

# CHALMERS



## Managing Customer Expectations

How Customer Expectations are Formed and Identified During a Project Delivery

*Master of Science Thesis*

*in the Management and Economics of Innovation Programme*

MARCUS ANDERSSON  
GUNILLA LIEDMAN

Department of Technology Management and Economics

*Division of Innovation Engineering and Management*

CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

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Consideration of Expectations to Enhance Customer Satisfaction  
How Customer Expectations are Formed and Identified During a Project  
Delivery

MARCUS ANDERSSON  
GUNILLA LIEDMAN

Tutor, Chalmers: Magnus Holmén  
Tutor, company: Bengt Rodung

Department of Technology Management and Economics  
*Division of Innovation Engineering and Management*  
CHALMERS UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY  
Göteborg, Sweden 2013

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Department of Technology Management and Economics  
*Division of Innovation Engineering and Management*  
Chalmers University of Technology  
SE-412 96 Göteborg, Sweden  
Telephone: + 46 (0)31-772 1000

Chalmers Reproservice  
Göteborg, Sweden 2013

*“Blessed is he who expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.”*

- Alexander Pope

## ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction is crucial for firms relying on customer relationships, where revenue streams are based on recurring sales. One such context is project business where service delivery is conducted in projects in close contact with the customer. In such an environment the customer is not only in contact with the final service or product, but also with its production. Customer satisfaction is achieved through an evaluation of the customer's perceived service quality against the customer's expectations on the upcoming service quality. As such, the understanding of the phenomenon of customer expectations becomes important for firms operating in this type of context.

To gain this understanding, an embedded case study design has been used within the focal firm Findwise. The company is an IT-consultancy firm specialized in delivering internal search solutions to customers. Their delivery occurs through projects performed in close connection with the customer and in a context which represents the setting described above. Four units of analysis, consisting of four different customer relationships, have been investigated through semi-structured interviews in order to gain a holistic view of Findwise's customer relationships and in order to be able to fulfil the purpose of this study.

To investigate this phenomenon the purpose of this study has been to *increase the understanding of Findwise's customers' expectations in order to increase the customer satisfaction. This understanding regards to the formation of expectations and how customer expectations are identified in their project business setting.*

It has been identified that customer expectations constantly reform along three different dimensions. These dimensions consist of the level of fuzziness, implicitness and unrealism. The expectations are influenced to a large degree on previous experience and the less knowledgeable customer the more fuzzy, implicit and unrealistic the expectations may be. Therefore it is important for the project supplier to guide the customer through an educational journey and have a continuous identification of the customer's changing expectations. This in order to either influence the expectations or adapt the project and its outcome to match the expectations and achieve customer satisfaction.

Customer expectations are hard to identify for Findwise, especially when they are fuzzy and implicit. As such, verifying Findwise's own perception of the customers' expectations, through demos and part-deliveries, has taken a large role in the identification of customers' expectations.

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*Gothenburg, June 2013*

Marcus Andersson  
Gunilla Liedman

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Where long-term customer relationships are of importance for profitability, customer satisfaction is essential for long-term survival (Cova & Holstius 1993). This is the case within project business where customer deliveries are made through joint projects with the customer. In such a setting, it becomes important to provide both a good product as well as a good customer interaction during the project. This to achieve customer satisfaction and consequently a good customer relationship.

Customer satisfaction is a state which customers experience when they are feeling a sense of satisfaction and happiness with the delivery of a supplier. This state is the result of an evaluation between what the customer thought that they would receive and what they felt that they received, i.e. between their expectations and the perceived quality (Grönroos 2008, pp. 81-82). The components of service quality contain both the project execution as well as the final service solution delivered. Hence, the satisfaction is a result of the customers' expectations on the service as well as the service process (Grönroos 1984).

Since expectations are an important aspect of customers' satisfaction, it is important for suppliers to understand the influence of customer expectations (Coye 2004). It is further essential for companies to be aware of their influence on customers' expectations and how to manage these influences (Robledo 2011).

Currently there is a gap in academia regarding the practical application of the identification and formation of customer expectations within project business. There of no analytical framework exist in this area; however several different strains of theory have been drawn upon in order to analyse the issue at hand. The authors of this thesis have the ambition that these strains of theory could act as a foundation for the construction of such a framework.

Findwise is an IT-consultancy firm which was founded in 2005 and currently has offices in Gothenburg, Stockholm, Oslo, Copenhagen, Warsaw and Sydney. Findwise offers their clients search driven solutions that can connect companies internal IT-systems and websites and make information more effectively accessible. Their concept findability represents the resulting business value of the clients' search technology investments. The constructions of the findability solutions are done in collaboration with the clients, as solutions need to be tailored to each specific customer. Often, the collaboration contains a review phase followed by several phases of technology development and maintenance. The goal is to get profit by a continuous relationship with the client and to continue to develop the findability solution within the client company.<sup>1</sup>

Findwise operates in a project business context as they deliver their findability solutions through joint projects with their customers. The customer is thus subjected to two different components of the offering, the service itself and the process of delivering the service, as stated above. Findwise has a long-term relationship with several of their customers and relies on recurring sales with each individual customer. This type of revenue stream is dependent on a high customer satisfaction. As such, it is important for Findwise to understand the phenomenon of customer expectations, how the expectations affect the customer satisfaction, and how the actions of the company influence the customers and their expectations.

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with Bengt Rodung, Findwise, 2013-01-21

The authors of this report aim to increase the understanding of how to manage the fit between customers' expectations and perceived service quality during the delivery of IT-solutions in project business. In its project business setting, Findwise becomes a suitable instance for investigating this topic. The conducted study consists of four embedded cases which have been made anonymous by altering the contextual data in order to protect the customers' identity. Through the studied cases the researchers got an understanding of Findwise's interaction with its customers in regards to their expectations.

## 1.1 PROBLEM DISCUSSION

Findwise's business model depends on long-term customer relationships and repurchases. To stay profitable, they are dependent on their customers' satisfaction. Since the customer satisfaction is depending on whether the perceived quality meet the customer's expectations, it is crucial for Findwise to identify customers' expectation and to know how to influence the expectations. Today, Findwise has a need for an understanding on how to manage customer expectations during the delivery process, so that the expectations is on the right level compared to what Findwise is capable of delivering.

In the project business theory, authors stress the importance of putting projects in context of the business environment and in relation to the whole project portfolio (Cova & Holstius 1993; Artto et al. 2011, p. 1). It is also important to consider aspects besides the technical quality measures time and budget, such as customer satisfaction and communication. What is not discussed however is the influence of customer expectations on the final customer satisfaction, and thereby the influence of customer expectations on the final success of the project. On the other hand, service quality and customer satisfaction theory stress the importance of regarding customer expectations in order to achieve customer satisfaction (Grönroos, 1984). However, little attention is put on the issue of how to do this in a project business setting in practice.

As such, the problem and research gap that will be analysed in this thesis are how to bridge the theoretical fields of project business and customer satisfaction. This in order to investigate how to address customer expectations in practice. The aim of this study is to identify how to manage customer expectations in relation to Findwise's business model within the context of project business.

## 1.2 PURPOSE

In line with the problem discussion regarding the bridging of project business and the impact of customer expectations, Findwise will be the unit for this study answering the following purpose:

*To increase the understanding of Findwise's customers' expectations in order to increase the customer satisfaction. This understanding regards to the formation of expectations and how customer expectations are identified in their project business setting.*

### 1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To be able to answer to the above stated purpose, the following research questions are formulated:

**RQ 1:** How do Findwise identify the customers' expectations throughout the delivery of projects?

**RQ 2:** How are Findwise's customers' expectations formulated during the projects' progress?

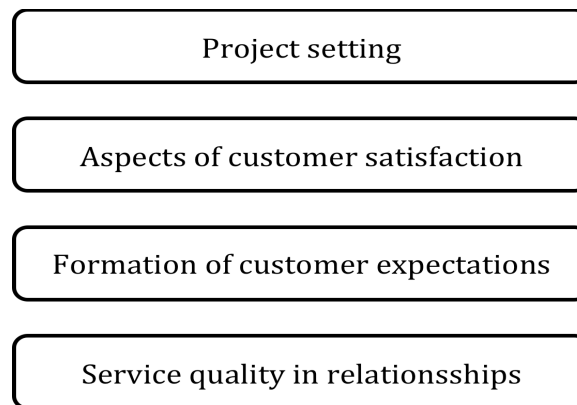
**RQ 3:** What are Findwise's difficulties in identifying the customers' expectations during the projects?

With the answers to these questions, the aim is to provide Findwise with tools to manage the customer expectation during their delivery process. Through research question one the issue of identifying customer expectations will be addressed. To consider the customers' expectations in order to achieve satisfaction, they must first be identified (Ojasalo 2001). By understanding how a firm like Findwise acts to identify expectations, the gap between how to manage customer expectations in a project setting can thus be bridged. Research question two concerns the aspect of how customers' expectations are formed and how they are influenced to increase the understanding of how to effect the customer's expectations in a more conscious manner. This is an important factor when striving to achieve a high customer satisfaction (Grönroos 2008, pp. 84-85). Research question three the aims to highlight difficulties in identifying expectations in practice.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

To answer the research questions, there is a need for both theory and data regarding four different areas as presented in figure 1.

Firstly, the project setting must be stated, laying a foundation for the analysis of the effects of conducting projects in this context, including the aspect of different stakeholder roles. Thereafter, a composition of aspects affecting customer satisfaction will be presented. This includes the evaluation mechanism for customer satisfaction, dimensions of expectations, and components of service quality as well as how customer expectations are formed. In the end, the effects of a customer relationship on satisfaction will be presented.



**Figure 1: The different sections of the literature review**

The division of these four areas of interest will later on be used as a frame for both the empirical findings and the analysis. This is done in order to create a structured and easy to follow way of answering the purpose.

### 2.1 PROJECT SETTING

A project is defined by Ajmal, Helo and Kekäle (2010) as a group of people working towards a common goal with shared responsibilities and resources. The supplier of the projects may be delivering several parallel projects with different scope at the same time (Artto et al. 2008).

Whether a project is successful or not, is traditionally explained by the constraint factors time, budget and performance (Shenhar et al. 2001). However, Shenhar et al. (2001) describe project success in four different dimensions, where meeting constraints is just one part. Thereafter customer impact, business success and future preparations are also considered. Shenhar et al. (2001) further state that in high technology projects overruns in time and budget are often tolerable, as it is other aspects that are of more importance for the customer. Also, a high technology project may often be initiated for other reasons than immediate profit, such as future growth and good customer relationships. (Shenhar et al. 2001)

Regarding project management, literature has traditionally been focusing on planning and implementation (Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala 2011, p. 1). To get a project business perspective, and to make it succeed, it is necessary to consider not only the specific project's implementation and planning, but also that the choices made reflects a long-term perspective (Cova & Holstius 1993). Therefore, Cova and Holstius (1993) state that the aspects on both customer satisfaction and

business success must be considered. When projects are connected to the business success of a firm, and the objectives are related to the company's success or survival, Artto, Martinsuo and Kujala (2011, p. 10) define project business as "part of a business that relates directly or indirectly to projects, with a purpose to achieve objectives of a firm or several firms".

For a project business to be successful, Cova & Holstius (1993) have identified three key success factors which are administrative effectiveness, entrepreneurial culture and personnel readiness. Administrative effectiveness is explained as co-operation between profit centres and projects as well as organizational readiness for business, which means that the necessary resources and logistic channels must be in place. The entrepreneurial culture regards the company culture and risk management. The risk management means the readiness to evaluate risks and the choice of the best strategies and the entrepreneurial culture is characterised by versatility and ambition of those who run the business. Personnel readiness explains that employees shall be knowledgeable and flexible towards customers' changing demands. Also, employees should be familiar with the customer's company culture. (Cova & Holstius 1993)

In project business there are four major areas explained by Artto & Kujala (2008). These areas are defined depending on how the management's concern is directed. If it is concerning a single project, it is described simply as management of a project. If there are several parallel projects in a firm, management of a project-based firm is required. Furthermore, management of a project network addresses the management of a project that is involving several firms. The last area is management of a business network area. This area addresses several firms and multiple projects. This is further described by Artto, Martinsuo & Kujala (2011, p. 1) who state that the corporate management should consider the whole portfolio of projects. By changing the view from managing a single project towards a project business perspective, where multiple projects are considered, the projects can be observed in the business environment, and not separated from it.

One way to look at a project is as a temporary organization with the purpose of completing a certain assignment, but the project can also be related to activities and phases, which makes it possible to manage and schedule. One way to look at these phases is through the project lifecycle perspective Artto, Martinsuo and Kujala (2011, p. 16). The services during a project can there be related to three different stages, sales, development & implementation and maintenance. In the different phases of the lifecycle there are different kinds of services provided, which all together lead to the business performance of the project-based firm. The services offered during the projects can therefore define the lifecycle of the project (Samli, Jacobs & Willis 1992). Artto et al. (2008) further describes these different phases of a project as pre-project phase, project phase and post-project phase.

Regarding project methodology, it can differ between traditional methods, such as waterfall, and agile methods (Aguanno 2004). Cervone (2010) states that agile project management was developed as a response to the mismatch between traditional project management and software development. This was due to the long process of setting requirements for a software development, and the large amount of resources that were used before the development even had started. The agile project management further has two important notions. Firstly, it is a way to reduce risk by focusing on short iterations and secondly, that direct communication between partners in the development process is preferred instead of large amounts of project documentation. Aguanno (2004) further states that the risks that can be reduced are regarding the risk of building the wrong thing, the risk of building the

write thing wrong or the risk of never finishing due to changing requirements. Aguanno (2004) ads that benefits of agile project management includes not only direct communication, but also increased control, which in turn reduces the risks.

In comparison, Aguanno (2004) states that traditional project management suggests that requirements should be locked down in the beginning and that you should be able to fall back on documented requirements as a way to control the project. Furthermore, it is stated that traditional methods, such as waterfall, are not responsive to change. Additionally, Aguanno (2004) describes IT-projects as high uncertainty projects which are both difficult to communicate in the beginning, due to its abstract nature, as well as that the products are often unique with few available comparisons. Therefore agile methods can be used, which are more responsive to change. This is done through an iterative process and incremental development.

Cervone (2010) states that scrum is the most common method to use within agile project management. The scrum process includes five major activities: the kick off, the sprint planning meeting, the sprint, the daily scrum and the sprint review meeting. The kick off involves the scrum team and the product owner and it is held in the beginning of the project. During the kick off the high-level goals are set for the project. The sprint meeting involves the same actors as the kick off, but occurs in the beginning of each sprint. In the sprint meeting a product backlog, for the final product, and a sprint goal are set as well as a sprint backlog, for the specific sprint. During the sprint the functionality of the product is developed. Each day, it is possible to have a daily sprint meeting during 15 minutes where the progress of the work is discussed. Furthermore, the sprint review meeting are held between the sprints. During this meeting, demonstrations of the functionality are shown to the product owner and the product backlog can be changed. The sprint backlog, on the other hand, can be changed each day.

When managing a project, there are a number of different stakeholders to consider. Hutt & Speh (2010, p. 78) explain a company's buying centre as a group of people that is participating in a purchasing decision and share both goals and risks with the final decision. Ghingold and Wilson (1998) describe that in most business decisions, there are different individuals that have responsibility over or influence different aspects of the decision making process. Therefore, different people have different perceptions of the buying problem and the company's needs. Ghingold and Wilson (1998) further state that when business marketers are about to sell a product or service, they have the difficult task of identifying the different buying participants and tailor the communication to fit each person. To only use generic messages will not be enough since each participant views the situation differently.

There are five different roles in a buying decision that are identified by Hutt & Speh (2010, pp. 79-80). They are users, buyers, influencers, deciders and gatekeepers. The users will be the people using the product or service purchased, and the user has more or less influence on the purchasing decision. The buyer is the role that has the formal authority to select supplier. The influencers are people that affect the purchasing decision by providing information. They can be either outside or inside the organisation, but often the technical departments has a lot of influence. For high-tech purchases, it is often external technical consultants that are influencers (Patterson & Dawes 1999). Hutt & Speh (2010, p. 80) further explain the deciders as the ones making the purchasing decision, whether they have the formal authority to do so or not. Lastly, the gatekeepers are the ones controlling

information that could be viewed by the other members of the buying center. Hutt & Spec (2010, p. 80) also emphasise that the different roles can be allocated to one person, or many persons can have separate roles, which makes the so called buying centre a complex research area.

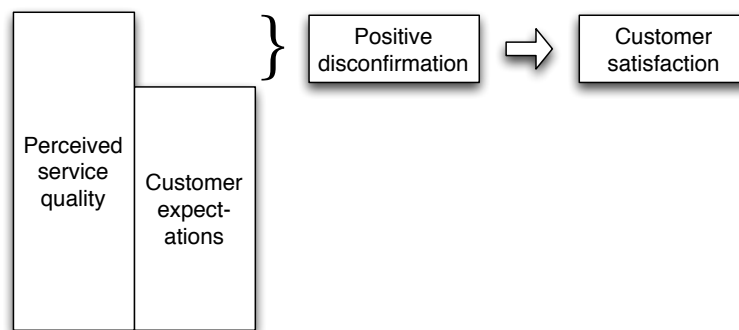
## 2.2 ASPECTS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

*This section includes an explanation of the evaluation of customer satisfaction, and a description of the different dimensions of customer expectations as well as the different components of service quality.*

### 2.2.1 EVALUATING CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

Ensuring customer satisfaction comes down to meeting customer expectations or exceeding them. When meeting the expectations the customer confirms his or hers expectations. When the expectations are not met they are however disconfirmed, which can then be done in either a positive manner, resulting in a high level of customer satisfaction, or in a negative manner, resulting in dissatisfaction. (Grönroos 2008, pp. 84-85) (Walker 1995) (Grewal & Sharma 1991)

As such, when the customer confirms it's expectations, they are evaluated towards the service quality by comparing the level of the customer's perceived quality towards its expectations regarding the level of quality (Grönroos 1984) (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1993).



**Figure 2: Evaluation of service quality against expectations**

Thus the level of service quality is what the customer perceives it to be. The evaluation is subjective and highly relative, based on the customers' expectations. As such a customer can obtain a high level of customer satisfaction from one service and a low level from another, even though the satisfaction level does not correspond to the perceived service quality level of the two different services. (Grönroos 2008, pp. 84-85). This can be viewed in figure 3.



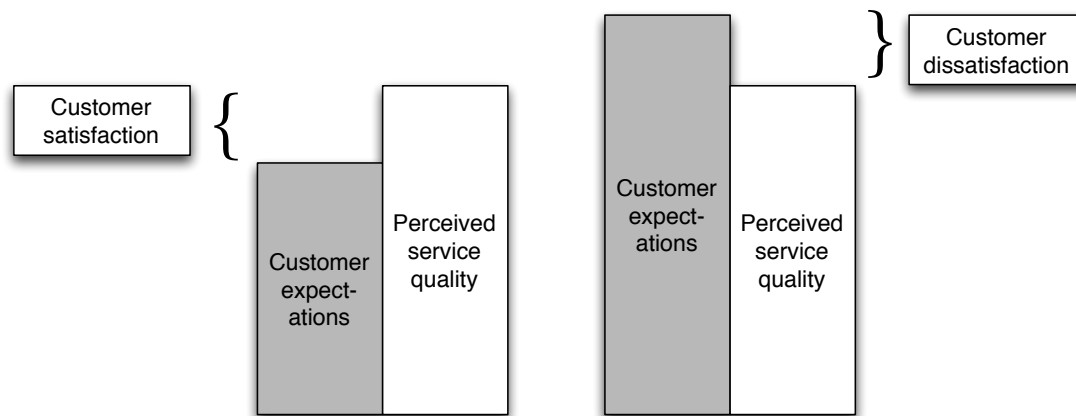


Figure 3: Clarification of the relativeness of customer expectations

### 2.2.2 DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Customer expectations are pre-experience beliefs of an actual experience yet to come (Oliver & Winer 1987). There are also different dimensions regarding the expectations that should be taken into consideration.

The dynamic of expectations is important to understand in order to manage the expectations into becoming achievable to obtain a high level of customer satisfaction (Ojasalo 2001) (Grönroos 2008, pp. 106). When a customer has little prior experience of the service, the expectations are often fuzzy. This means that the customer has a need for change but cannot state precisely what it is. Further, the customer might not precisely know what type of solution it is looking for or even what problem it has, just that it has one. As such, even though the customer cannot state what it is looking for, it still expects to receive it. Managing the customer's expectations therefore involve prying out the true issue in these fuzzy expectations. Since the customer will be dissatisfied unless its fuzzy expectations are fulfilled, it is important for the supplier to create a sense of clarity to the issue, even though the customer cannot. To get a successful problem solving phase it must hence be preceded by a successful problem formulation stage. (Ojasalo 2001) (Grönroos 2008, pp. 107-108)

Implicit expectations are by the customer considered obvious, and concerns quality at a "no need to mention" level. These types of expectations are developed either for services of a very well known nature, where a standard quality level has emerged, or in a relationship where the two parties get to know each other at a level where certain needs do not need to be expressed. These implicit expectations most often become an issue when the customer has previous experience from other service providers or when the service provider changes the employees that interact with the customer. When entering a new relationship, it's therefore important to make all implicit expectations explicit by being clear when discussing requirements. Furthermore, while doing employee changes it requires an extensive knowledge transfer between employees to avoid missing implicit expectations. (Ojasalo 2001) (Grönroos 2008, pp. 108-109)

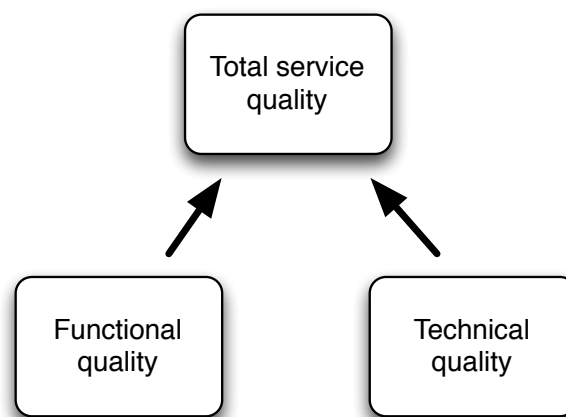
As customers have more insight and clarity their expectations become clearer. As such, they are able to clearly explain what it is they expect from the service supplier. Ojasalo (2001) and Grönroos (2008, pp. 108) explain that these now explicit expectations can be either realistic or unrealistic. Unrealistic expectations concern a level of service quality that cannot be matched by the supplier, either in technical or functional service quality. If the customer's expectations are unrealistic regarding the

service process, steps should be taken to lower them. On the other hand if the expectations are too high in relation to the current process, but not unrealistic to the industry as such, taking measures to increasing the performance of the process would be a more favourable path to take (Robledo 2001) (Sunder 2002).

### 2.2.3 COMPONENTS OF SERVICE QUALITY

To increase competitiveness and margins, industry is moving from a goods-dominant logic towards a service-dominant logic, increasing the role of services to provide added value in the value proposition to customers. Thus many offers consist of a combination of both services and goods (Vargo & Lusch 2008). As services are made up of a number of different processes carried out between a supplier and a customer where the production and the consumption are carried out simultaneously, the service quality concept is and will be quite complex to manage for organizations (Grönroos 2008, pp. 79-80). Discussing services and goods requires a distinction and definition regarding what defines a service. In this study the definition is given by Vargo and Lusch (2004); “We define services as the application of specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself.” (Vargo & Lusch 2004, p.2). To determine the quality of a service, and an offer with a service-dominated logic, one then has to look towards more underlying components than simply the quality of the end result (Grönroos 2001).

As a service is produced through a deed, process, or performance the customer comes in contact with the production process and the production process itself becomes an important part of the service offering. Thus, when evaluating the service quality the customer considers both the final characteristics of the outcome of the process, *the technical quality*, as well as the quality of the conception of the production process itself, *the functional quality*. (Grönroos 1998)

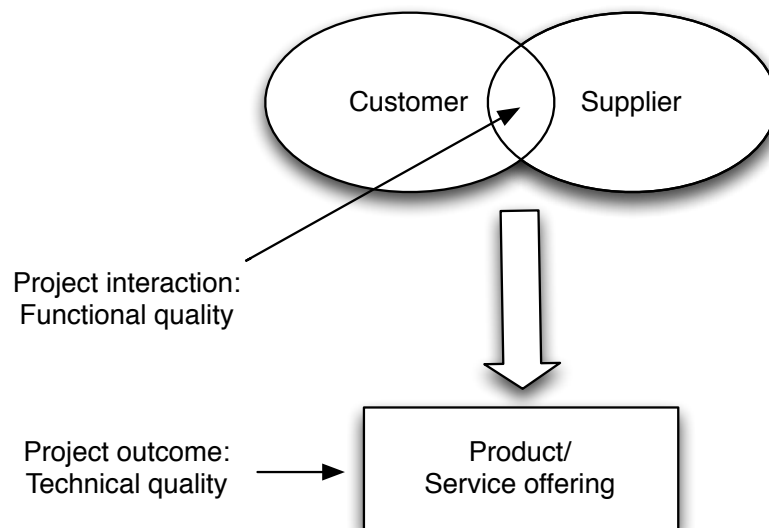


**Figure 4: The composition of total service quality**

The technical quality component consists of the final outcome of the service. It is evaluated based on the technical characteristics and performances of the end product and customers can often evaluate the technical quality level objectively. (Grönroos 1984)

Adding to the technical quality is the functional quality. As the customer is in contact with the production process, the customer’s interaction with the process also becomes a determinant of the service quality. The functional quality thus includes aspects on how the customer receives the outcome of the process, or the technical quality. As the functional quality is dependent on the

interaction between the two parties the customer evaluation of the functional quality level is often subjective. (Grönroos 1984)



**Figure 5: Functional and technical quality**

Both quality components are important to consider for a service provider as they add up to constitute the total service quality experience of the customer (Grönroos 2008, pp. 81-83). However, Swan and Combs (1976) argue that the impact on the total service quality experience is not the same. The technical quality is argued to be seen as a prerequisite for customers to be able to feel satisfactory about the service. As such the technical quality needs to meet a certain level, determined by the customer's needs, where the outcome of the service is considered good enough. As such, it does not matter the level of functional quality, unless the technical quality standards are met, in order for the customer to feel satisfactory. After obtaining this level however, increasing the technical quality further is argued to do little to increase the customer's satisfaction of the service quality. Instead it is within the functional quality component where the perceived service quality could increase. (Swan & Combs 1976)

Grönroos (1984) continue the discussion regarding the different components effect on the perceived service quality where the functional quality's importance increases with the amount of suppliers that are able to supply the prerequisite technical quality. He also argues that the functional quality can compensate for a lack of technical quality. (Grönroos 1984)

### 2.3 FORMATION OF CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

As expectations are pre-experience beliefs of an actual experience yet to come (Oliver & Winer 1987) they play an important part in decision making regarding the uncertain future (Robledo 2001). The more uncertainty there is regarding the future, the more uncertain the expectations are (Oliver & Winer 1987). As such, managing the customers' expectations becomes an important part in ensuring customer satisfaction, especially when the customer has relatively little experience with the service (Robledo 2001). Coye (2004) further underlines that since it is necessary to meet customer expectations to get satisfaction, it is important for the supplier to be aware of the expectations.

Customer expectations are created from traditional marketing activities such as advertising and other company communications, corporate image, word-of-mouth from references, as well as previous experiences with the service, service provider or other types of services and service providers (Grönroos 2008, pp. 84-85). Robledo (2001) further marks previous experiences as the most influential source of customer expectations in regards to services. Previous experiences play a large role in the formation of expectations for the future, but customers that have not had any previous experiences with the type of service in question, which would be the case for new markets, still have expectations that need to be considered (Robledo, 2001). Furthermore, in these cases where the customer have no prior experience and thus no point of reference, the expectations formed become less refined, more implicit and more unrealistic (Higgs, Polonsky & Hollick 2005). As the service process goes forth and the customer receives more experience, the expectations are changed dramatically. Then they become more refined and clear, explicit and realistic (Higgs, Polonsky & Hollick, 2005).

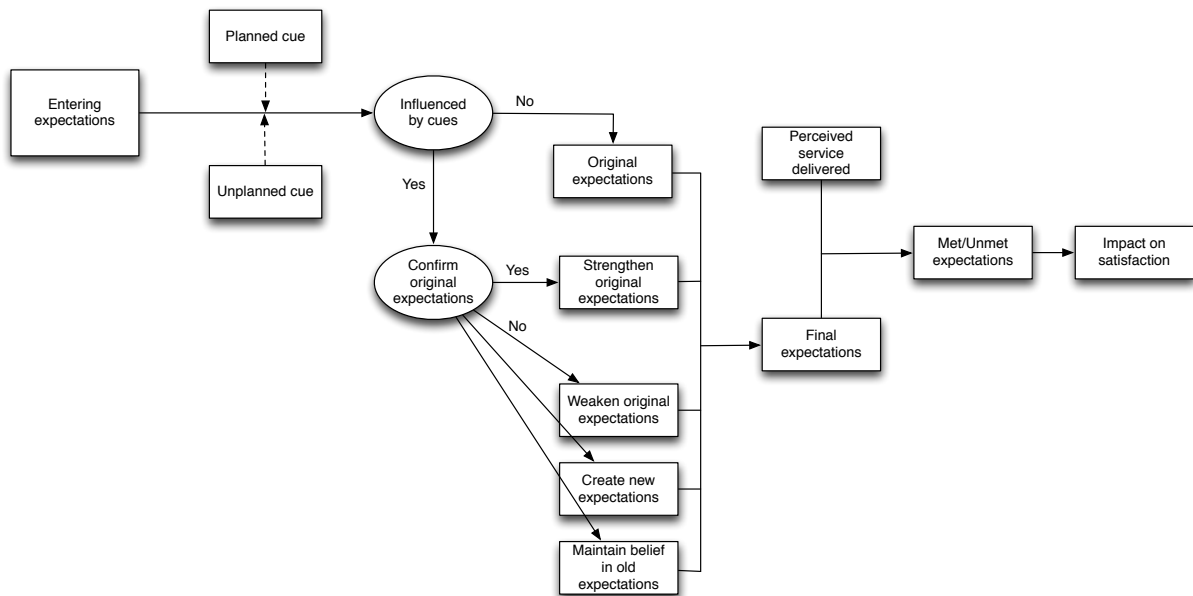
Sunder (2002) argues that expectations are social psychological constructs, coloured by individual wishes of the future. Expectations consist of one's anticipations, often too optimistic, regarding the future to come and are often far from rational. The mental creation or formation of expectations is in its fundamental nature complex and the understanding of it is not very developed (Sunder 2002). As stated earlier, several different sources are used as input into customer's expectations. The most influential one is previous customer experiences, not necessarily with the specific service at hand but with competitors or with other types of services that the customer perceives to be related (Robledo, 2001). In order to affect the customers' expectations it is important to be able to control the sources and inputs affecting the customer expectations, as well as designing an appropriate message for each different type of situation (Coye, 2004). However, the sources and inputs affecting ones psychological constructs isn't always straightforward nor is it rational.

Kahneman (2011, pp. 121) describes anchoring and its effects on expectations. Anchoring is the effect that occurs when people consider a value for an unknown quantity before estimating that quantity (Kahneman 2011, p. 121). This indicates that people are often influenced by a number that is arbitrary and chosen by availability, and therefore not relevant to the judgement (Thompson 2012, p. 215). Thompson (2012, p. 215) states that the anchor tends to weigh evaluations down and hinder sufficient adjustments from it. Therefore it is important to choose the right anchor in a negotiation, and be aware that the counterpart may use anchors to influence judgement of parties in the negotiation. This statement is also supported by Kahneman (2011, p. 126) who discusses the importance of the initial anchor in a negotiation.

Customers are constantly changing their expectations, and the expectations are reformed as customers receive new information. Coye (2004) presents a model, where the changes in expectations are shown as well as the factors affecting these changes. It is argued that the customers' expectations continuously change during the service process through a number of decision points where the customers actively process and interpret information. When entering a service process and while experiencing it, the customer is exposed to several different cues influencing the customer's expectations. A cue can consist of an act or a message which the customer experiences. These cues can be either planned, i.e. designed to influence the expectations of the customers, or they can be unplanned. An unplanned cue influences the customers' expectations even though that was not its original intent. As customers are exposed to cues it leads

to either that they maintain the old expectations, that they strengthen or weaken the old expectations or that they create new expectations. These reformations have an impact on the customers' evaluation of the service quality. (Coye 2004)

In figure 6 a model depicting the reformation of customers' expectations is shown, based on the model created by Coye (2004). The model has been simplified by the authors to reduce the level of aspects not deemed relevant to this study. Removed aspects include the notion that customers also evaluate the perceived service quality towards their desires of service quality.

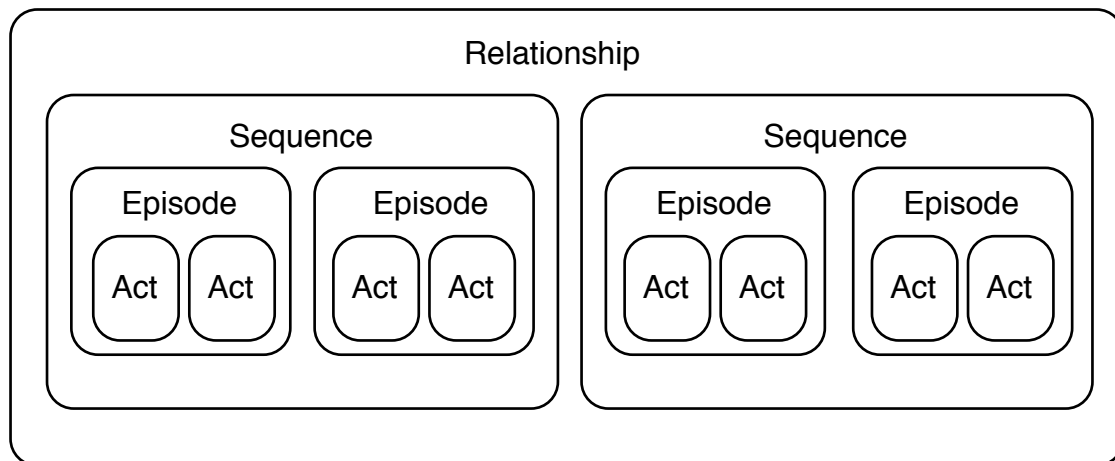


**Figure 6: Reformation of expectations, simplified based on Coye (2004)**

## 2.4 SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

The model regarding perceived service quality portrays a quite static, one time view, on how customer satisfaction is evaluated. In real service settings however there is also a time aspect to be added to the evaluation which occurs continuously (Grönroos 2008, p. 99). Furthermore, the concept of service quality's impact on the customer satisfaction is affected depending on the type of act, within a relationship, that is of focus (Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos 2004). Firstly, in order to elaborate on customer satisfaction and service quality in a relationship it should be outlined what a relationship consists of.

A single service process itself can be broken down into smaller pieces for analysis. At the lowest level of analysis is the act which is the smallest building stone of the relationship. A full linkage of the building stones of a relationship and the different levels of analysis can be seen in figure 7 below.



**Figure 7: The building stones of a relationship (Grönroos 2008, p. 99)**

The act represent a single action that takes place when the customer interacts with the service process. An act can for instance consist of a single contact between the service supplier and customer. Several acts make up an episode; an episode in turn can for instance constitute of a negotiation between the service supplier and the customer. Several episodes make up a sequence. The sequence of episodes and acts has a time aspect to them, or a specific beginning and ending, such as a campaign or a project. Several sequences in turn make up the relationship between the customer and the service supplier and the relationship can consist of several sequences in a continuous form, overlapping sequences or sequences with short time periods in between. (Grönroos 2008, pp. 99-100)

The customer experiences service quality on all these different levels. As such the service supplier needs to consider service quality and customer satisfaction on all these different levels (Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos 1994). According to Grönroos (2008, p. 101) the customer's experience in the lower levels of analysis will add up to the customer experience of the higher levels. The higher levels will further shape the expectations and effectively the experience of the coming lower levels. As such the customer expectations will be formed and evaluated continuously. The experience of one act will add towards the evaluation of the episode and the evaluation of the episode will in turn affect the expectations on the coming act. As such the service quality of a relationship's dynamic nature creates a criss-cross with experiences, evaluations and expectations affecting different levels of the relationship where a customer may be satisfied on one level but not on another. (Grönroos 2008, p. 101)

Storbacka, Strandvik and Grönroos (1994) also consider the aspect of different episodes of the relationship having a larger impact than others and they divide the different episodes into routine and critical episodes. The specific characteristics of a routine and a critical episode differ from situation to situation and from customer to customer, hence it is highly individual. A routine episode is a series of acts where the customer usually has a clear sense of what to do. This is due to extensive experience with the acts and therefore little mental activity is required, which indicates that the

customer puts little emphasis on the episode. A critical episode, on the other hand, is a series of acts that are important to the customer and its evaluation of the relationship; often they are of a make or break the relationship kind of nature. Characteristics of a critical episode often involve acts where the customer experiences new things and where a mental involvement is required. Thus, different episodes carry different weight in the overall evaluation of the service quality. Therefore the customer may be satisfied with the majority of the episodes but still be dissatisfied with the relationship if the service provider fails to deliver on a critical episode. (Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos 1994)

Grönroos (2004) extends the reasoning regarding relationships as an aspect that can also add service quality to the value proposition to the customer. Increased value is created through a sense of security and a minimizing of transaction cost in the process between the customer and the supplier. Mithas, Krishnan and Fornell (2005) add that a relationship itself, if handled correctly, help drive customer satisfaction. As the relationship progresses with more interactions, a broader knowledge and understanding may be gained about the customer and how they prefer to handle different types of situations. This increase in knowledge allows the service supplier to adapt to the customer and in turn increase customer satisfaction (Mithas, Krishnan & Fornell, 2005). This also corresponds to Storbacka, Strandvik and Grönroos (1994) who argues that a successfully handled relationship will lead to a higher customer satisfaction and a higher customer retention rate.

### 3 METHODOLOGY

*In the following chapter the research methodology used will be described. The description will include different aspects of the research; design and methods used, data analysis performed and a discussion regarding the quality of the research.*

#### 3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This master thesis started out through a convenience sampling of the focal firm. The researchers had the opportunity to do their master thesis at the firm Findwise and together with their company tutor a research topic that was of interest to Findwise was developed.

Fulfilling the purpose of this thesis required a deep understanding of the phenomenon that govern the customer expectations. As such, the thesis is designed as a case study, allowing the researchers to immerse into the complex empirical setting that is the relationships between the supplier and its customers. This to create the thick description of the relationship that is required to be able to explain how customer expectations play a role in project business (Yin 2003, p. 2). To increase the level of analysis and avoid that the study becomes too abstract, with already such a complex research topic, sub-units will be used as the unit of analysis (Yin 2003, p. 46). The unit of analysis will consist of four different customer projects and as such the study will use an embedded case study design (Yin 2003, pp. 42-43). At last, due to the nature of the research questions developed in order to answer the purpose, the case study will be of an explanatory relation, aiming to explain the nature of expectations' role in project business (Yin 2003, pp. 5-6).

Yin (2003, p. 13) also argues for the case study's appropriateness when there are more variables that the researcher is interested in than there are data points, as the researchers will be able to determine issues of causality through the thick descriptions. The case study also provided the amount of flexibility between inductive and deductive research that was needed for this study, which will be described further below, due to the abstract nature of the concept of expectations (Dubois & Gadde 2002).

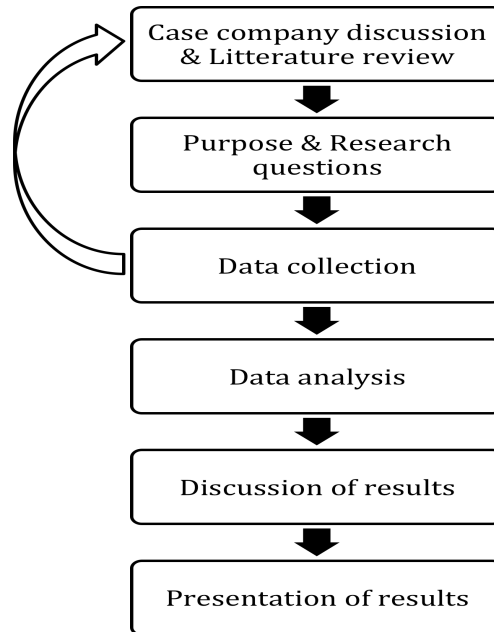
Due to time constraints of this master thesis, the case study will include a single case, the firm Findwise. The lack of multiple organisations may reduce the external validity and generalizability of the findings, since the phenomenon is only studied in the specific context of the single firm (Bryman & Bell 2011, pp. 163-165, 395). As such it may be hard to apply the findings of this study to other cases (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p. 136).

However, the focus on a single firm enables the researchers to put more focus on creating a thick description for the one case, enhancing the possibilities to increase the internal validity by triangulation, using more data sources and different research methods (Bryman & Bell 2011, pp. 397-398). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.135) define internal validity as a measure of whether or not the findings of a research can actually be explained in a correct manner by the gathered data. As different methods and sources depict the same thing, the probability that it is correct increases. Thus, by using different sources for data as well as different methods for gathering data the researchers aim to gain a holistic view of the phenomenon and establish accurate causal relations. By creating a thick empirical description it is the researchers hope that other researchers may use this description to identify other cases with similar context where the findings may be applicable to some degree. This is in line with Lincoln and Guba (1985) who argues that in qualitative research it is the



readers' task to evaluate the context of the findings and determine whether generalizability to their cases is appropriate (Lincoln & Guba 1985, as seen in Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p. 137).

The purpose of the thesis was practice oriented and originated from a need at Findwise to include the consideration of expectations when striving for customer satisfaction. The following research has been conducted as depicted in figure 8.



**Figure 8: Research overview**

This master thesis project started with a discussion together with the case company regarding their situation and aims with this project. This discussion together with a literature review created a foundation for the research design, together with which research questions to address and consequently what data was to be gathered (Yin 2003, pp. 28-29). Due to the abstract nature of the concept of expectations and their effects on delivery processes a clear view of what theory to build on was difficult to obtain. To deal with this, iterations between the empirical reality and the theoretical models were performed. This abductive approach was found appropriate due to the practical nature of the research. By using an abductive research approach the study has been allowed to change in light of the empirical findings, giving the researchers new perspectives on previously collected theory as well as insight into other relevant theoretical models (Dubois & Gadde 2002). Thus, new found empirical knowledge has been used to develop the theory models as well as the research questions, and vice versa, during a lengthy period of time in the study in order to being able to grasp and answer this practical issue of research.

## 3.2 RESEARCH METHODS

To receive a more accurate and unbiased view of activities, events and their relationships as well as to increase the internal validity, different research methods and data sources has been used (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 397). A model of how this triangulation has been performed is depicted in figure 9.

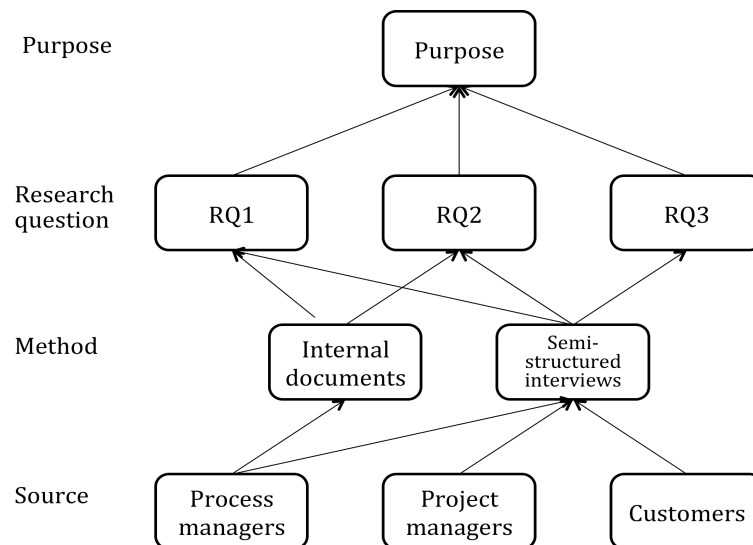


Figure 9: Source and method triangulation

### 3.2.1 INTERVIEWS

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with both employees of Findwise and their customers. For the employees of Findwise, the people interviewed works in different process areas and different offices. A distinction has been made on account of hierarchy, between upper management, or process managers, as well as project managers. The choice of conducting qualitative semi-structured interviews was based on the fact that the flexibility was high and that the answers would be of much detail (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 467). The flexibility increased the ability to investigate new empirical areas that were not considered prior to the interviews, as well as to adapt the interview guide, in line with the abductive research approach. The interviews were held in person, with video-call or by telephone depending on the geographical locations, possibilities of travel and available technical facilities. The interviews lasted for approximately one hour each. An interview guide was used to help prevent any uninvestigated areas but several deviations and other questions were also made when unintended interesting findings were discovered. The interview guide was pre-tested with two fellow master level students. The pretesting was done in order to identify questions that were hard to understand as well as to test the flow of the questions (Bryman & Bell 2011 p. 262-263). The pre-tests were conducted as mock-up interviews and lead to the rephrasing of a number of questions. The interview guide was developed throughout the study both due to that some questions, despite the pre-testing, were hard for the interviewees to understand and due to the abstract nature of the subject, which will be further discussed below. The research guide was also developed in accordance with the abductive research approach, as some questions were found not relevant as well as new areas of interests were being discovered. Extensive notes were taken as the interview was held, by one researcher, which after the interview were transcribed and also added to by the other researcher. The decision to use only note-taking and not recording was based on that recording may make respondents feel more conscious about their answers if recorded, which may affect the data collection in a negative way (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 482). The

choice not to record interviews may have affected the data collection in a negative way as recollection when writing up notes may be distorted which could reduce the possibility for an accurate secondary analysis (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 481). In this particular case the researchers weighed the negative effects of recording as greater.

Interviews were firstly held with the different process owners for the sales and production processes in order to get an overview on how the processes were designed and how to further focus the research, as well as getting their aggregated view on the study of research. For further interviews a non-probability sampling was used through a snowball sample. In a snowball sample some kind of contact refers the researcher to additional contacts which should be suitable for being a part of the study (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 192). In this study, the identification of the four specific sub-units of customer relationships to focus on was aided by the sales managers of the Gothenburg and Stockholm regional offices. The criteria consisted of the existence of enough history to be familiar to the working habits of the focal firm, their generalizability to other customer relationships of the focal firm, as well as their willingness to participate in the study and provide the researchers with sufficient data. The study included four customer relationships from two different regional offices. Within the empirical description names and context of the different projects have been altered in a manner that does not affect the outcome of this study, this in order to anonymize the customer firms.

Before contacting the customers, the different project managers for each customer project were contacted and interviewed. The focus of these interviews was to understand how the interaction and communication took place in the specific project. After these project specific interviews, the customers were approached and interviews were held. These interviews focused on how the interaction and communication took place with Findwise during the project, i.e. the same focus as the interviews with the project managers but from the customer's perspective. A list of interviews held can be found in table 1.

**Table 1: List over interviews held**

<b>Company</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Regional Office</b>	<b>Interview media</b>	<b>Date</b>
Findwise	Process Manager A	Gothenburg	In person	2013-01-21 & 2013-02-07
Findwise	Process Manager B	Gothenburg	In person	2013-02-28
Findwise	Process Manager C	Stockholm	Video call	2013-02-18
Findwise	Process Manager D	Stockholm	Video call	2013-02-25
Findwise	Process Manager E	Copenhagen	Video call	2013-04-15
Findwise	Project Manager- Project 1	Gothenburg	In person	2013-03-12
Findwise	Project Manager- Project 2	Gothenburg	In person	2013-03-27
Findwise	Project Manager- Project 3	Stockholm	In person	2013-04-09
Findwise	Project Manager- Project 4	Stockholm	Video call	2013-04-15
Customer 1	Steering Committee	Gothenburg	In person	2013-04-04
Customer 1	Tester	Gothenburg	In person	2013-04-11
Customer 1	Project Manager	Gothenburg	In person	2013-04-11
Customer 1	Steering Committee	Gothenburg	In person	2013-04-23
Customer 2	Program Manager- Enterprise Search	Gothenburg	In person	2013-04-12
Customer 2	Application Manager	Gothenburg	In person	2013-04-12
Customer 3	Solution Architect	Stockholm	Telephone	2013-04-16
<del>Customer 4</del>	<del>Application Manager</del>	<del>Stockholm</del>	<del>Telephone</del>	<del>2013-04-26</del>

Unfortunately, the interview with the customer 4 never took place. The subject had to cancel due to sickness and the interview was not rescheduled as the interviewee followed the sick leave with vacation, making a possible new interview available too late in the process for this study. The effects on the study will be negative in the sense that one less perspective will be added to the study and only the view of Findwise's project manager for project 4 on that relationship will be gathered.

Due to the complex and abstract nature of the concept of expectations, the verbal and mental lines of inquiry needed to be separated during the interviews. The verbal line of inquiry is composed of the actual questions that are asked to the respondent while the mental line of questioning is the questions that the researcher actually wants the answers to (Yin 2003, pp. 89-90). Asking the respondent the mental line of inquiry would not provide valid answers as most of the activities in relation to expectations are performed either subconsciously or on a quite abstract level which is not

reflected upon by the person, as such the researchers were forced to ask around the real questions. This aspect posed a large difficulty for the researchers.

To identify changes in expectations and how Findwise identifies changes in customer's expectations straightforward questions to customers regarding Findwise's ability to investigate their expectations has been made. This along with straightforward questions to Findwise employees regarding how they identify customer's expectations. In order to probe deeper into the, usually quite shallow, answers other questions were focused on the initial decision-making process regarding how the project was designed, in aspect of both methodology and the final solution. Focus was also on any changes in the two aspects which may have occurred, and how the decision makers thought process regarding those changes were. This focus was used due to the assumption of the researchers that decisions regarding project methodology and the solution itself should originate from a change in the perception of either the context of the project, or from a change in perception regarding the customer's expectations. Either that Findwise employees realized that the initial perception was wrong or that the customer's expectations has changed during the progress of the project.

Knowing what data to collect and constructing interview guides in order for the gathered data to become relevant has not been easy. Not being able to ask direct questions regarding the subject, the tactic has been to create a thick description of the context and through matching different perspectives and projects a foundation for an explanation to the research question could be extracted through that description.

### **3.2.2 ARCHIVAL DATA**

Additionally, archival data have been accessed through Findwise's intranet as well as through firm contacts. In line with Yin (2003 pp. 85-89) the archive data have been used in order to add to the understanding of as well as to verify the interview data, both regarding internal processes as well as the external processes that the customers have been in contact with. The data include process descriptions, designed and created by the process managers, as well as data on customer satisfaction, previously collected by Findwise under the responsibility of the production managers for each geographical profit center respectively.

When using archival data it is important to take into account who the producer of the documents is, why they were produced as well as the current conditions during its production (Yin 2003, pp. 85-88). The data on customer satisfaction has been collected by Findwise through a survey, conducted at the end of each project as well as quarterly for the larger projects spanning over several quarters. The survey consists of one question regarding how likely the customer is to recommend Findwise to another customer on a scale from one to ten. It also includes three additional questions asking the respondents to rank Findwise on a scale of one to five where one is the worst and five is the best regarding their technical quality, functional quality and consultant's skills. The survey is sent to respondents at their customers through email with a link to a web-questionnaire. The respondents are chosen as the individuals having the most contact with Findwise during the project. The data used in this report was collected from 85 customers from a sample of 100 customers in 2012.

## **3.3 DATA ANALYSIS**

The theory section is depicted by the impact on customer satisfaction in a project setting by a number of different influencing factors. The study's results, consisting of interview data as well as

archival data has in turn been gathered and structured according to these factors, both on a general organizational level as well as on a more specific project level. The analysis has then been conducted by matching the results to the theory in the literature review with the focus on explaining how Findwise deal with the different set of factors and subsequently what the implications on the customers' satisfaction are from this behaviour. By structuring the results by the literature review and these set of factors influencing the customers' satisfaction in the project setting, the authors aim to create a clear logical path for the readers to follow throughout the report.

### 3.4 QUALITY OF RESEARCH

For this study, elements of a positivistic epistemological position have been included, as focus is put on aspects which are scientifically observable (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 15). As such the explanations given in this report lack some perspectives that can be assumed has an effect on the formation of expectations. Individuals' emotions, backgrounds and interpersonal relationships have been excluded from the explanations provided in this report. This is a delineation used due to the practical conditions under which this study was conducted, making it hard to investigate these areas' implications. The role of internal politics has been touched briefly upon as that is considered the largest influencer in the authors' eyes. The other social aspects could be considered to have a minor role in the formation of expectations and thus this epistemological standpoint has been chosen. This impacts the level of simplification of the explanations and as such the authors do not presume to provide a full explanation of reality. The perspectives omitted however may be considered of less importance to the explanation and as such the given explanation is by the authors considered to hold value for both academia and business.

In order to increase the understanding of the research topic as well as the internal validity of the causal relations that exists, the aim has been to create a thick empirical description made up from several different sources of data gathered through different methods (Bryman & Bell 2011, pp. 397-398). Getting input from different sources allowed for a more holistic view, as some sources had some information that others did not, as well as having different views on the same type of event, depending on perspective. Individuals as sources will always contain some amount of contamination due to miss-recollection, forgetfulness, miscommunication or bias (Yin 2003, p. 92). Using different sources allowed the researchers to add the different pieces together and creating for themselves a more complete picture of the events and existing relations. Thus, by combining both source triangulation and method triangulation the aim has been to create a complete and more unbiased view of the research topic and improve the validity of the study. Alas, the triangulation and the thick descriptions are by no means exhaustive, as is hard to accomplish, according to the authors of this report, when dealing with a subject that is quite complex and subjective as the topic of customer expectations. As discussed briefly above, one aspect in particular which has not been regarded to enough extent are the internal influences within the customer firms. Internal politics and the level of informal personal influence of different stakeholders would be one aspect that may affect the expectations on project depending on who is in formal and informal power respectively. The limitations of getting access to customer firm employees have hampered the inclusion of this aspect.

The complexity was also a contributing factor to the choice of an explanatory research as causality may be hard to determine and as such more focus could be put on identifying and describing the phenomenon of expectations than ensuring internal validity (Yin 2003, p. 36).

The main aspect of quality regarding this study has however been the construct validity. The difficulty of knowing what questions to ask and how to construct the interview guides impacts the construct validity of the study, as the construct validity is dependent on that the used measure actually measures the dimension intended (Cohen, Manion & Morrison 2007, p. 138). The researchers have modified the interview guide during the process as experience has been gained regarding which questions result in what data, as well as the knowledge regarding what data is needed in order to answer the research questions. The interview guides for the different roles can be found in the appendices. The modification has included both removal of questions, that as the study progressed were found irrelevant, as well as the addition of new questions. New questions were added due to that new areas of interest were discovered, both by new literature as well as by findings during previous interviews. Yin (2003, p. 35) questions the subjectivity of judgement of the researchers in case studies regarding the measurements and its effect on construct validity. In this case the question is right since the modification made of the interview guide is solely based on the researchers' own judgement, based on the type of data obtained.

The use of snowball sampling for interview respondents creates a sample for which it is unlikely that it would be representative for the population in question (Bryman & Bell 2011, p. 192-193), which reduces the external validity and the generalizability of the findings (Bryman & Bell 2011, pp. 163-165, 395). However, the sampling strategy of respondents was justified due to the restricted number of individuals in possession of the necessary information.

The interview data may also have been affected due to that it has mostly been collected in Swedish and as such the data has been subjected to the translation of the authors. This enables the possibility for mistranslations, as the authors do not have English as their native language. However, the authors humbly judge their own competence within the English language as sufficient for this task and thus the risk of mistranslations as low.

Regarding the reliability of the study, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p. 133) argue that in order to obtain a higher degree of validity for ones findings, a certain level of reliability must be achieved as a precondition. Reliability refers to the ability for another researcher to achieve the same results by conducting a similar study in the same way as the original study (Yin 2003, p. 34). To increase the reliability of the study the final interview guides has been included in the appendices and a list of interviewees have been included in table 1 above. As the interviews were semi-structured the researchers did not always strictly follow the interview guide as other questions were asked as well based on the responses of the interviewee, which lowers the reliability of the study.

## 4 RESULTS

*This chapter presents the results from the data collection. The data consists of findings from interviews as well as from Findwise's internal documents. First a general overview on Findwise's organization is presented, including how they work with customer projects, as described by Findwise's process managers and internal documents on an organisational level. Thereafter, four different customer relationships, Project 1, Project 2, Project 3 and Project 4, will be outlined to provide a more detailed view on how Findwise interact with customers on a project level. This data comes from interviews with project managers at Findwise as well as with customers in the different projects. The results will further be used in the coming chapter to analyse how Findwise's interaction affects their customers' expectations and consequently satisfaction.*

### 4.1 FINDWISE'S ORGANIZATION

Findwise is geographically divided into different profit centres and this study investigates projects in offices in Stockholm, Gothenburg and Copenhagen. These different profit centres are autonomous in how they structure their work methodology, which is further transmitted down to different project teams at the profit centres. As such, there is little formal structure to the work methodology concerning the customer relation and the identification of customers' expectations. Although, a few overall similarities exist in how they arrange the project setting in order to identify the customers' expectations.

Findwise is structured in processes consisting of a sales process and a production process. The work in the production process is further structured into projects. Consultants are stand alone resources which are brought into different processes and projects depending on competence needs, availability and competence development possibilities.

The employees included in the sales process are responsible for establishing new as well as managing the current customer relationships. When establishing a new customer relationship, the first customer contact is usually through a cold call to a customer, presenting Findwise and their concept findability. The sample selection for the cold calls is up to each individual sales resource. One process manager described his main sample as a list of the largest firms in his sector, which was later extended with firms which he read about in the paper, saw at fairs, or any other possible way of which he got information about future customer. Another process manager said that there are target segment groups, based on size, which they are targeting, but that it is still permitted for the seller to go outside these and contact other potential customers.

From the cold call the sales resource aims to set up a meeting where the concept of findability is explained as well as what other firms are doing within search. One process manager explained this meeting not as a sales pitch, but as a way of presenting Findwise and himself as a search expert. The aim is to increase the customer's awareness of search and its possible applications in the business environment. In the later stages of this meeting the focus shifts towards the specific customer and the possibilities of applying search in the specific customer's business context. In doing so the vision of what the final solution could achieve for the customer is presented. The process manager specifically noted that it's important to address the cost issue directly to avoid further effort spent on a relationship that will not yield any revenue due to that the customer is deterred by the high cost. Another process manager had a different approach and explained it as that the main goal of the sales

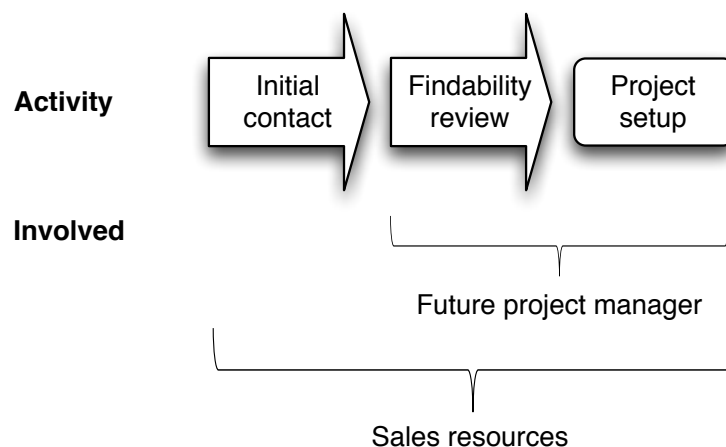


process is to get the customer hooked and that he thought that Findwise's sales representatives often undersell their current solution, which they should not. Hence, he thought that it is up to the sales process to land the customer and then the production process needs to manage the customer's expectations by either lowering them or stepping up and deliver.

After the initial meetings a draft for further discussion is written and sent to the customer, which through further discussions with the customer develops into a quotation for a job by Findwise. According to one of the process managers, the process of creating a quotation or a document as a frame for discussion is mainly about discussing the client's expectations and not as much about establishing an initial specification of requirements for the project.

The first phase that is conducted before most large projects is the findability review. The findability review aims to gather information about the context and current state of the organization. Its purpose is also to identify the behaviour of the stakeholders in accordance to search, extract their respective needs and determine in what manner Findwise can deliver value to the customer's specific context. To achieve this, the review includes a workshop where Findwise invites critical stakeholders which will be important for any eventual future project. The review also contains individual interviews with important stakeholders in order to verify and complement the gathered data as well as surveys containing questions regarding the customers current IT-environment.

The outcome of the findability review is a description of the current state and a recommendation for how to apply and implement a findability solution. This recommendation is presented as a road map describing the future end vision as well as specifying short- and long-term goals and how these should be reached. After the findability review a project may be purchased and a contract agreed upon with the customer, regarding the content and terms of the initial project phase. An illustration of the sales process can be seen below in figure 10.

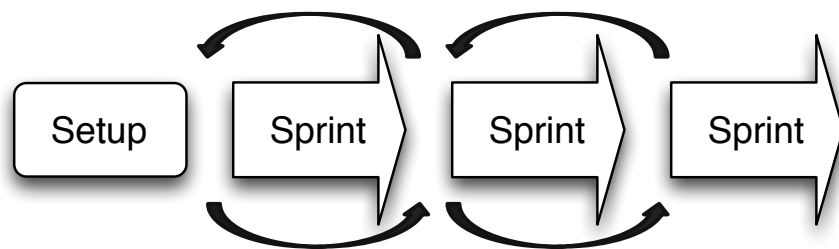


**Figure 10: Sales process**

Following the sales process is the production process in which the projects are conducted. Regarding the execution of the project, Findwise try to adapt as much as possible to the wants of the customer and in accordance with how they want the project to be carried out. This includes the level of details in the specification of requirements as well as the project methodology. As Findwise aims to adapt as much as possible to its customers preferences, no formal guidelines exist on project methodology or how to act with customer relations. Instead this lies on each profit center and the specific project

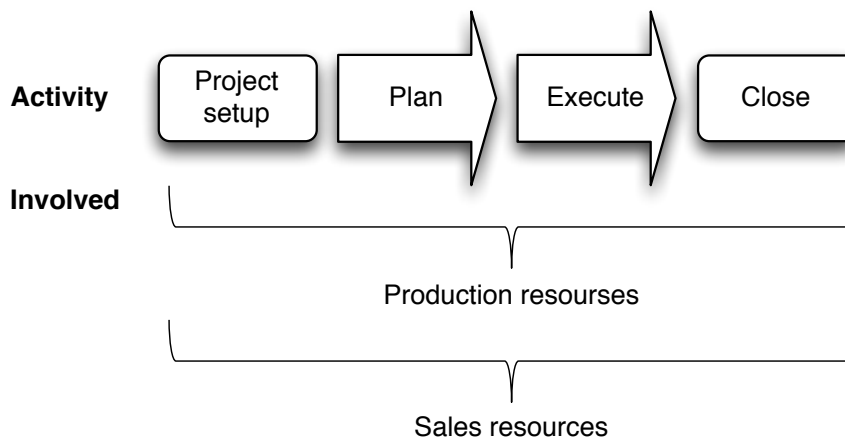
manager. Although, several process managers stated that there is a continuous dialogue with the customer during the process regarding how to conduct the project, which is of importance when it comes to customer satisfaction.

One of the process managers stated that it is important to let the specifications of the project change during the process, this since the customer gains knowledge about the search solution, and wants to include more. Another process manager further underlined this when he said that since the customer does not know what they want in the beginning, there will always be changes in the scope. He further said that when the way of working is agile, it has room for re-prioritization at every sprint. The process of sprints and iterations can be shown in the figure 11.



**Figure 11: Process of sprints and iterations**

An overview of the general production process, based on internal documents and the process managers' interviews, is presented in the picture below:



**Figure 12: Production process**

The different phases of the production process include different checkpoints that need to be covered. For example in the project setup the project team shall be set up and the project should be transferred from the sales process. In the plan phase the project kick off should take place and the project plan should be agreed upon with the customer. In the execution phase the deliverables should be delivered and a backlog should be created for future customer opportunities. Lastly, in the project close, the customer should accept the delivery and a lesson learned meeting shall be held.

One of the production managers explained that it is standard that the project managers report the project status to the production manager each week. This activity is performed in more or less formalized manners depending on profit center but includes the project managers' estimation on

status in aspect to time plans, budgets as well as the project manager's estimation of the customer's satisfaction level. At the end of each project and at each quarter a satisfaction survey is sent to the customers. It includes one question regarding how willing the customer is to recommend Findwise as well as three questions regarding the consultant skills, the project management and administration as well as the quality of the solution. From Findwise's documentation regarding the survey's result, a positive correlation has been identified between long time relationships and customer satisfaction. The data also shows that the project management and administration receives a lower score than the quality of the solution. A process manager also draws the conclusion that it is important to not create too high customer expectations, which they later cannot fulfil.

One of the process managers said that he always has follow up meetings with the clients at the end of a project. Another process manager at another office said that the survey conducted after each project is a good way of ensuring the quality of projects. There are although some concern from a third process manager that it is not clear how the results from the survey should be analysed. He also stated that he thinks that customer satisfaction should be discussed earlier in the project, and not just in the end. A fourth process manager said that it is good with the survey, but that it is through the dialogue with the customer that an understanding of the customer's expectations can be maintained.

## 4.2 CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS AND EXPECTATIONS

Process managers at Findwise stated that customers usually have no knowledge of Findwise or of search technology initially. Although, recently there have been some customers that were aware of Findwise and their area of competence. One process manager expressed the value of reference customers when dealing with customers with no prior knowledge. This since the reference customers helps to emphasize Findwise's knowledge within the search area. A process manager said that to make the customer think in search terms, Google's search function is a good alternative as a comparison of what Findwise can deliver since everybody can relate to it.

One Findwise process manager stated that it is almost always a mismatch between what the customer expects when entering the production process and what Findwise actually are able to deliver. This can be due to the initial dialogue with the seller. Another process manager had the perspective that a mismatch can occur between the customer's expectations in the initial stages and what Findwise can deliver, which is due to that Findwise has sold something they have not got or it is not related to budget. This can be a difficult situation to overcome, as well as when the customers think they know what they need, but where Findwise disagree. To be able to set the expectations at a realistic level initially, it is, according to the process managers, preferable to use resources with production competence in the sales process

One of the process managers expressed that it could be hard to explain to a customer what they can offer, since the solution is abstract and difficult to understand for the inexperienced. Another process manager explained that Findwise are good at pitching their offerings, but that they are bad at explaining the customer value they can provide. It could also be a gap at the customer side between what the decision makers and the final users of the customer company want and need from a findability solution. When such a gap exists it often results in changes in the specification of requirements during the project as more and more stakeholders' views are discovered. To handle this chasm and discover the different views, one of the process managers expressed that Findwise

aim to have several parallel relationships with different stakeholders in the organization, as developers communicate with developers, project managers with project managers etc.

To be able to transmit a high level of credibility, which is the main goal when establishing the initial contact, one process manager expressed the need of building an initial story of who Findwise are and what they do. It should not be about selling a findability solution, but to convey and position Findwise as a reliable partner. Creating a sense of trust and credibility initially lays the foundation of creating the continuous partner relationship that Findwise strive for, where the end of one project is followed by the start of a new one. This is preferable since process managers argued that it is much less resource demanding to obtain additional sales from a current customer than to get a new customer. Therefore, one of the process managers stated that it happens that he takes on initial projects that are not financially viable for Findwise in the short-term perspective, but with the aim to create a relationship in order to promote future business with long-term profitability.

One of the process managers explained that the responsibility for the established customer relationship is shared between the account manager, from the sales process, and the project manager from the production process. Utilizing resources with production competence in the sales process, preferably the future project manager allows for a more smooth transition between the processes. This since the project manager already has established a relation with the customer. During the production process, the account manager stays in contact with the customer and acts as an impartial contact external to the project that the customer can contact regarding, for instance, different service quality issues. In those cases where the same resources can't be used in both processes a hand-over meeting is held where the account manager describes the project to the project manager. There are several aspects that should be discussed during this meeting, the key stakeholders, the budget, customer expectations and key resource requirements. After the hand-over, the formal responsibility of the project lies with the production process. The production manager sets up a project team depending on the different competences needed, which competencies that needs to be developed and which resources that are available for the time period.

As previously mentioned, Findwise tries to have parallel relationships with their clients, and to communicate through different channels. One process manager at Findwise said that if a customer is not satisfied, it is due to a lack in the communication. The main reasons for dissatisfied customers are in his view, that the findability solution's quality is poor or that budget or time plans are overrun. However, all these can be managed as long as the communication with the customer is good. The process manager further said that customers are usually quite understanding regarding eventual faults on the supplier's side as long as Findwise is honest and straightforward about it.

Several process managers talked about the fact that there is generally not a high degree of new software development in the projects, although it does exist in some projects. The findability solution implemented usually consists of several different module components that are integrated. The new development most often concern integrating new and different types of data sources.

### 4.3 PROJECT 1

This project is conducted on an organisation depending on an IT-structure of several different IT-platforms. The purpose is to create a search solution to combine the different platforms and has been going on for a little more than a year and it is in its initial phase. The scope of the first phase is

to create a search solution platform to which eventually all the customer's different data sources can be connected.

#### *4.3.1 PROJECT SETTING*

The responsible project manager at Findwise explained that besides him there is a sales representative which is responsible for the customer relations. The project manager takes care of the technical aspects and the sales representative takes care of the softer aspects, if the customers are dissatisfied etc. There is also a steering committee who are the decision makers regarding the project. In the steering committee there are mostly members of the customer company, but it also includes the sales representative from Findwise. According to one member of the steering committee, it was both Findwise and the customer company that decided together the project structure with a steering group as decision makers. The rest of the project structure were proposed by Findwise and approved by the customer company, although, the customer company had some influence on the structure. There are also testers on the customer side that test the solutions delivered by Findwise.

The project manager at Findwise further explained that the initial scope of the project was quite vague and was to be detailed out as the project progressed. To work out the details the project is carried out in sprints and the project group have meetings each week and works with iterations. During these meetings the testers present their findings and a backlog of what is to be done during the next sprint is prioritized together with Findwise. The meetings also include part-deliveries and demos through screenshots etc. The steering group, on the other hand, has meetings one time each month. The focus of the steering group meetings is, according to a member in the group, on how to remove hinders and take decisions on how to proceed.

Findwise's project manager further stated that it has been hard to identify all the stakeholders at the customer company and that there may have been several people that should have been involved that has been left out. Also, there has not been an assigned contact person at the customer company, which has made communication more difficult. This also meant that in the beginning Findwise had trouble with finding the right people in the organisation to talk to. The project manager stated that he has been required to identify resources at the customer company, which has been an unusual situation. In this project, there have also been different opinions on how the project should be performed and what should be achieved in each phase. One employee at the customer company stated that different people at the customer company have different views of what the result of the collaboration will be. There was also a difference in the time perspective of the views since several people think of the vision and not the current phases.

Furthermore, according to one employee at the customer company, there are other projects at the customer company which are affected by Findwise's work. The employee further expressed that Findwise could improve in their collaboration with other suppliers in affected projects as their work have impacts on the other projects and systems in the customer's IT-context.

Regarding the involvement of stakeholders in the project, the testers of the customer company felt that they were involved too late in the process, and that they did not get any information about the progress. If they had been involved earlier they could have given feedback regarding an appropriate specification of requirements. This has resulted in that the objectives of the project cannot be tested and measured and the validation of project progress is thus difficult. The interviewee also stated that

Findwise came into the project a bit overconfident about the fact that they thought that they could just implement their solution on the customers data, but the metadata was not what Findwise thought it were.

#### *4.3.2 DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION*

Findwise's project manager stated that the customer did not initially know what they wanted. The customer's project manager in turn stated that if the customer company does not know what it need, it is Findwise's responsibility to investigate the organisation and identify what the customer need and expects. Members of the steering committee in turn stated that Findwise has been good in investigating the customer's expectation initially through the findability review and the workshop in it. It is also mentioned that even though the perspectives from both the technical and administrative employees were captured, the external users were not included. Regarding the customer's initial knowledge, the project manager at Findwise stated that as a project manager, it is hard to know what the customer expects from the product or project delivery in the beginning; the understanding is something that is achieved as he gets to know the customer. In relation to this, the project manager at the customer side said that it has become easier to work with Findwise the longer the project progresses. This is partly due to that it took Findwise some time to get to know the customer's organisation.

The project manager at Findwise said that sometimes it is easier to work with a customer that is not very technically knowledgeable. This is due to that when a customer do not know much about the technology, it is easier for Findwise to say what is possible or not, without the customer interfering. He also said that the customer might think it is hard to communicate what they want, but in this case the customer trusts their testers and Findwise.

Findwise's project manager stated that the scope of the project was too loosely formulated when it was time to involve the customer's large process organisation. This has made it hard to use the scope to steer the work. This is further stated by the project manager at the customer company who said that the scope has been vague, and if she had been included from the beginning, she would have worked towards clearer goals. According to her, there have been things missing in the beginning, which have taken time to fix afterwards. One of the testers also expressed that the vague scopes made it hard to know what to test, and how to evaluate tests. Also, one member of the steering committee said that even though he thinks that it is good that the scope of the project has been flexible, it has become a problem with the testing of the solution when it has not been clear what was supposed to be tested. He also expressed concern about the change of the scope during the process. This he explained is due to the fact that the project group had let the scope widen without the permission of the steering committee. This has been due to a lack of communication between the two groups and, according to one member of the steering committee, that there were different levels of ambition on the first phase of the project, which leads to an increase in scope. Therefore, he stated that he does not know what the result of the project will be yet, but he knows in what direction they are heading. Although, another member of the steering committee said that he thinks that the level of the specifications has been enough, and that it has been clear what must be reached in phase one.

Regarding the expectations of the other stakeholders of the customer company, they wish for a solution that makes all platforms searchable in one place, and that the search relevance is sufficient.

The buyer of the project said that his expectations regarding the technological aspect of the solution are that it has a base structure which is possible to add to further on.

On the other hand, regarding the project management, one member of the steering committee said that Findwise's project management has not been good enough. This is due to that information has not reached the steering committee in time and that the project should have been better controlled to keep the project within budget. The customer also expected that it should be raised when changes may occur, and that the project group stays inside of the scope. Another member of the steering committee said that the most important thing regarding the project management has been transparency, that problems show early in the process, which has not been the case in this project. He also said that the project could have worked better if Findwise spent more time at the customer's office, which would prevent any problems with communication and getting hold of stakeholders.

#### *4.3.3 FORMATION OF CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATIONS*

Findwise's project manager said that to ensure that everybody has the same view on what is to be delivered; the specifications of requirements play a large role. Sometimes the customer and Findwise have different views on what should be delivered, and according to the project manager this may be due to an inflexible specification of requirements, which is easy to misinterpret, or to interpret in different ways. If the specifications instead are flexible, and the project process includes several meetings with discussions and demonstrations, then it is a lesser risk of people misunderstanding each other than if they are strictly adhering to a specification document. To be able to understand the customer's expectations, the project manager expressed that the best way is to have a lot of demonstrations of what has been achieved so far. This since it is good to make things visible, as it becomes easier to show something than to explain it.

Also, the project manager said that the customer does not usually know about search technology from the beginning, and if they do, it is usually due to another customer or experience of other search, such as Google. When the customers compare Findwise's search solutions with Google's it is both positive and negative. It is good because search has become something that the customers expect to get, and negative because it is not only to install a "Google" into the customer's systems. One of the customers expressed that Findwise sell their search solution and vision about being a better solution than Google, which makes it hard for the customer stakeholders to not focus on the long term vision instead of what should be done right now.

Different members of the steering committee stated that their initial expectations included that Findwise was competent in the search area, as they had heard that from reference customers. They also said that their initial expectations were highly affected by the fact that Findwise had reference customers within the same field as the customer company. In the initial contact with Findwise, the steering committee was included in an information meeting where Findwise explained how they were going to proceed with the project in different phases. One member of the steering committee discussed that even though the project has gone over budget, it is seldom that IT-projects are finished within time and budget, and hence this did not surprise him. Although, when the deviation from the plan occurs, he expects that it is raised to the steering committee.

#### *4.3.4 SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS*

The customer's project manager explains that the relationships with the supplier differ depending on which role the individual possesses at the customer company. The project manager at the client company has a relationship and takes decisions together with the project manager at Findwise, the testers at the client talk with the developers at Findwise etc.

According to one member of the steering committee, there are three different communication channels that may be considered. There is one in the steering committee, one in the project group and one between the two. The communication within the steering committee has worked well, but in the project group it could be improved. The communication between the project group and the steering committee has not worked that well either. Another member of the steering committee expressed that the communication between Findwise and the steering committee has been good but the communication from the customer to Findwise has been weaker since there have been a lot of stakeholders that needed to be involved. The project manager at Findwise shared the opinion that the communication works well at the moment, but previously it has been worse due to bad planning and a lack of resources.

### **4.4 PROJECT 2**

Findwise has been working with this customer since they started seven years ago. The company is a large organisation with several different IT-suppliers to support their IT-structure. Today Findwise has its project manager working a large part of his time at the customer's location. During the years, the collaboration has included several different projects including both new developments and improvements on existing systems.

#### *4.4.1 PROJECT SETTING*

Findwise's project manager said that he tries to adapt the project methodology according to the wants of the customer. In this project, the project methodology has changed as budget has been decreased. When the customer's IT-department got a reduction in their budget, the control of the projects and of their suppliers increased. Therefore more decisions regarding budget were moved up to the level of the process development team, PDT, which is a decision making body. According to the project manager at Findwise, the project methodology has changed from agile and a focus on customer value to waterfall, where the costs have been in focus. This later became a bit more agile and resulted in a hybrid methodology which was used with both agile and waterfall elements. They conduct two week sprints and at the end of each sprint there is a meeting regarding the project's status.

Findwise's project manager explained that the project is conducted with a project manager in both the customer organization and at Findwise. Each year, Findwise's project manager, process managers and the customer's project manager together with the program manager for enterprise search and a few other stakeholders from the customer's IT department sit down and identify the customer's needs. The needs regard the customer's different business units and what they require from the findability solution. Additionally, Findwise's employees make up a report of the developments within search, what the latest trends are and what Findwise is doing for other customers. Together they then estimate costs and prioritize different initiatives to take on. This prioritization along with a short PowerPoint-description is then passed on to the PDT, which has budget responsibility. The PDT then adds their input to the prioritization and approves the project. The customer explained that, at the



customer company, the IT-department delivers projects to the business side, where they work together with several different suppliers.

Through Findwise's network of customers the customer's program manager said that they have gained insights into the possibilities of search and how the findability solution can support and develop their own business. Findwise's customer network could also be used for crowd funding for development of new technology which several different customers can benefit from, as explained by the client.

According to Findwise's project manager, there may be different stakeholder views regarding high level matters. There can be occasions where the business side expects a certain business solution but where the IT-department does not provide the budget for it. When communicating with different stakeholders, Findwise's project manager said that he adapts the communication regarding both linguistics and the message itself depending on the stakeholder. When communicating with the IT-department there is more focus on architectural aspects and security while when communicating with the business side the message is always regarding the customer benefit of the findability solution.

The customer program manager explained that the majority of the organization still does not really understand search and its possibilities. This is an aspect that needs to be addressed when trying to diffuse findability in the organization. However, it is hard to understand the organization and therefore a personal knowledge of different individuals is necessary to diffuse Findability in the customer organization. Also a relationship with these individuals is necessary to effectively spread the knowledge of the solution. As such, much of Findwise's recurring sales come from the customer program manager diffusing findability in the customer organization. According to the customer program manager, it is hard for Findwise to talk to the stakeholders in the organisation about their needs. This since they do not know the organisation that well, and as such it is better for the customers themselves to do that.

#### *4.4.2 DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION*

Regarding the prioritization of initiatives, the project manager at Findwise said that they are not frozen and they change often. Neither is the scope of each initiative, or project, frozen until quite late in the project. During the status meetings, there is often a reprioritization regarding what needs to be done. The reprioritization is based on feedback from Findwise as well as the customer's users and external users.

As the project scope is detailed out as the project progresses, Findwise's project manager stated that no matter how hard the project is controlled the scope will not end up the same as in the beginning. The so called scope creep often occurs regarding which data to include, and there are several integration aspects that are dealt with at the end of the projects, the customer has experience from search projects and expects this. The size of the project influence how detailed the scope of requirements is. The larger the project, the less detailed the scope would be as it is not feasible to make all the decisions required to define the details at the project start. If there is a requirement for integration with other systems however, this integration needs to be clear for all parties.

Findwise's project manager expressed that the customer has little problem understanding what benefits that can come from the findability solution, neither do they have problems with

communicating what is needed from the solution. This since the projects has always had a strong foundation on the customer's business side. It is the customer program manager who works to identify situations where the findability solution can provide benefits for the business.

When the quality is lacking, the project manager at Findwise explained that it is something that is noticed by the entire project team, both at the customer side and at Findwise. When the customer feels that something is not good with the findability solution, the project manager stressed that it is important that there is a dialog with the supplier about it. This since the customer's perception is not always true and it is important to have an honest dialog regarding it.

One customer said that there have been some issues with Findwise's interaction with other suppliers, where Findwise could benefit from being more humble towards other suppliers. This since Findwise is not the only ones who know search and could learn from other suppliers as well. Also, another customer said that currently it may be a bit too much ad hoc regarding the status meetings between sprints and that more structure in the processes regarding testing, handovers and deliveries could be needed.

#### *4.4.3 FORMATION OF CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATIONS*

The project manager said that in order for everyone in the project to have the same view of what is to be achieved, there is an iterative process throughout the project. Therefore there is not any specification of details in the early stages. Also, to include all stakeholders in the initial phase of the project, there is usually a project kick-off where relevant stakeholders are included, both from Findwise and the customer. It usually lasts for a few hours and the project objectives are discussed in order for all stakeholders to have the same view of what is to be achieved. However, Findwise's project manager stated that it is not possible to ask all stakeholders in the beginning of the project what they truly want from the delivery. Then the specification of requirements becomes too cluttered and the project will not get started. Instead it's important to create early deliveries which can be tested against the different stakeholders, and identify necessary alterations.

Further, Findwise project manager stated that the interaction with the customer have become easier during the progress of the project. This since employees at Findwise has established personal bonds with the client.

The customer project manager had previously been involved in other projects which were interconnected with Findwise's projects. During these projects, he did not realize the potential with the findability solutions, but thought it was just used to include the concept of search. As he started working with the findability project however, his notion regarding the value of findability has increased.

The program manager at the customer side expressed that during the initial findability projects it was his job to try to spread findability amongst the different business units. However, as time progressed this has shifted and now requests come from the different business units, and the program manager has to hold back the implementation.

#### *4.4.4 SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS*

Findwise has had a long continuous relationship with this customer, for approximately seven years. The project manager at Findwise explained that in this time the customer has developed into a

knowledgeable buyer and personal bonds between actors have been formed. Currently, most of the interaction and communication occurs when Findwise's project manager is on-site, through e-mails or status meetings. Two customer employees expressed that the communication is considered clear and quick. Throughout this time, Findwise's project manager stated that Findwise has developed an understanding of the customer needs.

The customer's program and project managers said that they see no end to the relationship with Findwise, even though they could be replaceable. There is constant development within search and more possibilities to support the business side of the customer that has not been done yet.

## 4.5 PROJECT 3

This customer is a large organisation with several different departments that have different needs regarding the solution. Findwise has worked with this customer for two years, during different phases. The goal from the beginning was to create a "search as a service" solution that all sources could plug into. As a long-term goal, the customer wants an enterprise search which includes information from their whole organization.

### 4.5.1 PROJECT SETTING

Findwise's project manager explained that this project is conducted together with the customer's IT-department, which in turn delivers the solution to the business side of the customer organization. As such, the project is conducted with a project manager from Findwise and a project manager from the customer. The customer's project manager acts as a requirement specifier towards Findwise and has part in defining the scope of the projects. There is a lot of dialog, mostly personal, between the two project managers. Findwise's project manager said that he adapts the communication depending on the recipient. He further said that it is important to get all relevant stakeholders involved in the beginning of the project in order to avoid situations later where a perspective has been left out. The customer project manager also expressed that it is easy to reach sales people and developers at Findwise, when there are issues to discuss.

The customer project manager is not the buyer of Findwise's project since there is another individual at the customer side, which has responsibility for the budget of the project. Although, according to the customer project manager, he has a quite large mandate. Several decisions that are usually handled by the steering committee have been pushed down to reduce overhead costs, which allows for a flexible project delivery process. The customer project manager said that the steering committee's involvement is kept to a minimum. Therefore, the steering committee is only informed through an information letter each week and it is up to the committee to contact the project manager if they identify issues that are mishandled. The customer project manager identifies some possible risks with this setup, including unwanted scope creep, increase in cost and that the project manager makes the wrong decisions as he might not have all the perspectives and consequences in mind.

The customer project manager stated that activities such as project reviews at the end of the projects often are neglected, both in Findwise's projects as well as in other internal projects at the customer organisation. The reason for this is that project managers do not want to spend resources on it and rather uses that budget for the project delivery. There is also an issue of gathering the

project team as they quickly are dispatched away to other projects and do not prioritize their time on review sessions.

Findwise's project manager further explained that he has status reviews with the project manager at the customer organization one time each week. They are not formal, but mostly occur when the customer project manager works at Findwise's office one day a week. During this time they review what has been done in the project, discuss demos and decide upon what should be done further on.

#### *4.5.2 DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION*

Findwise's project manager said that initially, the customer did not really know what they wanted from the relationship with Findwise. As the project progressed, changes in the scope have been made. These have mostly occurred because the customer's project manager wanted to add new things, features or data sources to the solution. Consequentially, there has not been a traditional specification of requirements in the project; instead there has been a vision of what to achieve which has been more detailed as the project progressed. The current status of the project is that they have developed the platform for the findability solution and the focus is now on connecting different data sources.

Findwise's project manager stated during the interview that search is an abstract field and that he has been working with search for two years and still think it is abstract. This leads to that it is hard to calculate the returns of a findability project. Therefore, it requires that all parties involved have a good gut feeling about the project, to get it initiated. The project manager at Findwise explained that ideas for new projects are introduced both by the customer project manager, as he spotted needs in the organization or by Findwise as they identify issues with the existing solution needing additional add-ons or fixes. Which initiatives that are to be initiated, and which applications that are to be developed are solely decided by the customer organization. It is an internal process at the customer where both the business side and the IT- department have some input.

There has been an issue with the two project managers agreeing on working at Findwise office. The customer project manager stated that Findwise did a good job identifying their expectations regarding the project methodology in the beginning of the relationship through a continuous dialog. There were however several other stakeholders on the customer side that felt that they should be located at the customer's office instead.

The customer project manager stated that he is the one ordering and reviewing each sprint, and that the agile project methodology with sprints is interesting. During the first sprint deliveries the customer project manager was positively surprised, both by Findwise consultants' competence as well as by the findability solution. Working with sprints is flexible and it works well in purely technical projects. Although, when aspects of the projects affect the business side as well, it becomes problematic as it is difficult getting the high level of frequency in the decision making that is necessary. There are also more stakeholders involved on the business side.

#### *4.5.3 FORMATION OF CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATIONS*

Findwise's project manager explained that at the project start they had a project meeting where they invited all the relevant stakeholders and explained the project with its objectives and how it was to be conducted with routines for sprints and deliveries. The agile way of working, including the methodology with sprints, is considered by both parties a good method when trying to get all

stakeholders to have the same view of the objectives. It also allows for a continuous dialog and a continuous way of thinking, regarding the contents of each sprint.

This customer knowledge has increased as the projects have progressed which has resulted in a clearer vision of where they want to go with the findability solution. The project manager also stated that during this development it has gotten easier to work with the customer. Further on, the scope of the project has changed when the customer's vision has cleared.

Findwise's project manager stated that it is unusual that Findwise takes on a project which they find difficult. Further he stated that Findwise can almost always deliver what is said on the first meeting. The real issue is whether the customer understands what will be delivered and the required time. However, during the delivery of one of the phases of the project, estimation for a certain activity was omitted and thus was not included in the budget. Even though the project ended up going over budget due to this, the customer was satisfied with the result. The project manager at the customer side discussed that the current findability project has gone over budget. However, mostly all of the IT-projects at the customer have gone over budget this fall, so it is something that the IT-department has learned to accept.

#### *4.5.4 SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS*

During the two years of this customer relationship a personal relationship has been developed with the customer, according to Findwise project manager. Since search is quite abstract and return on investment is hard to calculate, a close customer relationship and a personal discussion is needed to get everybody involved confident about the findability solution. According to the project manager, this cannot be done through a formal meeting but requires an informal get together, such as a lunch or another social activity. Findwise's project manager said that he has a good personal relationship with the customer project manager and the customer project manager has a good personal relationship with the customer buyer. Therefore, Findwise's project manager said that he feels that he can trust the customer's project manager regarding how to proceed with the project. The customer's project manager concurred, and further stated that Findwise's project manager has gotten a good knowledge of what the customer wants.

For Findwise it is a lot easier to make additional sales in long relationships with the customer, than selling projects to new customers. Findwise's project manager expressed that the initiation of a relationship is the hardest part, and if the first project is too short there is not enough time to build up a personal relationship and additionally not enough time to deliver good value. In accordance, the customer project manager sees the real benefits from the findability projects coming in about five to ten years from now.

Findwise's project manager said that even though there is a clear sales responsibility from his part, as he is also the account manager, he does not feel that it is prudent for him to discuss costs with the buyer. He said that it is important to separate the consultant role and the sales role. A consultant is supposed to act as an advisory to the customer and to do this effectively it is important that the customer does not feel that the consultant is just trying to sell and thus might lose the customer's trust.

The customer project manager said that the view on the objectives differs within the customer organization. Different stakeholders have different views on what the findability solution should

achieve. To deal with these discrepancies, there has been a dialog and discussions with different middle-level managers as well as higher level managers.

## 4.6 PROJECT 4

This client is a large organisation that Findwise has worked with since the beginning of 2010. They have done search for the customer's internal systems as well as findability solutions to cater to external users. Currently, they are rebuilding their external search, which Findwise is involved in.

### 4.6.1 *PROJECT SETTING*

The project manager at Findwise explained that in the initial phases of this project there was a workshop and a setting of specifications. Which projects that is going to be developed is often an outcome of something Findwise has suggested that could be done, which the customer gets to think about for a while, and then the customer comes back with a proposal to start a project.

The project manager stated that there is a steering group internally at the customer company, but it is not specifically assigned for the project with Findwise. This group has a meeting together with Findwise every third month to see how the project is progressing. On the other hand, the project group's work includes a lot of demos and every second week they go through what have been done and what they should do next. They are hence working in an agile way with sprints lasting two weeks with deliveries at the end. Internally at Findwise, the project manager said that the project managers have a structured way of sharing experiences. Every week they meet and go through what they have been through.

The project manager at Findwise said that they need to identify the key stakeholders, and communicate the information necessary for each stakeholder. This to ensure that everybody gets the information they need, and that they get the same vision of the outcome. The project manager said that he adapts the way of communicating with different stakeholders since everybody do not have to know everything and do not understand everything. There is therefore a communication plan to ensure that everybody involved have the same picture of the project outcome. It is different between projects whether people at the customer company have different opinions regarding what should be delivered. It depends on how well Findwise know the customer and how the communication is.

### 4.6.2 *DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION*

Findwise's project manager stated that the technical aspects that are of most importance for the customer is that data should be reachable from many different places. Also, the customer has become more aware of the costs lately, and therefore the project methodology has been changed towards a more agile method to suit their cost-consciousness. The project manager further stated that since they have been flexible towards the changing demands of the customer, more focus is now on time and costs, which means that features have become a variable.

### 4.6.3 *FORMATION OF CUSTOMER'S EXPECTATIONS*

Regarding the knowledge of the customer, the project manager said that it could be an issue when the customer does not understand what they can get, which makes it hard for them to communicate what they want. This could be due to that they are not that technically knowledgeable. The project manager said that this is handled by a lot of demos and discussion. Further on, when the customer

compares the search functionality to the little search experience they got, they expect to get Google to their intranet. Although, when the project progresses, they realize that that is not what they are going to get.

The project manager expressed that it gets easier to work with the customer when the project progresses, this because their knowledge increases. It is also a learning curve for the project manager at Findwise, who stated that in this particular project he was new in his role in the beginning, which led to a few misunderstandings between the customer and Findwise. This gap decreased when both parties learned more and got to know each other.

#### *4.6.4 SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS*

With this customer, the relationship has been going on for about three years, and the work is always project based. The project manager explained that in the projects, they do not work with tight specifications, instead the projects are built on relationships, trust, and a continuous dialogue on what is needed.

The project managers said that it is easier to work with a technically knowledgeable customer, but it is still important to understand how much a customer knows. Therefore it is necessary to verify the customer's knowledge by asking the customer questions to see how much they know and what picture they have of the outcome. It is through communication and show and tell that it can be ensured that everybody involved has the same picture.

The communication works well between the customer and Findwise according to the project manager at Findwise. Although, one problem has been that the buyer at the customer company do not have the authority to finance all that is needed for the search solution. This since it is hard to finance something that affects so many divisions.

## 5 ANALYSIS

*In this chapter the results, presented in chapter 4, will be analysed with the basis in the literature review presented in chapter 2.*

### 5.1 PROJECT SETTING

Findwise consider their organizational structure to be a process structure, divided into a sales process and a production process. This organizational structure is much in accordance with the project structure described by Artto et al. (2008) where the work is structured into three phases; the pre-project, project and post-project. In Findwise's case the pre-project phase corresponds to Findwise's sales process and the findability review, while the project and the post-project phases are organized within Findwise's production process. The post-project phase, which is traditionally consisting with maintenance, is absent to some degree in most cases since the aim is to re-start a new project and immediately iterate to the project phase again. In these cases the post-project phases of old projects get included in the new projects as these are typically consisting of add-ons or upgrades to the original solutions.

Furthermore, Findwise project methodology relates to the agile project management method scrum. This since they have several parts of their project management that relates to scrum elements. They have a kick off during the findability review, which can be related to the kick off described by Cervone (2010). Furthermore, Findwise works in sprints and with iterations and sprint review meetings between the sprints where backlogs are prioritized, which further corresponds to the description by Cervone (2010). Although, since Findwise adapts according to the customers' wishes regarding the project methodology, it is not always completely following the agile method scrum.

However, since Findwise origins in a scrum-based method for most of the projects, they can benefit from the positive aspects of agile methodology, such as shorter project set-up times and increased responsiveness towards change (Aguanno 2004). Additionally the agile method includes direct communication with client, as well as demonstrations and backlog prioritization during review meetings, which can relate to the identification of the customers' expectations.

Regarding the context of project business, Cova & Holstius (1993) state the need for viewing the project in a long-term perspective in order to reach success. Findwise demonstrates this type of perspective as they view the long-term customer relationship as the main goal even during the initial customer contact. They may perform projects initially, which may not be justified through a financial perspective for that specific project, only to create a relationship with the customer in order to promote future business. This is further strengthened by Shenhar et al. (2001) who states that high technology projects are often initiated for other reasons than to make immediate profit, such as long-term relationships and future growth.

When working in a context of a business network, with multiple projects and multiple suppliers (Artto & Kujala 2008), even more stakeholders become important to consider. When working in projects with other suppliers, as well as when working in projects affecting other projects conducted by other suppliers, this network becomes even more complex. Customers in project 1 and project 2 emphasize the importance of an adequate interaction between Findwise and the customer's other suppliers. The more intricate the business network, the more complex the interaction between different stakeholders become, and as such it simultaneously becomes harder and more important



for Findwise to interact with the customer's other suppliers. Findwise is also using a business network to enhance their development and creating customer value through the business network itself by using crowd funding, which several customers can benefit from, as expressed in the interviews of project 2.

Findwise's methodology of working in an agile way with an adaptive scope allows them to be flexible. This to discover customer demands and wants as the project progresses. In order to be able to utilize the flexible way of working, it requires Findwise's resources to possess a personal readiness (Cova & Holstius 1993). Project 1 stands in contrast to the others due to its negative results when working with a loose scope and adapting it as the project progresses. This could be related to an inability to be flexible due to a hinder in the personal readiness. The lack of a personal relationship with the different stakeholder may hamper Findwise's consultants to identify the shifts in needs of the customers and as such cannot utilize their personal readiness. The personal readiness is hence essential in order to be flexible to the changing demands from the customer, and since Findwise's customers in project 1, 2 and 3 are generally satisfied with the technical quality dimensions, it is the functional dimensions that Findwise needs to be more responsive to in these relationships.

When performing the findability review, Findwise's employees and customers express the need of identifying relevant stakeholders. Ghingold and Wilson (1998) discuss the difficulty of identifying the right individuals when selling to a new business environment. This becomes evident in Findwise's case when interacting with customers with large organizations. There several different individuals with different responsibilities and perspectives towards the issue need to be identified. In project 1, Findwise's project manager stated that it has been hard to identify all the stakeholders, especially since there was no contact person at the customer company. Without a proper identification of a gatekeeper, or a designation of a gatekeeper by the customer organization, it may have negative effects on the project. This as gatekeepers control the flow of information in an organisation (Hutt & Speh 2010, p. 80), and reaching the right individuals is important to get all perspectives. In project 2 this is taken one step further where the customer's program manager not only acts as a gatekeeper and helps identify important stakeholders, but he also does the internal promotion of the findability solution. One reason for this difference could be that there is a large knowledge gap between the customers in project 1 and 2. To the buying center within the customer firm, Findwise acts as an influencer (Patterson & Daves 1999). The less competence within search that the customer possesses, the more influence Findwise may have on the buying decision. In project 2 where the buyer is considered very knowledgeable the gatekeeper take a larger initiative influencing the rest of the organisation and less is required by Findwise. As such, the importance of Findwise's actions increase when the customer has less knowledge in working with search as their actions will have an even larger effect on the customer satisfaction.

From project 1 it can be drawn that the importance of the identification of the important stakeholders is realized in the production process where it will be shown if the relevant stakeholders have been involved or not. Different people in the organization will have different perceptions of the buying problem and the company's need regarding the issue at hand (Ghingold & Wilson 1998). Solely identifying different important stakeholder positions is however not enough. It is important to understand the informal roles as well as the level of influence they have on the organization and the decisions as that may differ from their formal role (Hutt & Speh 2010, p. 80). This was shown in project 1 and 3 where the responsibilities and level of influence differed between the two customer

project managers. In those projects where a specific gatekeeper has been identified, the identification of stakeholders has become easier and worked better. In those cases where the gatekeeper is the sole communication channel with the stakeholders, a risk of being too locked in with that individual can appear. In this case there may be a risk that all perspectives might not reach Findwise. An important issue to consider here is that even if Findwise fulfil all of the terms of the contract and the buyer is satisfied, the user or other stakeholders may not be, as they all might have different perspectives on the issue. A process manager stated that within some projects the use of multiple parallel communication channels have been used to avoid this issue.

During the workshop, in the findability review, Findwise gets the opportunity to meet all the identified relevant stakeholders. As different stakeholders will have different perspectives on the issue and how to proceed accordingly (Ghingold & Wilson 1998), Findwise benefits from getting them together and discussing it in an open environment where different stakeholders get to hear the other stakeholders' perspectives. This environment also allows Findwise to influence the stakeholders in order for them to reach a settlement (Patterson & Dawes 1999). However, the difficulty of identifying relevant stakeholders (Ghingold & Wilson 1998) is still present. In Findwise's case there have been occasions where important stakeholders have not been involved in the workshop or findability review, which has lead to a lack of their perspective. This has further resulted in difficulties arising as the project progressed which may have been avoided. This is particularly apparent in project 1, where there was one client explicitly expressing the issue of not being involved in the beginning. Further on, when the stakeholder is identified, it is important to tailor the communication to fit each person (Ghingold and Wilson 1998). Regarding the communication within the relationship, Findwise's project managers in project 3 and 4 said that they adapt the communication according to the individual stakeholder, and that it is necessary to have a communication plan to ensure that everybody involved have the same picture.

## 5.2 DIMENSIONS OF CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

According to theory, there are two roads to take to achieve satisfaction, either to affect the customer expectations or to adapt the process to meet the expectations (Robledo 2001) (Sunder 2002). The employees at Findwise said that they are flexible towards customer demands, thus adapting the process. At the same time, a process manager stated that it is necessary with expectation management to get the customer expectations in line during the production process. This is also corroborated by another process manager stating that there is almost always a mismatch between the customer's expectations and what Findwise is able to deliver, which requires the production process to adjust the customers' expectations. As such, Findwise both affect the customer expectations and adapt the process to fit the expectations in order to achieve customer satisfaction.

According to Grönroos (1998) there are two aspects that are important for the quality of the service, and these are the functional and technical aspects. Both these qualities are important to consider as they form up the total service quality perceived by the customer. Swan & Comb (1976) argue that the technical service quality needs to be met at a certain level, and after that it is mostly the functional quality that is affecting the customer satisfaction. Hence, the technical quality is a prerequisite, but the functional quality is the order winner. This can somewhat be confirmed by the answers the customer interviewees gave to the questions regarding what could be improved in the project with Findwise, which were all regarding functional aspects of the relationships. In project 1 there was the project management that needed improvement, in project 2 it was the structure of the work and the

relationship with other suppliers that could have been improved and in project 3 it was the location of the work that needed to be discussed with all stakeholders. According to Swan & Comb (1976), this indicates that the customers are satisfied with the delivered technology, and to increase the customer satisfaction, Findwise should focus on increasing the functional quality.

Grönroos (1984) writes that the functional quality is more subjectively evaluated, which becomes clear in project 1 where different people at the same organisation were interviewed. The members of the project group had a different view of the functional quality of the project, such as the project management and communication. Among Findwise's customers, the ones that were most satisfied with the collaboration with Findwise were in project 2 and 3 where one person at the customer's side had a close relationship with one person at Findwise's side. In relation to this, the documentation regarding the customer survey depicted a correlation between the length of the relationship and the customer satisfaction. As such, a long and close relationship may allow for learning regarding the customer's evaluation of functional quality and to adapt accordingly. Furthermore, as the customer relationship progresses, the customer's expectations are more developed and as such more easily identified and met, which will be discussed further below.

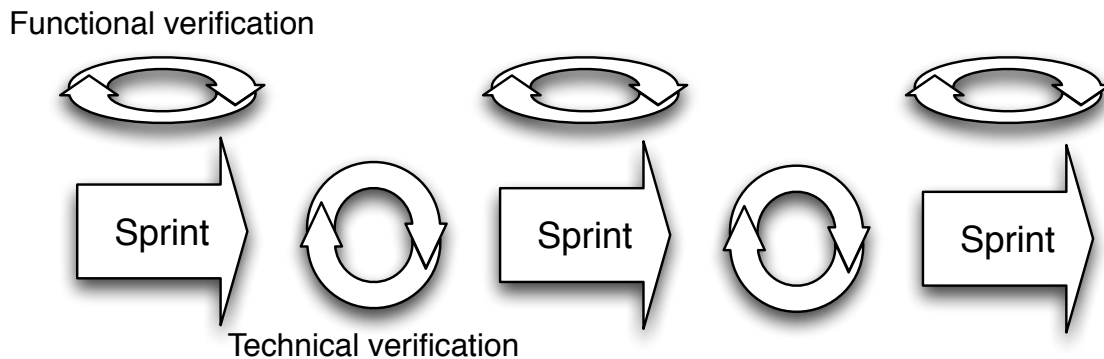
Ojasalo (2001) and Grönroos (2008, pp. 107-108) describe the problem when customers have no previous experience, which makes their expectations fuzzy. This reflects the problem with customers' initial struggle in expressing their needs and wants, which project managers at Findwise, in three out of four projects, have expressed during the interviews. As the project progress, it is explained by Findwise project managers that the customer expectations change as their knowledge regarding search technology and Findwise's offering increase. Therefore, they are also more able to explain to the service supplier what they expect (Ojasalo 2001)(Grönroos 2008, pp. 108). According to Ojasalo (2001) and Grönroos (2008, pp. 107-108) these fuzzy expectations that occur in the beginning still effect the evaluation of the project's progress.

To be able to meet the customer expectations it is important for the company to discover the customer's fuzzy expectations (Ojasalo 2001) (Grönroos 2008, pp. 107-108). It is also important to make implicit expectations explicit and clear (Ojasalo 2001) (Grönroos 2008, p. 108 – 109). According to the customer's project manager in project 1, it is Findwise's responsibility to figure out the customer's true needs, when they themselves do not have this understanding. However, another customer in project 2 stated that it is hard for Findwise to know where to look in a large customer organisation, and that it is better for the customers themselves to do that. This indicates that it is up to Findwise to adapt to the customer context regarding need discovery, and further act according to that. However, it is important to discover the fuzzy expectations and identify the unknown implicit expectations to enhance the customer satisfaction.

As Findwise, during the production process, works with one to two week sprints, they also conduct a status meeting after each sprint. These status meetings serve as planning meetings for what to achieve during the next sprint but also as a verification of Findwise's view on the customer's expectations. This corresponds with Ojasalo (2001) who discusses the educational journey of making the customer's fuzzy and unrealistic expectations clear and realistic through gains of experience. Findwise's project managers state that they prefer status meeting to include demos of completed work. These demos both work as an explicit demonstration of reality and as a reference point for future expectations. They thus allow the customer to gain a sense of clarity of what is actually being

delivered and allows the customer to gain some clarity in its expectations as well, aiding in their problem understanding and formulation (Ojasalo 2001).

The expectations regarding the findability solution and the verification through demos, is according to Grönroos (1984) regarding the technical aspects of the service quality. The functional aspects are not discussed to the same extent during the status meetings. Instead several process managers said that there exists a close relationship together with a continuous dialogue, where these aspects are more considered. As such, the functional verification takes place during the sprints, and the technical verification takes place between the sprints. This process can be viewed in figure 13 below:



**Figure 13: Technical and functional verification**

The close customer relationship may also allow for a greater understanding of the customer's implicit expectations, thus increasing the possibilities of meeting them and achieving a higher satisfaction (Ojasalo 2001). Ojasalo (2001) discusses the importance of discovering the previously mentioned implicit expectations. One of Findwise's clients in project 1 expressed that he was not satisfied with how the project management was conducted, and that there were aspects that he took for granted that was not fulfilled. This indicates that his implicit expectations were not explored by Findwise. When the implicit expectations has become explicit, the now explicit expectations will eventually transform back to implicit expectations as the two parties get to know one another and develop a personal relationship.

### 5.3 FORMATION OF CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS

Since it is essential to meet customer expectations to achieve customer satisfaction, Findwise need to be aware of the expectations (Coye 2004). During the findability review, Findwise aim to gather information regarding the customers' views on the context of the project. This could be both regarding the IT-structure and the customer's needs in relation to search. During this activity, the objective is on one hand to identify the customers' expectations, where all stakeholders that are involved will expect that their views are taken into consideration. One the other hand, the purpose of the findability review is to influence the customer's expectations with the actions of the Findwise consultants. Although, other things will also affect the expectations, such as discussion between the participants.

The expectations of customers are described as what customers imagine regarding the coming level of service quality provided by the supplier (Oliver & Winer 1987). During the interviews, several project managers have confirmed that during the beginning of the sales process, the customers do not know much of either Findwise or search technology. Therefore much of the expectations are

created by Findwise's sales personnel. Although, according to Grönroos (2008 pp. 84-85) it is not only activities performed by the supplier that affects the customer's expectations, but also previous experiences with other types of services and service providers as well as word-of-mouth and perceived corporate image. Robledo (2001) also states that previous experiences are most important when it comes to affecting expectations. During the interviews with Findwise's customers, it became apparent that the customer's previous experiences affect their expectations even if they have not had any specific experience from working with Findwise. For instance, one customer in project 1 expressed that IT-projects usually go over time and budget, which indicates that he does not see that as a critical issue, nor as something that he was surprised by. Since the customer does not think of meeting time as a critical issue, there might be other issues that are of much more importance. Furthermore, in project 3 the customer project manager mentioned that all previous IT-projects had gone over budget that fall, as well as the project with Findwise. Although, they were still satisfied with Findwise's project since they have learnt to accept budget overruns. The customers' experience of other types of IT-projects further confirms Robledo (2001) statement that expectations may be transferred from other types of projects.

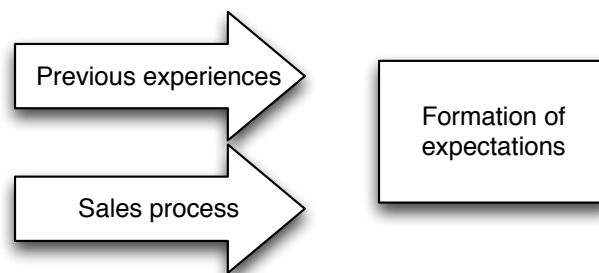
If a customer does not have any previous experience, Robledo (2001) underlines that they still have expectations. Findwise's customers seldom have prior experience in working with findability and search, and as such their expectations form in other ways. In project 1 the two members in the steering committee had implicit expectations that originated from their experience with other IT-projects, both regarding the functional quality and the level of autonomy of the project team. The more abstract the solution provided by the supplier, the more unrelated the experiences may be which influences the customer's expectations and as such they may become more implicit and unrealistic (Higgs, Polonsky & Hollick 2005). This can be related to interviews with the process managers where it was expressed that customers' expectations are generally too high entering the production process. It also corresponds to two of the project managers' interviews, where they discussed that in project 1 and 4 respectively, that customers initially expects to get a search solution as Google, which is unrealistic with the customer's current data structure. Also, one of the process managers mentions Google as a search reference, but he thinks it is positive since everyone can relate to it. In those cases where the customer expectations are higher than Findwise can deliver, it is important to get the expectations in line, either with a change in the customer's expectations or a change in the process to meet the customer expectation, which was discussed in the previous section. In project 3, the Findwise project manager stated that they do not often take on projects that they cannot deliver, hence in their case it is mostly the customer expectations that needs to be lowered. This however only regards the technical quality and not the functional quality which has been addressed above.

As portrayed by Findwise's satisfaction survey, there is a correlation between the length of the relationship and the customer satisfaction. This may point to that after a period of time an understanding of the customer's wants and needs in relation to functional quality is obtained. However, one possible rival explanation could simply be that unsatisfied customers do not maintain the relationship. Further, Findwise's project managers in project 2, 3 and 4 confirm that it does get easier to work with the customer after they get to know one another.

Based on Coye's (2004) model of the formation of expectations, a model will be presented that further includes the reformation of the initial expectations. The model will include the

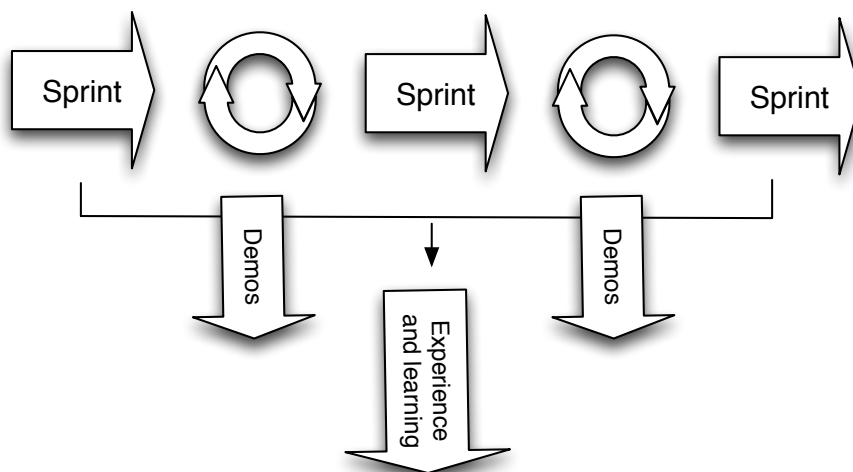
transformation of the dimensions of fuzzy, implicit and unrealistic expectations. The model will also contain how insights regarding the customer expectations are used in the delivery process to improve the project outcome. To be able to explain the process in the model, additional theory from other sections than formation of customer expectations will be used and the whole model is presented in figure 17.

The model will be explained in three separate parts, which will be put together into the whole model presented in figure 17. The first part of the model consists of the initial formation of expectations, which are depending on previous experiences (Robledo 2001) along with messages from the sales personnel. The customer's perception of Findwise's image and reference customers are here included in the previous experiences.



**Figure 14: Reformation of expectations, part 1**

The second part of the model, figure 15, contains the delivery process and the cues which will affect the formation of expectations. During the production process there are cues in the form of demos and verifications during the status meetings between the sprints. Also, cues are constructed by the accumulated experiences and lessons learned which the customers acquire.



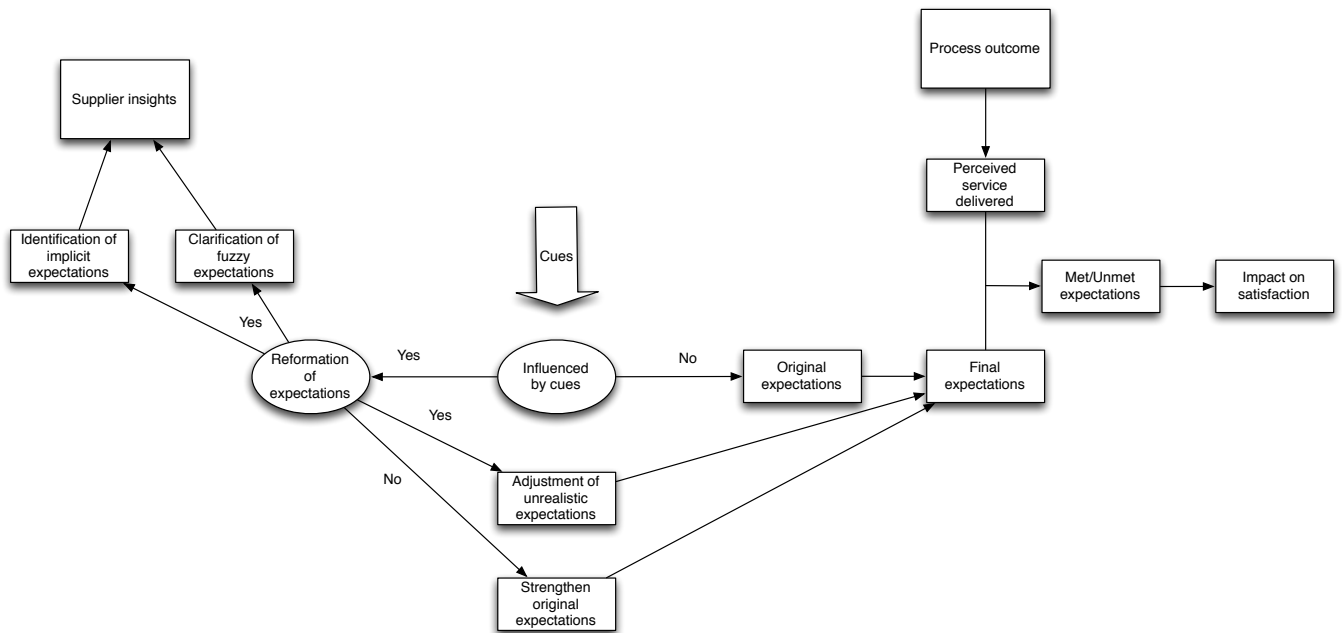
**Figure 15: Reformation of expectations, part 2**

The third part of the model, which is shown in figure 16, explains how the cues influence the initial expectations of the customer. The initial expectations are formed by previous experiences and the initial contact with Findwise and are fuzzy, implicit and unrealistic to various degrees depending on the previous experiences (Higgs, Polonsky & Hollick 2005). These expectations are then exposed to cues during the delivery process. According to Coye (2004) these cues can be either a message or an

act by the supplier. The cue can be intended by the supplier, i.e. designed by Findwise to affect the customers' expectations, or it can be unintended. In Findwise's case the demonstrations can be seen as an intended cue to clarify expectations. When the customer is exposed to the cues, the cues either influence them or not, and according to Ghingold and Wilson (1998) different stakeholders will be affected differently by different cues. One process manager stated that when the customer has to high expectations, almost all customers' expectations are easy to lower through simple and straightforward honesty. If the customer is not influenced, the customer sticks with its original expectations. On the other hand, if it is influenced by the cues, the expectations can either be reformulated or not. If the expectations are not reformulated, the influence by the cues only strengthens the original expectations. If the cues cause a reformulation of the expectations, there are three dimensions that can be considered. Ojasalo (2001) describes this transformation as making fuzzy expectations clear, implicit expectations explicit and unrealistic expectations realistic. This could further depend on the explanation of Higgs, Polonsky and Hollick (2005) that writes that as the project progress the fuzzy expectations that the customer had in the beginning becomes more clear as more experiences regarding the issue is gained.

The three dimensions have in Findwise's case been identified to be transformed and reformulated due to verification, learning and experience. The identification of implicit expectations and clarification of fuzzy expectations leads to supplier insights regarding the customer expectations. These insights are then used in the following activities of the relationship to further increase the possibility of achieving customer satisfaction. Either by meeting the current expectations with an appropriate level of performance or by adjusting unrealistic expectations to make them more realistic. As such, a long term relationship allows Findwise to reuse the insights they have gained regarding the customer's expectations and the relationship allows Findwise to obtain a higher customer satisfaction (Mithas, Krishnan & Fornell 2005).

The process outcome will be perceived by the customer as the perceived service quality delivered, which the customer will compare to their final expectations. This perceived service quality is then evaluated towards the customer's expectations, which will lead to met or unmet expectations, and an impact on the customer satisfaction. (Grönroos 1984) (Zeithaml, Berry & Parasuraman 1993)



**Figure 16: Reformation of expectations, part 3**

Further on, these three parts of the model can be combined in the way that is shown in figure 17. The first part displays the factors affecting the initial expectations. Further, the second part results in the cues that influence the expectations in part three. The supplier insights that are the result of the reformation of expectations in part three, are used in part two to be able to deliver a process outcome that will meet the customer expectations.



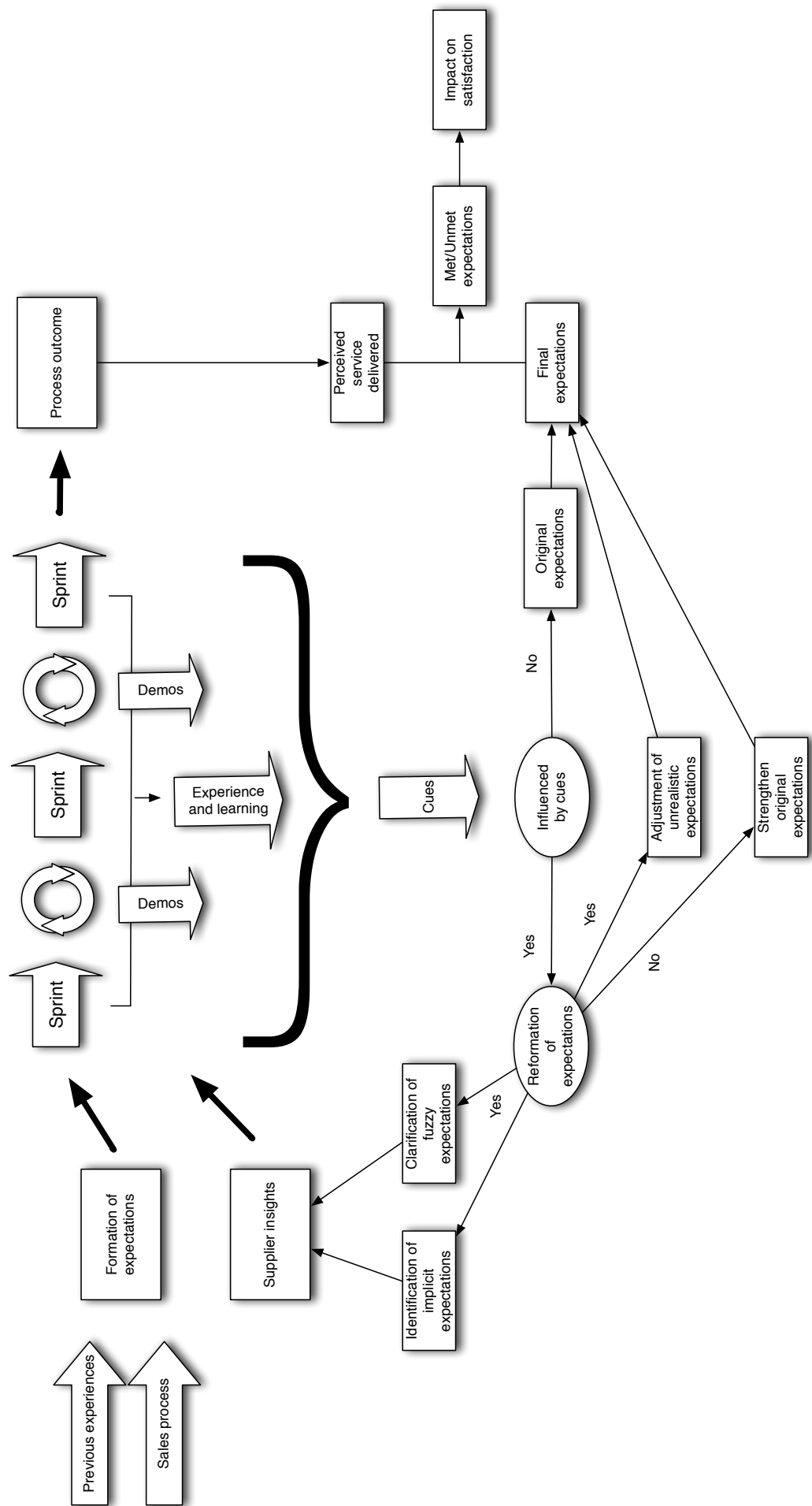


Figure 17: Reformation of expectations

In the initial stage of the sales process, some of the statements made by Findwise can influence the expectations in the form of anchors (Kahneman 2011, p. 126). One of the process managers said that he wants to tell the customers about the final cost of the project at an early stage, which according to Kahneman (2011, p. 126) means that the customer will compare the final cost with this anchor, and hence the customers satisfaction depends on this. Although, another process manager stated that Findwise's sales process should press harder for the sales and thus raise the customers' expectations. The sales process's objective is to get the customer hooked, then it is the production process's responsibility to adjust expectations or deliver on the initial expectations. This would be negative in line with achieving customer satisfaction according to the anchoring theory by Kahneman (2011, p. 126). This means that even though the customer expectations change over time, they will still weigh them to the initial expectations they formed in the beginning. Hence, the initial expectations still colour the evaluation. Anchoring may also be an issue in relation to the formation of the initial expectations as they are influenced by previous experiences, and especially when these influencing previous experiences are unrelated. As Findwise's process and project managers expressed that the offer often is abstract to the customer, this may further increase the influence of unrelated experiences on the customer's expectations (Higgs, Polonsky & Hollick 2005). Hence when unrelated previous experience has a larger influence initially, they may form expectations that are unrelated and may be unrealistic and remain as anchors during the project.

#### 5.4 SERVICE QUALITY IN RELATIONSHIPS

Establishing a continuous customer relationship has multiple effects on how the customer evaluates the relationship in terms of satisfaction (Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos 1994). Storbacka, Strandvik and Grönroos (1994) depict a customer relationship as built up by a series of sequences, which consists of one or several episodes and are made up by series of acts. Findwise's relationships can be divided into different projects, or sequences. These can in turn be divided into a sales process and a production process, or two episodes. Each process in turn consists of acts or activities which all of Findwise's interaction with the customer is made up from. Storbacka, Strandvik & Grönroos (1994) state that relationships and service quality needs to be considered on all levels. This is due to the fact that the activities in the sales process will effect, not only the customer's expectations on the coming activities, but it will also shape their expectations for the coming acts (Grönroos 2008, p. 101). Therefore, their evaluation of the process will set the expectations for the coming production process. As such, the customer's expectations are consistently changing and adapting to Findwise's actions. Having a long-term focus, and having a tactic for how the two processes are interconnected becomes important, as no action is independent. As such, the consequences of raising the customer's expectations in the sales process will affect the production process as well (Grönroos 2008, p. 101).

The project manager in project 3 discusses that it is necessary to separate the sales role from the consultant role, to be able to maintain a high credibility in the eyes of the customer. This corresponds well with one of the process managers who in the initial sales meetings try to position himself as a search expert rather than a sales man. This attitude can point to an understanding of the importance of how different acts in a relationship affect one another and also that the behaviour of one Findwise employee in the sales process will be carried by the customer into the production process.

Findwise's strategy to create long-term relationships with customers is supported by Grönroos (2004) who states that relationships add value in terms of lower transaction costs, both in the

process itself and between the customer and the supplier. Transaction costs may consist of the difficulties due to the subjective evaluation of functional quality. The value added by relationships and lower transaction cost may increase customer satisfaction (Mithas, Krishnan and Fornell 2005), this since the relationship enhances the understanding of the customer wants and needs. Additionally, it is easier to adapt to the customer's expectations due to increased knowledge of the customer. As previously mentioned, this is something that the project managers of project 2, 3 and 4 expressed. They stated that it gets easier to work with the customer the longer the relationship lasts, and this is due to that they get to know the customer and thus understands it's wants and needs.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

*In the following chapter the insights which can be drawn from the previous analysis is compiled into answers to the study's research questions.*

### ***How do Findwise identify the customers' expectations throughout the delivery of projects?***

Findwise identifies the customers' expectations differently depending on whether they regard the technical or functional quality. Concerning the technical quality Findwise prefers to work with an undetailed scope focused on a future vision, which is detailed out as the project progresses. This wide scope does not assist in the guidance of the nearby work to the same degree as a more detailed scope would have. However, it does not provide a possibility for misinterpretation or different interpretations either. The wide scope allows Findwise to avoid the difficult task of trying to identify all of the customers' expectations in the beginning of the relationship. Also, since the expectations changes during the process, an initial investigation of the customer expectations could be irrelevant as the project moves forward. As the project progresses and the relationship evolves, Findwise's perception of the customer's expectations is verified through the use of scrum project management that includes demos and part-deliveries. The status meetings between the sprints create a natural checkpoint and act as a verification test for Findwise's perception of the customer's expectations. Demos and part-deliveries are presented during the status meetings, and by showing physical examples or illustrations, the customer may get a clear view of the progress. Furthermore, Findwise may get verification that their interpretation of the customer's expectations, regarding the technical dimension of the project, has been correct. As such, due to the abstract nature of the findability solution, the identification of the customer's expectations become focused on verification and iteration rather than identification prior to development.

In regards to the functional aspects of the service quality there is no natural checkpoint as exists regarding the technical aspects. As such, this relies more on identification than on verification. Due to the lack of both formal guidelines as well as natural checkpoints, the identification of functional expectations occurs ad hoc through a dialogue with the customer's project manager. Therefore, it puts a large pressure on the personal relationship between the two parties in order for expectations to be identified. It also creates a situation where success mostly depends on the customer's counterpart to identify and pass along information concerning the expectations of other stakeholders in the customer organisation.

Furthermore, the way that Findwise identifies customer expectations today, are related to the agile project methodology that they are using, where a verification of technical requirements are supposed to be held between sprints, and a direct dialogue should be held with the customer. However, regarding the functional expectations, the scrum project methodology does not apply any tools for identification. Therefore, it is further concluded that Findwise do not have any guidelines to apply regarding the functional aspects, and hence the personal relationship is key.

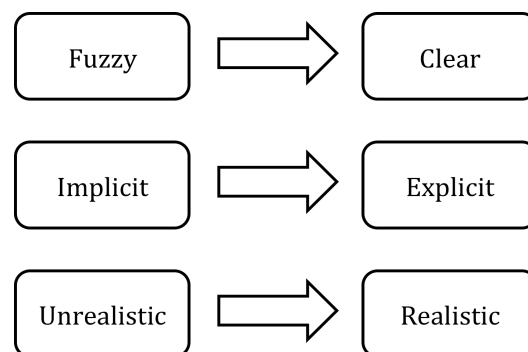
### ***How are Findwise's customers' expectations formulated during the projects' progress?***

The foundation for the customer's expectations is formed by a multitude of different sources more or less related to Findwise's offering. The more abstract the initial sales pitch sounds the more unrelated the sources influencing the customer's expectations will be.

Previous experiences are the greatest influence on the formulation of a customer's expectation. These past experiences primarily include experiences from previous interaction with the supplier or the industry. However, if no such experiences exist, the customer will be influenced by other experiences, which will be considered similar by that specific customer. As such, the more abstract the experience that the customer is about to face, the more the disparity between the customer's influences and the actual coming experience will increase. Even though the technical dimension of the findability solution may be considered abstract, most find the functional dimension regarding the project delivery not to be. Gatekeepers, buyers and other roles within the customer's buying centre are usually well traversed in purchasing projects from IT-suppliers and consultants. As such the expectations on the project itself will be affected by the previous experiences of project execution in general and IT-project in specific.

Other influencers include company image which include Findwise's brand, although this is currently quite weak as few customer's initially know of Findwise. Further, word-of-mouth reputation, web-page communication, social media communication and Findwise's representatives influence the customers.

Findwise's customers' expectations have been identified to be formulated along three different dimensions:



**Figure 18: Dimensions of expectations**

The less understanding the customer has about search, including the customer's own needs and wants, the fuzzier the expectations will be. Furthermore, the expectations will be fuzzier the less concrete Findwise are about what the findability solution can actually accomplish for the customer. As such, it puts more emphasis on Findwise's consultants to understand the true needs of the customer in order to be able to satisfy them. It also becomes the responsibility of Findwise to educate the customer regarding the possibilities and opportunities in search and findability in order for the customer to be able to reformulate its expectations in a clear manner. When working with large customer organisations however, this task is often delegated to the customer's IT-department.

As customers enter a relationship with Findwise there may be implicit customer expectations regarding several factors due to previous experiences with what they perceive are related experiences. This has been mostly clear in accordance with the functional dimensions of how projects are to be handled including project management, decision making and the level of structure to different activities. As such, in Findwise's relationships there is mostly an initial educational phase that needs to be gone through in order for Findwise's consultants to understand "how things are done" in the customer's organisation.

Also, as a result of lack of experience with findability solution, the level of expectations may start off on a somewhat unrealistic level. This may occur when the projects pass from the sales process to the production process. This is a combined consequence of lack of experience and Findwise's communication. As Findwise engages with the customer to communicate their offer and consequently educate the customer of their offer's possibilities, they may set unintentional anchors. One instance may be that in order to explain findability information regarding Google and the importance of finding information is brought up. This instantly influences the customer's expectations with their experiences of using Google and the level of that experience manifests as an anchor. Also, the sales resources need to raise the customer's expectations to the levels that they will perceive the benefits to outweigh the costs of the project in order to initiate the customer relationship. The educational journey then begins in the production process where the possible unrealistically high expectations need to be lowered. The use of sprints and early part-deliveries and demos are then used in order to clearly communicate what level of performance can be delivered.

### ***What are Findwise's difficulties in identifying the customers' expectations during the projects?***

Findwise's difficulties lie in a combination of issues arising partially by the interaction between Findwise and its customers and partially by the interaction within the customer organisation.

As Findwise's identification of expectations relies on the interaction with the customer's project manager, its level of influence on the rest of the organisation becomes an aspect which is important to consider. The project manager as such acts as a gatekeeper, being the contact point and steering the communication within the organisation. As Findwise's relies on this one individual, the project manager also needs to act as a strong influencer or even a decider within its own organisation. If there is a strong, and knowledgeable, gatekeeper in the project then this individual may facilitate the educational journey for the other stakeholders and Findwise may focus on the expectations of the project manager. However, if there is not a strong project manager then the view transmitted from the project manager may not correctly reflect the view of the customer organisation. Hence, more effort is required by Findwise to identify stakeholders and facilitate their educational journey in order for the project to become successful and the customer entity as a whole to be satisfied. These internal aspects are further affected by different internal political dimensions which have not been the focus of this study. These will be further addressed in the discussion.

Furthermore, since expectations initially can be both fuzzy and unrealistic, Findwise has the difficult task of making the expectations clear and realistic. If Findwise do not succeed in educating the customer and revealing their expectations, customer satisfaction is hard to achieve. Since Findwise's offering is abstract both to the customers and the Findwise employees, this makes this task even more difficult. Also regarding the implicit expectations that the customer has initially, they are hard to reveal if Findwise do not ask the right questions. Since they are hard to reveal, they will be hard to fulfil, and furthermore there is a risk that the customer will be dissatisfied regarding the issues of the implicit expectation.

Finally, a difficulty lies in the balance between focus on the technical and functional quality. When a sufficient level of technical quality is reached, it is the functional quality that will affect the customer satisfaction the most. Therefore, Findwise needs to consider the expectations on a technical level, and when these are met, try not to over deliver on technical aspects, but to focus on the functional aspect. Hence, the difficulty lays in knowing when the technical aspects are met and further to reveal

the expectations regarding the functional aspects, which are subjective to each individual stakeholder, to be able to meet them.

## 7 DISCUSSION

An aspect that has been of high importance in this study is the customer satisfaction of different stakeholders at the client company. In one project where several individuals were interviewed, it became obvious that there were different aspects that were of different importance for the individual's satisfaction. For example, one customer could be satisfied with open specifications that were set during the process, whilst another needed specifications that were set from the beginning to be able to perform its work tasks.

What was also observed was that even though several people in a project were interviewed, the politics in the organisations were not captured. Although, it was clear that they did affect the individuals' behaviour and satisfaction. Since no observation has been done within the customers' organisations, where the politics could have been observed, no strong conclusions can be drawn on their impact on the formation of customers' expectations. However, from the gathered results it can be assumed that internal politics within the client organisations will lead to implications on the formation and identification of expectations and the resulting customer satisfaction. It can be assumed that just as the previous experiences with the suppliers have a large influence on the expectations, so will the previous experiences with the different individuals within the customer organisation involved in the project. The buyer, the users, the project manager etc. will all have previous experiences with each other. As such, for instance, the selection of the project manager will have a large influence on the other stakeholders' expectations on the project. The degree of formal and informal power would also be a large influencer, whether the project is supported by powerful individuals. These project supporters could influence, either by formal or informal power, other stakeholders regarding their expectations on the project outcome. As such the explanation of the formation of expectations has not included, what can be assumed, the true impact of internal politics. Neither does it include other social perspectives such as individuals' social background or current emotions etc. which affects formation of expectations. These aspects have during this thesis not been considered major for this explanation of the formation of expectations and as such the authors still believe that the current explanation holds value both to academia and business for the aspects it considers. In hindsight however it could be stated that the inclusion of these social aspects, especially the internal politics, would increase the validity of this explanation of reality.

The theoretical implications of this study are an attempt to bridge the gap regarding the formation and identification of expectations in project business. With a combination of theory regarding the formation of expectations and theory on how companies work in projects, together with our results have been used to answer the research questions. This drawn upon theory can further on provide a basis for further research regarding the complexity of the formation and identification of customer expectations and the consideration of how different stakeholders are affected by the clients' internal politics. Even though there are theory regarding the different stakeholders' different areas of interest, information regarding the client's internal environment could enhance the usability of this theory.

The managerial implication from this study is the understanding that to achieve a high degree of customer satisfaction, the customer expectations are essential to consider. It is important to continuously bring up the question about expectations during the process, since the expectations change as the project progresses. To ensure that the question about expectation is brought up



continuously, open specifications are beneficial. This since projects with open specifications has a need for meetings between sprints to decide the further progress of the project. During this project methodology there is an educational journey which the supplier takes together with the customer, to understand the customer's expectations on the project. Within the sprint meetings, the question of expectations could more easily be brought up, then if the project just continued according to an initially set scope. On the other hand, through an initial detailed scope the expectations of what the project is to achieve can be more clear and explicit for all stakeholders. With an initial detailed scope each different stakeholder would know what is expected from them to achieve project success and expectations could be kept more realistic. This would also make the project's purpose more clearly to stakeholder not directly involved in the project. With a detailed written scope of requirements the influence which politics may have when one stakeholder tries to influence others regarding the projects purpose and progress would be reduced. As such, it is of importance to consider the role of gatekeepers in the client organizations. This since the gatekeeper might distort messages given by the supplier, either intentionally or unintentionally. Which could be avoided with a detailed scope. To conclude, the level of details in the initial scope should be determined by the degree of fuzziness. When undertaking a project where the customer's expectations regarding the outcome is fuzzy, specifying the details in the initial scope would not be possible as the customer will not be able to express them. As such, it depends on how knowledgeable the customer is as a buyer of the type of projects in question, and whether an educational journey is required or not.

Another outcome of this study is that in the case of Findwise, personal relationships currently are key when identifying customer expectations in order to get customer satisfaction. It was in the long going relationships with close personal relationships that the customers where the most satisfied, and in the recently started project with no identified gatekeeper, that the customer were the least satisfied. This indicates that in those customer relationships that Findwise do not have the close relationship that is needed, they need to either strive towards creating one, or to find alternative ways to raise the question about expectations. For example by having a loosely formulated scope and frequent meeting between sprints, where the question about expectations is raised, both regarding the technical and, even more important, the functional quality aspects.

An additional conclusion is that each individual stakeholder's expectations need to be considered. This strengthens Findwise's view that all involved stakeholders should be included from the beginning. However, it is not just Findwise's actions that will affect the customer's satisfaction and expectations. It is also the client's previous experiences as well as the company environment and the relationships among the people in the customer company. As previously stated, the politics in an organisation is hence crucial for how the project will progress. Therefore, it is of great importance to understand the politics in the organisation to get a successful project. Further, an understanding of the organisation as such, with different dimensions, need to be explored to be able to get a satisfied customer.

Even though this study has demonstrated some of the main issues with identifying expectations, research regarding organizational politics combined with customer satisfaction would be needed to enhance the result. This as it is not only the supplier's actions that affect the customer satisfaction. As further stated, customer expectations are highly dependent on the customer's previous experiences, but further research could further treat the link between the organisations previous

experiences and the current organizational politics. Further research could also be done on how the role of gatekeepers affects the customer expectations.

Additionally, since our study is conducted on only one focal company, the supplier, and on one project at each client company, further research could be conducted on the interaction between projects within the customer organisation and the impact of the sharing of resources. To increase the validity of the results, further research may also be conducted on more projects, or with more companies in a similar context as Findwise.

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## 9 APPENDIX 1

### 9.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE PRODUCTION PROCESS MANAGER

#### 9.1.1.1 Introduction

- For how long have you worked at Findwise?
- What is your position?
- For how long have you been in charge of the production process?
- What are your main tasks?

#### 9.1.1.2 Process orientation

- What type of roles does the project team consist of?
- What are the different phases in the production process?
- Is there a high degree of new development for each project?
- Is that development due to specific customer needs or employee initiatives for technological improvements?

#### 9.1.1.3 Sales interaction

- Is production involved in the establishing of the offer to customers?
- Is production involved in creating the sales pitch?
- Is there a request for an understanding of constraints due to time, resources etc. from the sales process to the production process?
- How does the initial hand-over from the sales process to the production process occur?
  - What type of medium? (what format)
  - Is customer expectations considered in that hand-over?
  - Is there any further interaction with the sales process during the project?

#### 9.1.1.4 Customer interaction

- When is the first contact with the customer/customer wants established?
- Is there a dialog with the customer during the production process?
  - During which phases of the process?
- Are there often changes in the requirements during the process?
- Do you adapt your way of working with a project due to the needs and wants of the customer?
- Do you have any guidelines on how the communication with the customer should work in your projects?
- Do customers have difficulties communicating what it is that they need?
- During what time in the process do you have a clear understanding of what the customer want?
- Do the specifications of the product change over time?
  - If yes: when are the final specifications set?

#### 9.1.1.5 Customer Satisfaction

- Do you feel that there might sometimes be a mismatch between the customer's expectations in the initial stages and what you know you can deliver?
- Do you think that you over-deliver in some projects?

- If the customer is not satisfied, what is often the main reason?
- Is there a relevance in measuring the customer expectations initially in the project to be able to compare with the outcome? (change over time?)
- Is there relevance in creating a guiding model for how to ensure a customer focus during the whole process?

## 10 APPENDIX 2

### 10.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE SALES PROCESS MANAGER

#### 10.1.1.1 Introduktion

- Hur länge har du arbetat på Findwise?
- Vad har du för titel?
- Hur länge har du varit ansvarig för säljprocessen?

#### 10.1.1.2 Kundkontakt

- Hur identifierar ni nya potentiella kunder?
- Hur identifieras kontaktpersonen på kundföretaget?
- Hur tas första kontakt med dessa potentiella kunder?
- Har potentiella kunder ofta kunskap om Findwise vid första kontakt?
- Hur är det att förklara för en ny kund vad Findwise kan leverera?
- Har kunder svårt att kommunicera sina behov inom sök?
- När i processen känner du att du har en klar förståelse för vad kunden behöver?
- Hur utformas ett erbjudande (en offert) till kunderna?
  - tidsram
  - kostnad
  - etc.
- Har produktionsprocessen, eller personer verksamma i produktionsprocessen, någon inblandning i utformningen av erbjudandet?
  - Vad är det de bidrar med?
- Är det någon förändring i vem som är kontaktperson från Findwises sida under säljprocessens gång?
- Är det någon förändring i vem som är kontaktperson från kundens sida under säljprocessen?
  - Har ni från sälj någon kontakt med kunderna när projektet har gått vidare till produktionsfasen?
- Hur ser era kundrelationer ut? Är det "rena" projekt eller flera mer pågående relationer?
- Vilken roll har ni på sälj i så fall i dessa längre relationer?

#### 10.1.1.3 Intern kontakt

- Hur sker överlämningen från säljprocessen till produktionsprocessen?
- Hur för man vidare vad kunden förväntar sig av en leverans eller av ett arbetssätt?

#### 10.1.1.4 Kundförväntningar och kundnöjdhet

- Sker det att det kan bli en skillnad mellan vad kunden ursprungligen ville ha vid den tidiga kontakten och vad som levererades?
- Hur ser du på säljprocessens roll i skapandet av kundens förväntningar?
- Förändras kunders förväntningar under projektens gång?
- Hur tycker du att arbetet med uppföljningen av kundnöjdhet fungerar idag?
- Om kunden inte är nöjd, vad är oftast den största anledningen?
- Upplever du att det finns något speciellt tillfälle i projekten som har extra stor inverkan på den slutgiltiga kundnöjdheten?



- Hur resonerar du kring/försöker du uppnå en hög kundnöjdhet
- Tror du att det skulle vara relevant att mäta kunders förväntningar i början och slutet av ett projekt för att se om man uppnådde förväntningarna?
- Tycker du att det skulle vara relevant att skapa en modell eller riktlinjer för hur man ska säkerställa kundnöjdhet genom hela processen?
- Du som har erfarenhet av Findwises säljprocess, vad tror du hade varit det bästa sättet att säkerställa kundnöjdhet genom hela processen?
- Har du några frågor till oss?

# 11 APPENDIX 3

## 11.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE PROJECT MANAGER

### 11.1.1.1 Introduktion

- Hur länge har du arbetat på Findwise?
- Vad har du för ansvarsområden?
- Hur länge har du haft den roll du har idag?

### 11.1.1.2 Hur fungerar Findwises leveransprocess?

- Hur länge har ni jobbat med kund X?
- Har du varit involverad från start?
- Vad var din första kontakt med dem?
- Vad gör ni för kund X just nu?
- Skulle du kunna förklara hur arbetet är upplagt med kund X? (Olika faser, program, olika projekt, styrgrupp, etc.)

### 11.1.1.3 Hur förändras leveransprocessen efter kundens förväntningar?

- Har er arbetsprocess ändrats utefter kund Xs önskemål?
  - Avstämningar, deadlines, demos, kommunikation, kravspec etc.
- Hur fungerar kommunikationen mellan Findwise och kund X?
- Blir det lättare att jobba med kunden under projektets gång?

### 11.1.1.4 Hur kan förväntningar identifieras i en leveransprocess?

- Hur kommer ni fram till vilka projekt som ska genomföras?
  - Förfrågningar från kunds sida?
  - Förslag från er sida?
  - Har detta förändrats under tiden?
- Hade kund X en tydlig bild från början vad det var de ville ha ut av samarbetet?
- Har kund Xs målbild med samarbetet förändrats sedan start?
  - Hur har det kommit sig?
    - Mer förståelse för sökteknik?
- Har du samma uppfattning om vad projektet ska uppnå nu som du hade i starten?
- Känner du att vet idag vad slutresultatet kommer att bli?
  - Om ja: När visste du vad det var för lösning som Findwise skulle leverera?
- Tycker du att Findwise hittills har levererat det som utlovats?
- Vilka aspekter av lösningen är viktigast för kunden? (Teknisk kvalitet)
- Olika typer av funktionalitet som är extra viktig?
  - Har arbetet med projektet skett som du först trodde?
- Upplever du att kund Xs krav på er har förändrats under projektets gång?
  - Teknisk kvalitet på lösningen
  - Arbetsmetodik; tid, kostnad
- Anser du att ni har hållit er till kravspecen/inom scopet under projektet?
  - Har ni lyckats hålla projektmålen (Tid, budget etc.)?
- Hur har detaljnivån varit på kravspecen?

- Tycker du att det har varit på en lagom nivå?
- När i processen visste du vad ni skulle komma att leverera?
- Har ni på Findwise haft en klar bild över vad kunden förväntar sig för leverans?
  - Händer det att ni upptäcker att kunden har önskemål som denne inte har lyckats förmedla?
- Hur ser ni till att alla har en klar (eller samma) bild över vad som ska levereras?
  - Är det lättare med en tekniskt insatt kund?
- Upplever du att kunden kan ha svårt att kommunicera vad de vill ha ut av projektet?
  - Varför?
- Upplever du att kunden kan ha svårt att förstå vad de faktiskt kan få ut av projektet?
  - Varför?
- Hur håller ni kund X uppdaterade under projektens gång?
  - Demos, möten, mail etc.
  - Sker det att ni i sådana avstämningar märker att ni inte tänkt på samma sätt om vad som ska göras eller hur det skulle ha gjorts?

#### **11.1.1.5 Hur förändras kunders förväntningar under leveransprocessen?**

- Hur många personer på kundsiden är involverade i relationen?
- Anpassar du ditt sätt att kommunicera beroende på vem på kund X du pratar med?
  - Hur?
  - Vad?
- Upplever du att olika personer på kund X har olika uppfattning om vad som ska levereras och hur det ska levereras?
- Är det svårt att veta vad kunderna förväntar sig av er?
  - Ang. lösning
  - Ang. arbetssätt
- Delar ni på kunskap och erfarenheter om projekthantering projektledare emellan?

#### **11.1.1.6 Vad finns det för svårigheter med att hantera förväntningar i en leveransprocess?**

- Hur ser du på informationen från er kundnöjdhetsenkät?
  - Är det information som du redan känner att du har för de relationer du är involverad i?
  - Tycker du att frågorna borde vara anpassade för varje kundrelation eller standardiserade?
- Jobbar du något med den färgstatusmodell som används i Stockholm?
  - Hur använder du den?
- Ser du någon nytta i att kunna se tillbaka på hur kundens förväntningar utvecklats och jämföra mellan projekt?
  - Ser du någon nytta i att följa en strukturerad modell för att dokumentera kundens förväntningar över tiden?
  - Hur tycker du skulle vara ett bra sätt att hålla koll på kundernas förväntningsnivåer över tiden?

#### **11.1.1.7 Snöbollning**

- Vilka är ni på Findwise som är involverade i relationen med kund X?
- Vi skulle gärna vilja ha kundens perspektiv på detta, och därmed prata med någon på kund X.  
Vi har bokat möte med XY.
  - Vad är dennes roll?
  - Är det några mer individer på kund X som vi bör kontakta?
- Kan vi kontakta dig om vi har några ytterligare frågor?
- Har du några frågor till oss?

## 12 APPENDIX 4

### 12.1 INTERVIEW GUIDE CUSTOMER

#### 12.1.1.1 Introduktion

- Vad har du för roll på kund X?
- Vilken roll har du i projektet med Findwise?

#### 12.1.1.2 Kommunikation

- Hur länge har du jobbat med Findwise?
- Vilka typer av roller är ni från kund Xs sida som har varit inblandade i projektet?
- Hur fungerar kommunikationen med Findwise?
- Tycker du att informationen du får av olika personer på Findwise är konsekvent?
- Hur har avstämningar fungerat under projektet?

#### 12.1.1.3 Förväntningar

- Hur kom du först i kontakt med detta projekt?
- Minns du hur Findwise initialt förklarade vad de skulle kunna leverera?
- Vad var det som gjorde att ni valde att samarbeta med Findwise?
  - Övervägde ni några konkurrenter?
- Vad vill ni uppnå med detta projekt?
- Har du samma uppfattning om vad som kommer att levereras idag som du hade i början av projektet?
- Känner du att du idag vet vad slutresultatet kommer att bli?
  - Om ja: När visste ni vad det var för lösning som Findwise skulle leverera?
- Hur förstod ni det?
  - Om nej: När tror ni att ni kommer veta hur lösningen kommer att se ut i slutändan?
- Har ni på kund X en gemensam bild om **vad** resultatet bör/kommer bli eller skiljer det sig mellan olika personer/instanser?
- Har ni på kund X en gemensam bild om **hur** resultatet bör/kommer uppnås eller skiljer det sig mellan olika personer/instanser?
- Tycker du att Findwise hittills har levererat det som utlovats?
- Tror du att ni kommer bli nöjda med det som kommer levereras?
- Tycker du att Findwise har varit bra på att undersöka /ta tillvara på vad ni förväntar er av lösningen?
- Hur har andra människor på kund X reagerat när de först kommit i kontakt med sökfunktionen eller sökprojektet?
- Har Findwise levererat något ni inte räknat med men uppskattat?
- Hur är detaljnivån på scopet/kravspecen?
- Har det varit förändringar i projektets scope?
- Hur går det till då man vill göra förändringar i scopet/kravespecen?
- Är Findwise flexibla för eventuella förändringar från er sida i funktionalitet och arbetssätt?
- Vilka aspekter av söklösningen är viktigast för er?
- Vilka aspekter av projekthanteringen är viktigast för er?

#### **12.1.1.4 Projekthantering**

- Hur har arbetssättet i projektet bestämts?
  - Är det ni eller Findwise som bestämt hur projektet ska fortlöpa?
  - Hade ni några önskemål på hur projektmetodiken eller interaktionen skulle gå till?
- Har arbetet med projektet skett som ni först trodde?
- Har arbetssättet förändrats under projektets gång?
- Vilka aspekter av projekthanteringen har varit viktiga för er?
- Tycker du att Findwise har varit bra på att undersöka/ta tillvara på vad ni förväntar er angående hur projektet ska skötas?
- Hur tycker du att samarbetet med Findwise har fungerat?
- Hur tycker du att projektledningen har fungerat?
- Hur anser du att projektet skulle kunna ha fungerat bättre?

#### **12.1.1.5 Undersökningar**

- Har du tagit del av den kundnöjdhetsundersökning som Findwise har skickat ut?
- Tycker du att den på ett bra sätt fångar upp era åsikter angående projektet?
- Tycker du att frågor angående kundnöjdhet bör vara mer anpassade till varje projekt än de generella frågor som finns nu?
- Ett önskat resultat av vårt exjobb är att Findwise på ett mer strukturerat sätt ska kunna dokumentera och följa upp hur projekt har gått över tidens gång i utvärderingsövningar:
  - Hur känner ni för att svara på utvärderingsenkäter oftare än vad som görs nu?
  - Skulle ni vara öppna för en enkätundersökning i början av projekten angående era förväntningar?
  - Vad tycker du annars skulle vara ett bra sätt att fånga upp vad ni förväntar er av Findwise?

#### **12.1.1.6 Snöbolla**

- Finns det någon mer på ert företag som du tror att det skulle vara bra för oss att prata med?
- Skulle vi kunna kontakta dig igen ifall vi har några följdfrågor?