

## **SATISFACTION BAROMETER OF THE CUSTOMERS OF AUCHAN RUSSIA**

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### **—Abstract —**

*Customer satisfaction research helps businesses build stronger relationships. The establishments need to retain existing customers while targeting non-customers. Measuring customer satisfaction provides an indication of how successful the organization is at providing products and/or services to the marketplace. This international retail group in Russia yearly surveys satisfaction researches. I have been working for the research department since April 2010 and I planned and carried the last project into display. In my presentation I would like to demonstrate the succeeds. The questionnaires were realized in august 2010, in 7 hypermarkets in 4 cities of Russia. Aims at principal of satisfaction barometer were:*

- *to measure the quality of service really perceived by the most regular customers in each store,*
- *to propose the evolutions of satisfaction,*
- *to underline the strength and the weaknesses of the store and its regional performances,*
- *to identify the relative importance of dimensions of service in the total satisfaction of the customers,*
- *and to draw the priority actions from them to improve total satisfaction of the customers.*

**Key Words:** *Customer satisfaction, Research, Russian market*

**JEL Classification:** **M31**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background of the research**

We can find a different kind of customer attitude in Russia than in Western Europe. Mechanisms in administration/managing and serving the customers are much less settled than in the West European countries.

The portrait of the average Russian customer is more attractive than ten years ago, and it has come nearer to the European level considering a huge number of specimens. Nowadays Russia is a country with medium income. Since the end of the 90's the number of people living under the poverty line has been decreasing continuously – finds *Alekszandr Szurinov*, director of Federal State Statistics Service.

The crisis definitely influenced the Russian portrait of customers. The customer in Russia felt best in 2007. But after that, during the following period the claim for services decreased, i.e. (= that is), the Russian citizens go to restaurants, theatres or cinemas much more rarely. However, in the area of telecommunication there was a real revolution, there the market segment tripled.

With the rise of the living standards customer habits have been changing. Rate of expenses for food and clothes has decreased, "non-financial" expenditure, or costs for buying a flat or a car have increased. In this respect during the last ten years progress is continuous, Russia approaches the European countries.

As *Alekszandr Szurinov* refers (points): official statistical data can always show only approximately the truth, they can only give an average image of people living in a country. But considering this average image we can say that people in Russia live better than ten years ago.

### **1.2. Justification of the research**

The economic fall in 2009 was followed by an active increase, it reached 5 per cent in the second quarter of year. They managed to overcome the industrial decline, and it can be seen that the reconstruction of production to the previous level – to the level before decline - is only a matter of time.

In spite of all the difficulties in Russian economy experts emphasize the main specificity of the situation: the economical revival is consistent and quite confident. Regarding the prognosis of the following year: increase in Russian economy can be more than 4 per cent. ([www.gks.ru](http://www.gks.ru)).

Companies, recognizing the significance of their customers' inner and subjective answers, began to apply the method of 'customer satisfaction examination'. This direct or indirect way of the connection between them and the customers influences and allows the consumption of the products/services again. The identification of the motive force of customer satisfaction is particularly important in those sectors where competition is exceptionally hard.

This group, after its appearance in Russia in 2001, makes efforts for the measurement of the relationship with its customers and regularly pays attention to the changes of the customers' experience. Based on these measurements hypermarket has enough information about the shopping habitudes, attitudes and preferences of the potential customer groups.

But considering the ad-hoc characteristic of the surveys these data are not suitable for comparison or analysis of timeline and process. Because of the changes of the market environment and the shopping habitudes, it is required to revise the methodology and to introduce a methodology which allows repeated researches with tuning, and comparative analysis based on fixed informations.

This essay/study presents the main elements of this methodology, and the results of the first research (pilot project).

### **1.3. The purpose of the research**

The comprehensive purpose of the research is to work out an analyser measuring method of customer service process for developing and keeping a customer oriented, engaged clientele for a retail trade chain and to base further, sophisticated researches on a special market.

Beside control and development of the quality of customer service and information in supermarkets another purpose is to make interaction between customers and shop assistants more effective. As a result, customer satisfaction increases, 'side effects' caused by dissatisfaction and nervousness can be reduced.

The main purposes of the research:

- measurement of the service quality, detected by the customer,
- identification of the motive power of customer satisfaction,
- dedication of the strengths and weaknesses of the supermarkets,
- shaping the areas to be developed,
- support of implementation.

The economical purpose of the research is the optimization of the costs for human resources and communication, and to increase money recovery.

## 2. SATISFACTION BAROMETER

### 2.1. Aspects of the research

The surveys took place from the same groups of aspects in the supermarkets. The four main groups of aspects have further points of view.

The general impression included the shopping comfort detected by the customers, the organization of divisions and practicality of the departments, and the waiting time at the sales departments as well as at the cash desks. About the behavior of the staff two main research directions have formulated : welcome, service and the quality of counselling for the customers. Regarding the products : assortment, viridity and novelty, quality, and, of course, price were asked.

**Figure-1: Aspects of the research**



Source: own work of the author

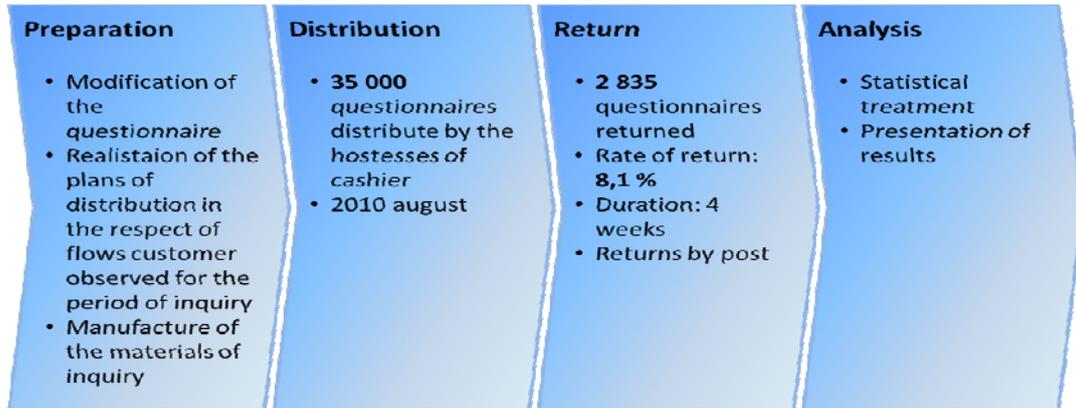
### 2.2. Methodology

Researches took place in August 2010, in 7 hypermarkets, in 4 cities with the help of the marketing department and the hypermarket staff. Analysis and evaluation of the questionnaires were performed by the research department led by me.

During the preparation the questions in the questionnaire were drawn up and refined, and I worked out the criterions in details which can ensure the necessary infrastructure of the successful realization. The research team also made the plan for the transaction of the process.

During the research the employees of the supermarkets handed out 35,000 questionnaires in all and 2,835 of them , that is 8.1 % (per cent), returned by post. It can be considered a successful response rate.

**Figure-2: Methodology**



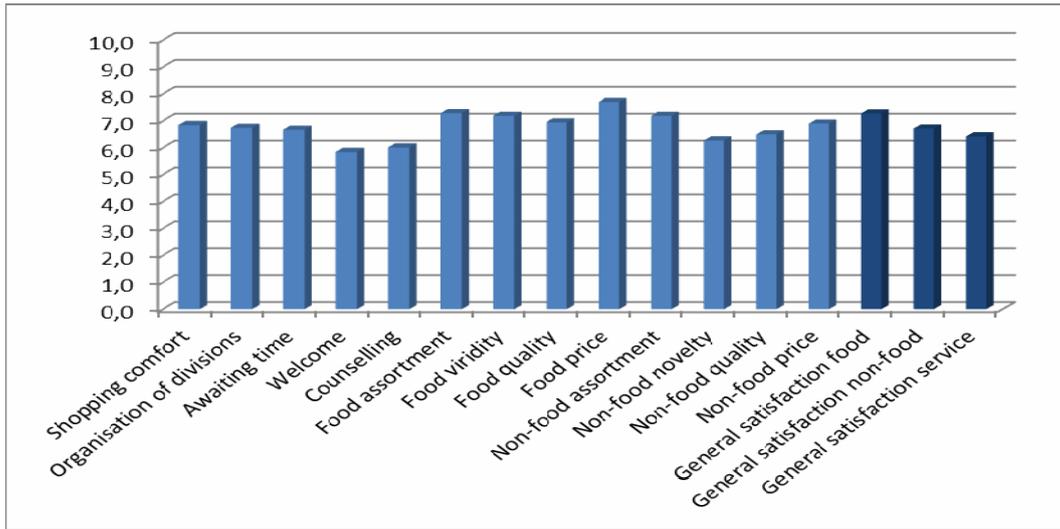
Source: own work of the author

### 3. CONCLUSION

Customers evaluated the different aspects by 1-10 points. In total, supermarkets reached better than medium result. The indexes can show that general impression of customers about supermarkets is good, but the behavior of the staff is a sphere to develop. Satisfaction with non-food products is also worse than with other spheres.

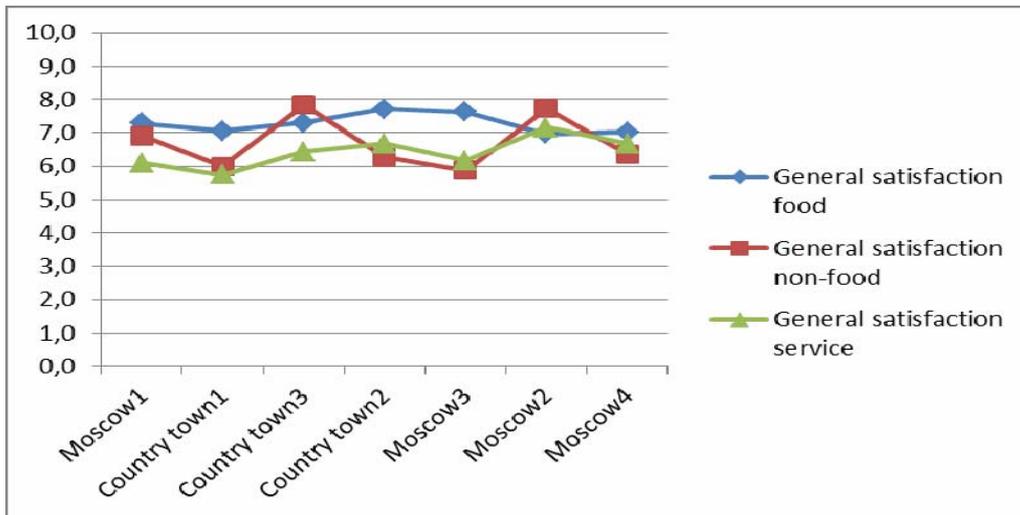
So the task of the management for the first step is the store workers' training and the remaking of their motivational system. The review of source of supply of the non-food products is also necessary.

**Figure-3: General results**



Source: own work of the author

**Figure-4: General satisfaction**



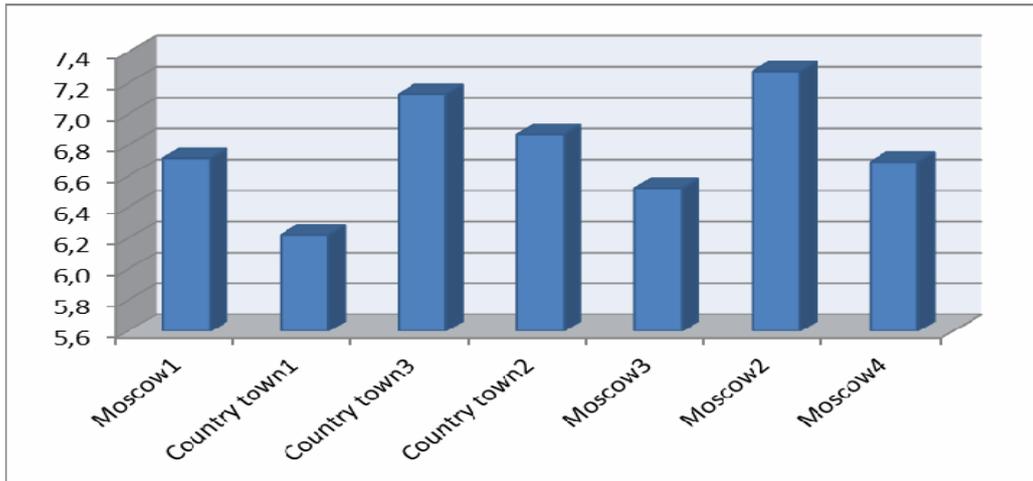
Source: own work of the author

Examining the individual achievements of the supermarkets it can be outlined that satisfaction with food products forms a relatively homogeneous opinion, but we can find larger differences in their satisfaction with service.

The attitude in connection with non-food products is definitely varying. The explanation for it is, that although in the supermarkets there is a central supply, the heads of the departments can decide the concrete assortment or serving.

So differences can show their conscientiousness and vocation, and also that how they take local specificities into account, for example customer demands by the popularity of the different products (Moscow-capital vs. country town).

**Figure-5: Average satisfaction**



Source: own work of the author

Average satisfaction indicator continued deepening the image we received so far. The role, qualification and motivation of human resources have a great effect on customer satisfaction.

The results of the research show a current situation, the further – comprehensive – researches and comparisons, concerning all the supermarkets, will show the success of the developments, the tendency of the changes.

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