparison to males, with a neutral rating of 3.0 for females compared to the 2.41 rating given by males. Those located in Helsinki had a lower average rating of 2.44 in comparison to those located outside of Helsinki with an average rating of 2.85, implying that while on average neither group was interested in gaining a better understanding, those located outside of Helsinki were more open to knowing more on the impact of their work.

f) I am often in contact with the company's customers or working directly with them

This question was aimed at exploring how much the employees are in contact with their customers. This can be compared to the survey results from question e), regarding how well employees understand their works' effect on the customer experience. In theory, if an employee is in direct contact with a customer, they are more likely to understand how their work impacts the customer. On the contrary, when employees are not directly in contact with customers, it is more likely that they might not have as deep of an understanding as to how their work impacts the customer experience. The results from this question was designed in order to be compared to results from previous questions d) and e). It should be noted however, that the employee's role in the company could affect the results of the question quite heavily, as some jobs require frequent contact with customers while others do not. As such, it should be expected that the sale department would have a high average response in comparison to the technology department, for example, who mainly communicate within the organization with internal stakeholders.

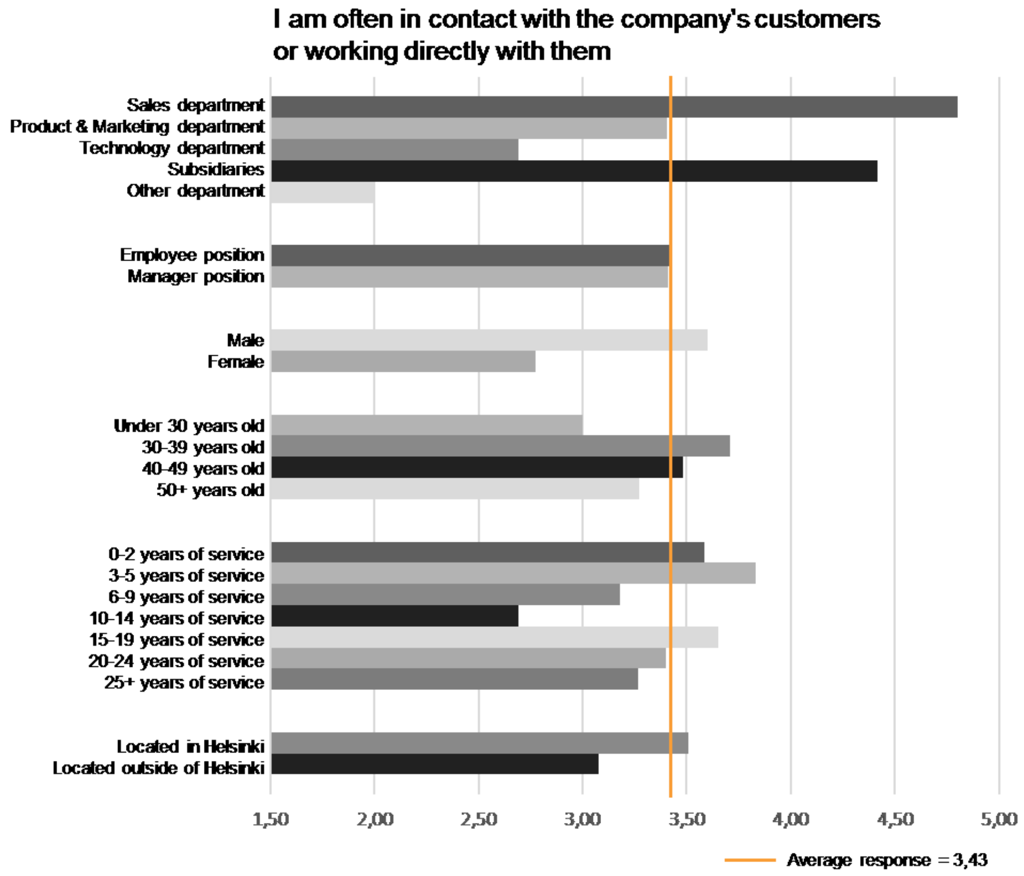


Figure 12. I am often in contact with the company's customers or working directly with them

The average response for this question was 3.43, meaning that on average responders agree to often being in contact with or working with the company's customers.

As expected, the sales department's average response was the highest of all the categories with an average response of 4.80. The second largest response was from the subsidiaries with an average rating of 4.42, which is also unsurprising as the subsidiaries are overall smaller organizations than the case company, and thus as explored in the literature review, the employees are relatively closer to the customer.

Females and those with 10-14 years of service gave relatively low ratings with 2.77 and 2.69 respectively, which may be explained by the fact that these categories have a very low ratio of people working in the sales department or subsidiaries.

There is a somewhat significant difference in the average response depending on the location of responders with an average response of 3.51 for those located in Helsinki and an average response of 3.08 for those located outside of Helsinki. This result cannot be explained by an uneven distribution of departments within the locations as, while there are no subsidiaries located outside of Helsinki, the percentage of responses from the sales department outside of Helsinki is 30%: which is the same percentage as responses from the sales department (19%) and subsidiaries (11%) combined for the whole survey. The difference in opinion according to location is interesting as it could suggest that being away from the capital creates a type of silo between employees of a company and its customers. It has been observed at the company, that many located outside of the headquarters may be quite isolated working in remote parts of Finland at small offices and scarcely populated towns. This is somewhat contradictory, however, to results from statement d), as responses indicated that those located outside of Helsinki were in fact more confident in their understanding of how their work impacts the customer experience, which might suggest a stronger relationship between employees and customers. This matter could be further investigated by studying if the difference in results for how often responders are in contact or working with customers are due to responders' interpretation of the statement and responses, or is there factual proof behind this difference. For example, if sales activities such as customer calls and visits are tracked, then these figures could give a better approximation of the actual interaction between employees and customers. Also, as the responses were given on a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and

5 being strongly agree, there was no frame of reference as to what is considered to be "often". Had the statement or answer possibilities contained some sort of factual numbers, then the responses would also have been more apparent. Finally, it is also possible that those located outside of Helsinki have fewer customers to work with and are thus not as often in contact with them, but on the other hand their smaller number of customers allows them to focus more on the few given customers, which could also explain why they feel that they understand their own impact on customer experience.

g) Our team regularly uses customer feedback to improve our performance

This question addresses whether or not information about the customer is used in practice at the organization. If the company is very siloed this information would not even be readily available to employees and as such could not be used to improve performance. This question is expected to be highly correlated to question d) about whether employees understand the effect of their work on customer experience. It could be expected that with a high understanding of how one's work impacts customer experience it would also motivate to improve performance when given constructive feedback from customers.

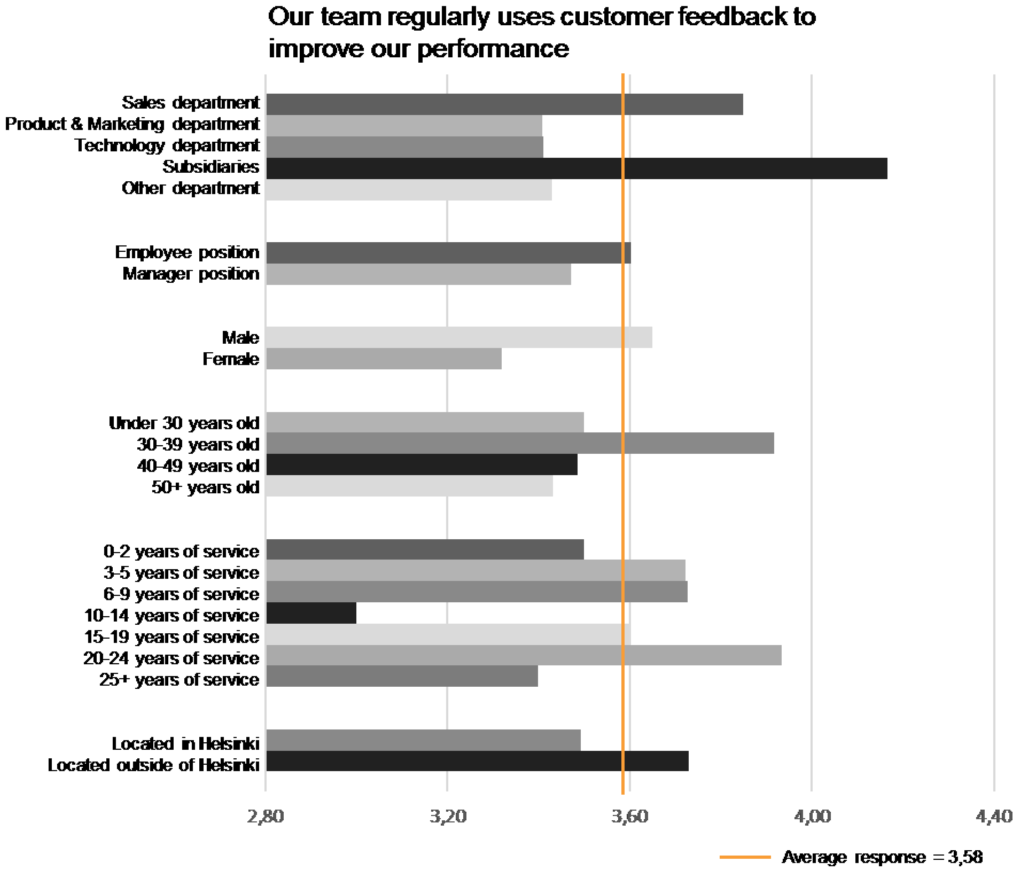


Figure 13. Our team regularly uses customer feedback to improve our performance

The average response for this statement was 3.58, suggesting that more often than not employees tend to use customer feedback to improve their performance.

In this statement the sales department and subsidiaries stood out with their relative higher average responses of 3.85 and 4.17 respectively. These results, however, were expected due to the nature of the jobs that employees have in these departments as discussed previously. What is surprising, however, is that in previous statements the sales department has indicated a relatively higher level of collaboration with the customers in comparison to the subsidiaries and other departments. According to the responses from this statement, the subsidiaries seem to be more inclined to use customer feedback to improve their performance compared to the sale department. As in the previous statement f), the results could stem from a discrepancy in the interpretation of what is meant by regularly as everyone can understand it differently. Another possible reason, is that the subsidiaries are relatively smaller organizations with everyone working closer to the customer, meaning that customer feedback may reach the employees more readily. In the case company, on the other hand, the sales department are rarely on the receiving end of hearing customer feedback; usually feedback goes through a customer care type function and from there it may or may not be reported onwards so that the information would finally reach the sales department. The responses would suggest that while the sales department works heavily with the customers and understands them, there is still a silo between customers and the sales department when customers want to give feedback.

There is also a noticeable difference between the average response from those who are located in Helsinki versus those located outside of the capital with average responses of 3.49 and 3.73 respectively. As previously discussed, information does not flow as readily within a large and complicated organization, whereas in a smaller less hierarchical organization information, such as customer feedback in this case, reaches different departments more readily. While the people located outside of Helsinki all belong to the same parent case company, their offices are less populated and as a result, employees are more familiar to one another regardless of function and department and there are less people to go through for information to reach the right people. In the capital, however, the headquarters are large and highly populated with single functions or departments habiting whole floors at the office building. Employees may not be acquainted to others from outside their own department and so information may not reach the right people as readily as in the more compact locations where typically everyone knows everyone else as there are less faces to remember. However, as discussed, there may also be a difference in practices for collaborating with customers between the different locations. Employees focusing on a handful of customers may have more opportunities to use the information that they get from customer feedback, whereas employees dealing with a large number of customers may not be able to fulfill everyone’s wishes due to time or other constraints.

From the responses for this statement it is unclear whether the differences are due to how well customer feedback reaches employees or if the differences are from how well the given information is used to improve performance. If there are gaps in the information flow of customer feedback to the employees then it would suggest the existence of siloes, but in case the information is received but not reacted to then this would imply that it is part of the work culture or bureaucracy which can easily be a result of the hierarchical organization structure, as discussed in the literature review.

h) We know how to give a unified image of our company

As indicated earlier in the literature review section about customer experience, it is important for a customer to have seamless interactions with the organization for a better customer experience. In an ideal situation a customer would be able to continue their discussion or other interaction with the organization from where they last left off, without the need to go through earlier interactions. Furthermore, the message from the organization towards the customer should be the same, regardless of the point-of-contact between the customer and organization. As this question was made for employees of the company, the question was aimed to find out how well employees feel like the organization is addressing the ability to interact seamlessly with the customer and giving the same message regardless of one's own position within the company.

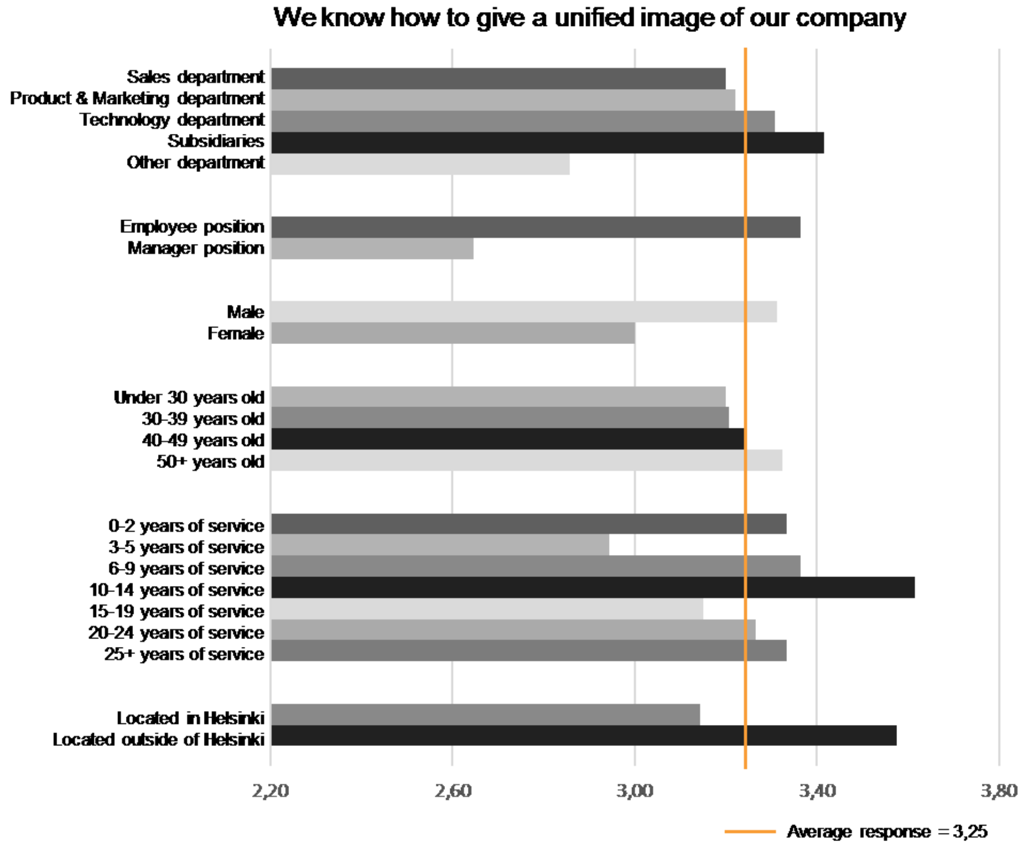


Figure 14. **We know how to give a unified image of our company**

The average response for this statement was 3.25, suggesting that on average responders feel that they only slightly agree with the statement that they know how to give a unified image of their company. The most notable difference in responses seem to be between employees and managers and between office locations.

The average response given by the employees who are not in a managerial position was 3.36, while the average response from those in a managerial position was 2.65. This would suggest that those in a managerial position somewhat disagree with the statement compared to the general agreement of the employees.

The actual image that the company gives may or may not be one that is unified. In order to find out what kind of image the company gives another survey would have to be conducted targeted to the customers of the company instead of its employees. The responses to this particular question rather indicate what employees feel about their company; how much they trust in their brand image and in the company's operations. The differences in responses may vary due to how the same given information is perceived by different people, meaning that those with a more positive attitude may respond with a higher rating than those who are generally more negative. The difference can also be an indication of information not being equally available to everyone, a result of silo mentality within an organization.

The brand image of a company, including how unified it seems, is usually part of a company's main strategy and so it would usually be handled in the organization's top levels of management. Those in managerial positions would usually have a better view of the overall state of affairs within a company in comparison to their subordinates, as they often rely on their manager to get information to trickle down from the higher levels of management. In this case, if the image the company is giving is not a unified one, the information would most likely be more readily available to the upper levels of management and least available to those in employee roles. Even if the image the company is giving is in fact unified, it is usually the management's role to find solutions to improving it, which could also be a reason for the variation in responses since those with managerial roles would understand the shortcomings of their current operations compared to those with employee roles, who would generally worry about more specified tasks according to their job description and not so much how it effects the brand. Additionally, as seen in results from statement h), it would seem that both managers and their employees are more or less equally in contact or working with their customers, the true judges of the actual image of the company. As such, it could be deduced that the difference is more due to internal reasons rather than external causes, namely the proximity and interaction with customers.

The responses also seemed to vary by the location of the responders. Employees located in Helsinki gave an average rating of 3.14 in comparison to 3.58 rating given by those located outside of Helsinki. While both location groups generally agree with the statement, those located outside of Helsinki seem to be more in agreement with the statement. There was a smaller percentage of managers within responders located outside of Helsinki, only 12% were in managerial positions compared to the 29% of managers within Helsinki. However, while the uneven ratio of employees to managers may to some degree affect the gap between response ratings, the location factor may also be significant.

As discussed previously in conjunction with the previous statement g), locations outside of Helsinki are less populated and employees, regardless of their position within the hierarchy of the organization, are often in closer contact with their compared to those located in the capital. Outside of Helsinki not only are there less employees, but customers are also scarcer, which often allows for sales people in particular to focus more on the needs of the customer instead of discussing whatever that employee happens to be specialized in. With less employees working with the customer at the more remote office locations, it seems natural that employees are also more aware of the customer needs as information is more easily obtainable. Furthermore, the people that are finally in contact with the customer may be just a single sales person, who would ideally have an understanding of the customer as a whole and knowledge of the interaction history with the customer.

In comparison, the headquarters in Helsinki is populated with experts in different fields and so many people that it would be virtually impossible to know who everyone is and what their roles are. This can result in situations where different employees contact customers with their own agendas, unaware of interactions that may have occurred or been planned by another employee. Ideally customers would be assigned to an account manager who know what discussions are being held with them, but even so the account manager may not have the resources to grasp the entirety of each customer that is assigned to them. The account managers may also have an agenda of their own, such as getting a higher paycheck or promotion from selling a certain product or making a certain type of sale, for example getting them to subscribe for a specific service.

i) I get regular feedback of my work

As previously suggested, feedback can help to improve work performance. Feedback can motivate employees when they get recognition for their accomplishment, it can encourage employees to perform better since their efforts are appreciated and noticed. Constructive feedback can also help an employee understand what they could be doing better, which can also boost performance.

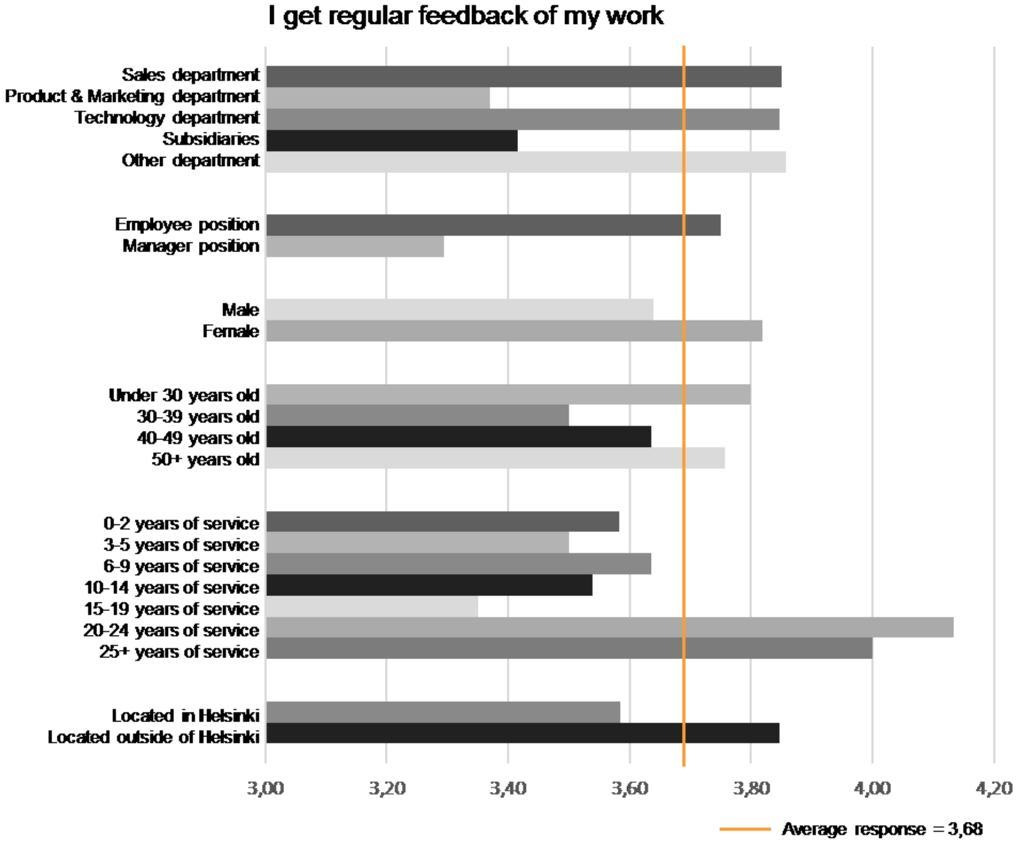


Figure 15. I get regular feedback of my work

The average response for this statement was 3.68, indicating that responders slightly agree with the statement, which could be interpreted to mean that in general responders get feedback, but not very often. The most notable differences in responses were between different departments, between employees and managers, and between employees who had been with the company for 20 years or longer compared to the rest.

People in employee positions gave an average rating of 3.75 while managers gave an average rating of 3.29. These results seem logical as the role of a manager typically includes giving feedback to their subordinates. However, as the organization in question is highly hierarchical, all the managers who responded also have a manager, so in theory the manager position responders would also have an equal opportunity to receive feedback from their own managers. The gap in ratings could suggest the existence of silo mentality between the different levels of management within the organization since feedback is not equally received. On the other hand, it may be part of the organization's practice to not give as much feedback at the higher levels of management, which could also explain the difference.

Compared to the other departments, the product and marketing department and the subsidiaries gave relatively lower ratings for this statement, with ratings of 3.37 and 3.42 respectively. In comparison both the sales department and the technology department gave an average rating of 3.85. These differences in given ratings are likely due to differences in the nature of the work in the given departments and how performance is measured. For example, people working in sales are often evaluated by sales performance, such as through numbers of how much sales revenue they are able to create from billing their customers. The sales are saved and tracked in a methodological manner within an IT system. As such, the performance of a salesperson can be evaluated directly from these statistics. Similarly, people in the technology department often use some sort of ticketing IT system where all work assignments are first entered into the system as tasks or tickets; when the task is finished the ticket may be closed, allowing for performance evaluation based on statistics about the completion of these tasks. When employee performance can be directly measured through statistics on meeting targets it is also more straightforward to give feedback, which may explain why the sales and technology departments' ratings are relatively higher. On the other hand, work in the product and marketing department and within the subsidiaries is much more varied from one individual to another and performance cannot necessarily be measured in numbers but through more subjective evaluations, which can result in receiving less feedback as it would require more effort: first the manager, or other person who wants to give feedback, needs to understand what each employee is working on and then make an assessment on how well they are performing, which would often be a subjective assessment.

Perhaps the most interesting results from this statement were the exceptionally high average responses from people with over 20 years of service at the case company, with an average rating of 4.13 for those with 20 to 24 years of service and 4.00 for those with 25 or more years of service. These results seem to support the theory that getting feedback improves employee satisfaction and thus employees are more likely to stay working for the company: In this case the employees who have been working at the company for the longest time also feel like they get the most feedback. This result is not correlated to the age of the employees; as seen in Figure 15 there is no clear pattern in results according to age. Employees who have spent the longest time at the company may also be recognized better and respected and known for their achievements, which may result in people approaching them more readily.

j) I give regular feedback to others

This question was meant to be for comparison with the previous question i), as evidently receiving feedback requires others to also give feedback.

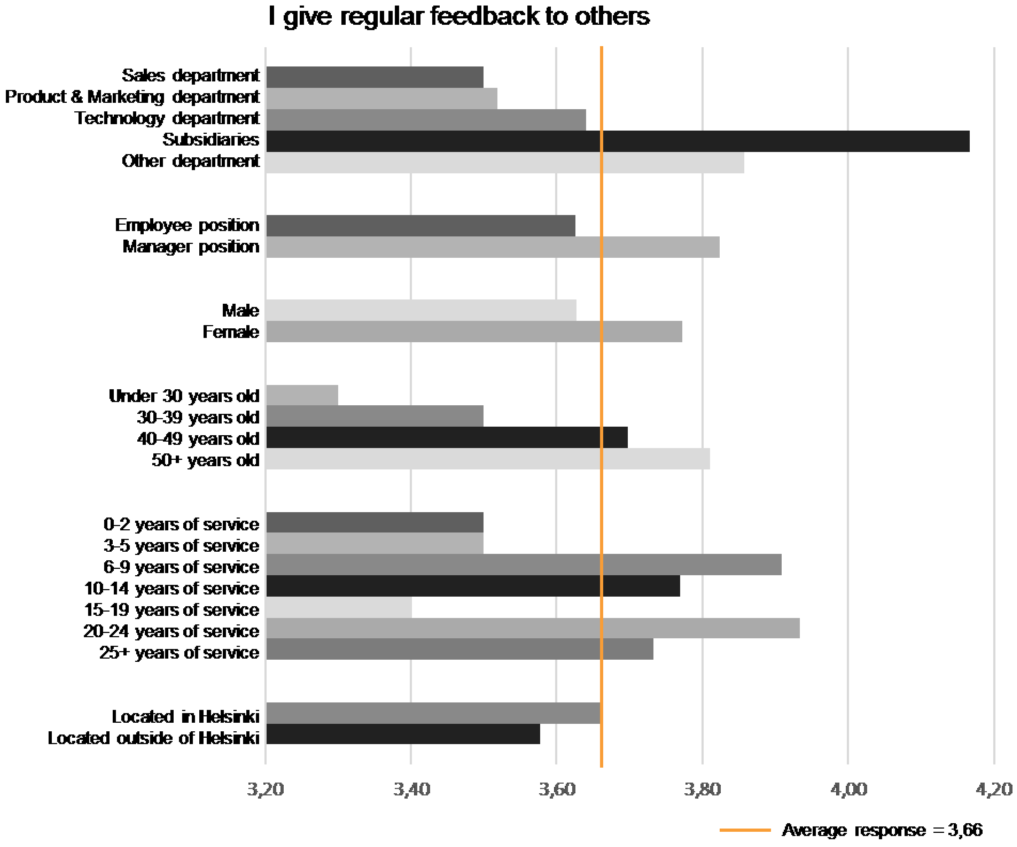


Figure 16. I give regular feedback to others

The average rating for this statement was 3.66, meaning that in general people feel that they sometimes give feedback to others. The most significant results were the relatively high rating of 4.17 given by the subsidiaries, as well as the pattern of growing ratings according to increased age of the responders.

According to the survey, the subsidiaries feel more strongly than others that they give regular feedback. Yet if we compare this result to the previous statement i), the responders from the subsidiaries are also among those who feel that they receive the least feedback. These results seem to be consistent with observations made about cross-departmental cooperation in section 0, where it was observed that in particular the product and marketing department, as well as the technology department, rated the collaboration to be at a significantly lower level in comparison to how the subsidiaries viewed the collaboration. In practice this could mean that the subsidiaries make more of an effort to collaborate with these departments while the opposite is true for the product and marketing and technology departments. The ones making a bigger effort to collaborate usually also give more feedback as seems to be in this case where the subsidiaries gave the highest rating for giving regular feedback. On the other hand, those that others do not make efforts to collaborate with would be left without regular feedback from these parties, as observed in the previous statement.

These results also showed that the older the employee, the more likely they seem to give regular feedback. This result is contrary to the previous statement where there was a pattern in years working at the case company but no obvious conclusions to be drawn from the age of responders. The rating for this statement grew linearly by estimation, with a rating of 3.30 for responders aged less than 30, 3.50 for those aged 30 to 39, 3.70 for those aged 40 to 49, and finally 3.81 for those aged 50 or above. Age usually correlates with work experience, and those with more work experience are often better qualified to giving advice to their colleagues given the knowledge that they have accrued throughout their work history. Cultural norms may also play a part in why the younger responders are not as likely to give regular feedback as it could be interpreted as being disrespectful to give feedback to others given their relatively younger age and therefore lack of work experience.

k) I know what is expected of my everyday work

This statement was aimed to evaluate how well responders feel like they understand their responsibilities at work and how well these have been communicated to them.

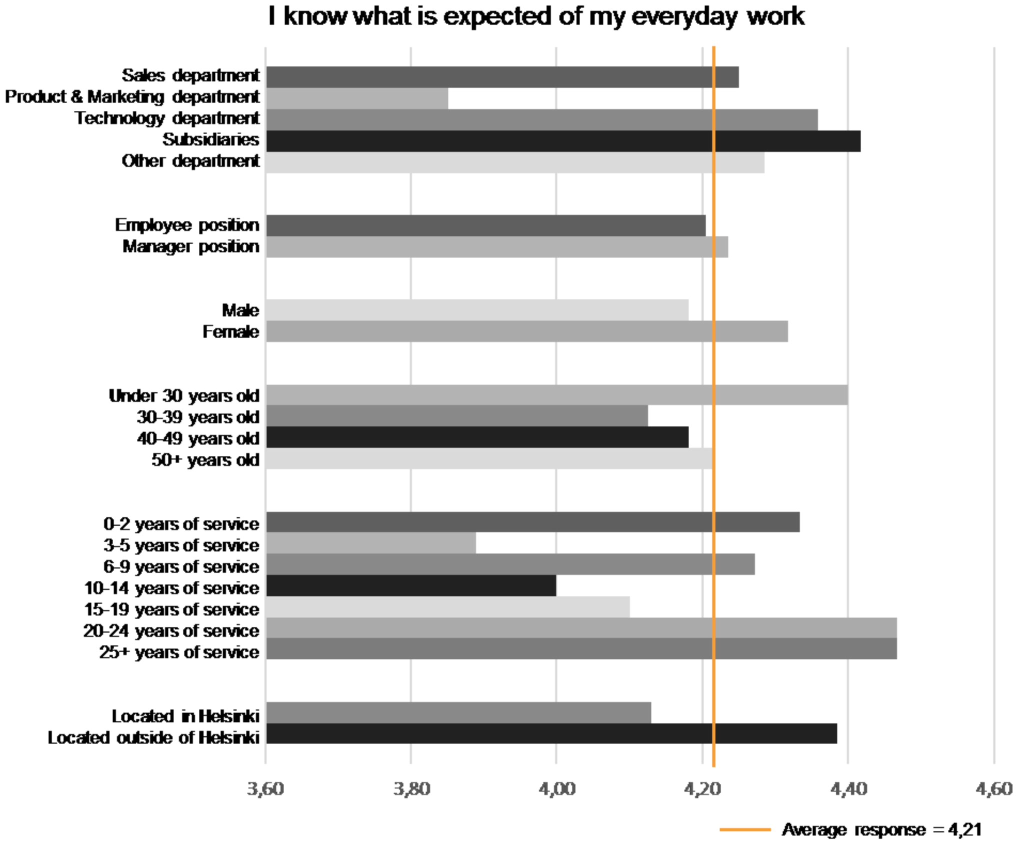


Figure 17. I know what is expected of my everyday work

The average rating for this statement was 4.21, meaning that the responders feel that they know what is expected of them. The most notable result was the relatively low average rating 3.85 given by the product and marketing department compared to all the other departments. While the rating still signifies that the responders agree to understanding what is expected of them, it seems that there may be more uncertainty within this department about what their work should entail. The result raises the question of whether this is due to the nature of responders' jobs or if it is more a result of insufficient communication. The results from earlier statement i) would support the theory that perhaps communication towards employees in the product and marketing department is not as thorough as in the other departments, given that the product and marketing department also gave relatively low ratings on how often they get feedback on their work.

l) I feel that I have the authority to make decisions about my own work

This question was aimed to find out how empowered responders feel like at work and how much of an impact they can have in their jobs.

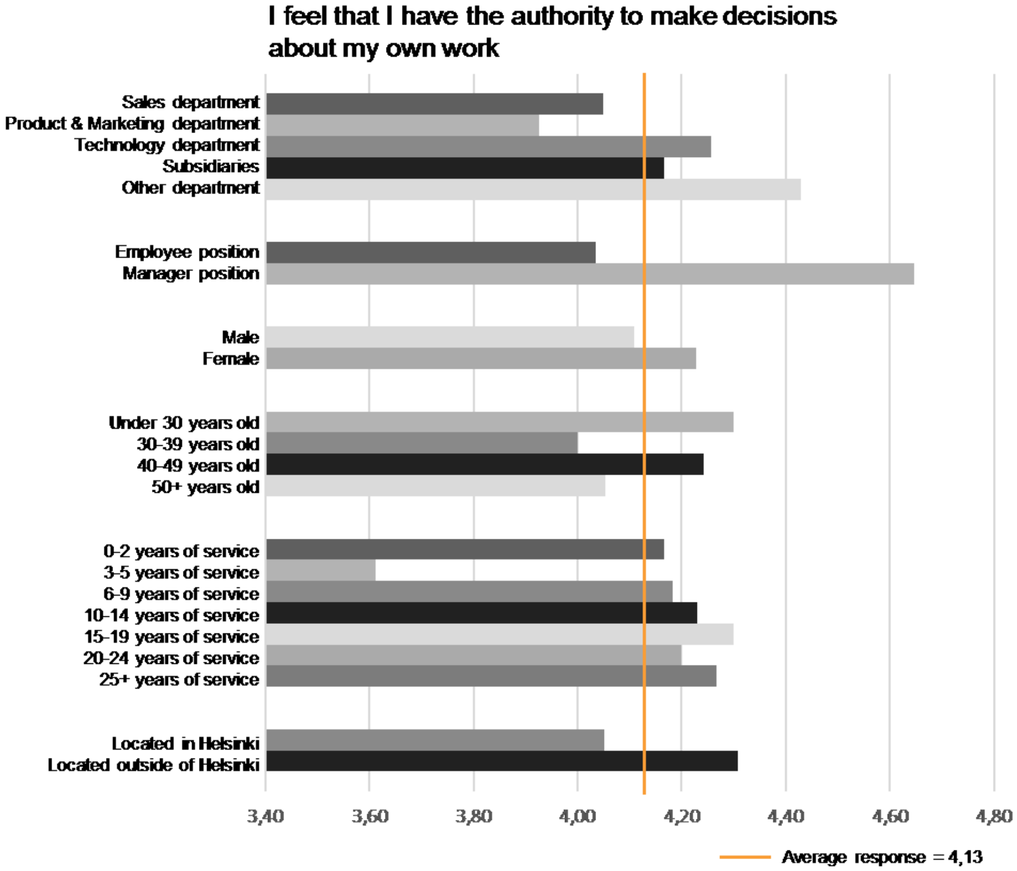


Figure 18. I feel that I have the authority to make decisions about my own work

The average response for this statement was 4.13, indicating that responders seem quite satisfied about the authority that they have to make decisions about their work. Out of all the departments the product and marketing department seemed to be the least satisfied with their given authority. The most notable difference in ratings was between employees with an average rating of 4.03 and managers with an average rating of 4.65. The difference between the employee and manager role, however, was to be expected due to the nature of their positions; usually important decisions are taken to a higher level in the organizations hierarchy, meaning that the managers are often making decisions for the employees.

An interesting result was also the relatively low rating of 3.61 given by those who have worked at the company for 3 to 5 years. These responders are from all the represented departments, consists of both managers and employees and both genders. They are all from Helsinki, which had a lower rating in general as well, but does not completely explain the low result.

m) I have enough information to make decisions about my own work

This statement was created to be compared with the previous statement l), with the intention of trying to discover whether responses were more due to the amount of information available or more due to how jobs and authority has been defined within the company.

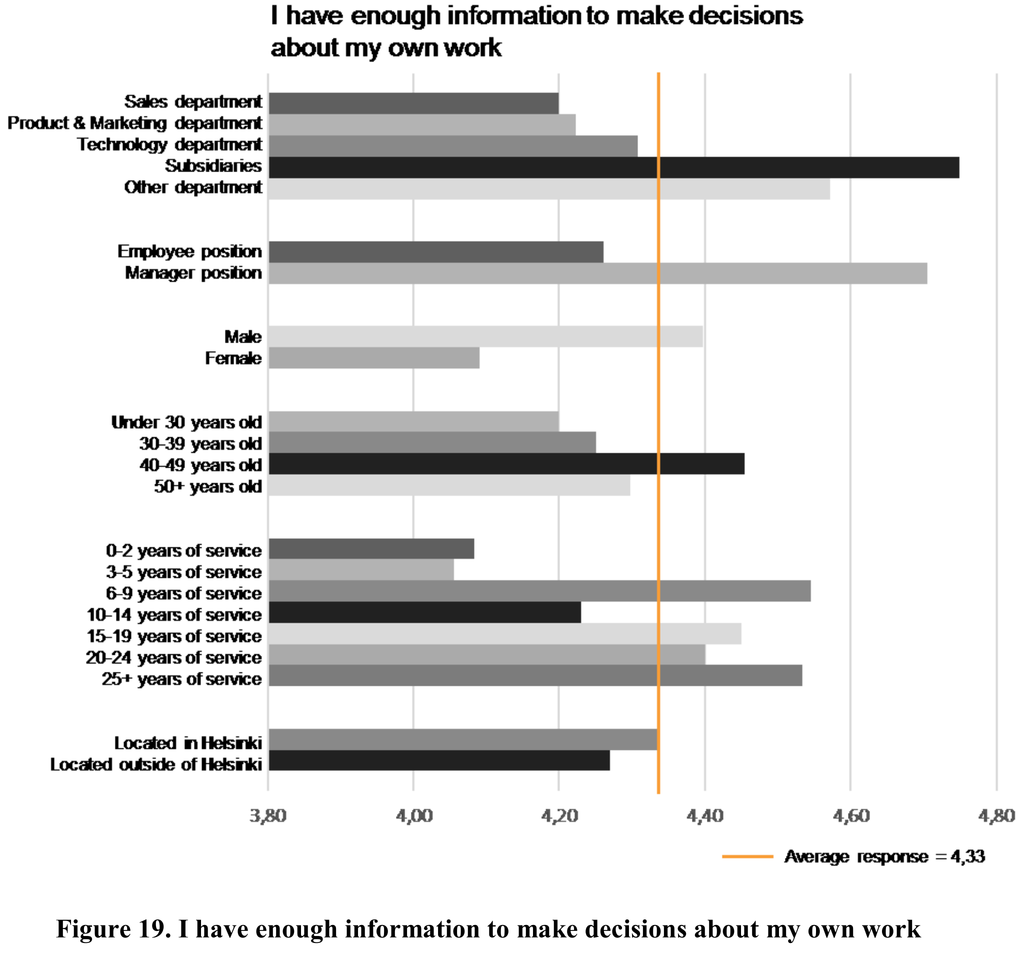


Figure 19. I have enough information to make decisions about my own work

The average response for this statement was 4.33, indicating that on average the responders feel that they have a good amount of information to make decisions in their work. Notable results were the high rating given by the subsidiaries, the difference in rating between employee and manager positions, the difference in ratings depending on gender, as well as observable patterns depending on age and years working at the company.

The subsidiaries gave a significantly higher rating of 4.75 in comparison to the other departments. This result is in line with results from previous statements, where it was observed that in general the subsidiaries seem to feel well informed and understand the impact of their own work both on higher level goals and customer experience: this can be seen in statements b), c) and d). While this is not a surprising result, it is interesting to notice that the subsidiaries feel that they have about the same level of authority as the other departments, despite having the opinion of having a relatively better grasp on the information required for making decisions.

As with previous statement l), those in manager roles gave a higher rating of 4.71 compared to those in employee roles with an average rating 4.26. While the manager role often demands being the authority to making decisions, employees neither have the jurisdiction nor proper knowledge for making informed decisions about their jobs. This same pattern of information being unevenly distributed between employees and managers can be equally observed in previous statements as well, such as in statements a), b) and d), implying the existence of horizontal silos between different levels of management.

While male and female responders gave a relatively similar average rating in the previous statement l) on the level of authority they have, in this statement male responders gave a higher rating of 4.4 compared to the females with a rating of 4.09. Upon further inspection, it seems that the difference in ratings may be due to the uneven ratio of the different departments represented within the two genders: there was less than 5% female responders and 13% male responders from the subsidiaries, the department that answered exceptionally high in this section compared to the others. It seems likely that the difference in responses between the two genders is due to the representation from the subsidiaries, but gender inequalities cannot be ruled out completely with these results.

There seemed to be a pattern in how informed responders felt with both their age and number of years working at the company. As seen in Figure 19, the first two youngest age groups gave the lowest average ratings in both categories, implying that age and work experience, as well as work experience at the case company, both increase how well employees are able to gain information affecting their work.

4.1.2 Feedback on the survey

Despite having the option of answering the survey through the printable document, all responses came through the online survey, which seemed like a natural choice as the case company is moving towards digitalizing everything and as an ICT service provider all employees are familiar with online tools.

Most questions only had the option of picking the best answer out of a given set of answers, but a few of the questions allowed for a written answer, such as age, location and years of service at the company. Not all questions were answered to correctly, as some responders may have been wary of giving too detailed answers about themselves. The survey included a field for open comments, and one responder left a note about concerns about how the demographic information could be used to identify the individual in question, which could be a reason for why answers were not all filled in accurately. When the survey had been sent out, there had been a mention of how all given information would be treated anonymously, but this was apparently not enough of a reassurance for everyone. Some responders also took liberties in filling in the survey, such as humorously writing “too long” for the years of service at the company: some answers could be fixed afterwards by asking the responder if they left their contact details or by using a best guess estimate in some cases or simply correcting obvious spelling mistakes. Due to the varying answer styles, some answers had to be omitted for analysis purposes when certain demographics were included in the analysis. In the future, answers would be more consistent when all possible answers were given beforehand to choose from, thus leaving out the option of writing an answer that cannot be used for analysis.

Another concern that was given in the comments section of the survey was the fact that all questions were mandatory, but there was no option to answer for example “not applicable” if the responder did not really know. This could be due to the fact, that the different departments may not be in any way familiar or relevant to everyone, especially to employees of the subsidiaries of the case company. All the multiple-choice questions, however, were given on a scale of 1-5, where 3 would be neutral, and the few who were unsure about some questions used the option 3 as had been planned, but could have been also separately mentioned. The lack of the option for “not applicable” was likely only a marginal issue.

Some responders were confused about what the survey was meant for, as the term silo was unfamiliar to them. This, however, should not have any effect on the answers in the survey, but may have discouraged some people from responding if they did not understand the survey’s purpose, thus potentially lowering the response rate.

4.1.3 Summary of the responses

The cross-departmental cooperation section raised the most interest within the case company as employees seemed to have formed the opinion that silos do indeed exist within the organization, and that it is a widespread problem. The purpose of this section of the survey was to find information to narrow down on which departments specifically are not communicating or cooperating enough with others.

The subsidiaries, in particular, seem to be siloed from the technology and product and marketing departments. The feeling is mutual in that the cooperation is not working well, and both the technology and product and marketing departments strongly feel that the level of cooperation is not sufficient as it is. Just from the fact that 64 out of 66 responses, from the product and marketing and technology departments assessing the subsidiaries, were identical implies that these departments cannot even distinguish the subsidiaries from one another.

The technology department is also somewhat siloed, especially towards the sale department, in addition to the subsidiaries as discussed. From the responses, the consensus seems to be that the technology and the sales departments do not cooperate enough, which could be also observed at the case company. Problems tended to arise when sales personnel sold or promised customers solutions that could not be supported by the technology department. Hindrances to succeed in the market happened when the technology department managed to develop new and innovative solutions, but the sales department did not know about them or understand them, preventing the solutions from even reaching the markets. The responses also hinted that the product and marketing department should have a larger role in cooperation with both the sales and the technology departments. This could be related to the relatively low level of cooperation between the sales and technology departments, as the product and marketing department is often the link between the sales and the technology departments, translating technological advancements into sales arguments and translating customer needs into technological requirements. Therefore, a better cooperation between the product and marketing department with both the technology and the sales departments would also bridge the gap between the cooperation of the sales and the technology departments.

When comparing the answers about the opinions about the workplace of the different departments, a general pattern of dissatisfaction, or at least relatively lower average responses, seemed to emerge from the product and marketing department. While the product and marketing department was not the most siloed of the departments in cross-departmental cooperation, in the opinions about the workplace section this department's answers were consistently low in comparison to the other departments, with just a few exceptions. These relatively low responses would suggest that the product and marketing department is more siloed than the other departments when it comes to the hierarchy of the organization, meaning that horizontal silos are more prominent in the product and marketing department. The answers suggested that there was less certainty about their interpretation of higher level strategy and goals and understanding what is expected of them, as well as uncertainty about the ability to make decisions.

The difference between results from those located in Helsinki and those located outside the capital region could be a result of the differences in sizes of the units within the organization. The subsidiaries are much smaller organizations than the parent company, with less levels of management and a smaller number of employees. Similarly, those located in Helsinki are physically close to a much larger number of different employees, compared to those that are sitting in offices scattered around Finland, some of which only have one functional unit in that location. When dealing with a large organization information can be more readily available in comparison to smaller organizations where there may be a lack of resources or expertize. On the other hand, in a large organization individual performance is not as easily recognized as it is in smaller organizations. In the same way, those located in the capital city and the main office of the case company have access to resources more readily than those who are physically further away, so those located in Helsinki would in theory understand the company's strategy better than those outside Helsinki. Conversely, those in small office buildings working with a handful of people may understand the significance of their own work better, as individual performance can be more readily recognized with a smaller head count and the effect of that work can usually also be seen faster in that work environment. In a relatively higher populated office the individual performance is harder to recognize due to the sheer number of employees, both for managers as well as co-workers as there are more people to interact with on a daily basis. In addition, the effects of one's own work may be seen in a different part of the organization or the building, meaning that it may be hard for the individual to understand their impact themselves if they cannot see it in their daily work.

The size of the organization and number of people at the given location can also affect the level of information flow. With the large organization and population, it can take a longer time for information to get from one place to another: there may be more levels of hierarchy to go through, more complexity and bureaucracy, more people to coordinate. At a relatively smaller organization, or office location with less people, information can be more simple with less special arrangements to be made: in some cases, all the people involved may be sitting in the same room and can be contacted by just interacting with them face to face at one's own convenience.

The observed difference in opinions could also be less a result of understanding and information flow, but instead a result of an underlying juxtaposition between roles and higher-level goals, where these may not be in line with one another. There could be a situation where employees' roles do not correspond to the higher-level goals, or goals do not take into account all the different roles that exist within the company.

5 Conclusion

The results of the research show that a degree of silo mentality exists at the case company, more in some places than others. The conclusion section goes through the key findings, some discussion summarizing the results, recommendations for the case company and other organizations dealing with silos, and finally suggestions for future research.

5.1 *Key Findings*

The original hypothesis was that silos exist in the workplace, an assumption and opinion shared by many within the workplace. The first question posed for this thesis, of whether or not there is evidence of a silo mindset at the case company, was answered after conducting the survey: the analysis of the results supports the hypothesis, indicating that silos do indeed exist within the company. Key findings include the differences in the silo mindset of different employee groups, the unsymmetrical nature of the silos, as well as the discrepancy between how well information flows and the sufficiency of the information flow.

The second research question was to find out if the silo mindset is more prominent in certain employee groups, and the results seem to indicate that this is indeed the case, depending on the point of view. From the different departments, the product and marketing and the technology departments are the most isolated from the subsidiaries. Similarly, the technology department is relatively isolated from the product and marketing and the sales departments. Silos could also be observed depending on the responder's level in the organizational hierarchy. Those in managerial positions understood company goals better than the employees, indicating an existence of horizontal silos between the different managerial levels. Responses from people located at the headquarters in Helsinki and those from other offices indicate a difference in the silo mindset of different employee groups. Those outside of Helsinki understood how their individual contribution makes a difference, while those in Helsinki understood the company's main strategy and customer needs better, implying that those in Helsinki are not as siloed from the different levels of management, but are instead experiencing stronger vertical silos in not understanding their individual roles and the impact they make. Surprisingly, age and time working at the case company did not seem to have any correlation with the level of silo mentality in the scope of this research.

A significant and surprising finding was that silos were not symmetrical, which was evident from the survey results on cross-departmental cooperation. In several cases, there were indications of vertical silos, where one party was satisfied with the level of information being shared across the departments, while the other side was dissatisfied and felt the cooperation to be lacking.

Another key finding was that there is a difference with how well information flows and how sufficient the information flow is. The difference could be observed from the answers regarding cross-departmental cooperation, as well as some of the questions about employee satisfaction. This shows that while silos may exist, the situation can be acceptable to the parties involved, depending on how well they need to be communicating in the first place. As such, since silos will not disappear overnight, it is important to consider the tradeoffs between spending energy and resources to break down silos and the actual advantages from achieving this. With limited time and resources, it is best to identify the largest discrepancies in communication and cooperation and to work on breaking down silos there first. Therefore, it is not only important to find out where silos exist and how strong they are, but to also establish what sort of hindrances they pose.

5.2 *Recommendations*

This section is to make recommendations for the case company and to answer the final question posed for the thesis on how the case company should act to break down silos.

Employee satisfaction surveys could be enhanced further and used to collect information about possible silos. Employee satisfaction surveys are commonly collected in most companies, including the case company; often more than once a year. Results are always treated anonymously, yet results are presented at a level as detailed as individual teams' feedback, provided there were at least 5 answers. Instead of only using the results to find out how different teams and the departments and units that they are part of answered, the results could be further analyzed to also discover possible correlations between answers according to other factors than just the team and department that they belong to. If new employees are more dissatisfied than others, perhaps they are not familiar enough with their current work or employer and could benefit from a more thorough introduction to ways of working, benefits and so on. Conversely, if instead employees who have been at the company for a longer amount of time are dissatisfied, then it could be time to help refresh their knowledge and skills, and involve them more at work: these employees have been loyal to the company and are usually more likely to be advocates for their employer, so the importance of keeping them happy is even more emphasized. There is no set number of years for who is a new employee or at what point has an employee been at the company long enough to be considered a loyal employee: the amount of years will usually be different according to the individuals themselves and their thought processes, as well as depending on the industry, since the pace of work and number of potential employers will vary.

It may be necessary to educate the technology and product and marketing departments on what the two subsidiaries do to allow them to understand the differences between them. Opening communication channels and finding synergies in the everyday work of these departments could improve the collaboration and help reduce the silos.

The product and marketing department could benefit from empowerment. The organization could empower the employees by giving them the tools and understanding to grasp what is expected of them, and knowledge and jurisdiction to make informed decisions about their work, while fully aware of how they impact higher level goals and how they affect the customer. This would require educating the personnel and giving them the means to make decisions affecting their own work. Empowering employees improve work satisfaction, which leads to better efficiency and employee retention.

5.3 *Future research*

The scope of the study was restricted to a limited target audience at the given case company at a given moment in time. Future studies could broaden the scope of the study with a larger target audience, for example instead of targeting only one part of the organization the whole company could instead be part of the study. The study could also be broadened to multiple countries and other organizations. In addition, the survey questions could be reviewed and changed, while bearing in mind how shorter surveys usually generate a better response rate as explored previously. A similar study could be conducted several times with the same questions and target audience to explore whether opinions have changed since the last survey, thus giving insight about the effectiveness of possible actions made to improve working conditions.

For future research, the target audience could be broadened, possibly with a few more specifying questions about the demography of the responders, to have the ability to group them into different segments according to their background information. The research could be taken a step further by looking for correlations and possible causalities, meaning cause and effect relationships, between the different demographics (or combinations of them) and the responses. The target audience should be considerably larger than the one in this study, in order to have the option of researching causality. The target audience could be from different parts of the organization and from different companies. Other companies could be competitors or partners from the same industry, but they could equally well be from a different industry, though these factors should be included in the survey in order to get results and possible recommendations for the individual companies, as well as for making comparisons between them.

The survey questions in this research could be used again, but depending on the intended use they should be reviewed first. As the survey questions were mainly subjective the responses may have been influenced by personal views, attitudes and opinions. Further research would benefit from consulting specialists in psychology to minimize differences caused by how people interpret questions. In addition, a question that could be added is “how likely are you to recommend your employee to others?” or similar, as is done in NPS studies. This question had not made it into this study as the question’s value had been discovered and added into the literature review only after the survey had already been conducted. For a future iteration of a similar study, this should certainly be a part of the survey as it has been shown repeatedly to correspond to loyalty, as previously discussed in section 2.3.1. Expanding the target audience could warrant for making more detailed questions about the demographics of the responders, while keeping the survey relatively short to avoid having people abandon answering the survey due to the daunting length. As such, a balance between the number of questions, including the level of details about demography, and the length of the survey needs to be found to get enough responses with sufficient information. Incentives could be considered to further motivate more responses from the audience, such as monetary rewards or the possibility to win something desired by the audience.

Silos have been present in organizations for decades, evident from various articles and literature on the subject, and is still a relevant topic today. Silos can exist at companies of all sizes. As silos have a negative impact on both the work culture and the customer experience, they should be taken seriously and addressed. In the future, ideally silos could be identified more readily and actions could be taken to get rid of them, enabling the work culture to be more open, sharing and cooperative, which could translate to better efficiency, as well as loyalty and a richer customer experience.

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Appendix A: Survey questions

1. Which department are you in?

☐ Sales SME (0-250)
☐ Sales Large (250+)
☐ Sales Public
☐ Offering
☐ Customer channels
☐ Technology
☐ Subsidiary A
☐ Subsidiary B
☐ Other:________________

2. Rate how well your department cooperates with the other departments on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very poor and 5 being very good)?

	1	2	3	4	5
Sales SME (0-250)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sales Large (250+)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sales Public	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Offering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customer channels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subsidiary A	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subsidiary B	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Is the current level of cooperation of your department with others sufficient on a scale of 1 to 5? (1 being very insufficient and 5 being very sufficient)

	1	2	3	4	5
Sales SME (0-250)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sales Large (250+)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Sales Public	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Offering	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Customer channels	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Technology	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subsidiary A	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Subsidiary B	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

4. Give your opinion of the following statements

	Totally disagree				Totally agree
I clearly understand the company's main strategy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can clearly see how my own work affects higher-level goals	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We regularly discuss about our customers and their wants and needs	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I understand how my work impacts the customer experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I would like a better understanding of how my work impacts the customer experience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am often in contact with the company's customers or working directly with them	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Our team regularly uses customer feedback to improve our performance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
We know how to give a unified image of our company	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I get regular feedback of my work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I give regular feedback to others	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I know what is expected of my everyday work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel that I have the authority to make decisions about my own work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have enough information to make decisions about my own work	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

5. Are you in a managerial position? ☐ No ☐ Yes

6. What gender are you? ☐ Male ☐ Female

7. How old are you? _______ years

8. How long have you worked at the company? ________ years

9. Which office are you located at? (Municipality) __________