Sales force job satisfaction and motivation

Case: Spa Hotel Peurunka

Salla Haapsalo

jamk.fi

Description

The objective of the thesis was to study the current state of job satisfaction and motivation of the employees at the sales department of Spa Hotel Peurunka. Another purpose was to find out whether there was a demand for improvements in them in the future. The research was conducted to offer an insight into how to manage the sales department of Peurunka in the most satisfying and motivating way from the viewpoint of the employees.

The research method used in the study was qualitative research, which was executed by conducting theme interviews based on the themes presented in the theoretical framework. All the five employees working in the sales team at the time, excluding the supervisor of the team, were interviewed. Theme interviewing was selected to be the method in order to gain a deep understanding of the researched phenomenon based on the personal experiences and opinions of the employees of the department.

The results of the research implied that in terms of their job satisfaction and motivation, the sales force of Peurunka valued things like variable work content, having an easy access to the information needed and caring from the management. The results indicated that employees were quite satisfied and motivated with their work in the sales department but for the satisfaction and motivation to grow, some improvements were hoped. Therefore, based on the results, some suggestions for the management of the sales department, to improve the satisfaction and motivation of the employees in the future, were created.

The results of the research offer valuable information from the managerial point of view about the ideas and hopes of the employees concerning job satisfaction and motivation. The results cannot be utilized as such in the other departments of Peurunka but the structure of the research can be exploited to gain equivalent results from them as well.

Keywords (subjects)
job satisfaction, motivation, sales force, management, qualitative research

Miscellanous

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Työn nimi **Myyntihenkilöstön työtyytyväisyys ja motivaatio** Case: Kylpylähotelli Peurunka

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Työn ohjaaja(t) Minna Tunkkari-Eskelinen

Toimeksiantaja(t) Kylpylähotelli Peurunka

Tiivistelmä

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli tutkia Kylpylähotelli Peurungan myyntipalvelun työntekijöi-den työtyytyväisyyden ja motivaation nykytilaa. Lisäksi tarkoituksena oli selvittää, olisiko niitä tarvetta parantaa tulevaisuudessa. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli tarjota näkemystä, kuinka Peurungan myyntipalvelua voitaisiin johtaa työntekijöiden kannalta tyydyttäväm-min ja motivoivemmin keinoin.

Tutkimusmenetelmänä opinnäytteessä käytettiin kvalitatiivista tutkimusta, joka toteutet-tiin teoriakehyksen aiheisiin pohjautuvan teemahaastattelun keinoin. Kaikki viisi myyntipal-velussa haastattelujen toteuttamisen aikaan työskennellyttä työntekijää haastateltiin, paitsi myyntipalvelun esimies. Teemahaastattelu valittiin tutkimusmenetelmäksi, jotta tut-kittavaa ilmiötä voitaisiin ymmärtää syvällisesti myyntipalvelun työntekijöiden henkilökoh-taisten kokemusten ja mielipiteiden pohjalta.

Tutkimuksen tulokset viittasivat siihen, että työtyytyväisyytensä ja motivaationsa kannalta Peurungan myyntipalvelun työntekijät arvostivat vaihtelevuutta työnsä sisällössä, helppoa pääsyä tarvittaviin tietoihin ja välittämistä johtamisessa. Tutkimus osoitti, että työntekijät olivat melko tyytyväisiä ja motivoituneita työhönsä, mutta työtyytyväisyyden ja motivaa-tion kasvattamiseksi muutamia parannuksia toivottiin. Siksi myyntipalvelun johdolle koot-tiin tulosten perusteella ehdotuksia työntekijöiden työtyytyväisyyden ja motivaation pa-rantamiseksi tulevaisuudessa.

Tutkimuksen tulokset tarjoavat arvokasta tietoa Peurungan myyntipalvelun johdolle kos-kien työntekijöiden ajatuksia ja toiveita työtyytyväisyyteen ja motivaatioon liittyen. Tulok-sia ei voida sellaisenaan hyödyntää Peurungan muilla osastoilla, mutta tutkimuksen raken-netta voidaan hyödyntää vastaavien tulosten saamiseksi myös muita osastoja ajatellen.

Avainsanat (asiasanat) työtyytyväisyys, motivaatio, esimiestyö, kvalitatiivinen tutkimus

Muut tiedot

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

Job satisfaction and the motivation of employees are subjects to many discussions nowadays due to their central role in the efficiency and profitability of organizations. The subjects have been researched a lot over time, and based on the mutual results the importance of having satisfied and motivated employees in a company working effectively and innovatively is undeniable.

In many companies, sales force interaction with customers is the most important factor when creating profitable deals and relationships with customers. Sales team members are usually the first people whom the customers transact with, and therefore the image that they give is crucial. The satisfaction level of the sales force is due to this important factor that affects the value that customers gain from each transaction. Ineffective personnel, working with a wrong attitude and without motivation can affect the whole image of the company negatively because people tend to share their negative experiences with one another more often than the positive ones. (Jobber & Lancaster 2009, 4.)

Even though work satisfaction and work motivation are separate concepts with different meanings, they will be discussed together in this research because in most cases, both satisfaction and dissatisfaction with work influence the experienced motivation either positively or negatively. Therefore, the concepts are closely connected and in several cases, dependent on one another.

1.1   Research problem and objectives

The objective of this research is to explore the current level of work satisfaction and motivation of the sales force of Spa Hotel Peurunka and to evaluate them from the sales management point of view. Another aim is to find out which factors have led to the current situation and to create suggestions for possible improvements in the future. Therefore, the research problem of the study is:

"What is the current state of satisfaction and motivation of the sales force and does it demand for improvements?"

The research questions to help in getting the answers to the problem are:

"Which are the factors affecting to satisfaction and the motivation of the employees?"
 "How do they affect to them?"

"What could be done in order for the motivation and satisfaction to grow in the future?"

Personal interest towards the subject of work satisfaction and interest from the company's part have been the driving forces for conducting this research. Job satisfaction and the motivation of employees are crucial to the success of every organization. In this case, when considering the motivation and satisfaction of the sales force, it has maybe got even a more significant role. This is due to the central position of the sales work in the company and as known effective sales usually keep businesses profitable.

Due to the missing research on the work satisfaction and motivation of the sales team of Peurunka, this study will offer valuable information for the management of the sales department. An insight into how employees experience their current working conditions is expected to offer a deeper understanding for the management concerning potential improvement areas for the future.

The whole theoretical framework revolves around the concepts of work satisfaction and work motivation, which will be explained in accordance with the theory of managing sales force. The theory consists of the most relevant factors concerning the studied subjects. These factors are the atmosphere of the workplace, content of the work, communication in the workplace, learning, development, feedback and rewarding. The theory of the research, gathered from varied literature sources and case studies concerning the subject, will be presented from the viewpoint of the sales force by offering an insight into how people want to be managed nowadays.

1.2   Structure of the thesis

The thesis consists of five chapters from which the first one is the introduction chapter. This chapter of the thesis introduces the studied matter, research problem,

research questions and objectives of the research to the reader. The chapter includes also general case company introduction as well as specified introduction of the sales department of the company.

The second chapter forms the theoretical framework of the thesis. In this chapter the concept of sales force management is introduced, followed by the concepts of work satisfaction and motivation. After that the focus will be on different work related matters that have an effect on the motivation and satisfaction of the sales people, from the point of view of managing sales force efficiently.

Chapter three focuses on the whole research process in more detail. This part introduces the method used to conduct the research and explains the process of gathering data. In addition also the implementation of the interviews and the process of analyzing the data are explained to the reader.

In the fourth chapter of the thesis the results gathered from interviews are presented. The similarities and differences in the responses are introduced and evaluated with the help of exact examples from the opinions of the respondents.

The fifth and the last chapter consists of discussion that combines the theory and results together. This chapter entails also improvement ideas for the management concerning each subject covered in the research. Reliability evaluation of the research process and suggestions for further studies concerning the field are presented as well.

1.3   Spa Hotel Peurunka

Peurunka is a spa hotel located in Laukaa in central Finland about 25km away from Jyväskylä. The company is known around the country and belongs to one of the most significant travel destinations in Finland with its surrounding area. The versatile hotel offers a wide variety of different wellbeing services among accommodation and spa such as exercise-, experience-, conference-, work wellbeing-, rehabilitation-, restaurant- and entertainment services. The operations of Peurunka are divided into

two separate wellness areas which are the spa hotel and the rehabilitation section. (Peurungan tarina 2015.)

Peurunka was founded in 1974 originally to be a wellbeing center for Finnish war veterans and was working at that time mostly for rehabilitation purposes. Later on in 1984 the spa was opened also for other than rehabilitation customers and it quickly became popular among the public. In addition to the use of spa, many customers were interested about the exercising possibilities of the company. (Peurungan tarina 2015.)

At the moment there are the spa, four restaurants, day spa with different treatments, hairdresser, gyms, many different conference facilities, saunas, bowling hall and much more operating in the main building of Peurunka. Activities offered inside and outside on the surrounding areas are varied including swimming, frisbegolf, hiking, curling, ice hockey, golf, badminton, bowling, group exercises, rally simulator, team building exercises etc. In addition to these Arena located in the main building, attracts customers to concerts of Finland's top artists monthly. Bigger public and private events are organized in Peurunka few times a year and smaller ones for groups and companies throughout the year. (Peurungan tarina 2015.)

Peurunka has got 700 bed places for customers, with different accommodation options available. These are hotel rooms in the main building, two differently rated terraced house areas with different sized rooms, vacation cottages and as the newest option an apartment hotel with different sized apartments. All of these accommodation options are located close to the main building and are in connection with the services offered there. (Majoitus 2015.)

Peurunka is one of the biggest privately owned hotels in Finland employs at the moment around 200 people. The spa hotel and its surroundings gather yearly not only Finnish customers but also customers from many other nationalities. Peurunka is not only buildings but it is a travel destination for people from every part of the country as well as from other countries. There are over 20 operators in Peurunka

area providing services for tourists and other operators of the area. (Peurungan tarina 2015.)

Company values are to offer the best service possible for their customers, learn and develop constantly, function successfully and profitably and work with openness as the basis. (Peurunka Intranet 2015.)

1.4   Sales Department Introduction

The goals, missions and visions of each organization affect the types of selling jobs they have to offer. These different types of job descriptions include wide variety of tasks that vary between companies, offering different kinds of responsibilities and opportunities, requiring different kinds of skills and offering different compensation for their sales forces. (Johnston & Marshall, 45, 2013.)

In Peurunka, the sales department is responsible of the sales of diverse products and experiences of the company mentioned above, as well as from the planning of customer events and making of reservations for varied facilities. The purpose of the sales service is to find the best solution for customers based on their needs by making offers and reservations for wanted accommodation, events and for other additional services. In addition to these things the aim is to always serve the customers equally and with the same expertise despite with whom of the sales team members the customer transacts with. (Peurunka Intranet 2015.)

The structure of the sales department in terms of the amount of sales negotiators has changed recently and during the recent years changes have also happened in the management of the team. At the moment the sales team consists of 6 members who are all equally responsible of taking care of the reservations of consumers and business customers. The sales are conducted via personal selling and based on contacts from the customers. The customer service and the sales occur via phone, e-mails, chat -service and face to face contact. In addition to the joint responsibilities, some team members have got also distinct responsibility areas to manage. (Kaliste 2015.)

The role of the sales department of Peurunka is significantly important due to the fact that almost every function of the company is connected to it. The sales affect to each department of the company and efficient customer service is only possible as a consequence to clear informing of the sales team from every department's part. In addition to this it is also important that the information from sales service reaches other departments so that all employees involved in certain process are aware of their role and position. (Kaliste 2015.)

2 SALES FORCE MANAGEMENT

Management style in sales has evolved from the traditional top-down management style to a modern dynamic and responsive approach. The modern style of managing sales is not as hierarchic as the previous one and allows more flexibility and responsibility for the work of the salespeople. Nowadays to be effective in managing sales force, the manager has to be able to lead and communicate with employees rather than to manage and control them. The sharing of responsibility as well as supporting and coaching the subordinates are becoming highly valuable factors in successful managing. (Johnston & Marshall 2013, 6.)

In the sales work, good performances are encouraged by advising and training the sales force to achieve goals and by offering opportunities to increase the satisfaction with the work. This might be a consequence of personal development possibilities offered to employees or an increased responsibility for and recognition of their work. The creation of work atmosphere that is supportive, innovative and wellbeing will result as profitable outcomes. (Jobber & Lancaster 2009, 417; Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 1.)

Each employee of the company is different and driven in their work by their own values and visions. The manager's understanding of the employee's behavior is crucial to the success of a company. The recognition of the psychological needs, values and visions of individual employees helps the manager to adjust the tasks for the subordinates in the most satisfying way. Motivation is likely to follow if the tasks match the personal desires of the employees and enable development possibilities to

wanted directions. (Motivating people for improved performance 2005, 19; Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 1.)

Trust is an important factor affecting the motivation of employees in sales work as well as in many other fields of work. When a manager acknowledges the skills of an employee and provides tasks accordingly, the employee is likely to feel proud and motivated to perform better. Trust can be also viewed as the degree to which the management keeps the agreements made with the employees, shares information and admits mistakes. This kind of trust builds the feeling of belonging, meaningfulness and motivation of the employees and is a step towards a higher productivity level. (Motivating people for improved performance 2005, 9.)

Research by *Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko & Roberts (2009)* supports the idea that genuine care and concern for the welfare of the employees by the management will lead the employees to act in the same way with customers. This is because the fact that the leader is willing to put effort into managing and caring for the subordinates, they are in return compelled to do the same for their customers. (Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko & Roberts 2009, 268-269.)

Good management and leadership is creating environment for development and growth, using encouraging and effective rewarding systems, providing sufficient information and giving supporting and constructive feedback to the workforce. (Ruohotie 1998, 99.)

2.1   Job satisfaction and motivation

The management of each company is challenged with the task of creating a satisfying and motivating work environment for their employees (Tanner, Honeycutt & Erffmeyer 2009, 229).

The factors that make the job rewarding, frustrating, satisfying or unsatisfying are all part of the combination that creates the overall job satisfaction. Thus the satisfaction of the employees consists of many different aspects that all together affect the quality of work. According to *Johnston and Marshall (2013),* there are seven

dimensions that affect the overall experience of satisfaction of each employee either negatively or positively. These dimensions are the job itself, coworkers, supervision, company policies and support, pay, promotion opportunities and customers. All of these factors not only affect the satisfaction of the employees but they also have an effect on their level of motivation. (Johnston & Marshall 2013, 217.)

At its best, a job can be exciting, challenging and rewarding at the same time and offer great satisfaction and motivation for the worker. Anyhow, creating these feelings for each employee of the company is not an easy task because each employee is different and driven by different values and motives that create their motivation. These can be, for example, personal needs and wants or rewards and punishments that individuals might feel differently about. Therefore, each worker's individuality has to be taken into consideration to create equal and satisfying working conditions for everyone. (Ventegodt & Merrick 2009, 5-6.)

Feeling of a wellbeing work community improves the motivation, commitment and trust towards the company and affects to the health and stress level of a person in a positive way. All of these factors improve the continuity of the work, work performance and the person's strength to work. In the best possible situation, wellbeing organization can offer a feeling of belongingness and acceptance as well as improve the whole quality of life of its employee. (Suonsivu 2011, 59,118.)

Sales force motivation and its improvement have been researched to be highly profitable for organizations. First of all, it encourages new kind of innovativeness and creativity in employees and increases their effectiveness. Work motivation has also got a positive effect on the self-esteem of the workers, and they are likely to work with a more relaxed attitude. Followed by an increase in these factors, the company succeeds better in the long run and in terms of selling, the sales are bound to increase as a consequence. (Jobber & Lancaster 2009, 405.)

Work motivation and satisfaction can be divided into two distinct components that are called intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation created based on the personal interests and values of a person and

intrinsic satisfaction refers to the feeling from the work itself and from the opportunities it offers. Extrinsic motivation, on the other hand, is created based on the rewarding systems and appraisal at work and extrinsic satisfaction based on the company policies, customers, coworkers and support. All in all intrinsic factors are the ones that affect employees from the inside and extrinsic the ones that affect the employees from the outside. (Motivaatio 2011; Johnston & Marshall 2013, 217.)

On the motivational level, intrinsic motivation is longer-lasting than extrinsic motivation because intrinsic goals are based on the personal interests of the employees and therefore the willingness to work towards them comes from the person itself. This type of motivation creates joy and satisfaction and can become a permanent source of motivation for the person. On the contrary the willingness to work towards extrinsic goal is usually based on gaining a certain short-term reward, and the interest towards the subject is likely to vanish after reaching it. This type on motivation is created by extrinsic source and the doing itself does not therefore create motivation and satisfaction for the person. (Motivaatio 2011.)

The next chapters will introduce a few motivation theories and an in depth theory of how different aspects of work are experienced by the sales force in terms of work satisfaction and motivation. The chapters will approach these factors from the managerial point of view.

2.2   Motivation theories

In this chapter a few important motivation theories concerning the motivation of salespeople, are introduced. Later on these theories are linked to the results gained from the interviews to show their importance in connection with the management and job motivation of the sales force of Spa Hotel Peurunka.

Motivation theories can be divided into two separate focus areas which are referred to as content theories and process theories. Content theories aim to explain specific needs that create motivation in person whereas process theories aim to explain how

certain processes can affect to the motivation level of a person. (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson 2014, 114.)

First theory introduced is a process theory called goal setting theory, discovered by Edwin Locke. According to this theory, the desire to reach a goal generates motivation. It suggests that people should be motivated to work by creating goals for them, that are challenging enough but not too difficult to fulfill. They should also be specific and measurable so that employees would have a clear idea on what is expected from them and where their efforts should be directed on. According to this theory a goal set together in a mutual understanding between the management and the employee will lead to higher engagement, motivation and improved performance in the job. (Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 89.)

Many research results from the field of sales force motivation support the idea of goal setting theory in sales management, which links it closely to this subject. The results of a research by *Doyle & Shapiro (1980)* show, that there is a connection between the clarity of sales tasks and motivation of the sales force. Clear sales tasks allow salespeople to follow the results of their own work while unclear tasks might make selling job harder and lead to frustration. Another study by *Schmitz & Ganesan (2014)* suggests that by reducing organizational complexity, clarifying internal responsibilities and aligning objectives and goals of the company with the tasks assigned to the sales force, management can improve the employee job satisfaction and job performance. (Doyle & Shapiro 1980; Schmitz & Ganesan 2014, 59-60.)

Another process theory discovered by Victor Vroom in 1960's called expectancy theory suggests that the expectations about the reward to be gained, control the amount of motivation and effort put into a certain task. There are three concepts used in the theory that drive the work motivation of a person: expectancy, instrumentality and valence. The assumption that a person has about the possibilities to achieve improved performance with more effort in a certain task is referred to as the expectancy. Instrumentality refers to the expectation about the reward such as promotion, higher pay or encouragement to be gained from the performance and

valence refers to the personal desire of a person towards the performance. (Jobber & Lancaster 2011, 407; Lämsä & Hautala 2004, 89.)

This theory suggests that in an ideal situation a person would believe in their own ability to attain a certain goal, which would lead to rewarding and would offer personal value for the person. People, having different kinds of personalities, appreciate different valences in their work which is a fact that the management should be aware of in setting the goals and rewards for their employees. Expectancy theory endorses the fact that to be effective in sales work, goals to be reached should be seen as attainable by the employees so that their expectancies would be high. (Jobber & Lancaster 2011, 407-408.)

The third theory introduced is the two-factor theory by Frederick Herzberg. This theory is a well-known motivational content theory which divides the factors affecting to work motivation into two distinct groups. These two groups are called hygiene factors which can cause dissatisfaction with the work and motivators which can cause satisfaction with the work. Hygiene factors are extrinsic factors affecting work such as working conditions, relationships in the workplace and salary. According to the theory these factors do not create satisfaction with the work but if they are not in balance, they can reduce it. Motivators are intrinsic factors of the work such as recognition from the work, the work itself and job development possibilities. The theory suggests that these factors work as motivators for employees and can have a positive effect on the job satisfaction of a person. (Ivancevich, Konopaske, & Matteson 2014, 118.)

According to this theory in case a person feels dissatisfied with the job, the management should focus on the hygiene factors of the work instead of the motivators to fix the situation (Lämsä, & Hautala 2004, 84). So all in all for an employee to achieve high level of satisfaction in the job the two groups have to be in balance at the same time.

2.3   Work content

As the society and attitudes of people have changed among time, has the stand towards working changed as well. Nowadays the meaningfulness of the work is increasingly important factor affecting on motivation to work. People no longer want to work in jobs that pay their bills but do not give them any other value. They want to feel that what they do is appreciated and that their efforts matter to someone or something. (Loren Gary, Harvard business school press 2005, 59.)

According to *Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson (2014*) work content is an important factor in creating satisfaction and motivation for employees. People who feel that their work aligns with their desires and offers challenges and possibilities for development, are likely to be engaged with their work, feel meaningfulness about what they do and succeed. The situation is quite different in a job that is felt to be boring and frustrating and which does not create the feeling of meaningfulness. Disengagement and lack of motivation commonly follow in a job that creates latter kind of feelings. (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson 2014, 144-145; Adams 2007, 179.)

When considering specifically sales force job satisfaction, these mentioned facts can be found to be supported by different researches. For example in a research by *Boles, Madupalli, Rutherford & Wood (2007)* sales force affective commitment to the company has been acknowledged to be in a direct connection with how they experience their work tasks and company policies. Therefore it is suggested that management should pay attention on how the content of the work and policies concerning the sales force could be adjusted to increase the satisfaction gained from the work. (Boles, Madupalli, Rutherford & Wood 2007, 316.)

Different criteria for setting objectives for employees exists but when considering specifically sales force management, format called SMART comes up consistently. This format consists of five words that are *specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-based.* Management using this format in setting goals and objectives for the sales force focuses on creating goals that are specific enough so that their

purposes are understood fully. Measurable so that the results can be seen accurately, and achievable in a way that the goals are not too hard to reach. They should yet be adequately challenging so that they create meaning for the employees. Lastly, they should be time-based so that employees know, in what time period to meet the objectives set. (Tanner, Honeycutt & Erffmeyer 2009, 11.)

2.4 Work culture and atmosphere

The basis for wellbeing organization is a healthy and equal community which does not allow discrimination but provides justice for its workers. Each individual who works in a company or has some kind of role in the organization, influences on the work wellbeing of the company by adding it or by reducing it. Therefore it is important to support each individual's personal qualities and offer everyone a possibility for instructive and meaningful work. (Suonsivu 2011, 58-60.)

Work communities are often formed from different kinds of people from different age groups and social backgrounds. Some of these people might be flexible, enjoy their work highly and be open for changes and new things while others might see things in a negative light. Negative-thinkers might cause damage to the company if their attitudes are being reinforced. Therefore it is important from the managerial point of view to find out the sources for negative thinking and solutions for removing the negative thoughts. (Jabe 2010, 97-99.)

Relationships in the workplace influence on how the work is being experienced. The satisfaction with the work tends to be high if the relationships with co-workers and supervisor are open and supportive. In this kind of good atmosphere also superior results are likely to follow. On the other hand in a situation where these relationships are felt to be week and the atmosphere pressuring, the joy from the work might vanish. Research by *Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko & Roberts (2009)* supports this idea by showing results of improved customer service from the sales force, as a consequence of providing positive work climate for them. (Suonsivu 2011, 26; Juholin 2013, 184; Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko & Roberts 2009, 268.)

Different people in different phases of life, who trust and support each other and express their opinions openly around one another, form a frame for balanced work community. Feeling of belongingness and usefulness as well as the ability to enjoy simple things in the work, guide towards more satisfied and joyful work atmosphere. (Jabe 2010, 101.)

2.5   Interaction and communication

Communication in workplaces has changed over time from top-down communication to mutual interaction in the community. Nowadays, the focus in workplace interaction is on six differentiated agendas that create a base for functioning communication. (Juholin 2013, 177.)

The first of these is up-to-date information concerning the company and its procedures that should be available for everyone in the company. The second thing is to interact together when making meaningful decisions in the company and to make sure that the final decisions are understood well by all the parties affected by them. The third thing is to keep the atmosphere relaxed and respectable so that everyone dares to express their own thoughts. The next things are that everyone has a chance to influence the work community and that learning and experiences are shared between employees. The last agenda is to create and strengthen the image of the company with the community members' own actions. (Juholin 2013, 177-178.)

Communication is a crucial success factor in every organization and is needed in carrying out all the major activities in the company. Effectiveness is a word related to communication because with clear communication and interaction, learning new things gets easier, and misunderstandings and errors can be avoided. Effective communication is a consequence of delivering a message in a way that the receiver develops mutual understanding with the communicator. (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson 2013, 367-369.)

Daily encounters and attitudes of coworkers and management affect the way employees see their own roles in the work community. These encounters might

enable employees to see themselves as valuable assets of the company or make them feel that they are not appreciated in their work. The former kinds of situations usually affect the fluency and profitability of the employees in a positive way while the latter situations might affect them in a negative way. Usually, the most important encounters affecting employees are the ones with the management which makes it really important for them to focus on the way they confront their subordinates each day. (Kuusela 2013, 43-44.)

2.6   Learning and development

The importance of know-how and professionalism of the personnel is a vital component in each organization. In the sales work, this professionalism might concern the know-how of the programs used, the products sold or analyzing of different data. It might also concern communication, language or decision-making skills of the employees. The success of a company is largely dependent on the combination of the skills of their employees and therefore it is crucial for the management to focus on maintaining and improving them to line-up with the goals of the company. (Grönfors 2010, 47; Dessler 2004, 159.)

Up-to-date determination and evaluation of the current skills of employees is important from the management's part to define whether or not there are gaps in the skills of the employees. Development need appears in case the employees have got capabilities to perform tasks but they lack the knowledge and techniques to perform to the required standard. If these kinds of gaps appear, training objectives to fix the problem should be created and determined with clear measurable goals. (Dessler 2004, 162; Clifford & Thorpe 2007, 11.)

Learning and development in a workplace can happen in varied ways, for example by coaching, delegating tasks, using discussion groups or offering trainings for the employees (Clifford & Thorpe 2007, 36). According to the study conducted by *Román, Ruiz & Munuera (2002),* it is important to put effort into choosing appropriate training method in order to influence on the performance of the salespeople. The research indicates that on-the-job training is the most effective

form of training the sales force. It is suggested that the combination of sales techniques, computer skills and customer knowledge in sales training lead to higher customer orientation and sales performances among the sales force. (Román, Ruiz & Munuera 2002, 1359-1360.)

In case organizational environment offers possibilities for development that are challenging but attainable, employees endeavor to work towards them. This fact is acknowledged in many of today's management strategies and emphasized in the development plans of many organizations. A sufficient amount of support to help employees in their learning as well as designing the training in a way that sustains and grows the professional competence of a person are key components in making the company's overall development efficient. (Ruohotie 1998, 141.)

2.7   Feedback and rewarding

According to a study conducted by *Srivastava & Rangarajan (2006)* concerning salespeople's "feedback-satisfaction" linkage, positive as well as negative feedback gained from the management, contributes as a feeling of challenge in the job for salesperson. Positive feedback challenges the salesperson to work hard in order to gain more positive feedback and to meet or exceed the expectations of the management also in the future. Negative feedback on the other hand challenges the person to work harder to enhance their performance and skills and avoid receiving negative feedback in the future. The study results suggest that these kind of challenges set higher goals, more expectations and demand more involvement from the workers. Succeeding in achieving high goals result as feelings of accomplishment, success and higher job satisfaction. (Srivastava & Rangarajan 2006, 156-157.)

Evaluating the performances of employees and giving feedback about them is important concerning their ability to perform effectively and efficiently in their work. People want to know how others evaluate their work efforts, what they are doing well and how could they improve their performance. Performance feedback offers employees possibilities to learn, develop and grow in their jobs. (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson 2014, 173; Sydänmaanlakka 2005, 130.)

Well executed feedback can be either instructive, motivational or both for the employee receiving it. In case the feedback is instructive, it offers solutions to make improvements in certain areas of work in a constructive way. Motivational feedback usually entails compliments and/or rewards from the work that has been executed well. (Ivancevich, Konopaske & Matteson 2014, 173-174.)

At its best, feedback can have an encouraging and powerful effect on the person receiving it. To reach this kind of effect, feedback should not be pointed on one's personal qualities or characteristics but on certain actions that can be clearly indicated and explained to the person. After this, solutions to change the actions for better if necessary, can be thought together and monitored among time. It is important to focus on the way the feedback is presented for the employee so that the situation does not feel distressing or accusative for the receiver. (Kuusela 2013, 88.)

Workplaces can offer many kind of incentives for their employees to make them improve their performance. These incentives can be for example monetary bonuses, pay raises, recognitions or joint events. When company's management chooses to use incentive plan for their employees it should be first determined whether the plan will actually be necessary and effective. This is because in some cases, people find intrinsic motivation and satisfaction from the job tasks that they are performing and not from the rewards they might gain from performing well. (Adams 2007, 135-136.)

In these cases the situation might change if an external reward is being added to the mix because it suggests that the task is only worth the reward and not worth continuous intrinsic motivation. According to Fessler (2003), better approach when considering improving effectiveness would be to focus on adding the task attractiveness and in this way the intrinsic engagement on the work. (Adams 2007, 136.)

3 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

This part of the research focuses on explaining the concept of qualitative research and more precisely the method of theme interviewing which was chosen to be the data collection method in this research. After that the interview implementation and the choices made during the research process, are presented to the reader.

3.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research seeks meaning for certain phenomenon and the results are presented in a text format as opposed to numbers and statistics used in quantitative research. The idea in qualitative research is not to find generalizations about phenomenon but rather to understand the research subject in-depth. Qualitative method explores individual cases and is interested in how people experience the reality that they live in. (Kananen 2014, 18-19.)

Qualitative research method is usually inductive which means that the results are transferred from singular observations to the end outcomes. As a result to qualitative research, new explanations from individual experiences are aimed to be discovered, to offer new knowledge for people. Usually exploring pre-existing concepts and comparing if the general theories about the same subject correlate with the new research, is part of the qualitative research process. (Gibbs 2007, 4-5.)

According to *Kananen (2014)* the reliability evaluation of qualitative research is not unambiguous, but it is important to focus on certain factors in the process. From the beginning of qualitative research process, adequate documentation of the phases and justifications to the choices made during the process should be registered. When making interpretations of the collected data, important is to confirm that the conclusions made from the comments of the examinees are correct in their own opinions. Reliability of the research can also be strengthened by saturation, which means that the results gained from different examinees begin to follow the same pattern. All of these things will make the research more reliable from the standpoint of the reader and alleviate the understanding of the overall study project. (Kananen 2014, 145-154.)

Qualitative research happens usually by means of interviewing in transaction with the researcher and the examinee or examinees in a natural environment. The interview approaches vary from narrow to broad ones based on how the interview questions are set. Different types of interview settings are formed based on the researched matter but common in all types is to examine the phenomenon objectively by focusing on the examinee's perspective to obtain comprehensive picture of the phenomenon. (Kananen 2014, 18; Rubin & Rubin 2005, 4-5.)

Theme interview

Nowadays interviewing is executed increasingly by means of informal or semi-structured interviews. These kind of approaches allow interviewees to express their opinions freely and enable them to be active participants in the research process. Theme interview is one of the interviewing forms that can be classified under semi-structured interviews. The idea in this interview form is to define discussion areas to be dealt with in the interview beforehand, according to relevant themes concerning the researched problem. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 34, 35.)

In theme interviews the themes addressed with each interviewee are the same but specific structure and order is missing from the interview frame. In the interviewing situation the themes are specified with questions that can be formed based on personal notes of the researcher concerning each theme and based on the observations made from the interviewee's comments. Listening carefully and asking additional questions about the phenomenon which is called responsive interviewing by *Rubin & Rubin (2005)* helps the researcher understand how the phenomenon is concretized in the mind of the examinee. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 48, 66-67; Rubin & Rubin 2005, 30-33.)

3.2   Data collection

To get the wanted results, the research method used was theme interview with each worker of the sales team excluding the supervisor of the team. Therefore, all together 5 interviews were conducted. The interviews were executed in Finnish

because it is the mother tongue of the interviewees. This offered a possibility for the respondents to express themselves more freely and accurately.

The reason why a qualitative method was chosen to gather information was the fact that the sales department is quite a small unit, which made it easy to decide that each member of the team would take part in the research. Quantitative research with only five respondents would not have given as relevant information and deep understanding about the opinions and experiences of the respondents as the qualitative research offered.

Unified themes for each interview were selected beforehand based on the areas covered in the theoretical framework of the study and with the help of other related research from the fields of work motivation and work satisfaction. The themes selected to be addressed in every interview were therefore the content of work, atmosphere of the workplace, learning and development, management work, feedback and work motivation. The themes worked as guidelines during the interviews, and made it easy to follow whether or not each wanted subject was covered.

Under each theme, there were few support questions to help cover the subjects as widely as possible and to make sure that the important viewpoints concerning the subjects were not left out. The support questions were planned in a way that would not lead to generalizations in the answers but would offer a possibility for the interviewees to share their own personal experiences with the researcher.

Interview implementation

The interviews were conducted during the working hours, most of them in a separate room where only the interviewee and respondent were present and one of them in a restaurant of the hotel, before it was opened for customers. The interviews were opened with a few warm-up questions such as how long the respondent had worked in the company and what they had done before that. These questions were asked in order to relax the situation and make the interviewees feel comfortable as well as to map out how long experience they had had with the company.

Even though support questions were printed, the interviews did not follow a unified structure. In most of the interviews, part of the support questions were left out and new questions were invented as the conversation moved forward. The interviews were, therefore, largely composed from the ideas and feelings that the interviewees wanted to personally bring up concerning the themes. This made each interview different and brought up different kinds of viewpoints as well as deepened the understanding of the phenomenon from the interviewer's point of view.

The themes were not presented to the interviewees beforehand but the respondents knew that the interviews followed a themed structure. The themes were presented for the interviewees when they emerged in the interviews. The interview structure had around 20 questions that were more or less addressed in each interview. The duration of the interviews were evaluated to last about 30 minutes, and on average it turned out to be the right evaluation with the interview durations varying from 24 to 41 minutes.

Analysis of the data

The interviews were recorded in order to capture the data as accurately as possible. After the interviews, each recording was listened to and transcribed precisely, using standard language and removing the colloquial language expressions. After that, the analysis of the collected material was initiated by first creating charts on Excel from all the five interviews and their precise answers. The singular answers of each interview were then given codes based on the themes that they were associated with.

After each individual interview was coded into themes, the answers under each theme from all of the interviews were unified. This way it was possible to see the big picture of the similarities and differences between the opinions of the respondents and start presenting the results.

4   RESEARCH RESULTS

The results of this study are based on the interviews with five female employees of the sales department of Spa Hotel Peurunka. The interviews were conducted in August and September 2015. The experience of working in the company varied at the time from 5 years to 39 years between the respondents, and included in many cases experience of varied work assignments of the company. The interviewees had been working at Peurunka 22,5 years on average and they all had experience of working in the sales department for several years.

When presenting the research results, the respondents are referred to as respondent 1-5. The order of the respondents has been changed as opposed to the interviewing order so that the answers of the respondents cannot be recognized based on the numbers. This and the fact that the interview answers were translated and are presented in English in the results, protects the privacy of the respondents.

The results will be presented according to the themes used in the interviews and in the theory base. The order of the results follows the structure of the interviews and later on, in the conclusions, the theory base and the results are presented in accordance with one another.

4.1   Meaningfulness of the work

According to the empirical material gathered from the interviews the respondents felt that variability, challenges and easy access to the information needed are important factors in the work itself. They also felt that reasonable workload and appropriate amount of personnel working in the sales department, effect on their performance positively. Here are few examples of how the respondents described the factors creating a good day in the sales service in their own words:

> *"Good workday is probably the kind that entails bit variability, the phone is ringing conveniently, you have enough work to do and there are adequate amount of workers present." (Respondent 3)*

> *"Decent amount of work, good drive, happy people and easy access to information needed."* (Respondent 5)

> *"Good workday entails appropriate amount of work, not too much or too less. You get the information clearly what you need and you don't have to look for it from many different places."* (Respondent 4)

The respondents felt that rush in the work affects negatively on their performance because they do not have time to execute their work as thoroughly as they would want to. In addition performance suffers due to lack of clear access to all information needed because time is wasted going through the different databases to find the right pieces of information.

Most of the employees of the sales department of Peurunka felt that they cannot affect their work content and everyday job tasks. This comment of one respondent summarizes the opinions of almost every interviewee concerning the subject:

> *"I cannot affect to it (work content) because the phone calls and e-mails that come, they are what they are and then there are the surprising situations as well so you just basically can't.. No matter how much you try to organize, that today I will do this and this, there always comes some variable. So in my opinion I can't make a difference."* (Respondent 4)

This answer reveals that the nature of work in the sales service is not entirely controllable. In the opinion of the employees every day is formed based on the same pattern but the content cannot be controlled or predicted in advance. Only respondent 2 mentioned in the discussions that she believes that she has had an influence on the content of her work in the sales department among time.

When asked would the sales force want to change something in the work itself if they could, the answers divided based on two different stands. Some suggested that by separating different areas of work from each other and by giving smaller specialist areas to each sales team member, the employees could focus better on their work.

Others thought differently that in order for the sales department to function at all times the current operating model is the best one because knowledge about all functions and areas allows all team members to serve all customers with different needs. As opposed to this, specialized areas would require the specific members of the team to answer to the questions of customers about different functions of the company.

The respondents felt that they have principally good control over their work tasks but the job description being so wide, instructions and adjustments are needed from time to time. The team is working in an open office where asking help from one another in case of obscurity is possible and in the opinion of the team members even advisable. Few of the respondents articulated that it is better to ask help than to make mistakes in the work due to uncertainty.

Employees of the sales department of Peurunka felt that they are doing meaningful work or at least wanted to believe that. Here are few examples of the comments about the meaningfulness:

> *"Yes, yes our work matters. Think about if our work wouldn't exist. It is quite significant in this whole company." (Respondent 1)*

> *"I feel that it matters, but it would matter more if we would be told clearly the monthly results." (Respondent 5)*

> *"We don't get praised for it but I want to believe that it is meaningful." (Respondent 4)*

Uncertainty in the answers and the fact that feedback was mentioned as a missing fact in some of the discussions about the meaningfulness of work, showed that the respondents would like to see and hear concrete results of and feedback about their work more often. Respondent 5 mentioned that by showing concrete sales results and utilization rates of each month and using clear measurements would offer valuable information for employees.

4.2   Atmosphere in the workplace

Employees of sales department of Peurunka described good work atmosphere based on their own experiences as being open and supporting. The fact that everyone can be their own selves in the work community even though there are different personalities, was mentioned as an important factor creating good work atmosphere.

> *"Good work atmosphere is that you like going to work, you can discuss openly about the work stuff that puzzles you, and you get support from your colleagues. It is also the kind that you can be yourself and talk about everything, also non-work related matters, others have time and they listen." (Respondent 3)*

> *"I like it that we have many different kinds of personalities who have different opinions and everyone works enthusiastically. I wouldn't like if someone would not give their effort to the work." (Respondent 1)*

Respondents felt that they have generally good work atmosphere and team members having different kinds of knowledge, all support and teach one another. Employees can express themselves freely concerning any feelings they might have and can talk to each other also about matters that are not related to work. The respondents felt that they have open relationships with one another.

One negative thing mentioned was that sometimes if the workers have too much work, too less employees are present and people are busy all the time, the atmosphere occasionally tightens. Anyhow, even in these situations the respondents do not feel that the overall team spirit is affected negatively by it.

Occasionally tightening work atmosphere was commented by few of the respondents like this:

> *"When less people are present and work load builds up, of course it tightens the atmosphere. But I don't know if it can be improved. They*

are mainly factors that we cannot affect to, that tighten and deteriorate the atmosphere." (Respondent 3)

"Recently I have noticed that people are really tired and stressed out. There are too less of us. On few days there have been situations where it shows that there are way too many things to do. That kind of comments have been said." (Respondent 1)

Even though the overall atmosphere was experienced to be good, the answers revealed frustration concerning the current situation with having too much work to do. This made the respondents feel that even if they wanted to, they cannot give their full contribution to the job when having too much to do at once.

4.3 Learning and development

The opinions of the sales department employees were divided in the answers concerning learning and development at Peurunka. Some felt that learning and development are adequately supported in the work while some did not. Some employees had participated in several different training programmes during their working career in Peurunka, and some brought up that the encouragement concerning trainings is not, in their opinion, sufficient. All the respondents felt anyhow that training is possible and supported in some ways if the employees realize to ask for education themselves.

"There is definitely support! During the years that I have been working in Peurunka, I have been to many kinds of trainings." (Respondent 1)

"There could be maybe more encouragement to study more but it is probably mostly up to the employee to decide what they want to do." (Respondent 3)

Another thing mentioned in this connection was that some of the respondents felt that even though they can educate themselves in some areas of work if they want to,

they do not get any monetary benefit from the extra knowledge. Therefore, from the rewarding point of view there is no incentive for the employees to learn more.

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter on results, most of the respondents had been working in different job tasks previously in Peurunka and therefore made progress in their careers inside the house. Nevertheless, according to the respondents, the possibilities for career development were seen as non-existent in the work of the sales department at the interview moment.

Feelings concerning development discussions and their relevance were common in the interviews where they came up. Based on the answers, the mutual idea between the employees was that there is only little or no benefit for the employees from them. The structure of the development discussions was felt to be old, and generally, the employees did not feel that changes had been recently made based on the things that had come up in them.

> *"Well we always have those development discussions where it is questioned how I plan to develop myself and what would I want to develop but that's it. I feel that they are not meaningful." (Respondent 4)*

> *"Development discussion is quite pointless in a way of what its structure is. It has been the same for at least ten years or even more and the same things are gone through every year. They should be renewed somehow."(Respondent 5)*

Alternatives were suggested to replace the traditional one-to-one development discussions. One thing was the idea of organizing meetings for the whole sales team and work community to figure out what could be done better for the community's and team's benefit. It was also mentioned that it is not enough that once a year meetings are set with the supervisor to discuss about the development and other important things related to the job. Instead, this was suggested to be done on a regular basis and always right away when something to discuss comes up.

4.4 Internal communication

Reactions to communication inside the organization implied to the same idea between the employees of the sales department. All of the respondents felt that communication should be developed radically inside the house so that all the employees would have the same knowledge about important information. Here are examples of the opinions of three respondents concerning the subject:

> *"The information is fragmented. Something more open, happening in good spirit should be more." (Respondent 5)*

> *"Many times people who were supposed to inform about something, haven't done that and then the information comes to us via customers. We feel kind of stupid in a situation where customer tells us that you have this and this coming, and we have no idea what they are talking about." (Respondent 3)*

> *"Inside our work unit we inform one another but otherwise in this building internal informing is in child's shoes, it just doesn't exist." (Respondent 4)*

The employees of the sales department adduced that the internal communication has always been something to improve inside the organization. Therefore change to its functionality has been waited already for a long time and the respondents hoped that the management would start addressing the problem eventually.

The comments of the sales team members showed frustration towards how the informing is executed inside the company. In case the workers would be informed more in advance about the information concerning their work, they might be able to conduct their work tasks more carefully and with more professionalism.

One of the respondents suggested that sometimes it would be good to have gatherings with the whole work crew of the organization. These kinds of gatherings would offer an opportunity for the management and all of the employees to go over

the strategy and goals of the company together and to make sure that everyone is working towards the same goals.

4.5   Management work

When discussing with the sales department employees about what kind of manager is a good one in their opinion, many similarities came up. Few of the most important things mentioned were that manager should be supportive and show genuine interest towards the employees. The respondents brought up that manager who knows his/her employees and their special skills as well as is interested about their personal lives and how the employees manage in their work, is the kind that they would refer to as a good manager. The answers revealed that the respondents value and respect the most the kind of manager that knows how to manage people rather than things.

> *"Good manager is nowadays encourager, motivator, spirit lifter and people leader."* (Respondent 5)

> *"Good manager is the kind that genuinely cares about his/her employees and transacts with them daily. Cares also about how you are doing outside work."* (Respondent 3)

> *"Good manager is the kind that sticks by his/her employees. Encourages, is robust but not too much and it can be seen that he/she cares about the employees truly."* (Respondent 4)

The employees of the sales department felt during the time of the interviews that support from the management was lacking in some situations of the work. It was mentioned more than once that sometimes in difficult employee-customer situations the support that the sales force would need from the management is missing. Also the previously mentioned caring and leading of people were hoped to show more in the actions of the management.

The structure of the management and the sales team is seen by the respondents to be in many cases hierarchic in a way that management makes the decisions on their own level rather than together with the employees. The team felt that even though their opinions are inquired at times concerning the decisions to be made, they are taken into account too rarely. Respondents also felt that information they need from the management is not always available when needed. Based on the interviews this could be interpreted to create feelings that the atmosphere between the management and the staff is not as open as it is hoped to be.

Sales team members are hoping more openness and more caring from the management. The opinion of having people leader rather than leader who focuses on numbers was brought up in the discussions and is something that the management should consider in their leading style. Having more meetings and discussions with the employees about current issues and including their opinions more to the decision-making process would probably increase the satisfaction of the employees.

4.6   Rewarding and feedback

The empirical results concerning appraising comparted between the employees of the sales department. The answers showed that intangible, tangible and monetary rewarding were all valued, some more than others depending on the respondents' personal opinions. Here are quotations from three conversations concerning the subject:

"For me the most important is to feel that I have succeeded and to be acknowledged from it face to face by someone." (Respondent 3)

"Sometimes there could be a bonus on a bank account that you have performed well, I believe that it would be the best. (Respondent 2)

"Well, all of it feels nice if it is positive feedback. Whether it is spoken or written, well-spoken is of course better and then tangible on a reasonable rate." (Respondent 5)

The feelings about from whom, the gained feedback is most important were divided. Some valued most the feedback gained from the customers and others the feedback gained from the manager. Colleagues were mentioned to be very important in the supporting and giving feedback as well.

Smartum-coupons were mentioned more than once when talking about functional compensation for a work well done. They had been used earlier in the company to compensate the whole workforce and therefore the respondents had experience from them. It was mentioned that the coupons or other kind of compensation for individual teams would be valued in addition to the compensation given to the whole workforce of the company.

The discussions with the respondents adduced that more feedback from the management was hoped from the team's part and also to be pointed on individual members of the team. Here are few examples of the opinions of the employees:

> *"Manager could sometimes thank in front of everyone and not only privately form one to one. And tell, in what things you have succeeded and so on." (Respondent 2)*

> *"For me it would be important that the management would come and thank all of us from time to time somehow because we have quite a pressure in there occasionally." (Respondent 3)*

> *"It would be nice to hear from the management from time to time that "You did great" or "This kind of feedback came about you". After all the customers sometimes contact the manager when they have something negative to say about us." (Respondent 5)*

Common idea between the employees seemed to be that getting feedback from colleagues and customers happens more often than getting feedback from the manager. One of the respondents commented that it is better to have feedback whether it is positive or negative, than not to have it at all. This is an important factor to be taken into consideration from the managerial point of view and to offer

feedback about both positive and negative things so that the employees know what is expected from them.

4.7 Work motivation

When asked about the motivating factors of work, a lot of things that had been already mentioned discussing the previous themes, came up again. The variability of the work and easy access to the information needed were mentioned to be motivational factors more than once. Also the fact that the work entails challenges was seen as an important creator of motivation because overcoming obstacles and challenging oneself were mentioned to create meaningfulness for the respondents. The employees of the sales department described the motivating factors of work for example this way:

> *"Work, in which you can see what you have accomplished yourself and you are able to organize it in a way that it goes painlessly, that motivates." (Respondent 4)*

> *"The kind of work that entails enough challenges so that you have to really do something for it." (Respondent 3)*

> *"Motivating work is meaningful. It is the kind that you of course possess and have all the information available." (Respondent 5)*

In addition to the things mentioned, also colleagues and the whole work community as well as working with other people were seen to be factors that create motivation for the respondents. The answers revealed that the employees of the sales department of Peurunka, see their work on a large scale to be motivating even though they are hoping for some improvements to happen in it in the future.

When asked if the employees felt satisfied with their work, they came up with these kinds of answers:

"Well, if it has been throughout the times closer to 10, then probably at the moment it goes a bit under it. At the moment I feel a bit tired and even frustrated about this situation." (Respondent 1)

"Principally yes. I don't have that many things that I'm not satisfied with." (Respondent 4)

"It is probably kind of okay." (Respondent 2)

None of the employees mentioned that their work satisfaction was the highest that could have been hoped for. Reason was explained to be most of all the fact that too less employees are working in the sales department at the moment and therefore the atmosphere tightens and work load builds as mentioned before. This was told to create irritation and frustration towards the work of the respondents. In addition, the satisfaction is affected by the already mentioned fact that the information is hoped to be communicated to the workforce faster so that things can be anticipated beforehand and therefore work tasks taken care of with more efficiency.

According to the employees of the sales department, the factors creating more satisfaction and motivation would be adding more caring to the management of people and having enough workers at all times. It was also mentioned that everyone should have the same rules inside the house and that information about the decisions concerning the work of the sales department should reach the employees along with the management.

Idea for raising community spirit was to have more social gatherings with the work crew where the management would also be present. It was also mentioned that in the past, sales team members could try exercises and beauty treatments offered for customers. This enabled them to offer professionalized information for the customers about the activities and treatments and made their selling job easier. Respondent 1 mentioned that this does not happen nowadays that often, which was in her opinion a shame.

5 DISCUSSION

Management and leadership faces nowadays many challenges because employees do not just want to settle with what is given to them but to feel that meaningfulness and satisfaction are present in all the aspects of their work. In the theory part of this thesis, many points that are unified with the results of this research came up and will now be presented alongside with one another. The discussion is presented in the same order with the results in order to make the interpretation easier for the reader.

The purpose of this research was to examine the current state of the work satisfaction and motivation of the employees working in the sales department of Spa Hotel Peurunka and to find out whether there is need for future improvements in the procedures of the department. The research was successful in finding answers to these problems which will be presented below.

The employees feel that their work is adequately challenging and variable, which is felt to be motivational consistently with the theory gathered concerning the work content. On the other hand, the workload has been recently felt to be overwhelming at times, which has created frustration among the workers. According to the theory, frustration towards work might decrease the motivation and capability of the employees to perform according to their best ability. In line with this, the frustration of the sales department employees can be seen to have an effect on their work motivation and satisfaction.

The results show that measuring the performances of the team and individuals is felt to be weak in the sales department. Anyhow, according to the theory about work content, this is pointed out as an important factor creating the feeling of meaningfulness about the work. The goal setting theory and SMART-format presented in the theory both highlight the meaning of defining clear and measurable goals in sales force performances. The results of this research are consistent with these earlier findings both directly and indirectly.

The shortage of performance measurements can be seen to have an effect on the meaningfulness felt about the work because some of the respondents mentioned that they only want to believe they are doing meaningful work instead of truly believing in it. Also the employees who felt that they are doing meaningful work defined their answers merely based on the fact that the work is important for the company and customers and therefore meaningful. The personal meaningfulness did not show in the discussions probably due to the lack of consistent performance measurements that would help the monitoring of the personal development in the work.

As mentioned in the theory, the work atmosphere of the company influences the work performance and how the work is experienced by each employee. The results of this research support this idea and the fact that the sales team members felt that they have a good work atmosphere is experienced to increase the satisfaction from the work. The employees felt that there is no "back-stabbing" inside their work community and that the atmosphere is open and supportive which was mentioned to have a positive effect on work satisfaction.

Offering a supporting environment with possibilities for learning and development was mentioned in the theory part to be motivational for the employees. In the results of this study the opportunities to learn were seen to be something that the employees can have if they ask for it and learning is seen to be supported in these situations.

The encouragement concerning learning, by offering different possibilities with incentives was considered non-existent. The comments and ideas implied that by encouraging and offering incentives, the motivation of the employees to learn new things could be increased. This observation can be linked to the expectancy theory because in case the employees would be offered learning goals with high expectancy, instrumentality and valence, they would likely be motivated to work towards the goals. High expectancy would mean that the learning goal is attainable and worth-wile, instrumentality would offer an incentive for reaching the goal and valence

would offer personal value for the employee. This theory offers a functional viewpoint concerning the learning in the sales department of Peurunka.

When considering the theory about management and the results concerning the management work, much conformity was discovered. The individuality of the employees was one big theme throughout the theory. The results show that the employees of the sales department of Peurunka value the recognition by the management of their individual skills. Consistent with the theory was also the need for openness and support from the management, which is not felt to be fully actualized at the moment in the opinion of the sales force.

The theory addressed the issue of change in the management style of the sales force to less hierarchic. The results, anyhow, revealed that the common impression among the sales team of Peurunka was that this is not the case for them. According to the theory the importance in management is leading, communicating and making decisions together with the employees on the same level with them. Again, the consistency with the importance of the theory can be seen but the execution is lacking since the employees felt that their opinions are seldom taken into account. Another thing mentioned was that communication and informing about all of the decisions made, do not always reach the employees right away.

The results of this research support the idea included in a previous study by *Jaramillo, Grisaffe, Chonko & Roberts (2009)* presented in the theory, about the importance of managing people with genuine care. This research does not directly prove the connection between leading with caring and improved customer service performance of the employees but it proves that caring is seen to be an important factor in creating satisfaction and motivation from the work by the sales department workers of Peurunka. Many times in the discussions with the employees, the management style was hoped to be targeted more on leading people rather than on leading numbers and things.

The theory about feedback and rewarding emphasizes the importance of feedback as a powerful motivator because it offers valuable information on how the employee is

performing in the opinion of others. This was supported by the results gained from this research because everyone mentioned that they were hoping for more feedback. Some of the employees told that they usually congratulate themselves if they succeed in something but it would be also nice to hear it from others more often.

The results showed that the sales team members value the feedback gained from customers, colleagues and management to be almost equally important. From the management part it was yet hoped to be offered more often than from the other parties. This might correlate with the fact that feedback from colleagues and customers were felt to be gained more often than feedback from the management.

A previous research by *Srivastava & Rangarajan (2006)* indicates that both negative and positive feedback from the management to employees can challenge the workers to perform better. The comments by the employees are consistent with this idea and also negative feedback is in their opinion welcomed. As mentioned by one of the employees, the worst kind of feedback is not gaining any at all.

When examining the results from the viewpoint of the Herzberg two-factor theory, it can be seen that the employees are satisfied with most of the extrinsic hygiene factors of their work such as their work atmosphere. However the working conditions in the current change situation seem to create some frustration due to the challenging amount of workload at times. Therefore, according to the two-factor theory this issue should be addressed first, and after that the management could focus on making improvements to the intrinsic motivation factors of the work. The situation is already quite good when considering one of the most important intrinsic factors of work because all the team members feel satisfied with their variable work content. Improvement ideas on some of the other motivation factors will be presented in the next part.

Improvement suggestions
Even though the employees of sales department feel that they are satisfied with their jobs in most parts, this thesis indicates that some things need updating in order

for the workers to be able to perform according to their best ability at all times. The research revealed that some of the improvement factors were bigger than others and present throughout the discussions. These factors are the ones that need most improving in the management of Peurunka's sales department and therefore suggestions for them are presented below. Additional smaller improvement suggestions have been presented already in the chapter concerning the results.

Information disconnections and lack of clear access to all needed information came up many times in the results. Spa Hotel Peurunka is a large organization and the amount of information that the sales force needs in their work is huge. The most important information needed in the work is provided for the employees through many different channels such as e-mail, different computer databases and as unwritten information. Therefore as a suggestion for the company, if all of the fragmented information would be combined into one clear database and gone through with the employees frequently, it would probably make the work easier and lessen frustration of the sales force in the long run.

Another suggestion for the management would be to the use utilize SMART-format presented in the theory, to enable increase in the motivation and satisfaction of the employees. Definition of specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-based goals together with the team and individuals that would be monitored regularly and given feedback about, would probably increase the motivation of the employees and this way also have an effect on their efficiency. Regular, accurate figures and feedback from the performances of the team and individuals would likely add the experienced meaningfulness from the work also on a personal level instead of thinking only about how meaningful the work is for customers and company.

One of the most important things concerning the relevance of this thesis was the mentioned lack of adequate amount of workers at all times, which seemed to have an impact on the stress levels of the employees negatively. When discussing with the employees, this factor came up frequently when handling different themes. When

people are in a hurry all the time and stress levels rise, the work satisfaction and motivation are bound to lower as a consequence.

Therefore as a suggestion concerning this, would be from the managerial point of view to make sure that each employee can manage with the workload that they have and to ensure that workers are not pressed with too many tasks at the same time. In addition making sure that the amount of workforce in the sales department is adequate at all times would probably help the team in conducting their work overall more carefully and more efficiently.

It came up in the results that employees were hoping to see more meaning from having development discussions. They also mentioned that updating the discussion structure and changing their time span to be more regular would give the discussions more value. Therefore as a suggestion for future improvement concerning the development discussions would be first of all to renew the discussion content. Having the same kind of structure each year without seeing any concrete results following from them, did not feel motivating in the opinion of the employees. Secondly, regular team meetings with the management where everyone could express their ideas about the current topics and make a difference to procedures that are not felt to be functioning could add the motivation of the employees. In these discussions also encouragement concerning new learning opportunities for the workers could be introduced.

The employees seemed to believe that sometimes in challenging situations the support needed from the management is missing. Support, openness and caring from the management were mentioned to be important factors creating satisfaction from work but they were hoped to show more in the actions. Therefore as a suggestion, the management could discuss with the sales force and pay attention on why employees sometimes feel like they are not supported or cared for enough and as a consequence find solutions for it together.

All in all the employees seemed to have a lot of ideas on how to improve their work motivation and satisfaction with some adjustments in the work. The team members

answered to the interview questions without thinking a lot and had a lot of similarities in their ideas. This shows that they had been thinking about the issues that were dealt with in the interviews either alone or together already beforehand, even though the themes were only brought up during the discussions. This confirms the need for regular meetings and searching of solutions for problems together as a work unit, management and employees together.

It is important to take into consideration that employees of the sales department of Peurunka have been working in the company on average 22,5 years. This suggests that despite improvements are hoped from the company the workers have been satisfied to work in the company for a considerably long time. In the decision-making it should be remembered that the employees have a long history and experience from working in the company and therefore a lot of knowledge and ideas to share.

Reliability

The reliability of the research has been taken into account throughout the research process by making detailed descriptions of the study phases and by explaining the choices made during the process to the reader.

When considering the amount of interviewed workforce and the reliability in terms of that, it can be said that the results are reliable. This is due to the fact that each employee working in the sales department was interviewed and all of their answers have been taken into account in the results. Also the fact that the answers started to follow the same kind of pattern showed that saturation in the answers had been obtained.

The fact that the examined workforce knew the researcher beforehand might have had an influence on the way they discussed about the themes with the researcher. The interviewees told openly about their opinions and shared their experiences without holding back in their responses which increases the research reliability.

Sales department of Peurunka has been going through changes in their management and the amount of employees recently which can be seen to have an effect on the

results. Therefore the research layout could have been set differently to offer more information concerning the management of change. The change situation might also cause limitation to the research results because the frustration towards the change might have led to stronger dictions concerning the themes as opposed to how they would have been expressed in a normal situation.

The researcher has got personal experience from working in the sales department of Peurunka. Therefore as another limitation to the reliability of the research is the subjective view to the situation that the researcher has gained from working closely together with the team during different phases of the research process. This might have had an effect on how the results have been interpreted by the researcher because even though the aim has been to obtain objective view, the relation between what is objective and what is subjective interpretation have probably been tangled during the process due to personal experineces.

Further research

This research entails suggestions for further improvements in the procedures of Peurunka's sales department. That offers an opportunity to examine the same research topic later on to survey whether the suggestions have been taken into consideration and if they have made a difference in the satisfaction and motivation of the workers.

The results of this research offer valuable information on how satisfaction and motivation are felt by the employees of sales department but they cannot be generalized as such to other departments of the company. The research structure and implementation were discovered to be functional in gaining the wanted results and could therefore anyhow be exploited also in further studies. Another suggestion for further research could be to examine other departments of the organization by similar means to discover wider view of the state of work satisfaction and motivation of Spa Hotel Peurunka's personnel.

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APPENDICES

Theme interview frame

How long have you worked for the company?
What work have you been doing earlier?

Theme 1: Content of the work

- What kind of things create good work day in the sales department in your opinion?
- Can you affect to the content of your work?
- Do you feel that you master your work tasks?
- Do you feel that your work is meaningful?

Theme 2: Atmosphere and communication

- Describe good work atmosphere based on your own experiences.
- Is that the kind of atmosphere you have at the moment?
- Do you feel that information flows well inside the company?

Theme 3: Learning and development

- Is learning and development supported in your work?
- How do you see your career development possibilities in this job?

Theme 4: Management work

- Describe what kind of manager is a good one based on your own experiences.
- Do you feel that your current manager possesses these qualities?
- Do you feel that the management takes your ideas into account in the decision-making?
- Do you trust your manager and the choices made concerning your work?

Theme 5: Appraising and feedback

- What kind of appraising is the most meaningful for you? (monetary, intangible etc.)
- From whom you feel that the feedback is most important? (colleagues, management, customers)
- Do you feel that you are getting enough feedback?

Theme 6: Work motivation

- What is motivating work in your opinion?
- Do you feel that you are doing that kind of job at the moment?
- What kinds of positive or negative changes that have affected on your motivation, have you noticed in your job during your work career?

Do you have ideas about what you would want to change in your work in order for your job satisfaction and motivation to grow in the future?

Teemahaastattelurunko

Kuinka kauan olet työskennellyt yrityksessä?
Mitä töitä olet tehnyt aiemmin?

Teema 1: Työn sisältö

- Mistä asioista hyvä työpäivä myyntipalvelussa muodostuu?
- Pystytkö itse vaikuttamaan työsi sisältöön? Jos pystyisit, muuttaisitko jotain?
- Hallitsetko työtehtäväsi täysin?
- Koetko työlläsi olevan merkitystä?

Teema 2: Työilmapiiri ja vuorovaikutus

- Kuvaile omien kokemuksiesi perusteella, millainen on hyvä työilmapiiri.
- Vallitseeko sellainen työssäsi tällä hetkellä?
- Millaiset työpaikkasi vuorovaikutussuhteet ovat?

Teema 3: Oppiminen ja kehittyminen

- Tuetaanko oppimista ja kehittymistä työssäsi? Miten?
- Millaisena näet urakehittymisen mahdollisuutesi tässä työssä?

Teema 4: Esimiestyö

- Kuvaile omien kokemuksiesi perusteella, millainen on hyvä esimies.
- Omaako nykyinen esimiehesi nämä piirteet?
- Otetaanko mielipiteesi huomioon päätöksenteossa?
- Luotatko esimieheesi ja hänen valintoihinsa?

Teema 5: Palkitseminen ja palaute

- Millainen palkitseminen on sinulle mieleisintä? (rahallinen, aineeton, jokin muu)
- Keneltä saatu palaute on sinulle merkityksellisintä? (kollegat, asiakkaat, esimies)
- Koetko saavasi riittävästi palautetta?

Teema 6: Työmotivaatio

- Millaista on mielestäsi motivoiva työ?
- Koetko tekeväsi sellaista työtä tällä hetkellä?
- Millaisia motivaatioosi vaikuttaneita positiivisia tai negatiivisia muutoksia olet havainnut työssäsi työurasi aikana?

Tuleeko sinulle mieleen jotain, mitä haluaisit muuttaa työssäsi kasvattaaksesi työtyytyväisyyttäsi ja motivaatiotasi?