Adaption of the Sales Process when Entering a New Market

A Case Study within the Public Safety Industry

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Linnea Lindberg and Karolina Perzon
ABSTRACT

The increasing globalization has lead companies to venture into new areas of business, and thereby new markets. When entering a new market, it is important to gain market knowledge to be able to satisfy the customers’ needs. Companies are no longer competing only with products and services; they are also striving to increase their competitive advantage by improving the processes that ultimately deliver the result. In order to obtain competitive advantages, designing business processes to meet the needs of the customers is therefore vital for companies to succeed. Entries into new markets may therefore require adaption to new customers in order to sustain the purpose of the processes.

For a telecommunications company venturing into the market of Public Safety, changing preconditions for customers are inevitable, why companies must be aware of changes in the customer’s needs and requirements. When preconditions are changed in this sense, adaptions to the supplier’s sales process might be necessary in order to enable building a relationship between the supplier and the customer. The aim of this study is therefore to establish how companies active in the telecommunications industry can adapt their sales process to new customer requirements and needs when entering the market of Public Safety. This to address the issues that may arise when the established sales process is no longer suited to new customers’ needs and requirements.

The thesis is based on a case study at a global telecommunications company, which recently entered the Public Safety market. To create a greater understanding of subjects and findings presented in the report, a literature review touching on the structure of the sales process as well as the preconditions surrounding public procurement is presented. To further create an understanding of the case company’s sales process, nine in–depth interviews were conducted with employees active in the process.

In order to draw conclusions on how the sales process should be adapted to Public Safety, five in–depth interviews with customers were conducted. Through analysis, seven underlying needs of the customers could be identified. Further analysis has focused on whether the case company fulfills these needs and aimed to identify gaps between the sales process and the customers’ procurement process. Based on the analysis, recommendations for companies who are entering markets where the customers have similar needs were formulated.

One major conclusion of this thesis is that customers within the Public Safety market value traits in a supplier that are not specified as requirements in the formal tender documents. Furthermore, the conclusions expand on these traits and touches on their impact on the customer’s assessment of the supplier. The conclusions also connect the findings of the study to the theory presented, consequently emphasizing how companies should adapt their sales processes to better meet the customer needs.
SAMMANFATTNING

Den ökande globaliseringen har lett till att företag väljer att ge sig in i nya affärsområden och därmed nya marknader. Vid inträde på en ny marknad är det viktigt att bygga kunskap om marknaden för att kunna tillfredsställa kundernas behov. Företag konkurrerar inte längre bara med produkter och tjänster, utan strävar även mot att skapa konkurrensfördelar genom att förbättra de processer som slutligen levererar resultat. Detta ställer därför krav på att företagets processer är utformade för att möta kundernas behov. Då företag går in på nya marknader innebär detta att en anpassning av processer kan krävas för att säkerställa att de möter kundens behov och därmed upprätthåller syftet med processerna.


Studien är baserad på en fallstudie vilken genomförts vid ett globalt telekommunikationsföretag som nyligen har gått in på Public Safety-marknaden. För att skapa en större förståelse för de ämnen och resultat som presenteras i rapporten presenteras en litteraturstudie vilken berör säljprocessens struktur samt de förutsättningar som omger offentlig upphandling. För att vidare skapa förståelse för hur fallföretagets säljprocess är utformad har nio intervjuer genomförts med anställda aktiva i processen.

För att dra slutsatser angående hur säljprocessen bör anpassas för Public Safety har fem intervjuer genomförts med kunder inom marknaden. Genom analys har sju underliggande behov för denna typ av kunder identifierats. Vidare analys har fokuserat på huruvida fallföretagets säljprocess möjliggör för organisationen att uppfylla dessa behov och ämnar även identifiera gap mellan den existerande säljprocessen och kundens köpprocess. Baserat på analysen har rekommendationer formulerats för företag som ämnar gå in på en marknad där kunderna har liknande behov.

En viktig slutsats i denna studie är att kunder inom marknaden för Public Safety värdesätter fler egenskaper hos en leverantör än vad som uppges som krav i det formella förfrågningsunderlaget vid upphandling. Vidare utvecklas slutsatserna och berör påverkan dessa egenskaper har på kundens utvärdering av leverantören. I slutsatsen kopplas även studiens resultat till den presenterade teorin och framhåller på så sätt hur företag bör anpassa sina säljprocesser för att möta och uppfylla kundens behov.
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INTRODUCTION

1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the reader is introduced to recent developments in the telecommunication industry and is furthermore presented with a problem discussion leading up to the aim of the study. The problem discussion is used as a basis for the formulation of the four questions which has guided the study, presented together with the aim.

1.1 Background

One of the most significant changes in the world economy over the past two decades has been the growing globalization of markets and industries (Wiersema & Bowen, 2008). Not only does the globalization lead to greater pressure for companies to stay competitive (van Eijndhoven, Iacob & Ponisio, 2008), but it also brings opportunities within large and integrated markets. Although, this means that organizations will need foresight to find new ways of interacting with their customers (Baffour, Awuah & Amal, 2011). This development has according to Wiersema and Bowen (2008) had a significant impact on firms’ international diversification strategies, leading companies to venture into new areas of business. This statement is supported by Dougherty (1990), claiming that the successful development of new solutions for new markets is critical to the viability of many large firms. Dougherty (1990) further states that development of new technologies and the shifting market needs all emphasizes the need for companies to broaden or expand their offerings.

During the past years the interest in the Internet of Things, IoT has increased tremendously (Wortmann & Flüchter, 2015), representing one of the most potential disruptive technological revolutions of modern time (Mohamed, Kawsar, Boussard, & Trappeniers, 2013). By combining physical and digital components, new products and business models are made possible. This, in turn, making IoT a great source of innovation (Wortmann & Flüchter, 2015) and creating opportunities for a large number of new applications (Xia, Yang, Wang, & Vinel, 2012). A development seen in companies active within the telecommunications industry, operating in the development of IoT solutions, is the pursuit of new business areas where existing knowledge and solutions can be applied (Taylor, 2013; Heavy Reading 4G/LTE Insider, 2015). One area acknowledged as a potential lucrative market for these companies to pursue is the market of public Public Safety (Taylor, 2013), including solutions connected to vital public communication in organizations such as emergency agencies, police and military (Gubbia, Marusica, & Palaniswamia, 2013).

In the Public Safety market, telecommunication companies can provide their information and communications technologies to make critical infrastructure components and services more aware, interactive, and efficient in Public Safety contexts (Gubbia et al., 2013). Personnel in Public Safety agencies are showing similar trends to those in the wider society (Taylor, 2013), expressing a need to share information more effectively through pictures, maps and diagram searches (Su & Saunders, 2015). This implies a new potential market for telecommunications solutions traditionally used in commercial purposes.

When entering a new market, Dougherty (1990) stresses the importance of market knowledge and states that an understanding of the marketplace and an ability to satisfy customer needs is essential to a firm’s competitive advantage. Furthermore, DeToro and McCabe (1997) argue
that competition is not just between organizations’ products and services, but also between
how well organizations perform their work. Palmberg (2005) interprets this statement as
implying a focus on the methodologies to manage the processes that ultimately deliver the
result. Further, Botha and von Rensburg (2010) state that companies only will be able to enjoy
a strategic competitive advantage when they succeed in designing their processes according to
the needs of the customer. This implies that telecommunications companies venturing into the
market of Public Safety need to require knowledge of the market situation as well as ensure
that the company’s business processes are adapted to meet the needs of its new customers in
order to succeed. The inability for companies to adapt their processes across critical customer
touch points is claimed as a potential cause of lost opportunities for the firm (Chan, 2005).

One major characteristic of Public Safety customers is that they are often public organizations,
operating under public procurement laws and regulations (Uyarra & Flanagan, 2010). Public
procurement is subject to regional legislations, for example the EU Directives, which are
applied to all countries within the European Union. The directives cover procurement of
works and services in the public sector agencies as well as companies in the utilities sector and
do for instance imply that all tenders over a specified amount have to be advertised in a joint
database (Gelderman et al., 2006), overall posing an important aspect for telecommunications
companies to consider when venturing into Public Safety.

1.2 Problem Discussion
Moving into a new business area it is important that companies are fully aware of the
customer’s needs and requirements (Bhatti, Khan, Ahman, Hussain & ur Rehman, 2011) to be
able to identify profitable opportunities and create customer value and satisfaction
(Suntornpithug, Karaatli, & Khamalah, 2010). Additionally, Chan (2005) claims that focus is
moved towards more integrated and optimized value chains between the company and its
customers, replacing product-centric strategies with customer-centric strategies and thereby
facilitating value creation for the company.

For a telecommunications company venturing into the market of Public Safety, changing
circumstances regarding the customers are inevitable. When entering this new market, the
customer type will move from commercial and private customers to mostly governments and
public sector agencies. This implies that telecommunications companies striving to make this
entry need to be aware of changes in customer needs and requirements throughout the
company’s value chain (Gelderman, Ghijsen & Brugman 2006). Furthermore, the company
needs to create an understanding for public procurement and its associated laws (Gelderman,
Ghijsen & Brugman 2006).

Looking at private customers compared to public customers, a major differences lies in the
customer procurement process (Uyarra & Flanagan, 2010). While private customers have the
option to choose a supplier from the criteria they consider most beneficial, governments and
public sector agencies has to comply to laws and regulations employed in the region which
they are active within (Gelderman et al., 2006; Uyarra & Flanagan, 2010). This implies that
governments and public agencies are often forced to create specification as to what features are
desired, in order to enable companies to compete on equal terms (Gelderman et al., 2006).

Swiss (1992) states that it is important to acknowledge the unique characteristics of the public
sector as opposed to the characteristics of commercial companies. Furthermore, Viio and
Grönroos (2015) states that adoptions of the supplier’s sales process might be needed to enable
or improve the relationship between customer and supplier as the circumstances are changed. Such adaptations require, according to Viio and Grönroos (2015) an understanding of the customer’s procurement process. As a process is intended to create value and meet the needs of the customers (Palmberg, 2009) an adaption to new customers is vital to sustain the purpose of the process.

Reviewing existing literature shows extensive research in the use of information gathered from customers to develop product offerings, as it is frequently mentioned as a source used in product development and product improvement (Slater, Olsen, & Sörensen, 2012). Furthermore, the use of information expressed by customers is additionally mentioned as an element when conducting improvements of business processes. Although, research regarding how this type of information can be used in improving the sales processes specifically is limited. Since the sales process is a key business process and information gained from customers often is regarded as vital for companies to be successful, this shows there is a gap in the research (Viio & Grönroos, 2015). According to Viio and Grönroos (2015) further studies will be necessary in order to examine the relationship between the degree of information collected from customers and the adaption of the sales process. The authors further states that there is a lack of research regarding the type of information needed, and how it should be gathered in order to optimally adapt the sales process.

1.2.1 Aim

Entering a new market where the procurement strategy and customer needs and requirements differs from the company’s traditional customers requires adaption of the company sales process. The aim of the study is to establish how companies within the telecommunications industry can adapt their sales process to new customer needs and requirements when entering the market of Public Safety. This, to address the issues that may arise when the established sales process is no longer suited to new customers’ needs and requirements.

In order for the study to fulfill its aim, four questions have been developed to guide the work as it progresses. The answers to these questions will serve as the basis for the analysis as well as the conclusions drawn regarding the current sales process. The first question intends to create an understanding of how the sales process is designed at a case company, aiming to represent telecommunications companies venturing into the market of Public Safety. The first question is thereby intended to work as a foundation for providing knowledge of the current situation and later for enabling identification of areas where the current sales process could be improved.

Q1: How is the sales process designed and utilized within a telecommunications company?

The focus of the study is based on the needs and requirements of customers within the Public Safety market, where customers’ procurement processes deviates from those of private telecommunications customers. To gain an understanding of new customers’ requirements and needs, information derived from the new customer is crucial. In order to give recommendations regarding how the current sales process can be improved to be better adapted to the new customers, an understanding of the customers needs and requirements must be created.
Q2: What are the needs and requirements of customers when procuring solutions from the Public Safety market?

The third question is intended to identify gaps between the current sales process within the case company and the general procurement process in the customer organizations as well as the customer needs and requirements. An understanding of what gaps there exists and how they affect the output of the sales process will then enable conclusions to be drawn as to how these gaps can be eliminated and how the sales process can best be adapted to new customer requirements and needs.

Q3: What gaps can be identified between the current sales process within a telecommunications company and the Public Safety customer’s needs and requirements in their procurement process?

Based on the previous questions, the final question will combine the knowledge and intelligence gained in order to present suggestions regarding how the sales process in the Public Safety area should be improved to be better adapted to its customers.

Q4: How can companies within the telecommunications industry reduce the gaps between their sales processes and customers’ procurement processes?

Based on the four questions, the method for conducting the study has been developed. Furthermore, the questions have served as a basis for the theoretical framework, which in turn has been formed to support the empirical findings and conclusion drawn. The method and theoretical framework will be presented in chapter 2 and 3 respectively.

1.3 Thesis Disposition

The structure of the thesis is based on the choices presented in the method section, explaining and justifying the choices made. The choices presented in the method will furthermore be reflected throughout the report. Following is a theoretical frame of reference, aiming to define key concepts of the studied subject as well as present previous academic research that contribute to the understanding and further analysis.

The case company’s current sales process as well as a generalization on the customers’ procurement process, based on interviews with internal and external individuals, is presented in the empirical findings. The empirical findings also include the reflections of the case company’s employees and statements expressed by customers. Empirical findings are then analyzed, identifying the customer’s underlying needs and comparing these to the current sales process, in order to identify gaps between the sales process and the best adaption to the customer and its procurement process.

The analysis in full provides a basis for further conclusions drawn from the study, presented in the subsequent chapter. Together with the conclusions, further concretization is presented through recommendations. Finally, a discussion is presented touching on how the thesis contributes to the body of research within the area. Additionally, suggestions for further research are presented. Figure 1.1 presents a visualization of how the chapters included in the
thesis contributes to answering the questions raised in Chapter 1.2 and thereby fulfilling the aim of the thesis.

Figure 1.1: Visualization of how the chapters included in the thesis contributes to answering the questions of the study.
INTRODUCTION
2 METHOD

This chapter presents and motivates the research method applied in the study. The information is presented in order to create an understanding of how the empirical data and results found in the report have been collected and achieved.

This section presents the methodological choices made to answer the questions and reach the aim of the study. As the answers should be reliable and valid, much effort was made to conduct the study through a systematic approach. Through this section, the reader will be guided from the choices of research philosophy and purpose to the final decisions of data collection and analysis. The intention is to clarify how one choice lead to another, hence justifications will be provided explaining how the choices are considered best suited to the specific context of the study. In this sense, the purpose is to give the reader an understanding of how the study have been shaped and how empirical data and results have been collected and established. To get an overview of the methodological choices made, these have been summarized in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: An overview of the methodological choices made, presented together with the chapter where the specific choice is justified.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Choice</th>
<th>Chapter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Philosophy</td>
<td>Interpretivism</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Purpose</td>
<td>Exploratory</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Approach</td>
<td>Abductive</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Strategy</td>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sample Selection</td>
<td>Purposive &amp; Snowball</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Secondary: Documentary Primary: Semi–structured interviews</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Analysis</td>
<td>Voice of the Customer Table Gap–analysis</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.1 Research Philosophy

Based on the way in which the researchers viewed the problem, a certain research philosophy has characterized the study. Through the research, the philosophy has strongly influenced the research strategy and methods employed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 108).

A positivist philosophy is characterized by theorizing by definite laws in the same way as in physical sciences (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 115) while a interpretivist research philosophy implies conducting research among people rather than objects (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 115).
**METHOD**

An interpretivist research philosophy therefore requires the researcher to understand the subjective meaning of social action (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 19). In turn, this generates a challenge in entering the social world of the research subjects and understanding their world from their point of view (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 115).

As this study concerned a unique and complex business situation, an interpretivist philosophy has characterized the study. This was in accordance with Saunders et.al (2009, p. 115) who argues that an interpretivist perspective is highly appropriate in business and management research. Further, a positivist philosophy was considered too restrictive and therefore not suitable in this context. During the study, the philosophy has functioned as a guideline for suitable data collection techniques, such as using small samples and qualitative data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 119).

2.2 Research Purpose

Depending on in which way the research questions are formulated, Saunders, et al. (2009, pp. 138–139) states that the research purpose can be either exploratory, descriptive, explanatory or a combination. This is supported by Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 58) who argues that the structure of the problem is decisive.

The emphasis of an explanatory purpose is to study a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationship between variables (Saunders, et al., 2009, p. 140). As Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 59) explain, the problem under scrutiny is structured and well understood, and the main task is to isolate causes and tell whether and to which degree causes result in effect. As such actions neither were applicable, nor desirable, in this research, an explanatory purpose was excluded.

A descriptive research purpose requires the problem to be structured and well understood (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 59) prior to data collection (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140). This was the main reason why this alternative was excluded, as there were uncertainties of the precise nature of the research problem.

The exploratory research purpose possess great advantages as it is flexible and adaptable to change, implying that new data and new insights can constitute the foundation for a change in direction (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 58; Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140). An exploratory research implies flexibility (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 58), something that might be perceived as a sign of absence of direction. Although, according to Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991), this should rather be interpreted as an initially broad focus, which progressively narrows as the research progresses.

As there were uncertainties regarding the precise nature of the research problem sought to be clarified, an exploratory research purpose was applied (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 140). Furthermore, an exploratory research purpose was seen as valuable since a phenomenon was assessed in a new light and as new insights are sought (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 139), which corresponded well to the case company’s desire of a new perspective. Conducting an exploratory research, the key skills required are the ability to observe, get information and construct an explanation (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 58). For this specific research, these skills were considered reasonable and contributing to the overall aim. Thereby, the choice of an exploratory research purpose was further supported.
2.3 Research Approach

Regarding the approach to the conducted study, Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 14) suggests two main approaches that could be applied, namely deduction and induction. This suggestion is also supported by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 124) and Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 11), although Saunders et al. argue abduction as a third possible approach.

The inductive approach focuses, according to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 124), on the researcher’s understanding of the nature of the problem. Furthermore the authors describe the approach as revolving around the collection of data on which conclusions and theory can be based. Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 16) describe it as the process of observing facts to generate a theory.

According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 124), deduction involves the development of a theory that is subjected to rigorous testing. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 11) describes the approach as testing a hypothesis deduced from previous theory which is then subject to empirical scrutiny. This description is further supported by Saunders et al. (2012, p. 124) and Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 14) who conclude that a deductive approach enables the researcher to make comparisons between the tested hypothesis and the empirical results, and by that confirming or rejecting the hypothesis. As the aim of the study was not to test a hypothesis deduced from previous theory, this alternative was excluded.

Abduction is by Suddaby (2006, pp. 633–642) described as a combination of the deductive and the inductive approach. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 149) also describes a combination of induction and deduction in which the research is initiated with an inductive approach developing theory by a series of observations, and further proceeding with a deductive approach, testing the predictions formed. Saunders et al. (2012, p. 149) further states that this combination is compliant to the behaviors in business and management in that it is helpful when predicting and explaining behaviors.

The approach for the conducted study have been abductive, focusing on collected data as a base for development of a theoretical framework whilst continuously evolving the method of collecting data by exploring new theories. The research has its basis in both theory as well as empirical findings from which conclusions have been drawn, further supporting the chosen abductive approach. Although, the study places greater emphasize on the inductive elements of the abductive research as there has been a focus on understanding the nature of the problem and drawing conclusions based on collected data.

2.4 Research Strategy

According to Saunders et al. (2012, p. 173), the aim of a research strategy is to act as a guide as to how the research will be conducted in order to answer the set questions. There are a number of approaches to choose from when it comes to selecting a research strategy (Yin, 2009, p. 8). Yin (2009, pp. 8–9) states that the choice of research strategy should be based on the formulation of the questions along with the focus and requirements the questions entails. Yin (2009, p. 8) additionally proposes that the choice between possible strategies can be made based on three conditions, illustrated in Table 2.2.
METHOD

Table 2.2: The different types of research strategies and how they are positioned in regard to three different conditions providing the basis for deciding research strategy. Modified from Yin (2009, p. 8).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Form of Research Questions</th>
<th>Requires Control of Behavioral Events</th>
<th>Focuses on Contemporary Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experiment</td>
<td>How? Why?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Study</td>
<td>How? Why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes/No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History</td>
<td>How? Why?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The conducted study did not require control of behavioral events and focused mainly on contemporary events. According to Table 2.2, this implies that both the experimental strategy as well as the history strategy was not suitable for this study. According to Saunders et al. (2009, p. 150) the archival research strategy focuses mainly on administrative records and documents as a principle source of data, and therefore having a stronger focus on past events. Since the conducted study had a stronger focus on contemporary events and future development, nor this strategy was considered suitable.

The survey strategy is by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 144) described as associated with the deductive approach and tends to be used for exploratory and descriptive research. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 144) also state that the survey strategy allows for the collection of a large amount of data from a sizable population, which then can be analyzed quantitatively. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 144) additionally states that when using this strategy, it is important to ensure that the sample is representative and that the response rate is acceptable. Due to the limited populations studied in this research, the survey strategy was not seen as entirely applicable.

The focus of the study was based on contemporary processes used within the telecommunications industry with the aim to develop suggestions as for how organizations venturing into the market of Public Safety can improve their sales processes. Therefore, a case study was determined to be the most suitable alternative. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 145) describe the case strategy as an empirical investigation of a contemporary phenomenon. This description is supported by Yin (2009, p. 4) who further states that it allows for holistic descriptions of real life events. The fact that the case study strategy gives the opportunity to explore theories in a real life context, clarifying the complexity of the situation, is according to Myers (2009, p. 80) one of the advantages of this strategy. Myers (2009, p. 82) further states that the complexity can lead researchers to have a difficulty clarifying the scope of the research, risking for data collection to be too extensive. This requires, according to Myers (2009, p. 82) a focus on the important issues, which can be hard to identify if knowledge within the area is limited.
Yin (2009, p. 47) makes a distinction in case study designs between a single case study and a multiple case study. According to Yin (2009, p. 47) a single-case study can be rationalized if the situation studied is critical when testing a well-formulated theory. Yin (2009, p. 47) states that a single case study can be used to confirm, challenge or extend existing theory and by that could facilitate a refocus of future investigations in the field. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 146) further states that a single case study can provide the researcher with an opportunity to observe a phenomenon that has not been considered before. Although Yin (2009, p. 61) points out that a single-case design is vulnerable and often criticized based on the artificial conditions and uniqueness surrounding the case. Yin (2009, p. 62) also states that when choosing a single-case design strong arguments should be made to justify the choice.

Saunders et al. (2009, pp. 146–147) describes a multiple case study as focusing on a need to compare results between cases, and thereby generalize from the study’s findings. A multiple-case design is therefore, according to Yin more robust (2009, p. 53) as analytical conclusions arise independently from multiple cases. Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2005, p. 192) supports this statement as they highlight that a multiple case study will allow for the phenomena to be considered in more than one context. Yin (2009, pp. 60–61) additionally states that a multiple-case design is preferred over single-case designs since multiple cases can provide substantial analytical benefits.

In addition to the distinction between single-case design and multiple-case design, Yin (2009, p. 50) describes another dimension distinguishing between holistic and embedded case studies. Yin (2009, p. 50) describes the holistic approach as a study of the global nature of an organization whilst an embedded case study describes only part of the organization and as separate units. Yin further states that embedded as well as holistic approaches might be used in both single and multiple case studies (2009, p. 59). The choice should be made to best suit the type of case studied as well as the set research questions (Yin, 2009 p. 59).

This thesis has been formed as a single case study, based on a new business area connected to Public Safety within a case company. The choice of case company was made as it was considered a representative company, traditionally providing telecommunications products and services and currently experiencing the effects of broadening its offerings to suit new customers in new business areas. Although Yin (2009, p. 61) claims single case studies as vulnerable and often criticized, the limited time frame of the project played a significant role, which made a multiple case study difficult to conduct. The study was further conducted as an embedded case study where focus was on the underlying needs of the customers in the Public Safety market.

2.5 Sample Selection

The method of selecting a sample, referring to a segment of the population investigated, can be based on a probability or non-probability approach (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 182). As the method of probability sampling implies that a sample has been selected using random selection (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 182), this approach was not chosen. It was not considered useful as only a selected few individuals were interesting and had enough insight in the subject of the study, more precisely employees involved in the specific processes. In that sense, a non-probability sampling technique was chosen.

Three non-probability approaches are presented by Bryman and Bell (2007, pp. 197–201); namely convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling. Besides these, Ghauri

As proposed by Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 155) the purpose of qualitative research is seldom to arrive at statistically valid conclusions, but rather to understand, gain insight and create explanations. In accordance, quota sampling was excluded, as there was no desire to reflect a population in terms of the relative proportions of people in different categories (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 201). Convenience sampling, entailing choosing a sample that is simply available (Bryman & Bell, 2007, pp. 197–198) was excluded as there was difficulties in identifying members of the desired population. Lastly, in self-selection individuals identify their desire to take part in a research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 241), which not was considered suitable as only individuals with specific knowledge were of interest.

Judgmental sampling enables the researchers to use their judgment in selecting cases that are considered to best enable addressing the questions and objectives of the research (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 237). Furthermore, snowball sampling implies that contact is established with a small group of people relevant to the research topic, who later are used to establish contact with others (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 200). As these two sampling techniques enables selecting a narrower range of samples, closely connecting to the objective of the study, these were applied. Judgmental sampling made its possible to contact only the individuals who were considered to possess the desired experience and expertise, while snowball sampling was utilized to find more individuals of interest. For this study, the sample selection included employees at the case company as well as customers from companies active within the Public Safety market.

2.5.1 Case Company

At the case company, employees working in different sub-processes of the sales process were chosen, in order to gain a holistic view of the sales process and obtain insights as to how they perceived the prevailing situation. Also managers at regional and global levels were selected, to create an understanding of their more strategic and overall perspective. Some of the managers were also involved in the sales process, which combines the two perspectives mentioned. The selection was conducted through snowball sampling, as representatives at the case company could give leads on employees strategic to the purpose of the study. More details on the sample selection are provided in Table 2.3, which covers specific roles and a description of how they are relevant to the study.
Table 2.3: The roles of employees at the case company presented together with a description of how they are connected to the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Fulfillment Responsible</td>
<td>Involved in the sales process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Manager</td>
<td>Involved in the sales process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account Manager</td>
<td>Involved in the sales process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Holistic view of the business area and its challenges.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further detail on the role of the interviewee, the structure of the specific interview, topics covered and length of the interview, a table is provided in Appendix 1.

2.5.2 Customers

Customers were selected in order to gain an understanding of the design of the procurement processes, customer needs and requirements, and by that also what qualities customers value in a supplier when procuring solutions related to Public Safety. Two of the selected customers had contact with the case company at the time of their interviews, the remaining had no contact with the case company but extensive experience in purchasing Public Safety solution through public procurement. The customers were selected through judgmental sampling, as only organizations with a connection to the Public Safety industry were desired. Furthermore, snowball sampling was used as personnel could refer to other individuals with more knowledge or experience in the field. To provide a background and an understanding of their experience, the roles of the individuals interviewed are described in Table 2.4.
### METHOD

Table 2.4: The customers included in the study, presented together with their role in the organization and a description of their tasks and organization.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Procurer</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Technical Officer, previously Purchaser</td>
<td>National agency procuring solutions connected to Public Safety. Has experience of the case company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>National agency procuring solutions connected to Public Safety. Has experience of the case company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Project Lead</td>
<td>Responsible for procurement process for a Command and Control solution on national level. Does not have experience of the case company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>National Lead</td>
<td>Involved at board level in the procurement of national public safety solutions. Does not have experience of the case company.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Chief Constable and CEO</td>
<td>National responsibility for police procurement in the UK. Does not have experience of the case company.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For further detail on the role of the interviewee, the structure of the specific interview, topics covered and length of the interview, a table is provided in Appendix 2.

#### 2.6 Data Collection

Data collection can be conducted through secondary and primary data sources. This study has collected both secondary and primary data, implying that information previously collected for other purposes was combined with original data collected for the specific study (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 90). The following section will provide greater detail about the respective sources of data.

##### 2.6.1 Secondary Data

Secondary data has been utilized as it has aided in understanding and explaining the research problem (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 91) and in turn could assist in problem formulation and creating more focused questions in the study (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 92). The use of secondary data can further broaden the base from which scientific conclusions can be drawn, giving a positive impact on the validity and reliability of the study (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 95).

The greatest advantage of using secondary data is according to Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 95) the enormous savings in time and monetary resources, which is considered beneficial given the restrictions of the study performed. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 258) explains that secondary data frequently are collected to constitute a part of a case study in business and management research, supporting the suitability of including secondary data in this research.

By definition, secondary data includes both raw data and published summaries (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 256). As most organizations collect and store a variety of data to support their operations (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 256), organizational documents provide a rich source for...
METHOD

secondary data. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 566) states that organizational documents are of particular importance to business and management researchers but also points out that often only some of these can be found in the public domain. Documents such as organizational charts and external consultancy reports might not exist in the public domain but could provide the researcher with valuable background of the company (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 566). In order to build up a description of the organization and the background to the problem studied, both documents found in the public domain and internal documents were collected.

The secondary data collected were mainly documentary data (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 258), but also secondary data such as internal documents and correspondence were collected. In order to build a frame of reference, different search engines such as Google Scholar and Scopus were used to collect relevant literature and find academic journals. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 258) mentions that documentary secondary data often are used in research projects that also use primary data collection methods.

Another type of secondary data described by Saunders et al. (2009, p. 259) is survey–based secondary data, consisting of data collected using a survey strategy. As this type of data were not considered relevant or value adding to the specific study, it has been excluded. Lastly, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 262) also covers multiple–source secondary data, combining documentary or survey–secondary data, or a combination of the two, a source not included in this study.

2.6.2 Primary Data

Primary data is according to Ghauri and Grönhaug (2005, p. 102) collected for the particular project or research at hand, implying a great advantage as data is more consistent with the questions and objectives of the specific research. Normally, primary data includes observations, experiments, surveys, and interviews (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 102). Because of the context the problem was studied in, where personnel’s perceptions and opinions were of great importance, it was decided to collect primary data through interviews. Thereby observations, experiments, and surveys were excluded as they were not considered sufficient to extract crucial information.

Saunders et al. (2009, p. 318) claims that interviews can aid in gathering valid and reliable data that is relevant for the objective and purpose of the study. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 472) also argues that the flexibility of interviews makes it attractive in collecting primary data in qualitative research, supporting the decision made. Saunders et al. (2009, p. 320) suggests three categories of interviews; structured interviews, semi–structured interviews and unstructured or in–depth interviews. Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 474) claim that two of these are most suitable in qualitative research, namely semi–structured and unstructured interviews.

Structured interviews can be compared to questionnaires as they are based on a predetermined and standardized set of questions (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320). Mainly, structured interviews are used to collect quantifiable data (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 132) and were therefore not chosen as a source of primary data.

Semi–structured and un–structured interviews are by Bryman and Bell (2007, p. 474) referred to as methods in qualitative interviewing, in which there is a much greater interest in the interviewee’s point of view. Compared to structured interviews, these are described as non–standardized (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320). For semi–structured interviews themes and topics to be covered are prepared in advance (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 474). Although, themes and
topics may vary between interviews given specific organizational contexts. Furthermore, it is common that also other questions than planned are asked (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 320). In unstructured interviews, the interviewee is given almost full liberty to discuss their opinion on a particular issue (Ghauri & Grönhaug, 2005, p. 132). The interviewer may ask just a single question and thereafter the interviewee is allowed to respond freely (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 474).

For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted. As previously mentioned, this study is exploratory which implied that semi-structured interviews were considered the most suitable way of collecting primary data. This way of applying qualitative interviewing has shown to be more flexible, as the direction of the interview might lead to adjustments in the emphasis of the study (Bryman & Bell, 2007, p. 474). As an abductive approach characterized the study, the flexibility described was desired, meaning that the utilization of semi-structured and unstructured interviews was further supported.

2.6.3 Data Collection in Regards to Sample Selection
As presented in section 2.5, Sample Selection, the selection consisted of employees at the case company and representatives from procuring organizations. Regarding the customers, these were active within or had been active within organizations purchasing solutions connected to Public Safety. Based on the sample selection and the methodological choices made regarding primary and secondary data, these have been combined in order to give a structure to which type of data that would be of use for each type of sample selection. This information is summarized in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: The secondary and primary data collected regarding the case company as well as the customers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary Data</th>
<th>Case Company</th>
<th>Customers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reports and internal documents.</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Data</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews.</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2.7 Data Analysis
As interviews were conducted, transcripts were written. Quotes from each transcript were selected and assigned a category. For the interviews performed with customers, the categories were “Way of working”, including quotes of how the procurement process was managed in each organization, and “Opinions and perceptions” which rather regarded how the customers perceived contact with potential suppliers during the procurement. For the latter, additional categories were assigned depending on what the specific quote regarded, for instance “Partnership” or “Professionalism”. All quotes belonging to the same category was then complied, and one quote from each category were selected to be further analyzed through Voice of the Customer Table, which is described in greater detail below.

Also for the interviews conducted at the case company, quotes were selected and assigned to the categories “Way of working”, including details on how the sales process was performed,
and “Opinions and perceptions” including quotes on how the employees perceived the current way of working. The latter was used to create an understanding of the prevailing sales process.

The quotes regarding how the sales process and the procurement process respectively are design constituted the foundation for identifying major gaps between the two. The information retrieved from the Voice of the Customer Table was used to further identify gaps between the case company’s sales process and its ability to fulfill the needs and requirements of the customers.

2.7.1 Voice of the Customer Table

The Voice of the Customer Table, VoCT, is a term describing the process of capturing the voice of the customers, including requirements, desires and proposals, through a product—development technique that produces a detailed set of customer wants and needs (Gaskin, Griffin, Hauser, Katz, & Klein, 2010). The process is not only applied in developing products and services, but also in process design (Gaskin et al., 2010). The VoCT process can be broken down into four phases, described in greater detail in the work by Gustafsson (1998). These four phases has constituted the foundation of how the information gained from customers has been structured and analyzed throughout this study. To better align the result of the VoCT to the purpose of this study, some modifications were made, creating a three—step process as described in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: Applied method for analyzing data collected from customers. Modified from Gustafsson (1998)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The first step implied summarizing the data collected from customers in a table called Customer Context Table, CCT, containing information somehow expressed by the specific customer regarding which customer it concerned, what, when in the procuring process, why and how. This information can be both spoken and unspoken by the customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In the second step, the spoken and unspoken requirements and needs presented in the CCT were transformed to concise statements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In the third step, these statements were transferred to a new table called Customer Voice Table, CVT, where they were analyzed in order to identify underlying needs and requirements of the customers. This information was further used to identify desired process attributes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results obtained through the VoCT have been used as a basis for identifying gaps between the case company’s current sales process and the needs and requirements of the customers.

2.8 Critical Review of Research Method

In order to assess the credibility of the research findings, a critical review of the research method have been performed. To reduce the possibility of drawing incorrect conclusions, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 156) suggests paying attention to the reliability and validity of the research design, why the two have been elaborated on in this section.
2.8.1 Reliability

Reliability is described as the extent to which the employed data collection techniques or analysis procedures would yield consistent findings (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 156). As the methodological choices made during the study are presented in a logical order, it facilitates repeating the study, and in terms increases the reliability of the study. Although, Saunders et al. (2009, p. 327) state that the findings derived from using non-standardized research methods are not necessarily intended to be repeatable as they reflect the reality at the time they were collected. What mainly was considered to affect the repeatability in this study was the selection of customer interviewees, as their experience and the region they were active within might have had an impact on the collected data.

Saunders et al. (2009) explains that there are certain threats to reliability depending on how the data was collected. For semi-structured interviews, the lack of standardization may lead to concerns about reliability regarding whether alternative researchers or interviewers would reveal similar information (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 326). Furthermore, various types of bias might pose a threat to a study based on semi-structured interviews. The first concerns interviewer bias, as the comments, tone or non-verbal behavior of the interviewer might affect how the interviewee responds (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 326). As the interviews performed with customers have been conducted over telephone, the risk of non-verbal behavior was minimized. As the topics covered not regarded personal matters, the risk of the interviewee not feeling comfortable to share its opinions or experiences was considered low.

Also interviewee bias is mentioned, implying that interviewees may choose not to reveal and discuss an aspect of the topic the research wish to explore, since it could lead to probing questions that would intrude on sensitive information that the interviewee might not wish or is not allowed to share (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 326). This threat has been experienced to some extent during two of the interviews with customers, as topics related to public procurement were considered sensitive. The remaining customer interviewees had recently left their roles related to public procurement, implying that these interviewees were not concerned whether they would reveal too much information. Regarding the interviews at the case company, the respondents were encouraged to participate and share their thoughts by their manager. As their input would be used to develop recommendations possibly improving their situation, they were outspoken during the interviews and were never perceived to withhold information.

Lastly, bias may also result from the nature of the individuals or organizational participants who agree to be interviewed, as the time-consuming requirements may imply a reduction in willingness to take part (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 326). At the case company, the sample selection was made through snowball sampling, meaning that the interviewees were recommended for the study by previous interviewees. Regarding customers, the sample selection was conducted through judgmental as well as snowball sampling. In both cases, all the desired interviewees were willing to participate. In terms, the threat of this bias was considered low.

2.8.2 Validity

In order to ensure the quality of the study, different forms of validity have been acknowledged and preventive actions have been applied. Yin (2009, pp. 40–44) defines construct validity, internal validity, and external validity as three main tests used to establish the quality of the research.
Saunders et al. (2009, p. 373) describes construct validity as to which extent measurements actually measures what was intended. The term is normally associated with quantitative research and that it is normally used when referring to constructs such as attitude scales, aptitude and personality tests (Saunders et al., 2009, p. 373). Furthermore, Yin (2009, pp. 41–42) states that construct validity is especially challenging in case study research. Internal validity is, according to Yin (2009, pp. 42–43), mainly a concern for explanatory case studies. Yin continues stating that measurements for internal validity is therefore inapplicable to descriptive or exploratory studies.

Saunders et al. (2009, p. 158) defined external validity as to which extent the results are generalizable, that is, whether the findings are equally applicable to other research settings. Yin (2009, pp. 43–44) states that external validity traditionally has been a barrier in case studies since it is claimed to offer a poor basis for generalization. Although, Yin (2009, p. 43) argues that rather than relying on statistical generalizations, case studies can rely on analytical generalizations. This means that the researcher strives to generalize a particular set of results to a broader theory. To be able to improve the opportunity to generalize the results, Merriam (1988, p. 187) states that it is imperative that the context of the case is described. This will, according to the author, ensure that everyone interested in transferring the results will have sufficient information as basis for the assessment. Merriam (1988, p. 188) also suggests cross–analysis within the case or between cases as an alternative method to increase external validity.

Having an exploratory research purpose, methods to increase internal validity were not relevant for this study. To increase the construct validity, multiple sources of information has been used. Additionally, a chain of evidence has been established to enable external observers to follow the steps from the initial questions to the final conclusions. Furthermore, key informants have reviewed drafts of the report to be able to reassure the accuracy of the results, a method recommended by Yin (2009, p. 41) to increase construct validity. In order to increase external validity, a thorough description of the case company’s sales process have been created. Furthermore, employee reflections of the sales process have been documented, creating additional understanding of the context of the case.

By initiating contact with customers both currently in contact with the case company as well as customers who are not directly involved in public procurement, the risk of a biased customer perception is reduced. In order to ensure a deep understanding of the case company preconditions and practices, the study was conducted during a five–month period. Continuous contact with supervisors, both at the case company as well as at Luleå University of Technology, has further increased the validity of the study.
How the presented literature has been aimed to aid in answering the questions of the study is presented in Figure 3.1. The figure further contains information on whether the literature is intended to create an understanding of the case company’s sales process, the customers’ procurement process or provide a basis for analysis and drawing conclusions. Depending on the complexity of concepts and their impact on the study, each subject is described to a varied extent. Together with the empirical findings, the literature is intended to reach the aim of the study, namely how companies within the telecommunications industry can adapt their sales process to new customer requirements and needs when entering the market of Public Safety.

![Figure 3.1: Information on how the provided literature is aided to answer the questions of the study, combined with whether it is intended to create an understanding or provide a basis for analysis and conclusions.](image)

### 3.1 Business Processes

Business processes are described as a central point of a process-oriented corporate design (Becker & Kahn, 2003). As stated by Becker and Kahn (2003), compared to the organizational structure that divides the organization into partial systems such as departments and divisions with their assigned tasks, a business process deals with the execution of these tasks and coordinative aspects such as “who does what?”, “how?” and “with what?” (Esswein, 1993). Examples of business processes are the order processing in a factory, the routing business of a retailer or the credit assignment of a bank (Becker & Kahn, 2003). Another key business process presented by Viio (2011) is the sales process of an organization.

There is a wide range of definitions of business processes. Lindsey, Downs and Lunn (2003) present the definition of business processes proposed by Hammer and Champy (1993) as the most general; namely a “Set of partially ordered activities intended to reach a goal”. Similar to
Hammer and Champy, Merino and Elguezabal (2005) refers to business processes as "A collection of activities that are required to achieve a business goal and is represented with an activity flow that specifies the orchestration needed to complete the goal".

Lindsey et al. (2003) further presents Jacobson’s (1995) way of defining the concept as more specific, also including a customer focus; “The set of internal activities performed to serve a customer”. The focus on customers also appears in Becker and Kahn’s (2003) approach to business processes, saying; “Essential features of a business process are interfaces to the business partners of the company, such as customers and suppliers”.

The work by Esfahani, Rahman and Zakaria (2013) rather suggests the definition formulated by Tinnila (1995); “A group of logically related tasks that use the resources of the organization to provide defined results in support of the organization’s objectives”. Instead of formulating a specific definition, Ould (1995) lists a few key features of business processes; contain purposeful activity, a group performs it collaboratively, it often crosses functional boundaries and that external agents or customers always are the driving forces.

As indicated above, also more recent literature refers to definitions originating in the late 20th century. This could be interpreted as the result of there being no significant progress in providing an updated definition, or that there has not been any need for an update. In this study, the definition suggested by Tinnila (1995) with complements from Ould’s (1995) view of business processes will be used.

3.1.1 Process Categorizations

Palmberg (2009) presents four categories representing different levels or hierarchy of processes; process, sub-process, activities and tasks. Walsh (1995) explains that processes are disaggregated into sub-processes, which in turn are divided into activities and a number of tasks. The work is done at task level, referred to as the smallest unit of work (Walsh, 1995). The hierarchy of processes is presented in Figure 3.2.

![Figure 3.2: The hierarchy of processes as presented by Palmberg (2009).]
3.2 Sales Process

In 1980, the linear model called Seven steps of selling was presented by Dubinsky and has since constituted the base of most existing models in business-to-business sales processes (Åge, 2011). Even today, the sales process model presented by Dubinsky is widely popular and continuously used (Viio, 2011). Traditionally, this way of characterizing the sales process is composed by the steps presented in Figure 3.3.

![Figure 3.3: The Seven steps of selling as presented by Dubinsky](image-url)

Recently, there has been efforts made to develop the sequential Seven steps of selling to better reflect the dynamic and repeatable nature of the sales process in the real business context (Åge, 2011). Characteristics of this context are for instance the expanding strategic role of selling within organizations, team-based approaches to selling and increased buyer knowledge and sophistication (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005). Also technological advances and long-term relationships with customers are driving forces for an updated view of the sales process (Ingram, LaForge, Avila, Schwepker, & Williams, 2008).

Inspired by Dubinsky, Moncrief and Marshall in 2005 proposed an alternative evolved sales process model. Grounded on transformations which has occurred in the markets, Moncrief and Marshall points out a need for a more relationship-oriented model. Unlike Dubinsky model, where the steps are sequential and the salesperson is assumed to work his way through each step, the model proposed by Moncrief and Marshall assumes that a sales person or a sales team will perform the steps in collaboration (Viio, 2011). Furthermore, Moncrief and Marshall’s model also takes into consideration that the steps do not have to occur for each sales opportunity and that the sequence of the steps not has to be given according a predetermined order (Åge, 2011) as illustrated in Figure 3.4.

![Figure 3.4: The evolved selling process and its seven steps. Modified from Åge (2011).](image-url)
The model proposed by Moncrief and Marshall (2005), called The evolved selling process has gained a lot of attention and is suggested to better match with modern selling (Viio, 2011). To summarize, the steps are described in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: The steps and corresponding descriptions of The evolved selling process developed by Moncrief and Marshall (2005).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer Retention and Deletion</td>
<td>Refers to planning and acting in order to utilize the organization’s sales resources as efficiently as possible. The fundamental focus is the return on the time invested in the customer account. Tasks may include: finding new potential customers, increasing the sales value of existing customer accounts, outsourcing small accounts to be handled by a partner, or cancel unprofitable customer relationships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Database and Knowledge Management</td>
<td>Refers to technology-supported information gathering and pre-validation of the customers, but also to information gathering used to help the seller to positioning the service or product to ultimately make it as attractive as possible from the buyer’s view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurturing the Relationship (Relationship Selling)</td>
<td>The objective is to create a foundation for a long-term relationship instead of focusing on maximizing profit in the short term. Long-term goals prevail and set the pace of the sales work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing the Product</td>
<td>It is proposed that the traditional presentations that the salesman used to conduct are not the main reason for visiting a customer anymore, much due to technological advancements. Today information can be transmitted to a customer for instance by e-mail or through a website. The salesman of today is a part of the marketing team, and is participating in the segmentation of markets, strategy building and the construction of business cases.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
<td>Proposes a view of the salesperson as a problem solver rather than a persuader. The salesperson of today has to be prepared to solve problems, rather than simply offering off-the-shelf products. Each customer is unique, and so are his or her needs. The goal is not to make a quick win, but rather to create a mutually beneficial business, referred to as a win-win situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding Value/Satisfying Needs</td>
<td>States that overall, the seller must bring added value to the customer. As Moncrief and Marshall (2005) state, “Win-win relationships that build on customer satisfaction and added value do not require a closing technique to bring the parties together in agreement”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Relationship Maintenance</td>
<td>Refers to staying in contact with the customer after the first sale. The methods may vary, but their essence and the reasoning largely are the same: the goal is to keep the customer satisfied.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.2.1 Roles in the sales process

The roles in the sales process studied in literature is mainly concentrated to regard key account management, account management and sales people. Sales in a business-to-business context are increasingly associated with account management and solution development (Storbacka, Ryals, Davies, & Nenonen, 2009). The sales function is increasingly taking on a relationship management role, one noticeable manifestation of this in business-to-business selling is the emergence of key account management, KAM, or strategic account management, SAM, as a strategic sales activity (Storbacka et al., 2009).

The key account manager, conducting consultative and solution selling activities, is by Storbacka et al. (2009) compared to have become a guardian of the customer relationship. The
role of the key account manager is not limited to selling new products and services, but also to manage the ongoing relationship with the customer, to coordinate delivery and customer service, and to oversee the profitability given by the relationship (McDonald, Rogers & Woodburn, 2000).

In customer–focused organizations, the overcoming of functional boundaries and the development of cross–functional teams is identified as important aspects (Homburg, Workman, & Jensen, 2000). This can be connected to the account manager whose role is to ensure customer profitability (McDonald et al., 2000) and integrate and reconfigure resources from other functional departments to ultimately satisfy customer requirements (Eisenhardt & Martin, 2000).

As there has been a shift from product to service selling in many business–to–business interactions (Vargo & Lusch, 2004), this development has widened the constituency involved in the sales and delivery process (Storbacka et al., 2009). In order for sales people to succeed in such a context, it is crucial they possess knowledge held by marketing (such as unique selling features, value in use, competitive advantage), operations (such as delivery timelines and reliability) and finance (information about profit and loss), which call for greater internal communication (Storbacka et al., 2009).

3.3 Sales Process Adaption

As customers are becoming more sophisticated and better informed (McDonald et al., 2000), the sales process is currently less concerned with selling a product and more concerned about creating a relationship between supplier and customer (Viio & Grönnroos, 2015). Business relationships can be described as a process of matching (Grönnroos & Helle, 2010, 2012) or aligning (Corsaro & Snehota, 2011) the operations between two companies. Hence, adopting a relationship focus implies that at least one of the partners adapts to the other (Brennan, Turnbull, & Wilson, 2003).

Relationship orientation can be referred to as a process of engaging in or maintaining a mutually profitable and rewarding business relationship with a buyer, realized through adaption of key business processes, in particular in the sales process (Viio, 2011). In terms, initiating a business relationship may involve the seller having to adapt their sales process to the procurement process of the buyer (Viio & Grönnroos, 2015). Even though, the sales process is most often portrayed from the selling firm’s point of view, implying a low focus on the buyers and their procurement process (Viio & Grönnroos, 2015).

To enable and improve the relationship initiation with the buyer, it is critical that the selling organization understands both the sales process of its own organization as well as the procurement process of the customer (Rackham & DeVincentis; 1999 and Viio & Grönnroos, 2014). The more extensive the seller’s knowledge of the buyer’s procurement process is, the more accurate and effective the adaption of the sales process to the procurement process can be (Viio & Grönnroos, 2015).

The adaption of the sales process refers to the degree to which the selling organization adapts its sales process from the organization’s standard, requiring both ability and willingness to adapt. The willingness can be influenced by the support given by management, while the ability rather depends on the flexibility of the sales process (Viio & Grönnroos, 2015). More comprehensive adoptions often demand that the parties share information (Canning &
Brennan, 2004), why Viio and Grönroos (2015) suggests that the buyer has the important role of enabling the seller's sales process adaption through sharing information. Viio and Grönroos (2015) claim that further research is necessary to offer managerial guidelines on implementing a highly adaptable sales process. For instance, research is suggested in fields as what type of information, when, and from whom the selling organization needs to obtain it to adapt the sales process in the most beneficial sense.

3.4 Public Procurement

According to Uyarra and Flanagan (2010) public procurement refers to “the acquisition of goods and services by governments or public sector organizations”. Furthermore, Uyarra and Flanagan (2010) state that a distinction can be made between a more general form of public procurement and what is referred to as “public technology procurement”. Public technology procurement occurs when a public agency places an order or acts to purchase a product or service that has yet to be developed. The more general definition of public procurement is based on a purchased made from pre-existing information regarding price, quantity and performance, given the existence of standardized markets (Uyarra & Flanagan, 2010).

With public procurement follows political as well as other types of risk and incentive structures, which have a clear differentiation from that in the private sectors. Public procurement have to comply to a specific legal and regulatory framework that applies its own requirements in order to ensure transparency and non-disclosure, which can result in a greater reluctance to risk in procurement (Uyarra & Flanagan, 2010).

According to Uayar and Flanagan (2010), different procurement strategies of the public sector will influence the demand which suppliers are confronted with, particularly the firms for whom the public sector is an essential part of the customer base. Furthermore Uyarra and Flanagan (2010) state that the buying situation will in turn create a need for different types of buyer–supplier relationships, depending on the complexity of the product or service, the need for frequent exchange of information, and the length of the contract.

Innovation is often stated as a driving factor for applying public procurement regulations (Edquist et al., 2000; Edler and Georghiou, 2007; Uyarra and Flanagan, 2010; Brammer and Walker, 2011). Brammer and Walker (2011) state that a large body of research examines how public procurement can boost innovative activity among companies within a region. Supporting this statement, Uayarra and Flanagan (2010) state that public procurement is increasingly seen as an attractive instrument for furthering the goals of innovation policies.

Another area which has emerges from existing research explores the impact of public procurement on economic activity, specifically on the tendency of public procurement to favor relatively local over foreign suppliers (Brammer & Walker, 2011). Uyarra and Flanagan state that public procurement shapes the demand environment in which suppliers innovate and compete and provides examples of how it can act as a driving force for achieving greater efficiency in public sector spending as well as encourage local economic development.

A number of objectives for governmental or public sector organizations to use public procurement, besides from the impact on local economic growth and innovative power, is mentioned in the literature (Gelderman et al., 2006; Uyarra and Flanagan, 2010; Brammer and Walker, 2011; Sorte, 2015). Uyarra and Flanagan (2010) exemplify greater production efficiencies as a possible impact while Gelderman et al. (2006) state that ensuring transparency
and thereby avoiding discrimination are important driving forces. Furthermore, Sorte (2015) states that public procurement can be used as a pulling mechanism to stimulate private investment and to influence entrepreneurship and R&D activities as well as to promote the growth of local industries.

3.4.1 Request for Information and Request for Proposal

Request for information and request for proposal are two of four procurement terms (also request for quotation and request for tender exists), which have steadily grown in popularity in procurement and purchasing, especially amongst larger buying organizations (Mhay & Coburn, 2016). The choice of which document to use for which type of sourcing project depends on the desired outcome – if it is information or a proposal that is sought (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016).

Request for Information

A request for information, RFI, is in simple terms described as an open enquiry that spans the market seeking broad data and understanding (Mhay & Coburn, 2016), aiming to gather information from different suppliers before procuring a product or service (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016). Normally, an RFI is used when there are many potential suppliers and not enough information is known about them (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016).

More in depth, the RFI compiles detail about potential suppliers and their capabilities, advises potential suppliers that your organization intend to source this product or service competitively, shows that your organization are acting fairly and including all participants and lastly gathers information in a way that decides the next step (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016). Through analyzing the RFI responses, strategic options, lower cost alternatives and cost reduction opportunities may be identified (Mhay & Coburn, 2016).

Request for Proposal

Based on the RFI responses, a request for proposal, RFP, follows (Mhay & Coburn, 2016). A RFP is described as a formal method of receiving detailed and comparable proposals from different suppliers regarding a defined service or product (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016). Ultimately, a RFP provides all the information needed to make an informed purchase decision (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016).

By using a RFP, the purchasing organization notifies suppliers of its intentions to buy certain products or services, get a formal submission from the chosen suppliers to enable comparison of the proposals and lastly shows that the organization have a formal and fair process which not favors a specific supplier (Purchasing & Procurement Center, 2016).
4 EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

In this chapter, the findings of the study, as well as an analysis of the findings are presented. The chapter provides a brief background on the case company as well as the data collected through the approach specified in the method, answering Q1 and Q2. The findings are then analyzed based on Q3, highlighting relevant areas of improvement and creating a base for answering Q4 in the following chapter. Finally, an analysis comparing the identified sales process to resent literature is presented, providing support for conclusions made in Chapter 5.

As an understanding of the supplier’s sales process and the customer’s procurement process is vital to an accurate and effective adaption of the sales process (Viio & Grönroos, 2015), this chapter contains empirical findings regarding each of the respective process. In order to provide recommendations of how a sales process preferably would be adopted, the empirical findings is analyzed, resulting in a gap analysis. To create an understanding of how the empirical findings have led to the analysis, Figure 4.1 provides an explanation of how the content in this chapter is related.

4.1 Case Company

The case company studied is a global telecommunications company providing equipment, services and software. The case company is involved in technological development and highly specialized within networks and services. Core competences therefore include a broad knowledge and experience base as well as a respected and recognized brand within the telecommunications industry. The company recently entered into the market for Public Safety solutions with an ambition for the company is to grow market share within this specific market and thereby strengthen the competitive position.

4.1.1 The Case Company’s Sales Process

The sales process within the case company has been identified through an analysis of internal documents and process maps supported by interviews with key personnel active throughout the process. Details on with whom and how these interviews were conducted are found in section 2.5.1. The aim of the sales process is described as to govern mandatory activities which represents the decided model for the company to process sales opportunities to profitable deals.
The process consists of three primary levels describing the main process, sub-processes, and the activities which the sub-process constitutes off. The highest level of the process consists of six sub-processes as well as five decision points, referred to as DP, in which the progression of the lead or opportunity is decided. The sub-processes are presented in Figure 4.2.

Figure 4.2: The sub-processes and decision points the case company’s sales process consists of.

The mandatory activities described in the sales process are required in sales within all business areas in the case company and are described as to provide business control throughout the process. The roles involved in each sub-process of the sales process is presented in Table 4.1, a description of each of the mentioned roles is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.1: Roles involved in the sales process at the case company.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles</th>
<th>Lead Responsible</th>
<th>EP</th>
<th>ACR</th>
<th>CSR</th>
<th>CFR</th>
<th>Decision Makers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generate Lead</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nurture Lead</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP0</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualify Opportunity</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP1</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create Proposal</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP2</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Close Deal</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP3</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Execute Deal</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP4</td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Table 4.2: Description of roles within the case company’s sales process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead responsible</th>
<th>EP</th>
<th>ACR</th>
<th>CSR</th>
<th>CFR</th>
<th>Decision Makers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responsible for the activities in the generate lead and nurture lead sub-processes.</td>
<td>Engagement Practices allocates resources for a specific lead or opportunity.</td>
<td>Account Commercial Responsible. Responsible for an opportunity. Coordinates CSR and CFR.</td>
<td>Contract Solution Responsible. Responsible for the design of the solution.</td>
<td>Contract Fulfillment Responsible. Responsible for the planning and execution of implementing the solution.</td>
<td>Depending on the size of the contract. Can involve Key Account Manager, Business Unit Managers, Regional Managers etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following is a description of each of the six sub-processes as well as descriptions of the five decision points that constitutes the sales process. A more detailed visual description of the sub-processes preceding execution of the contract as well as their included activities is presented in Appendix 3.

Generate Lead

The sub-process of generating a lead focuses on defining the customer and describing the details of the specific lead. By doing this, the identification of customer interest and documentation of customer interactions is established. Judging from the information available, a decision on whether to move forward with the lead is made, creating a qualified lead.

Nurture Lead

During the sub-process of nurturing a qualified lead, the customer demand is defined. The purpose of the sub-process is to ensure awareness of the customer’s issues and how the case company can deliver value. The sub-process also aims at strengthening the relationship with the customer and to support the customer’s procurement process for a specific lead. Furthermore, the lead responsible is chosen.

Details of the lead are reviewed and an expected signing date as well as an estimated monetary value is added. During the Nurture lead sub-process, the lead details will additionally include a plan for how to nurture the lead in regards to where in procurement process the customer is and how to develop communication plans towards stakeholders.

Decision Point 0

Decision Point 0 aims to facilitate a decision of whether the lead should proceed further in the sales process. Depending on the estimated monetary value of the lead and the importance of the specific customer, various decision makers are involved in the discussion and decision-making. Decision point 0 can thereby be either informal, where the decision can be made by email or one-to-one conversation between Lead Responsible and Key Account Manager, or formal where for example decision makers and other required participants come to a joint decision.
If the decision is made not to pursue the lead, there are two possible outcomes. Either, the lead is further nurtured, or the lead is discarded. Assuming the decision is to pursue, the lead is converted into an “opportunity” and an Account Commercial Responsible, ACR, is assigned the opportunity. The decision point also results in a pre-sales budget as well as allocation of resources for continued sales activities.

**Qualify Opportunity**

The purpose of the sub-process is to qualify new sales opportunities by further clarifying the explicit need of the customer and translating that into how the case company can create value in the specific context. The sales team therefore encouraged to continue to develop the opportunity and strive towards understanding the customer better.

Activities included in the sub-process are risk assessment, activities related to the development of a sales strategy and the mobilization of resources. Involved in this sub-process is the assigned ACR along with a Customer Solution Responsible, CSR, and a Contract Fulfillment Responsible, CFR. The three roles work as a team in pursuing the opportunity, analyzes and manages customer needs, key players and competitors, among other activities. Also support resources for each of them are assigned.

**Decision Point 1**

A decision is made on whether to pursue or not pursue the opportunity by authorized decision makers. Questions raised are whether the case company is believed to have an opportunity to win and whether it is considered to be beneficial for the case company to spend additional pre-sales budget in the pursuit. Furthermore, it is discussed whether the knowledge of the customer’s explicit needs is sufficient or if further exploration is needed.

Where a decision is made to pursue the opportunity, the process will progress to the *Create Proposal* sub-process. A decision not to pursue the opportunity will require either further updates of the opportunity in order to enable new material to base the decision on, or a decision to close the opportunity.

**Create Proposal**

The sub-process of creating the proposal is highly iterative, in which the activities are intended to create the best possible proposal for both the case company and the customer. The main focus within this sub-process is to seek customer buy-in for a value proposition unique for the case company. By that, meaning a proposition that matches the agenda of the customer organization.

Depending on the type of opportunity combined with the context in which the deal is taking place in, the needed activities and as well as how these are performed by the ACR, CSR, and CFR vary. Furthermore, a number of the performed activities will be carried out in parallel and iteratively.

The scope of the proposal is set in regards to solution and the commercial aspects of the proposal. In terms, the design of the solution is further defined, as well as how to price the solution and what cost it will imply for the case company. Also a plan regarding how to deliver the project is designed. The proposal is later analyzed in terms of pricing, profitability, cash flow and the risks it implies. The proposal is then drafted and reviewed.
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Decision Point 2

In this decision point, a decision whether to sign and submit the developed proposal is made. Questions raised during Decision point 1 are whether the case company is believed to have an opportunity to win and whether it is considered profitable for the case company to spend additional pre-sales budget in the pursuit. Furthermore, it is discussed whether the knowledge of the customer’s explicit needs is sufficient or if further exploration is needed.

Where a decision is made to pursue the opportunity, the process will progress to the sub-process called Close Deal. A decision not to pursue the opportunity will require either further update to the opportunity in order to enable a new basis for decision, or a decision to close the opportunity. If authorized decision makers decide to pursue, authorized parties at the case company and customer would sign the customer proposal.

Close Deal

The purpose of the sub-process is to secure the acceptance for the submitted proposal and by that maintaining and strengthen the customer buy-in gained in the previous sub-processes. The Close Deal sub-process is highly iterative, where the composing activities intend to support the sales team in negotiating the final deal and by that ensuring profitability both for the case company as well as the customer. Included in this sub-process are activities defending the case company’s position, as well as weakening the position of competitive companies. The intention is to reach the best possible terms and conditions acceptable by both parties, as well as closing the deal with a signed customer contract as an the output.

If the customer demands compliance to certain terms and conditions, these must be analyzed. The type of opportunity combined with the business situation will determine the range of needed activities as well as how these are performed by the ACR, CSR, and CFR. Furthermore, a number of the performed activities will be carried out in parallel and iterative. Other activities included in the sales process comprises updating existing documents, analyzing the proposal in regards to the scope of the solution, the commercial scope and risk analysis. Furthermore, the customer contract is drafted, analyzed and reviewed.

Decision Point 3

The purpose of the decision point is to decide whether to sign the contract based on evaluating the result of the negotiation. A decision not to pursue the opportunity will require either further update to the opportunity in order to enable a new base for decision, or a decision to close the opportunity. Where a decision is made to sign, authorized parties at the case company and customer organization sign the customer proposal. The ACR is responsible for submitting the contract to the customer and to archive the signed contract documents.

Execute Deal

The purpose of the sub-process is to ensure that the deal is performing with the expected or more favorable levels of profitability and managed risk. Additionally, interactions with the customer can in this sub-process enable the identification and capture of new opportunities or added sales. The sub-process is highly iterative, with activities intended to support the sales team to make proper governance and support of the deal in order to make sure it is progressing as expected and fulfilling all aspects of the deal.

The type of contract together with the business situation will determine the range of needed activities as well as how these are performed by the ACR, CSR, and CFR. Furthermore, a
number of the performed activities will be carried out in parallel and iterative, such as reviewing risk, monitor execution and analyzing deal performance.

The outcome of the sub-process is to ensure that all contractual obligations are fulfilled by the case company as well as the customer

**Decision Point 4**

The purpose of the decision point is to verify that all parties have fulfilled the obligations according to the contract. A decision is made whether close the contract as complete. A decision not to close the contract will require either further updates to the deal in order to enable a base for a new decision, or a decision to leave the deal open.

### 4.1.2 Effect of the Design of the Process

The design of the sales process allows for a thorough analysis of the customer and the customer’s needs. Although, the process is protracted and includes substantial resources throughout, resulting in increased costs and high resource requirements. Furthermore, the process is not designed to include the customer in discussions, creating a great risk when establishing the specific needs and requirements. Even though customer contact is maintained throughout the process, the fact that it is not included to a greater extent in the process description creates an uncertainty as to what degree the customer should be involved when developing the offer.

The process, being designed for the traditional telecommunications customers, does not show any adaption to the preconditions that signify public procurement and specifically the Public Safety market. Since the case company sales process, being horizontal, involves departments not specifically knowledgeable of the Public Safety market, the sale is being met as any other sale within the company, thereby loosing any adaption that could create an additional competitive advantage in the offer. Effectively, the process should be adapted so that adaption for customer specific needs is included in all sub-processes of the development of the offer.

### 4.1.3 Employee Reflections

To gain insight on how the design of the sales process is perceived by the users, semi-structured interviews were performed with a total of nine employees at the case company. Each individual was involved in the sales process of Public Safety solutions, of which four were managers at regional or global levels. Other roles of the interviewees were price manager, account manager and Contract Fulfillment Responsible (CFR). Further details on the conducted interviews are found in section 2.5.1. The interviewees were chosen to gain an accurate view of the prevailing state of the design and to gain insights from varied sub-processes and areas of expertise throughout the sales process. A compilation of the employee’s perceptions has lead to an analysis reflecting potential areas of improvement for the current sales process of Public Safety solutions.

As the case company has a background in the telecommunications industry, a sales process has been developed and implemented globally, based on the solutions applied in the business of telecommunication. This sales process is strongly established and is indicated as well suited for customers in telecommunications. As the organization has developed and further business areas have been entered, the sales process has remained the same. The result being that the sales process of solutions connected to the Public Safety market is identical to the sales process of products and services in telecommunications, as communicated by involved personnel. This
fact is suspected to have caused lost sales during in the business area of Public Safety, as exemplified by the respondent account manager when explaining why a previous attempt was non-successful:

“This is some of what I think led us to not win that business. They did exactly what they have always done.”

The sales process of the case company is adapted to large sales and long-term implementation projects, which is not always the case in the Public Safety market. As the case company organization is adapted for sales within telecommunication, it creates difficulties handling customer relationships in Public Safety. Managing a smaller number of larger sales, as is the case of telecommunications, implies more time to spend on each account, compared to sales connected to Public Safety where a larger number of accounts are handled simultaneously. This leads to concerns when following the current sales process as it is seen as rather complex since constraints in some cases might lead to some activities in the process being overlooked. This issue is further explained through the thoughts of the respondent account manager.

“Our sales process is designed for working with large, long term projects. Then you have the time and focus to work and to disclose information internally in the organization. As we are doing business, I today handle fifteen customers. Then you cannot stick to the same process and the same methodology, because there is not enough time.”

The importance of understanding customer needs when developing a solution is stressed. This is something the case company is successful in doing considering telecommunications and is becoming increasingly better at regarding solutions in the recently established business area of Public Safety. Not only is it important to understand the customer’s needs, it is also stressed that it is of great importance to understand the needs of the customer’s own customers, as they often are the end users. This subject was further elaborated during an interview with a respondent regional manager.

“A main issue is to understand the problem of the customers. We cannot just sell them hardware, we have to understand what is facing the customer today and tomorrow, and we have to understand the business model. How do we sell this? How will it be profitable?”

Today, this matter is mainly approached through conducting user cases and developing solutions according to the issues the end user is facing. As previously stated, the majority of customers purchasing solutions connected to Public Safety are public organizations. In certain regions, there are strict regulations for procurement within such organizations, drastically changing the conditions regarding interaction between supplier and customer. The issues connected to these changes in preconditions is mentioned by the respondent account manager.

“The problem is that this company is made for telecommunications businesses, it is not made for Public Safety, its type of businesses, and public procurement”
Dealing with public procurement, regulations often demand that after the customer has requested a RFP, the unofficial communication between the customer and the potential suppliers must be discontinued. A significant difference between the traditional context that telecommunications sales are performed in and those of public procurement is that negotiation is not allowed in the latter. In public procurement, it is therefore the price presented in the response of the RFP that the customer’s final decision is based on, an issue touched upon during the interview with the price manager covering the design of the sales process.

“First you have the submission, then you have the negotiation. Well, normally, towards the customers buying solution in telecommunications.”

It is therefore of great importance to have a good knowledge of the market to be able to create an offer with competitive pricing. Furthermore, it is important to see to the customer needs rather than to over-engineer the solution or overestimate the cost of delivering the solution. Since the submitted documents, after their submission, become public domain the challenge also lies in finding a balance in the details included in the response to the RFI so that the competitive edge of the supplier is not threatened. This challenge is noted by the respondent contract fulfillment manager:

“The submitted information becomes public property, which is why you must be careful not to describe things in too much detail and lose your competitive edge.”

The customers procuring Public Safety solutions operate in other industries than the customers procuring telecommunications solutions. The implication is that the understanding of the technology provided by the case company might be significantly lower for customers within the Public Safety market. This makes it crucial to seize the opportunity to educate the customer in how the supplier’s solution would fulfill the customers need.

4.2 Understanding the Customer

In order to gain knowledge of the customers, information of how the customers’ procurement processes are designed has been collected. Further, the opinions and statements expressed during the interviews have been structured and undergone an initial analysis through Voice of the Customer Table to identify underlying needs and desired process attributes.

4.2.1 Customers' Procurement Process

The basic elements of the customer procurement process have been identified through interviews with key personnel within the procurement process in five companies dealing with public procurement in the area of Public Safety. Details on with whom and how the interviews were conducted is presented in section 2.5.2. This identification aims to create a basic understanding of the customer’s behavior and requirements, in turn verifying the results of customers expressed opinions regarding important aspects for a supplier to fulfill. The identified procurement process will furthermore be used in the analysis in order to support the identifications of gaps between the customer’s procurement process and the case company’s sales process.
Since the procurement process varies between organizations depending on the organizational structure and the impact of the specific procurement as well as the laws and regulations affecting it, the identification made in this study should be regarded as simplified and generalized. The identification has, due to the delimitations for the study, focused on the sub-processes that include, or have an impact on, contact or relationships with the supplier. The identified customer procurement process is presented in Figure 4.3.

![Figure 4.3: The sub-processes included in the customer's procurement process.](image)

The aim of the procurement process is to ensure that the most suitable supplier is chosen, based on monetary value as well as functionality and long-term innovative ability. The activities connected to each sub-process are designed to contribute to the fulfillment of this aim. A strong emphasis is placed on user-integration, meaning that resources are focused on the initial two sub-processes. A short description of each sub-process follows below.

**Identify Problem/Need**

Through communication with the operating users, a problems or needs that are not covered by the equipment or tools currently used are identified.

**Establish Tender**

The preparation of a tender is initiated, involving users as well as internal technical experts. To create a basis for the tender a market analysis is conducted where the different solutions available on the market are reviewed. The market analysis might also include contact with a number of suppliers as well as trials of certain solutions in a test group within the own organization. A trial will enable the organization to gain feedback from the own organization in regards to how suited the solution is for the business. An additional Request for Information, RFI, can be sent out in order for the customer to obtain further knowledge of the available products or solutions from the suppliers active in the market. Furthermore, the budget and commercial aspects are regarded and determined. The procurement expertise needed is located internally or acquired externally.
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Publish RFP
A Request for Proposal, RFP, is established using the prepared tender as a basis. When published, the RFP may generally not be updated and should include all information needed for potential suppliers to respond with a proposal. After the RFP is published the contact between the customer and suppliers is generally restricted.

Evaluate Proposals
The submitted proposals are evaluated based on shall and should requirements specified in the RFP. The customer can for instance use a scoring system.

Award contract to supplier
The supplier that best fulfill the shall and should requirements are rewarded the deal and the contract is signed.

4.2.2 Voice of the Customer Table
By interviewing customers procuring solutions in Public Safety, information consisting of opinions, requirements, and statements have been collected. Quotes from the interviews have been structured and analyzed through a Voice of the Customer Table. In order to identify underlying needs and requirements and desired process attributes, also a Customer Context Table and a Customer Voice Table has been produced as previous steps in the VoCT. These are presented in Appendix 4 and 5 respectively.

In the Customer Context Table, which is found in Appendix 4, representative quotes are presented and broken down to specify what each quote regards, when in the customer procurement process the issue occurs, and why and how it occurs. These components have been utilized to reformulate the customer’s requirements. In the Customer Voice Table, found in Appendix 5, the reformulated customer requirements are presented and analyzed in regards to what the underlying needs of the customers are, which constitutes the basis for desired process attributes. The process attributes are also presented in Table 4.3.
**Table 4.3: Process attributes defined through analyzing interview data through VoCT.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Process Attributes</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Communicate experience within the specific area or with other solutions relevant as experience.</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Provide an opportunity for the customer to try the solution.</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Facilitate contact to previous/current customers who are or have been in a similar situation and have procured solutions from the supplier.</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Assess the level of technological knowledge in the customer and customize how they are approached.</td>
<td>Transfer Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Demonstrate a will to understand the customer requirements and needs and express a shared vision and goals. Communicate will and proof of current or previous long-term partnerships.</td>
<td>Interest in the Customer Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Display integrity throughout the procurement process and carry out an open and honest dialog with the customer regarding what solution are possible to implement.</td>
<td>Professionalism in Communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Show interest and respond to the customer as a partner wanting to reach a common goal.</td>
<td>Longer Partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Create and communicate an understanding for the customer’s situation.</td>
<td>Interest in the Customer Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Communicate what innovations are available in the market as well as how the supplier solutions will benefit the customer and fulfill their needs and requirements.</td>
<td>Communicating Innovations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Communicate professionalism to the customer in order to increase their trust.</td>
<td>Professionalism in Communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Communicate how the offer will be updated through the lifetime of the contract and by that continuously meet changing requirements.</td>
<td>Communicating Flexibility and Integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The person accountable for delivery should be available to the customer.</td>
<td>Professionalism in Communicating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Provide and communicate examples of when complex integrations have been implemented in a complex environment.</td>
<td>Experience</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different process attributes are to be considered as categories elaborated upon by the interviewed customers. In Table 4.3, the subjects of the different categories are displayed. This is further complemented with information regarding how many of the interviewees that have discussed each subject, which has been compiled in Figure 4.4.
By presenting how many of the interviewees that have discussed each subject, Figure 4.4 provides an indication of which subjects are considered the most important. The following section will in greater detail analyze each of the subjects through a gap analysis.

4.3 Gap Analysis

Based on the identified customer needs and requirements, the case company sales process has been analyzed, pinpointing the gaps to the current sales process.

Gap 1: Interest in the Customer’s Organization

Demonstrating an interest, not only for the specific procurement, but in the customer’s situation and organization in general communicates an intent of the supplier to create a solution that is aimed at meeting the specific needs and requirements that the customer may have. The customers in the Public Safety market value this commitment from suppliers since it indicates shared goals of developing a solution that best suits and accommodates to the issues that exist in the customer’s current operations.

“That is probably the single greatest failing any organization bidding for public contracts can do /…/ they have a standard way that they pitch their products or services and they try to squeeze it into your requirements.” – Customer D

The current sales process, being designed to suit a telecommunications customer, emphasizes creating a deeper understanding for the customer needs through negotiation. Focusing resources to a later sub-process in the process implies that additional resources spent on establishing a dialog and relationship with the customer from the start might be limited.

Even though the process specifies that knowledge of the customer is to be gathered, the process does not regard the specific preconditions facing the customers within the Public Safety
market. Focusing resources to the development of the solution without previously having placed resources on creating an understanding of the customer’s needs and requirements, specifically since public procurement does not normally allow for negotiations, implies that the solution might not be well suited to the customer. The current process therefore does not consider the prolonged sales cycles, nor the customers’ risk aversion and preferences, meaning that customers might feel somewhat overlooked.

Gap 2: Innovation

As the customer desires a solution that is aligned to current technological advancements and not will be outdated during the life of the contract, an innovative ability is a valued trait in a supplier. As it is desired for the solution to be up-to-date and innovative, the rather low risk appetite of the customer creates a fine line where the supplier have to be able to offer innovative solutions but also instill a trust in that the solution would be successful in the customer organization when implemented.

"You are looking for a solution, not necessarily at the bleeding edge of this technology. You probably want a company that is good at taking the bleeding edge and turning it into something that works consistently." – Customer E

An innovative ability does not necessarily have to be communicated by offering an innovative solution, something that might be received with caution in the customer’s organization. Innovative ability can also be expressed in dialog, where the supplier can explain how the solution might be developed during the life of the contract. This could additionally include discussions of how potential setbacks would be managed through innovation.

“Throughout the project we came across some difficulties in terms of integration. There were some innovative solutions that were offered to us and we took them. It came with additional cost but we, at the time through negotiation, understood that and we accepted that additional cost and the risk connected to it since it was innovative.” – Customer C

The case company’s sales process does not include activities which communicates, on a broader base, the innovations that are offered by the company and are applicable in the field of Public Safety. Communicating innovations and how they could benefit potential customers is limited to contact with specific customers, meaning that the opportunity to plant the idea of new solutions in the mind of the customers is limited. Furthermore, this leads to that the case company is also limited when trying to convey trust in the new innovations and their applicability on the Public Safety market. Since customers within this market are often dealing with sensitive information, large investments and communications that are imperative to the safety of the population, new innovations might be perceived with caution. If the customer is not reassured that the solution is suitable and dependable, the innovation can be seen as a potential risk if implemented.

Gap 3: Experience

The customers request an assurance of whether the supplier can be trusted to develop and to deliver the solution, implying that the experience of the supplier is valued. This aspect can be
seen as two folded, as the customers both want to assess the suitability of a solution of a complex nature in their organization and also want to gain a perspective on how the supplier previously has collaborated with other customers.

This need can be considered as an effect of the low risk appetite of customers procuring solutions related to Public Safety in combination with the long procurement cycles common for such solutions. Having experience in developing and delivering solutions can be seen as increasing the opportunities for a well-suited solution, a successful implementation and also affecting how potential problems arising would be solved. Being unsuccessful in these matters would cause major consequences, why this need can be regarded as a matter of trust in the supplier.

To address the suitability of a potential solution, the customers have suggested trials and proof of concept, POC. Through enabling such activities, the supplier can support the customers in understanding their needs and what type of solution would be the most beneficial in the specific context. These activities also propose an opportunity for the supplier to market their solution. To help the customers understand what they need for the solution to achieve and to demonstrate the reliability of the supplier, also the use of references is beneficial.

I think there is a benefit in engaging in some suppliers in an early stage, because sometimes, the client has to be honest with themselves and actually admit that they actually quite do not understand the requirements themselves. /.../ At some times, there is a great benefit to contact potential suppliers and ask them for references. – Customer C

By finding references that has procured a similar solution from the supplier or has comparable operations, the potential customer can learn from previous customers, as they are likely to possess a greater understanding of their needs. Furthermore, contact with references also demonstrates the case company as trustworthy.

A gap occurs as the case company’s sales process does not include activities connected to analyzing what type of references that could bring added value to the customer and benefit the customer in their tendering process. An early understanding of the customer needs is, as previously mentioned, limited due to resources being focused to negotiation. This means that the process lacks the understanding needed as well as distinct activities that encourages the case company to evaluate what references are most suitable and what references are most likely to have had similar preconditions to the potential new customer. Since the business area of Public Safety is also relatively new for the case company, the company lacks a larger selection of references, making it more difficult to find a reference that has experience relevant for the potential customer.

Gap 4: Longer Partnerships

Customers within the Public Safety market, having long procurement cycles, possess a need for a supplier to commit to the customer in the sense of creating an understanding of the problems facing the customer. Having expressed a need to feel confidence in the supplier and their capabilities to deliver, the customers are therefore seeking long-term partnerships with their suppliers. These partnerships will ensure the customer that the supplier will be dependable and that they will assist the customer organization in reaching their goals.
EMPIRICAL FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A supplier that in turn treats the customer as a partner rather than a procurer is highly valued and considered to allow for more useful information to be gathered. Viewing the relationship as a partnership will by extension give the supplier a better basis to provide the customer with a well-suited offer.

“I think the word sought is partnership, it’s developing that partnership with a client, and sharing a clear understanding of what the overall outcome of what the client entails.” – Customer C

Although, establishing a partnership demands early involvement from the supplier with no guarantee that the supplier will be awarded the contract. This effectively creates a gap to the case company’s sales process since it focuses more resources on the development of the solution and negotiation with the customer rather than establishing an understanding and a relationship to the customer when the customer is defining their requirements. This will in turn lead to that the published tender will be harder for the case company to interpret, meaning that the developed solution is less likely to fulfill the underlying needs of the customer and is less likely to be awarded the contract.

Gap 5: Professionalism in Communication

The interviewed customers have argued the level of professionalism as an indicator of the supplier’s capabilities and capacity. The customers have further expressed the importance of a supplier showing integrity and honesty, an aspect that is suggested to at times be valued over price. The desire for integrity can be seen as an effect of the high-risk environment of these solutions. It is therefore of great importance that what is promised actually is delivered and that the suppliers do not express themselves as too commercial. Interviewed customers also expressed a desire to meet with the individuals accountable in the supplier’s organization, meaning that the customers not only value integrity and honesty of the organization as a whole, but also the individuals responsible for the specific solution.

"You want to be in the room with the people that are going to deliver the solution /…/ you want the director who is going to be directly accountable for the delivery and you want to be pretty confident in the individuals.” – Customer E

This aspect has been identified as an effect of the long lifetime of contracts in the Public Safety industry as it implies collaborating with the supplier for a longer period of time. It is therefore reasonable for the customer to, not only to assess the organization of the supplier, but also the individuals involved in regards to their competency and experience.

"In that early engagement with companies you do get a sense of whether or not you could do business with them. /…/ We identified this in an early stage because of that personal engagement with these people from the outset.” – Customer E

It is suggested that the individuals interacting with the customer should be knowledgeable in the solution offered, both in regards to its technology but also how it would create value in the
specific context of the potential customer. This implies being able to answer complex questions and preferably have experience of the industry the customer operates in.

As the case company’s sales process is designed to suit traditional telecommunications customers, the resources allocated to a specific opportunity are not necessarily versed in the specific business of Public Safety solutions. Furthermore, it is not specified whether the resources allocated for the sale of the solution will take any part in the implementation, creating a gap to the customers expressed wish to have contact with the individuals that will be responsible for the implementation. Having longer sales cycles, the customer has a need to form a relationship with the supplier prior to awarding the contract, something that is not enabled through the current sales process.

Another potential gap identified concerns the approach of the case company to the customer organization. No clear guidelines are established as to how a representative of the case company are to approach the potential customer organization in regards to what questions are to be asked or what is seen as acceptable lines of communication. Since public procurement often is controlled by specific laws and regulations, contact might be limited beyond a certain sub-process and customers in different areas might have different preferred forms of communication. Having no defined guidelines for communication and sales within the Public Safety market creates a potential gap in fulfilling the customer need of perceived professionalism.

Gap 6: Flexibility and Integration

For customers within the Public Safety market, solutions are likely to involve a number of systems and several suppliers. This creates a need for a solution that can be integrated with current and future systems, making it vital for the supplier to be flexible and able to adapt to the customer’s specific situation. It is important for suppliers to be able to cooperate with additional suppliers and effectively handle any conflicts or issues that may arise for the duration of the contract. In order for the supplier to communicate its ability to integrate the offered solution to a number of systems, it is vital that a dialog with the customer is carried out. The offered solution will need to regard flexibility of the design as a factor affecting the customer’s assessment.

As previously mentioned, the case company sales process is designed for shorter sales cycles, limiting the resources available for evaluating the customer and their previous experiences from the onset. By not encouraging that a dialog is immediately initiated regarding the long-term goals of the customer, their previous issues and their current needs, the case company may in turn lose the chance to communicate how their specific solutions could facilitate future developments. Furthermore, the case company cannot provide the customers with previous examples of proven flexibility or integration, creating a gap between to the customers need for his type of reassurance.

Gap 7: Transfer Knowledge

For complex systems, the customer might not possess the specific knowledge to understand and determine requirements themselves, creating a need for the customers to inform and educate themselves in order to reach a desired result. It is therefore important for the customer to be informed as to what solutions and technology are available on the market, how they could be applied in the customer organization and how they would contribute to the overall
goal of the procurement. Customers therefore continuously strive to update their knowledge through mainly media and trade fairs.

Since the knowledge of technological solutions is more advanced amongst suppliers, customers have expressed a desire for potential suppliers to share their expertise. This poses an opportunity for the supplier to early on influence the customer and explain the benefits of the solution. As the customer forms their opinion and formulate the tender, they will do so with a clear idea of what the different suppliers can offer.

“The technical knowledge is higher in the supplier organization than it is in–house.” – Customer B

Although, customers also state that any technical experts within the customer organization often are highly skeptical of commercial suppliers and are suspicious of the solutions they are being shown. The implication might then be a split between the decision makers and the technical experts. For a supplier to effectively convince the customer they would therefore need to communicate what solutions are available on the market as well as convey that the solution offered by them is most beneficial for the customer.

Since the sales process within the case company does not include activities specifically aimed at evaluating the degree of technical knowledge in the customer, a gap arises where it is more challenging for the case company to transfer the most suitable knowledge to the customer. Furthermore, the focus on shaping the solution to the customer specifications during negotiations implies that the knowledge of the offered solutions is brought to the customer at a later stage, which then risks being met by skepticism.

4.4 The Sales Process in Relation to Presented Literature

In trying to define the concept of processes, Palmberg (2009) presents six components that can be seen in a majority of current literature. Comparing the case company’s sales process to the proposed literature, five of the components are well recognizable, while one is considered an area of improvement. For each sub-process, input and output is well defined, the activities are considered interrelated and the process is horizontal as it is performed cross-functionally in the organization. Furthermore, resources are used to perform the process, which also is repeatable.

The main difference between the literature and the studied sales process lies in creating value and meeting the needs of external customers. This is not true for the sales process in the new business area. The sales process is designed for customers purchasing products and services related to telecommunications, not for solutions created for the Public Safety market. As these two types of customers are not to be considered as having the same needs, this proposes an area of improvement for the case company.

As mentioned by Viio (2011) a sales process is a type of business process. Ould (1995) suggest a few key features of a business process, namely containing purposeful activities, a group of individuals performs it collaboratively, crossing functional boundaries and always driven by external agents or customers. Comparing these features to the case company’s sales process, only the last feature is notable.

The case company’s sales process is considered aligned to literature regarding the categorization of processes, as it is divided into sub-processes and activities as proposed by Walsh (1995).
Comparisons between the case company’s sales process and *The seven steps of selling* presented by Dubinsky (1980) shows some similarities. The sub-processes can to a high extent be compared to the sales process of the case company. *Prospecting* resembles with *Generate lead*, *Pre-approach* with *Nurture lead*, *Approach* with *Qualify opportunity*, *Presentation* with *Create proposal*, *Overcoming objections* with the negotiation in the sub-process *Close deal* and lastly, *Follow up* can be compared to *Close deal* as it includes monitoring activities.

More similarities can be found when comparing to *The evolved selling process* presented by Moncrief and Marshall (2005). Regarding *Customer retention and deletion* a number of the tasks presented by Moncrief and Marshall (2005) are found as activities in the case company’s sales process; finding new customers is concerned in the *Generate lead* sub-processes, attempts to increase the value of existing customer accounts takes place in the *Execute deal* sub-process and lastly, decisions on canceling unprofitable customer relationships are made in the decision points.

Also features mentioned as “Database and knowledge management” are found in the case company’s sales process. Information gathering occurs from the *Generate lead* sub-process until *Decision Point 2* where a final assessment on whether the information is sufficient is made. Furthermore, a pre-validation of the customer is made in *Decision Point 0*. Activities connected to nurturing the relationship are initiated in the *Generate lead* sub-process where the aim is to strengthen the relationship with the customer.

*Problem solving* regards, according to Moncrief and Marshall (2005), creating a mutually beneficial business. Activities related to this matter is found in the sub-process *Close deal* where negotiating the final deal aims to ensure profitability for both the case company and the customer. Lastly, Activities related to *Adding value/Satisfying needs*, regarding bringing added value to the customer, are prominent in the sub-processes *Nurture lead*, *Qualify opportunity* and *Create proposal*. In *Nurture lead*, the purpose is to understand how the case company can deliver value, in *Quality opportunity* the needs of the customers are translated into how the case company can create value in the specific context and in *Create proposal* the main focus is to develop a solution that matches the agenda of the customer organization.

However, what significantly differs the case company’s sales process from *The evolved sales process* are the sequential sub-processes. For the latter, Moncrief and Marshall (2005) states that the sub-processes are not performed in a sequential order where the sales person is assumed to work through each sub-process in order to continue. As this poses a main difference, the sequential way of performing the sales process at the case company can rather be likened the *Seven steps of selling*, presented by Dubinsky (1980).
5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

In this chapter conclusions derived from the analysis are presented, providing a basis for the subsequent recommendations. Since the recommendations stem from an analysis of one case company, they should be considered as primarily intended for the specific case company. However, the recommendations are also relevant for other organizations and researchers to consider.

5.1 Conclusions

Deriving from the analysis, a number of conclusions can be drawn. These conclusions involve aspects of the customer’s needs and requirements that are not clearly stated by the customer in the published documents connected to the official procurement. To achieve a well-adapted sales process, companies must not only have a clear understanding of the market and customer requirements, but also analyze the underlying needs that affect the customers in their decisions.

One conclusion that can be drawn from this study is that there exist two main perspectives from which the aim of procurement is seen. One perspective derives from the supplier organization, which focuses on presenting their solution as advantageous to the customer with the aim to convince the customer of its superiority, thereby influencing the customer in their decision. The second perspective derives from the procuring organization and does in turn have two objectives of it own. One objective is to determine the best available solution that could solve the established problem, leading to the formulated requirements. The other objective is to identify the supplier that is most likely to meet the established requirements while offering the best premise for delivery. The fact that the customer perspective in itself is twofold shows that the customer has a need to gather information that cannot solely be collected from the submitted offers. Other needs that are not spoken still have a big impact on the requirements formulated by the customer and thereby also on which supplier that is likely to win the contract.

Another conclusion following the first is that it is important for suppliers to understand, not only the new market they are entering, but also to understand the implication the market situation has on the customer. The impact of the solution on the customer’s organization must be considered as it affects what values are included in the customer’s evaluation. Certainly price and design of the solution has a great impact, but several underlying aspects affect the customer’s overall assessment of the quality of the offer. One considerable finding from the analysis, reoccurring in several interviews, is that customers expressed a desire for early involvement from the suppliers. The customers value suppliers that show an interest in the customer’s organization and are willing to aid the customer in gathering a complete assessment of the market. The relationship with the supplier is therefore vital and is composed of a number of different aspects, all deriving from the specific situation of the procurement.

Early involvement will allow for the supplier to demonstrate commitment to the customer procurement process. Early involvement additionally enables the supplier to gain a greater understanding of the customer’s operations and further enables the supplier to gain insight to the needs existing in the customer’s organization. A supplier that engages with the customer at an early onset also has the opportunity to communicate strengths within both the company
and its offered solutions. The supplier thereby has the opportunity to develop a relationship with the customer and by that influence the customer’s perception of how the supplier fulfills the requirements that are not spoken but still has an influence on the customer’s final decision. This supports existing literature, claiming the importance to use the sales process as a means of creating a foundation of long-term relation rather than focusing on maximizing profit in the short-term (Moncrief & Marshall, 2005).

Through the study, it could be ascertained that a solution that is customized for the specific needs of the customer was desired by a majority of the respondents. This aspect is aligned to what Moncrief and Marshall (2005) suggests in their model The evolved selling process, implying that customers prefer customized products, demanding the sales person to work as a problem solver rather than a persuader. The customers expressed an appreciation for the suppliers that acknowledges this fact throughout the procurement process and also recognizes the connection this has to early involvement.

A supplier that is perceived as sharing the goals of the customer and putting effort into understanding the underlying problems and needs of the users was considered favorable by all respondents. Although, an approach mentioned as beneficial by respondents from the case company was the use of reference solutions as a basis for solutions offered to new customers. This implies adapting previously used solutions to new circumstances as this is considered to be more productive and price-efficient. An additional conclusion is therefore that the interests of the supplier separate from those of the customer. It can be considered natural for the supplier to strive toward more efficient operations but it seems as though the implications this has on the customers perceived value has not been thoroughly considered.

Furthermore, this concludes that the customer’s values that are not noted by the supplier may lead to gaps between the customer’s procurement process and the supplier’s sales process. In order for a supplier entering the Public Safety market to be successful it is therefore important to recognize the underlying needs of the customers and analyze to which extent the supplier’s sales process facilitates meeting these needs. This will enable the supplier to identify any gaps, furthermore enabling measures to be taken to eliminate or minimize gaps. Since the gaps identified through the study stem from the identified customer’s underlying needs, they could be beneficial to consider.

Companies operating within the Public Safety market are often are dealing with sensitive or vital information, resulting in that the risk aversion is very high. The implication is that Public Safety organizations are likely to value aspects connected to security and dependability in their suppliers. The effect of this is particularly reflected in some of the gaps identified through the study, mainly gap 1–3. The Public Safety customer has an increased need for the supplier to have insight into the problems facing the customer in order to be ensured of the solutions suitability. To ensure that the solution is capable of continuous performance and that the supplier will be able to deliver such a critical system, the degree of innovation as well as experience is also directly reflecting the Public Safety customer’s risk aversion.

Through the findings in the study it can be concluded that both the operations and the aim of customers who are public organization differ from those of private customers. Acting under public procurement laws creates another set of preconditions for operations and binds the organization to certain procedures. Although, the results also show that procurers within public organizations evaluates solutions as well as suppliers before the tender document is established. Identifying and minimizing gaps between the aspects that are valued by customer
and the sales process thereby enables the supplier to communicate the organization’s capabilities and may by that be able to influence the customer. The customer is then more likely to include details of the supplier’s specific technology in the tender, giving the case company a great advantage as competitive suppliers are less likely to fulfill the requirements to the same extent.

### 5.2 Recommendations

From the analysis and the subsequent conclusions, recommendations have been developed. Since the analysis has its basis in the case company studied, the recommendations are developed to suit its specific needs. Although, the recommendations are also relevant for other organizations that are venturing into new business areas where customers are faced with similar preconditions. The recommendations are aimed to eliminate the gaps identified in the analysis and should therefore be prioritized depending on two aspects; the number of gaps eliminated by the recommendation and the impact of each gap on the relationship between the customer and supplier. How the recommendations are intended to eliminate each gap is visualized in Figure 5.1.

![Figure 5.1: Visualization of how the recommendations will aid in addressing the identified gaps.](image)

As seen in Figure 5.1 Early Involvement has an impact on the highest number of gaps, whereby this recommendation should be seen as key both for the case company as well as other organizations with customers faced with similar preconditions. Furthermore, Early
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Involvement is aimed at minimizing the gaps that are connected to values that are seen as most important for the customers when evaluating a supplier and establishing the tender, meaning that it has the highest overall impact. Although, Early Involvement does not solely reduce these gaps and should therefore ultimately be combined with the other three recommendations. A more detailed visual description of proposed actions for activities, connected to the overall recommendation given, are presented in Appendix 6.

Create a common goal with the customer

In order to ensure that the offered solution will fulfill the customer needs and requirements, the supplier should establish an understanding of the customer and with that also a common goal. By working towards the same goal, a solution that will effectively meet the customers needs, the supplier communicates involvement and dependability. Furthermore, by communicating its commitment to the customer, it is more likely that the supplier is able to gather more useful information regarding, for example, the customer’s budget and delimitations.

Working towards a common goal also indicates to the customer that the supplier values the potential contract, which in turn is considered as an indicator that the company will ensure quality in the delivered solution. Since the lifetime of the contract is often extensive, the customer has a need to get reassurance that the supplier will be a good long-term partner, indicated by shared goals and objectives.

Early involvement in the customer procurement process

To communicate an interest in the customer organization and an interest for a long-term partnership, early involvement is necessary. Involvement at an early stage will allow the supplier to gather information regarding the customer’s situation, which in turn will provide a better basis for suggested solutions. The early involvement will also enable influencing the customer to understand and appreciate the innovativeness and flexibility of the supplier.

Furthermore, involvement at an early stage enables the supplier to show the customer how their experience and knowledge can contribute to reaching the customer’s goals and gives the supplier an opportunity to inform the customer of resent developments. This will also increase the customer’s trust in the supplier since the customer can form an opinion of how the supplier performs in regards to aspects such as professionalism and experience. This will then in turn result in that the supplier is more likely to be able to influence the customer in the design of requirements.

Demonstrate Presence in the New Market

When entering a new market it is important to show intent to seriously pursue the market and become a dependable long-term partner. It is also important that the supplier can display how they will contribute to the offers existing on the market and emphasize the strengths and competitive advantages that they bring. Since customers are continuously researching developments it is imperative that new entries are present and made available for the customer. If the company is not seen, the interest from customers will subsequently be inadequate. Presenting the company on fairs and in media relevant for the market communicates commitment to the market entry and enables the customer to place the company amongst its competitors. Additionally, this will enable the supplier to build trust with the customer by meeting and interacting with them before an actual procurement process is initiated.
Allocate Competence

To instill credibility in that the offered solutions are applicable in the new market, sufficient knowledge and experience needs to be secured in the own organization. Resources that have an understanding of the market in itself and are able to understand the problems of the customer organization needs to be allocated. Resources that possess this knowledge should be involved at an early stage to ensure that the supplier communicates its expertise as well as professionalism and interest. By including resources with experience of the specific market, the company will be able to collaborate with the customer in both the definition of the customer's problem as well as in establishing the most suitable requirements to solve these problems. This will in turn give the supplier a better basis when formulating the offer. To utilize the gathered knowledge of the problems facing the customer in the design of the solution, internal communications needs to be established. Specifically for horizontal processes where a number of departments may be involved, it is important that an understanding of the customer is maintained throughout the sales process. Therefore, the use of reference solutions should be re-evaluated. Since the customer needs may demand a more specified solution, the use of reference solutions could negatively impact the understanding of the customer throughout the process.
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION
6 DISCUSSION

This chapter will provide the reader with a description of the method for answering the questions as well as the fulfillment of the aim of the study. Furthermore, the implications of the study are discussed, followed by a critical review of its reliability and validity. Lastly, suggestions for further research are provided.

6.1 Fulfillment of Aim

The basis for the study has been the four questions presented in Chapter 1.2.1. These questions together contributed to the aim that has been to establish how companies within the telecommunications industry can adapt their sales process to new customer requirements and needs when entering into the market of Public Safety. By answering the questions, recommendations has been given as to how a telecommunication company should adapt the sales process to new circumstances. A description of how the questions have been answered, thereby also describing how the aim of the thesis has been fulfilled, is provided in this chapter.

Q1: How is the sales process designed and utilized within a telecommunications company?

The case company’s sales process as well as the employees’ reflections is presented in Chapter 4.1. This chapter does together with the presented literature on sales process design answer Q1. Having studied existing process maps and conducted semi-structured interviews with personnel throughout the sales process have provided a comprehensive picture of the process which has served as a basis for answering the following questions.

Q2: What are the needs and requirements of customers when procuring solutions from the Public Safety market?

Through semi-structured interviews with five representatives from customer organizations, information regarding their needs and requirements when procuring Public Safety solution was gathered. The information gathered through these interviews was then processes and analyzed through the use of a Voice of the Customer Table. The results of the analysis, presented in Chapter 4.2.2, thereby answers Q2.

Q3: What gaps can be identified between the current sales process within a telecommunications company and the Public Safety customer’s needs and requirements in their procurement process?

A comparison between the case company sales process and the needs and requirements gathered from the interviews with customers of Public Safety solutions was conducted. The result of the comparison was the gap-analysis presented in Chapter 4.3. In the gap-analysis, seven gaps were identified were the needs and requirements expressed by the customers are not met by the case company sales process, thereby answering Q3.
Q4: How can companies within the telecommunications industry reduce the gaps between their sales processes and customers’ procurement processes?

Based on the gap–analysis as well as the needs and requirements identified through interviews with customers of Public Safety solutions, recommendations have been developed. Since the recommendations, presented in Chapter 5.2, have been developed based on gaps identified in the case company sales process, they should be seen as developed for the specific case company. Although, the recommendations can also be considered relevant for other telecommunications companies aiming to adapt the sales process to customer needs and requirements. Therefore, the recommendations provide Q4 with an answer.

6.2 Implications of the Study

Recent literature discussing developments for sales processes suggests that sales are becoming more relationship–oriented, creating an added need for sales process adaption. To enable a relationship initiation with the procurer, an understanding of the own sales process as well as the procurement process is critical (Rackham & DeVincenzi, 1999; Viio & Grönroos, 2014). Since the result of this study are recommendations as for how companies can improve the sales process based on customer needs and requirements, it has the potential to improve relationship initiation and in extension also the number of sales in the organization through sales process adaption.

Literature regarding using customer needs and requirements when optimizing and adapting product offerings is extensive. Although, research regarding using customer needs and requirements to develop sales processes is limited. This report therefore adds an additional dimension to the topic.

To maintain competitiveness, companies can expand and develop their offerings as the market around them changes. Therefore, it is important to adapt business processes to accommodate changes in offerings as well as the customer situation. A sustainable development of business is an important aspect in the survival of any company. Since companies contribute to economic growth as well as employment and societal development, the implications of a thriving company spreads through society.

6.3 Critical Review

A critical review of the study’s validity and reliability has been conducted to determine the accuracy and repeatability. Reviewing the validity and reliability of the study will furthermore determine whether the findings are credible and generalizable.

6.3.1 Reliability

The method presented in Chapter 2 provides the readers with an understanding of the study’s design, thereby enabling the study to be repeated. Furthermore, different sources have been used in the literature review as well as in the data gathering process in order to strengthen accuracy and credibility of the data. However, the selection of customers as well as the personnel within the case company that have been interviewed lowers the repeatability. The reason for this being that the individual’s experience and the region they are operating within might have an effect on the collected data.
DISCUSSION

For all interviews, the respondent was given an introduction to the aim of the thesis as well as the interview at the beginning of the interview. This as a preventative action to ensure that the respondent would provide answers of relevance. The interviews were then conducted with a basis in a number of predetermined discussion points depending on if the interview focused on the procurer or the case company. Being a semi-structured interview, supplementary questions were asked depending on the respondent’s answers. The use of semi-structured interviews is seen to somewhat lower the repeatability of the study, although the prepared discussion points, presented in Appendix 1 and 2 respectively, limits this risk.

6.3.2 Validity

Internal contact within the case company was initiated by supervisors at the case company and continued by the use of snowball sampling. This enabled the authors to obtain a varied group of respondents contributing to the full understanding of the case company sales process. Although, since the researchers did not have full control of the sample selection, this could have a certain impact on the validity.

All interviews conducted were recorded to minimize the risk of misinterpretation. The recordings enabled the interviews to be listened to several times and in some cases also be transcribed. By establishing a good relationship with all interviewed respondents, any ambiguities could also be resolved with additional contact. As a part of the study, the findings were presented to the case company and global management for Public Safety. The findings were described as coinciding with the issues experienced with Public Safety customers, further strengthening the validity of the study. In summary, the presentation was described as articulating the employees’ perceptions, but from the customers’ perspective rather than the perspective of the case company.

Since the findings are based on a single case study, the conclusions and recommendations are developed for a telecommunications company active within the Public Safety industry. However, the results are believed to be applicable or adapted to other companies who are entering the Public Safety market. If the results, conclusions or recommendations are intended to be applied to another organization, they would need to be evaluated and adapted to its specific situation.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Research

To gain a better understanding of the findings applicability on a global level, the suggestion is to use a selection of customers from each region to be interviewed. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to interview a larger number of customers in order to gain a more detailed and rich understanding of the customers needs and requirements. Since the customer preferences might vary depending, not only on region but on culture and experience, these factors should also be considered.

Additionally suggested for further research is to examine how different suppliers active within the Public Safety market have designed and utilizes their respective sales processes. A comparison between the suppliers would provide insight as to what it is that has affected the design and what aspects in the processes are considered more or less beneficial. By examining how suppliers within the market operate, additional conclusions could be drawn regarding their view on what they believe the customers value.
7 REFERENCES


REFERENCES


Heavy Reading 4G/LTE Insider. (2015). LTE for Public Safety: Don't Count on It. 6 (2).


REFERENCES


### APPENDIX 1—Interviews Conducted with the Case Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Topic Covered</th>
<th>Length &amp; Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Challenges within the newly established business area.</td>
<td>60 minutes Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Challenges within the newly established business area.</td>
<td>60 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Introduction to the business area’s operations in the Nordic countries and its challenges.</td>
<td>40 minutes 60 minutes Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract Fulfillment Responsible</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Design of the sales process, focus at the later sub-processes. Details on how the design of the solution is compiled.</td>
<td>60 minutes Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Design of the sales process. Details on how the price presented in the offer is established.</td>
<td>90 minutes Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Account Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Sales directed to other customers than in telecommunications.</td>
<td>50 minutes Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Challenges within the newly established business area.</td>
<td>80 minutes Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Director</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>The effects of moving from telecommunications to Public Safety from a sales perspective.</td>
<td>40 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Challenges within the newly established business area.</td>
<td>60 minutes Video Interview</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each interview was initiated by a short introduction to the study and a description on how the specific interview would contribute the fulfilling the aim of the study. General points of discussion are listed below.

- The employee’s role in the sales process
- Design of the sales process
- Perceived challenges connected to the sales process
- Public procurement’s effect on the sales process
- Interaction with customers
- Reasons for unsuccessful sales
- Differences between geographic regions
- Differences between private and public customers
### APPENDIX 2 – Interviews Conducted with Customers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer</th>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Structure</th>
<th>Topic Covered</th>
<th>Length &amp; Context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Technical Officer, previously Purchaser</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Procurement process design. Desired traits in a supplier.</td>
<td>50 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Project Manager</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Procurement process design. Desired traits in a supplier.</td>
<td>60 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Project Lead</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Procurement process design. Desired traits in a supplier. New entry.</td>
<td>60 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>National Lead</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Desired traits in a supplier. New entry.</td>
<td>60 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Chief Constable and CEO</td>
<td>Semi-structured</td>
<td>Desired traits in a supplier. New entry.</td>
<td>70 minutes Telephone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each interview was initiated by a short introduction to the study and a description on how the specific interview would contribute to fulfilling the aim of the study. General points of discussion are listed below.

- Design of procurement process
- How the procurement is restricted
- The interviewee’s role in the procurement process
- How information is gathered from suppliers
- How suppliers preferably should interact
- Attractive traits in a supplier
- Level of technological knowledge in the organization
- Examples of previous procurements, good and bad experiences with suppliers
APPENDIX 3 – Current Sales Process
## APPENDIX 4 – Customer Context Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Experience is vital as well. I think that is something we look at in terms of if the supplier could actually deliver.</td>
<td>The experience in the supplier.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>The customer wants to assess whether a supplier can deliver.</td>
<td>The customer looks at the supplier’s previous experience.</td>
<td>The customer value experience in the supplier as it confirms whether they can deliver such a solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>If the price per unit is low, it is possible to purchase a few units from each supplier and conduct trials. If the solution is more expensive, we have to rely on references.</td>
<td>In first hand conducting trials, second to contact references.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>To test and/or evaluate who different solutions are suited to the customer.</td>
<td>By purchasing the solution in a limited version or by studying the results from implementation in other organizations.</td>
<td>The customer would like to conduct trials to evaluate how well suited the solution would be for its organization.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>We certainly seek reference sites, from a number of different suppliers, to see solutions working in action and to get that independent assessment from previous clients of a supplier. I think that suppliers are a part of that; they have to broker the contact.</td>
<td>Contact with reference sites to see previous solutions of a supplier.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>To get an independent assessment of the solution and the supplier.</td>
<td>The supplier facilitates the contact.</td>
<td>As the supplier facilitates contacts, the customer can conduct an independent assessment of a supplier and its solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>I think there is a benefit in engaging some suppliers in an early stage, because sometimes, the client has to be honest with themselves and actually admit that they do not fully understand the requirements themselves.</td>
<td>Engaging suppliers to complement lack of understanding of requirements and technology internally.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>A lack of technical knowledge creates difficulties in interpreting own requirements.</td>
<td>Engaging potential suppliers, taking advantage of their expertise.</td>
<td>As the customer has a lack of technological knowledge it engages with suppliers to take advantage of their expertise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The technology turnover time scale in communications technology for the emergency services is long, why we are looking for companies who got a good track record of being a long-term partner.</td>
<td>Suppliers with a good track record of being a long-term partner.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>The technology turnover time scale in communications technology for emergency services is long.</td>
<td>Evaluating how well previous customers have perceived the supplier as a long-term partner.</td>
<td>The customer is looking for a supplier proven to be a good long-term partner.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>It was not all about price although that was also quite important. Some of the other things were about integrity, about the consistency of the approach throughout the tendering process; it was about their honesty and the reputation of the company.</td>
<td>Important traits in a supplier are integrity, consistency in the approach, honesty and reputation.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>These traits would ensure that the supplier has the capability to deliver a solution that suits customer requirements and needs.</td>
<td>Established through contact with suppliers.</td>
<td>Other than the price the customer value integrity, honesty and reputation in a supplier combined with a consistent approach to ensure a solution suited for the current situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Probably the most important thing in terms of pre-procurement engagement is that an organization comes in and is interested in what your requirements are going to be, rather than coming in with a sales pitch. Somebody who is willing to talk to you as a partner rather than a purchaser is highly valued as you get more useful information that way.</td>
<td>Suppliers showing interest in the customer and its requirements and needs.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>Ensures that the suppliers gather useful information and from that forms a well suited proposal to the customer.</td>
<td>Suppliers responding to customers as a partner rather than customer.</td>
<td>A supplier who responds to the customer as a partner and is interested in their business is more likely to get more useful information for formulating the proposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>We seek a supplier that really wants to understand what it is that you want to buy and how you want to buy it. To make sure they offer you something that you want rather than say “this is what we got, take it or leave it”</td>
<td>Supplier with an understanding of the customer’s situation and needs.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Contact with suppliers)</td>
<td>To ensure a solution suited to the customer specific situation.</td>
<td>Dialog between the supplier and the customer.</td>
<td>A supplier who understands the customer is sought in order to ensure a well-suited solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Since the technology is continuously developed, we continuously update the tender until it is published. /.../ The tender is formulated so that new innovations in the market are included.</td>
<td>The tender is continuously updated to include new innovations in the solution.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Market analysis)</td>
<td>To ensure that new technological advancements are included in the solution.</td>
<td>A continuous market analysis and dialog with suppliers throughout.</td>
<td>The customer continuously updates their requirement to include innovations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We found that quite interesting and even just the responses in videoconferences and how they set out the level of professionalism or not gave us an idea and an indication of whether or not this was a professional organization that would have the capabilities and the capacity to deliver.</td>
<td>Gain an indication on the degree of professionalism in the supplier.</td>
<td>Establish tender (Contact with suppliers)</td>
<td>To get an idea of whether the organization would have the capabilities and capacity to deliver a sufficient solution.</td>
<td>Open meetings or videoconferences.</td>
<td>To ensure that the supplier has the capabilities and capacity to deliver the solution its professionalism is assessed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>These days, customers are looking at the whole life of the solution, they want to be sure that whatever they are buying not only meets their requirements now, but also is likely to continue to meet evolving requirements throughout the life of the contract.</td>
<td>The solution and price is evaluated based on the life of the solution.</td>
<td>Evaluate proposals</td>
<td>Ensuring that the solution not only meets the current requirements but is likely to continue to meet evolving requirements throughout the life of the contract</td>
<td>Evaluating whole life cost based on net present value and how the solution can be updated.</td>
<td>The solution is evaluated on how well it meets customer requirements throughout the contract, involving price and how it can be updated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>For the final presentation, rather than focusing on technical details, we focus on the people who are going to be accountable for the delivery and how confident we are in them. We want the people that are going to deliver the project, preferably a board level member and the director that will be directly accountable for the delivery to be present.</td>
<td>The customer wants the final presentation to be held by individuals accountable for delivering the project.</td>
<td>Evaluate proposals</td>
<td>To assess whether the individuals are suitable to deliver the project.</td>
<td>Assessing how confident the customer is in the individuals of the supplier.</td>
<td>The individuals in the supplier organization, that will be accountable for delivery should be available to the customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>I think flexibility and integration is vitally important. I think that issues we have had was integration with all new components because obviously there was more than one supplier.</td>
<td>Flexibility and integration are vital traits in a supplier.</td>
<td>Evaluate proposals</td>
<td>Organizations with more than one supplier needs for the solutions to be able to integrate with other systems or solutions.</td>
<td>Ensure flexibility and integration through contact with suppliers and specified requirements in the tender.</td>
<td>To ensure a well-functioning solution, the supplier should be flexible and able to integrate with other systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### APPENDIX 5 – Customer Voice Table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID</th>
<th>Reformulated Customer Expression</th>
<th>Underlying Needs</th>
<th>Process Attributes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>The customer value experience in the supplier as it confirms whether they can deliver such a solution.</td>
<td>Assurance of whether the supplier can be trusted to develop the solution.</td>
<td>Communicate experience within the specific area or with other solutions relevant as experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>The customer would like to conduct trials to evaluate how well suited the solution would be for its organization.</td>
<td>Try and assess the suitability of a complex solution.</td>
<td>Provide an opportunity for the customer to try the solution.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>As the supplier facilitates contacts, the customer can conduct an independent assessment of a supplier and its solutions.</td>
<td>Gain perspective of how the supplier has collaborated with other customers, how they have dealt with challenging situations etc.</td>
<td>Facilitate contact to previous/current customers who are or have been in a similar situation and have procured solutions from the supplier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>As the customer has a lack of technological knowledge it engages with suppliers to take advantage of their expertise.</td>
<td>Get a deeper understanding of current technology.</td>
<td>Assess the level of technological knowledge in the customer and customize how they are approached.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The customer is looking for a supplier proven to be a good long-term partner.</td>
<td>A long-term partner who is willing to develop a deep understanding of the customer and share risk.</td>
<td>Demonstrate a will to understand the customer requirements and needs and express a shared vision and goals. Communicate will and proof of current or previous long-term partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Other than the price the customer value integrity, honesty and reputation in a supplier combined with a consistent approach to ensure a solution suited for the current situation.</td>
<td>Assurance of whether the supplier is likely to deliver what is promised.</td>
<td>Display integrity throughout the procurement process and carry out an open and honest dialog with the customer regarding what solution are possible to implement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>A supplier who responds to the customer as a partner and is interested in their business is more likely to get more useful information for formulating the proposal.</td>
<td>For the supplier to have a clear understanding of the customer needs when formulating the proposal.</td>
<td>Show interest and respond to the customer as a partner wanting to reach a common goal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>A supplier who understands the customer is sought in order to ensure a well-suited solution.</td>
<td>Assurance of the supplier’s understanding of the customer’s situation in order to ensure a proposal adapted to the customer specific situation.</td>
<td>Create and communicate an understanding for the customer’s situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>The customer continuously updates their requirement to include innovations.</td>
<td>Assurance of that the solution is aligned with current technological advancements and will not be outdated through the life of the contract.</td>
<td>Communicate what innovations are available in the market as well as how the supplier solutions will benefit the customer and fulfill their needs and requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>To ensure that the supplier has the capabilities and capacity to deliver the solution its professionalism is assessed.</td>
<td>Assurance of the suppliers’ ability to deliver a well-suited solution.</td>
<td>Communicate professionalism to the customer in order to increase their trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The solution is evaluated on how well it meets the customer’s requirements throughout the contract, involving price and how it can be updated.</td>
<td>Knowing how well the solution will meet future and changing requirements.</td>
<td>Communicate how the offer will be updated through the lifetime of the contract and by that continuously meet changing requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>The individuals in the supplier organization that will be accountable for delivery should be available to the customer.</td>
<td>Knowing and meeting the individuals that will be accountable of delivering the project to make an assessment of whether they are considered suitable.</td>
<td>The person accountable for delivery should be available to the customer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>To ensure a well-functioning solution, the supplier should be flexible and able to integrate with other systems.</td>
<td>Eliminate or minimizing the risk of project failure due to issues in integrating a new system to existing systems.</td>
<td>Provide and communicate examples of when complex integrations have been implemented in a complex environment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 6 – Proposed Sales Process

0 Market Presence
- Exhibits at Trade Shows
- Invite Customers
- Connect Customers
- Generate Lead

1 Nurture Lead
- Define Customer
- Lead EP
- Lead Details
- Re-use Reference Solution
- Establish Criteria for Core 3

2 Qualify Opportunity
- Define Opportunity
- Assess Risk
- Key Issue Analysis
- Sales Prediction
- Mobilize Resources
- Sales Strategy
- Governance Model
- Identify Reference Cases
- Customer Details

3 Create Proposal
- Commercial Strategy
- Solution Strategy
- Fulfillment Strategy
- Fulfillment Plan
- Analyze Proposal
- Draft/Review Proposal
- Customer Solution Scope (RoM, BoQ)

4 Close Deal
- Negotiate with Customer
- Update Customer Solution Scope
- Update Customer Commercial Scope
- Draft Contract
- Update Risk Analysis
- Update Fulfillment Plan
- Analyze Proposal
- Approve Deviations
- Contract Review

Sign Contract, Ensure End User Statement, Sign and Archive Contract.

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- Exhibits at Trade Shows
- Invite Customers
- Connect Customers
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- Lead Details
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Sign Contract, Ensure End User Statement, Sign and Archive Contract.