Services Marketing in the Health Care Industry- Elekta in Sweden

Agnieszka Nadowska

Second Cycle

Supervisor: Dr. Maria Fregidou-Malama

Master’s Thesis in Business Administration
ABSTRACT

TITLE: Services marketing in the health care industry- Elekta in Sweden

LEVEL: Second Cycle

AUTHOR: Agnieszka Nadowska

SUPERVISOR: Dr. Maria Fregidou-Malama

EXAMINER: Dr. Akmal Hyder

AIM: The aim of this research is to investigate how Elekta markets its products and services in Sweden, its country of origin. For this purpose, factors such as adaptation/standardisation, trust and network connected with culture, are used to find out, how they influence the heterogeneity and intangibility of services.

METHOD: Primary data was collected through semi-structured interviews, phone interviews, emails-questionnaires and direct observations within the Elekta and Varian Medical Systems companies. Secondary data was gathered from relevant books, scientific articles, companies’ brochures and websites. Qualitative data was collected to analyse differences and similarities between theory and empirical findings.

RESULTS & CONCLUSIONS: It was found that model of international marketing services process, can be applied to domestic marketing and variables such as trust, adaptation/standardization and network connected with culture, help Elekta company to make company’s services more recognisable and similar in customer eyes. The research indicates that Elekta is more focused on international business than in its home country. In Sweden, the company focuses rather on collaborating with research institutions for product development and getting good references for other clinics.

Also it is significant that Elekta’s marketing process is linked to Hofstede’s national dimensions which are Power Distance, Individualism/Collectivism, Masculinity/Femininity, Uncertainty Avoidance and Long Term/Short term orientation.
**SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:** It would be beneficial, if there are more studies dedicated Elekta in different countries and then a comparison made with that of the Swedish Division. Apart from Elekta employees and staff who use Elekta’s equipment, data and feedback from patients, could help to provide a more comprehensive outcome too. The model of international services marketing could be used in other service industries and when studying domestic market, national and organizational culture should be considered.

**CONTRIBUTION OF THE THESIS:** This research shows the importance of adaptation/standardization, networking and trust connected with culture in cross-cultural and domestic services marketing, in terms of making services more visible and similar for customers. The work helps to increase awareness of services and products of Elekta company in health care industry and also can be taken as a part of the set of studies dedicated Elekta company.

**KEY WORDS:** Gamma Knife, Culture, Domestic Services Marketing, Standardization, Adaptation, Network, Relationship, Marketing Mix.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to the people who were with me and have assisted to my research:

To my supervisor Dr Maria Fregidou-Malama for support and belief in my abilities.

To Mr Christer Melander, a Manager for Radiology Unit at Gävle Hospital and staff members who showed me the equipment.

To Ms Anna-Strandberg, Business Unit Manager Nordic & Baltic Countries from Elekta Company.

To Dr Kristina Nilsson for the interview at Uppsala University Hospital.

To Håkan Sjöstrand from Uppsala University Hospital for significant information.

To Thomas Jansson from Gävle Hospital for answering my survey.

To Staffan Björk from Elekta Headquarters for the interview.

To my family and friends and those ones who supported me during the whole process.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COO</td>
<td>Country of origin</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDV</td>
<td>Individualism</td>
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<td>IHIP</td>
<td>Intangibility, Heterogeneity, Inseparability and Perishability</td>
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<td>LKG</td>
<td>Leksell Gamma Knife</td>
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<td>LTO</td>
<td>Long term orientation</td>
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<td>MAS</td>
<td>Masculinity</td>
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<td>NC</td>
<td>National Culture</td>
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<td>PDI</td>
<td>Power distance</td>
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<tr>
<td>PESTEL</td>
<td>Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal</td>
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<tr>
<td>UAI</td>
<td>Uncertainty avoidance</td>
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<td>4Ps</td>
<td>Marketing Mix /product, place, price, promotion</td>
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Introduction

Chapter 1 consists of five sections. The first part presents the general background of the study. The second section, presents the motivation of the study and the reasons why the research has been carried out. In the third part of this chapter, four research questions are listed; another section illustrates the issues of the research; and finally, brief outline of the chapter with a structure of the study figure, closes this chapter.

1.1 Background

During the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, the world has moved from a manufacturing to service-based economy, where the twentieth first century, will be the “century of services”, and will transform into the century of “international services” (Clark and Rajaratnam, 1999). In the global world’s economy, services are growing fast, making 63% of gross world product (Kotler & Armstrong, 2009, p.268). The most developed countries compared to less developed ones, provide more services, which can be seen by large number of companies retaining its existing customers and attracting new ones, which creates a sustainable competitive advantage (Zeithaml et al., 2006, p.vi).

Service is a complex word, with many meanings ranging from personal service to service as a product. This means that product can be turned into a service to a customer, depending how much the seller tries to meet customer’s needs (Grönroos, 2000). As services have many definitions, here is one proposed definition from the 1990’s: “A service is a process consisting of a series of more or less intangible activities that normally, but not necessarily always, take place in interactions between the customer and service employees and/or physical resources or goods and/or systems of the service provider, which are provided as solutions to customer problems” (Grönroos, 2000, p.46).

In general, service is a process consisting of number of activities between a seller and a customer in relation to meet customer’s need. For Kotler & Amstrong (2009), services are products too, but intangible ones. Researchers identified four specific characteristics of services, which are: heterogeneity, perishability, intangibility and inseparability (Grönroos, 2000). Hyder and Fregidou-Malama (2009) argue that heterogeneity (same service differs from customer to customer) and intangibility (service not visible in customer eyes) are service
characteristics that cause the most issues making services difficult to commence. When a customer purchases the product, he/she employs many tangible cues to judge the quality by colour, style, fit, size and so on. When purchasing services there are only a few tangible cues which can be employed in decision making (Javalgi et al., 2006). However, there are variables such as adaptation/standardization, trust and network that have impact on services. All together connected with culture, they make services more visible and similar in customer eyes (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009; Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011). The variables are presented in “the process of international marketing services model” which was created by two researchers Hyder and Fregidou-Malama.

1.1.1 Domestic versus International Marketing

Scholars agree that marketing is about formulation and implementation of the basic policies of product, price, promotion and place. It is a part of every business that every company applies those policies to rich its customers. There is domestic and international marketing distinguished; the same marketing principles are used for both, however in other aspects they differ significantly (Perry, 1990). International marketing in contrast to domestic one, involves crossing national boundaries and engaging with foreign cultures (Clark and Rajaratnam, 1999; Perry, 1990). According to Perry (1990), international marketing is understood to be carried out across borders. Domestic marketing is applicable to international marketing, however differences in economy, languages, politics or culture are considered as barriers (Perry, 1990; Clark and Rajaratnam, 1999).

It is also important, what the company’s orientation towards international business is. Whether it is ethnocentric (relates to home country being the best that should be accepted by others); polycentric (host country oriented with belief that each country knows best); or geocentric (associated with worldwide orientation with positive attitude to all people, cultures etc.) (Perry, 1990).

1.2 Motivation of the study

Elekta is a global medical technology company that develop and sell solutions for cancer and brain disorders. Every year, around one million patients are treated with Elekta’s equipment which is aimed to save people lives. The company develops equipment for radiation therapy
and radiosurgery and also software systems that help to enhance efficiency in treating cancer. The company is listed on Nasdaq OMX Stockholm and operates in 26 countries worldwide (Elekta 2011/12, p. III).

Hyder and Fregidou-Malama (2009) when examining Elekta services operating in Egypt, have developed “the process of international services marketing model”, which has been used in studies dedicated Elekta operating in such countries as Philippines, China, Russia and Brazil. However, there is no study dedicated Elekta services in Sweden, its country of origin. In order to add this research to scope of studies on Elekta and to benefit the service marketing theory, the newer framework by Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) has been applied. Also in this research, for comparison and providing valuable information about marketing services in Sweden, Varian Medical Systems which is Elekta’s biggest competitor is used.

1.3 Aim and Research Questions

The aim of this research is to investigate Elekta’s marketing process in Sweden, the country of its origin. For this purpose, three variables: trust, network and adaptation/standardization connected with culture, have been examined to find out, how they influence intangibility and heterogeneity of the services in a home market. In order to achieve this aim, the process of international services marketing model and three research questions have been adopted from Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) original study and one is added by the author. They are as follows:

RQ1. How does adaptation/standardization of services and products take place in domestic market as being considered an international marketing strategy?

RQ2. How is trust developed in the local environment and how does it help to overcome the intangibility and heterogeneous nature of service offerings?

RQ3. How are networks established and how do they help to overcome the intangibility and heterogeneity of service offerings?

RQ4. Can Elekta’s domestic marketing process be linked to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions?
1.4 Limitations

The study is limited to one organization, where qualitative data collection method has been used. There are no competitors in Sweden with exactly the same product. There is Varian Medical Systems that provides radiology treatments and is Elekta’s competitor to some extent. Another limitation is that not all the Elekta’s customers which are hospitals and their patients have been considered in this study and the model of international services marketing process has been applied to domestic market. The model application will help to find out what are the aspects of marketing strategy used by Elekta in home market.

1.5 Outline of the Study

This study consists of six chapters (figure 1) with ingress at the beginning of each. Chapter 1 (Introduction) illustrates the background of the study, motivation, research questions and limitations. The theoretical discussion is presented in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 (Methodology) explains how the data was collected and which methods have been applied. Chapter 4 (Empirical Findings) presents the data collected during the investigation. Thereafter, the theories and empirical findings are combined and analysed together in Chapter 5 (Analysis). Finally answers to research questions, implications, recommendations and suggestions for future research are presented in Chapter 6 (Conclusion).
Figure 1: Outline of the Study

- Introduction
- Methodology
- Theoretical Framework
- Empirical Findings
- Analysis
- Conclusion

Source: Own construction.
Theoretical Background

This chapter reviews the literature about marketing services and service characteristics. It is followed by theoretical framework of the process of international services marketing model with its three variables: trust, adaptation/standardization and network. Further, Hofstede’s dimensions of national culture are presented with application to health care industry and presenting Sweden according to Hofstede’s framework.

2.1 Services Marketing

To start with, marketing of products and services has no single definition, however the most common one says, that the aim of marketing is to make sales superfluous by understanding and getting to know the customer well, that the product and service fits customers’ needs and can sell itself (Simkin, 2000). The most important themes that appear in marketing definitions are such as: the ability to satisfy customers; the need to create an edge over competitors; the identification of the most common marketing opportunities; or profits to enable a viable future for the company (Simkin, 2000).

How company achieves its goal, depends on meeting customers’ needs and delivering desired satisfaction more effectively and efficiently than company’s competitors (Kotler and Amstrong, 2009, p.16). To achieve organizational goal, a company needs to choose its marketing strategy by planning the details of the marketing mix (4Ps). The “4Ps” is a set of tools that company mixes to produce the response to target market needs. It consists of:

*Product*—goods and service combination that company offers to target market.

*Price*—the amount of money customers have to pay for wanted good or service.

*Place*—means company’s activities making product available for target market.

*Promotion*—includes company activities that communicates the product and persuades target consumers to buy it (Kotler and Amstrong, 2009, p.76).

However, to services marketing, it has been added *People, Process and Physical Evidence* (3P’s), variables by calling it Extended Marketing Mix (Goi, 2009).
People- are significant players in service delivery who have impact on customer experience. People are also one of the visible service elements.

Process- the systems used to deliver services (i.e. booking system that hotel uses)

Physical Evidence- internal and external appearance of premises, equipment or waiting areas (Richardson and Gosnay, 2010, pp.124-125).

2.2 Service Characteristics

Grönroos (2000) argues that it is better to identify service’s characteristics than defining them as it is impossible to do it properly (p.49). There are four characteristics of services identified by researches: intangibility, heterogeneity, inseparability and perishability (IHIP). They are as follows:

Intangibility- The most cited criterion of services. A customer faces difficulties in service evaluation, due to its high level of intangibility. Services cannot be touched, seen or felt before they are bought; however to describe them, customers use words such as “experience”, “trust” or “feeling” (Grönroos, 2000, p.47).

Heterogeneity- (Grönroos, 2000) means that service to one customer will not be the “same” service to another one. This characteristic creates major issue in marketing management, regarding how to maintain an evenly perceived quality of service provided to customers (p.49).

Inseparability- Services in contrast to products, at first are sold, produced and then consumed at the same time. Services cannot be separated from the service provider and both service provider and the customer have impact on outcome (Kotler & Amstrong, 2009, p. 269).

Perishability- Services cannot be stored and kept for later use; also they cannot be resold or returned. When patients miss their appointments, doctors can change them as the service value exists for some period of time, so when a patient does not show up, he/she loses a place in a queue. (Kotler & Amstrong, 2009, p.270).

Due to those characteristics of services, “quality” is considered as a measurement criterion. Also quality cannot be measured instantly as every service provided is different to every
customer, so it is a hard job for a service provider to ensure that customer’s needs will be met (Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011).

### 2.3 Process of Services Marketing Model

Researches Hyder and Fregidou-Malama (2009), when examining the market in Egypt, have created a framework called *The process of International Services Marketing model*. The model consists of 3 variables: trust, standardization/adaptation and network. Later, when analysing market in Brazil, they have developed a new model by adding another variable, culture (figure 2).

**Figure 2: The Process of International Services Marketing Model**

![Diagram of the Process of International Services Marketing Model](source: Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011, p.7.)
In both case studies on Egypt and Brazil (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama 2009; Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011), the authors argue that intangibility and heterogeneity are the most complicated service characteristics in health care industry. Services are invisible in customer eyes and due to various numbers of markets where services are offered, same service differs from one customer to another, thus they are difficult to commence. According to Hyder and Fregidou-Malama (2009) variables such as adaptation/standardization, trust and network influence services, making them more tangible and homogenous in relation to customers. Those frameworks have been used in other studies on such countries like Egypt, China, Philippines, Brazil and Russia. In order to continue with those studies and to contribute to the project dedicated Elekta services marketing, the newer framework by Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) is adapted to examine Elekta’s services in Sweden which is home market.

Those four variables are discussed further in following sections.

2.3.1 Adaptation/Standardization

Adaptation/standardization is a significant strategy for a company that wants its services to be accepted when entering a foreign market (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009). Ryans et al., (2003) cited in Hong and Ling (2011), consider adaptation/standardization as international marketing services strategy, which means it plays less important role in a home market. Standardization exists, when a company markets its offerings to international markets where basic concept and marketing mix aspects remain unchanged (Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011). On the other hand, adaptation prevails when the company listens to the local market that wants to enter and makes its offerings to meet needs of the local customers (Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011). Also authors argue if adaptation and standardisation is balanced, services become more homogenous and tangible leading to success and service acceptance by customers (Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011). According to Perry (1990) barriers such as language, culture, politics or economy, exist between international markets, however this cannot be find in domestic marketing. This means that standardization strategy could be applied in domestic markets more likely than adaptation.
2.3.2 Trust

Trust is a confidence in the intentions of a business partner and belief that the partner will behave as hoped. On the other hand, there is distrust which means negative expectations towards business partner (Erdem, 2003).

The trust concept is divided into four categories:

- generalized trust (a customer knows that the company is stable, offers same components to everyone due to its reputation)
- system trust (based on law, industry regulations and professionalism of the company. Customer trusts the supplier that will perform according to expectations)
- personality based trust (a customer believes that can rely on the supplier or service provider)
- process based trust (relates to experience in an ongoing relationship between service provider and a customer. If the customer is pleased, then the trust exists (Grönroos, 2010, pp.37-38). According to Hyder and Fregidou-Malama (2009), in domestic and international marketing, developing trust between parties takes time, money and needs tolerance. Between alliances there are three elements of trust identified: uncertainty, vulnerability and control. The greater uncertainty of future events and partner's response to those events, the greater trust is significant. In terms of vulnerability, trust is needed to avoid issues in a relationship and also when is low control over the partner (Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011).

Importance of Country of Origin

Michaelis et al., (2008) argue that country of origin (COO) develops initial trust and is significant when entering new markets. Potential customers cannot develop trust relying on experience with the company, rather through COO and corporate reputation. COO, is an important tool for driving consumers' product/service evaluations and behavioural intentions to purchase (Josiassen & Assaf, 2010). Customers’ COO image has greater influence on buying behaviour when they perceive products to have greater product-origin congruency than products with lower product-origin congruency (Josiassen & Assaf, 2010, p.305).
2.3.3 Network

Scholars define network as a set of many simple and difficult interactions and relationships (Hyder, 2008). The reason why companies collaborate with each other is to perform better and achieve goals. Companies cannot function isolated, that is why there is a need to networking. (Hyder, 2008). Companies need to network with others in order to get information and access to resources of the firm, that companies run their activities with (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009). According to Ford (2004, p.140) a network relates to all actions of the main company and others around it. These are distributors, subsidiaries, competitors, co-operators and customers. Also, entering new markets can involve engaging in complex relationships, thus it may be beneficial for companies and competitors in one market to cooperate in another.

Accordingly, service providers are networking with their customers; they build trust by meeting customer needs (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009). So that, those two variables interact with each other and the better their performance, the more tangible and homogenous services become.

When cooperation between a customer and the service provider takes place, a customer relationship emerges. In service context, there is always relationship between two parties being used as a basis for the marketing. Relationship can be taken as an “attitude” that has to be earned by the supplier and service provider. The harder work the higher chances for relationship (Grönroos, 2000, p.33). Anderson et al., (1994), see relationships as parts of networks and call it as a “secondary function” of a relationship. For instance one firm focuses on adding value activity to its business by networking with other firm that works on partner’s research and development of the product (Anderson et al., 1994).

Also Olkkonen et al., (2000) argue that relationships and networks are formed by interpersonal communication process and are affected by contextual and structural factors. However communication can make changes in those contextual and structural factors. Thus, relationships and networks can be understood by having knowledge of the communication process between each other and communication being understood when contextual and structural factors are considered (Olkkonen et al., 2000).
2.3.4 Culture According to Hofstede

Studying differences in culture among groups and societies, assumes a position of cultural relativism. It calls to stop judging when dealing with different groups and societies from one’s own. If someone wants to change something in other group or society, there is a need to negotiate. Negotiation will succeed when both parties will understand the differences in viewpoints (Grönroos, 2000, pp.25-26). Geert Hofstede is a well-known Dutch researcher who studied culture for many years and defines it as a *software of the mind*. He argues that individuals behave according to the environment, where they were brought up and collected life experiences from (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.5). He identified 5 dimensions of national culture which are: *Power Distance* (PDI); *Individualism/Collectivism* (IDV); *Masculinity/Femininity* (MAS); *Uncertainty avoidance* (UAI) and *Long term/Short term orientation* (LTO) (Hofstede et al., 2010).

According to Meeuwesen et al., (2009), Hofstede’s dimensions of national cultures can be applied to the health care sector in medical communication at country level. Firstly, countries with large PDI, show there are fixed roles of doctors and patients, patients get what they expect, that is why consultations are shorter comparing to countries with low PDI. Secondly, in more individualistic countries, there is importance given to psychological issues and more information exchanged. Thirdly, in masculine countries there is more social talk and less biomedical, where in feminine countries patients are willing to give more information about themselves and use biomedical talk. Lastly, the country’s wealth is a significant predictor too. In richer countries, there are more male doctors than females, longer consultations and better patient’s health condition (Meeuwesen et al., 2009).

Sweden according to Hofstede Dimensions

Sweden is one of the nations that Hofstede examined in his study about national cultures (figure 3) and it is significant to present the country according to those dimensions.

Power Distance is based on the value system for less powerful people (Hofstede et al., 2010). Sweden scored 31, which means that the country represents independent style, there is low
hierarchy, equal rights, management facilities and empower. Power is decentralized, in recruitment, work experience is important. Manager-associate attitude is informal and communication directs (Hofstede, 2013). As Sweden scored 71 on IDV, it is considered as an individualistic country where individuals take care of themselves and their families. The employer-employee relationship is a contract based on mutual advantage. Experience has high impact on hiring and promoting process (Hofstede, 2013). In an individualistic country, tolerance of others, harmony with others, non-competitiveness and trustworthiness are favourable. Regarding relationships, they are not obvious and they have to be fostered (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.100).

On MAS, the country scored 5, thus it is considered as feminine country. In feminine societies, it is significant to keep balance at work and life ensuring that everyone is included. Everyone is involved in achieving goals and equality is favoured. Conflicts are resolved by compromises and negotiations and more leisure time is preferred than more money. Also Swedish culture relates to ‘lagom’ that means not too much and not too little; everything is moderated (Hofstede, 2013).

On dimension representing low preference for avoiding uncertainty, Sweden scored 29, which means the society is characterized with relaxed attitude, which counts more than principles in practice. In societies with low UAI, people believe that if some rules are ambiguous they should be changed. Innovation is not seen as threatening, citizens trust politicians and legal systems, and also there is ethnic tolerance and positive attitude towards foreigners. Also cooperation is an important value in low UIA countries (Hofstede, 2013; Hofstede et al., 2010, pp.203-332).

Sweden by scoring 20 on LTO makes its culture as short term oriented. Swedish people show respect to traditions, impatience for achieving fast results and concern when proving the truth (Hofstede, 2013). Also in short oriented countries, collaborating is valued (Hofstede et al., 2010).
2.4 Reflection on the Theoretical Framework

In this chapter, the concepts of marketing, services and their characteristics were presented with the help of theory. According to Grönroos (2000), it is more relevant to identify services characteristics than trying to define them. From four characteristics of services, intangibility and heterogeneity are two characteristics that mainly cause issues in international service delivery process. It is due to services not being visible in customer eyes and same service provided for one customer being different to another (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009; Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011).

In order to overcome issues regarding heterogeneity and intangibility in domestic market, such variables as trust, adaptation/standardization network connected with culture should be examined. The process of international services marketing model created by Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) is essential, as it consists of those variables. The question is, if the model can be applied to examine domestic market too? According to Perry (1990), domestic marketing can be applicable to international marketing, but in international there are political, economic, environmental and cultural barriers that do not exist in domestic market.

Source: Hofstede et al., 2010, pp.51-282, with own construction.
Also adaptation/standardization variable is considered as international marketing strategy. Thus it is nurturing, whether standardization and adaptation aspects exist in domestic market for companies, when entering new markets within a country.

It is also significant if Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions can be linked with company’s domestic marketing process. In this study, the researcher has applied the process of international services marketing model by Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) and modified that to domestic market (Figure 4). The variables such as trust, adaptation/standardization, network and cultural aspect discussed by various researchers in this chapter, further guide the entire research. Regarding culture, there is focus on Hofstede’s cultural dimensions as it is one of cultural aspects.

Figure 4. The process of domestic services marketing.

![Diagram of domestic service marketing process]

Key:
- [ ] Interconnection of the variables
- → Influence on the variables and service characteristics

Source: Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011, with own construction.
Methodology

Chapter three presents how the research is been carried out, which method of data collection has been used and explains adequacy of chosen method in order to answer research questions. Later, the procedure of primary data is explained and respondents presented.

3.1 Business Research

Research is searching for facts, answers to questions and solutions to problems. It is seeking to find explanation to unexplained phenomenon to clarify it and to correct misunderstood facts. There are two ways to make this research: arbitrary method which means seeking answers to questions based on imagination, opinions or blind belief and scientific method which is based on verifiable evidence (Krishnaswami and Satyaprasad 2010, p.2).

Business research is a scientific process that involves studying people, systems or groups of people and interactions of people and systems. Business research can be formal or informal, where the good one is replicable and should provide more benefits to the organization than it cost. Business research is designed to answer such questions as: how to improve company’s performance, how to satisfy customers, employees and owners, or how to achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. Today in business life, many companies’ primary activity, involves providing research services to answer strategic business questions (Hair et al., 2011, pp.2-8).

Model purposes are distinguished between guidance of activities, description, explanation, and prediction/forecasting. Descriptive study is intended to tell us how “things are”. It can be framed in different ways, and questions such ‘who’, ‘what’, ‘how’, ‘where’ and ‘when’ are adopted. Other researches want to explain phenomena, for example why one company succeeds in particular industry when other fails? This requires a definition of success and factors that produced both success and failure. The third motivation is prediction/forecasting, where many business studies forecast sales or prices and are based on extrapolation of past activities (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2008, pp.49-52).

This is an exploratory research in its nature which requires ability to observe, gather information and construct explanations (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2008, pp.58-59). Thus, the
research explains how marketing strategy is implemented by Elekta company in home market, Sweden. As company’s data and its analysis are presented in the study, later the data can be used for practical purposes by business people.

**Induction versus Deduction**

A research can be deductive or inductive; depending on emphasis of the research and the nature of the research topic. Deductive research in contrast to inductive one takes less time to complete and is low-risk strategy in contrast to inductive one. Induction takes long time to collect data, to analyse it and there is always the possibility that no useful data or inappropriate theories will emerge (Saunders et al., 2009, p.127).

According to Saunders et al., (2009), the researcher has adopted an inductive strategy because of qualitative data collection being used; the researcher is a part of the research and as it is a single study where is less concern for generalization (Saunders et al., 2009). Also the research is high risk strategy, what means it takes long time to complete it and researcher must be really careful in choosing the right theory and data collection methods in order to bring fruitful results. As the topic is new and there is little existing literature about it, induction is a perfect strategy to adapt.

**Qualitative versus Quantitative Methods**

Krishnaswami and Satyaprasad (2010) identify two basic research approaches: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative approach is based on quantity and amount and the outcome is presented in through numerical terms. Qualitative approach uses non-numeric data and usually is used to find consumer behavior, employee’s attitude or changes in trends (p.5). Qualitative approach has been used in two case studies done by Hyder and Fregidou- Malama titled *Services marketing in a Cross-Cultural environment: case of Egypt* (2009) and *Health Care Services Marketing in a Cross-Cultural Context: Elekta in Brazil* (2011). There are also three more studies about Elekta in Russia, China and Philippines with the same approach
applied. In order to follow those studies and when working on theoretical part, qualitative approach has been used in present research. As the main aim of the study, is to collect adequate data that combined with theory will make the study valid and reliable, this approach seemed to be more appropriate to use than the quantitative one (numeric).

3.2 Research Process

Researches use different data collection methods. In order to answer research questions and make this study useful for researches, both primary and secondary data is collected.

*Primary data* is collected for specific research problem at hand and there are three collection methods identified:

1) **Experiment** – the researches creates the situation and has full control of who participates in experiment (Hox and Boeije, 2005).
2) **Survey**- is carried out when researcher wants to collect data on behavior, feeling, attitudes of targeted population.
   - Interview can be conducted via telephone, through internet communicator or face-to-face and other methods. They can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured. They are presented in a form of questionnaire, where all the issues can be covered. This method used is to collect qualitative data.
   - Questionnaires comes in two types: open and closed. “Open “ones, have no definite answer, it takes time to answer and analyze them. “Closed” questions provide alternative answers to be chosen. Questionnaire can be conducted via telephone, mail, live in a public area etc. .

The positive aspect of the semi-structured interviews conducted in this research, was the possibility of asking additional questions that arose during the interviews, which helped the researcher to understand the issues better (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

3) **Observation** is a neglected aspect of the research. It involves recording and analyzing peoples’ behavior. It can be rewarding and enrich the research data (Saunders et al., 2009, p.288).

*Secondary data* is collected from other sources being already published in any form. This data is used in literature review and is examined before primary data collection to avoid
duplication. Also secondary data may be at lower cost comparing to primary data (Hox and Boeije, 2005).

Regarding data collection method in present research, interviews and observation have been applied. There were three face-to-face semi-structured interviews, a phone interview conducted; two email questionnaires with open and closed questions and two observations at (a) Hospital in Gävle and Uppsala University Hospital. During observations the researcher has seen (the) equipment and patients being treated by that equipment. Secondary data about Elekta and Varian was gathered from companies’ websites and their annual reports from 2011/12. Other information was collected from internet sources, scientific articles and relevant literature.

3.3 Case Study as a Research Strategy

Robson (2002, p.178) cited in Saunders et al., (2009, p.145), defined a case study as a research strategy that embraces empirical investigation of a specific contemporary phenomenon within its life context using diverse sources of evidence. The case study strategy is of the author’s specific interest that is willing to get greater understanding of research context and accomplished processes. Also the case study strategy enables to collect answers to questions such as ‘why’, ‘what’ and ‘how’. That is why this strategy is used in explanatory and exploratory research. Saunders et al., (2009), argues when considering the case study, it would require to use multiple sources of data. The author refers to triangulation which is using different data collection techniques for the single study to prove that data is telling what researcher thinks and says (p.146). The multiple data collection techniques such as semi-structured interview, phone interview, observation, documentary analyses and online questionnaire have been used in the study. A single case exploratory study is been applied in this work, as it focuses on one company, Elekta AB. The data about the company has been gathered from questionnaire filled up by Elekta’s employees, interviews, company’s website and Elekta Annual Report (2011/12).
3.4 Data Collection

There were six respondents who participated in the current research. The information obtained was in the form of three face-to-face semi-structured interviews, one phone interview, two observations and two email questionnaires. Before conducting the interview and sending the questionnaire out, a pilot test was taken on two students. The questions have been presented to them and the timing was checked. The questions that have not been understood, were corrected and explained. Questions that seemed to be not important or irrelevant have been removed. After the corrections, the survey questions have been sent to the supervisor and agreed with and finally been sent to the respondents.

3.4.1 Respondents

Anna-Carin Strandberg

Business Unit Manager Nordic & Baltic Countries

Elekta AB

Anna C Strandberg was recommended by Gustaw Schwang, the market development manager, that the author met during a presentation at Elekta Headquarters in Stockholm. As Ms. Strandberg is responsible for Nordic and Baltic countries, she was the right person to get information regarding Elekta operating in Sweden. It was quite difficult to reach the respondent as she was occupied with work. After not responding to e-mail, she has been contacted by phone about the e-mail. As she was not able to be interviewed, she answered the set of questions emailed to her again (Appendix E). The questionnaire contained questions regarding Anna-Carin Starndberg as an employee of Elekta company; Elekta operating in Sweden; trust; network and adaptation/standardization variables.
Mr Christer Melander  
Radiology Unit Manager  
Hospital in Gävle  

My supervisor, Maria Fregidou-Malama has suggested to the author, to interview a member from the Hospital in Gävle, who could answer questions about the marketing of Varian Medical Systems. Firstly, the author called the hospital reception and was redirected to Radiology Department and contacted Mr Christer Melander, who agreed to an observation and to be interviewed. The interview date was assigned for December 14, 2012 at 1pm. Questions have been sent by e-mail to the interviewee two weeks before the interview. Also with the list of questions, a recommendation letter was attached (Appendix A). The interview was carried out in a manner of conversation, which is considered be semi-structured. Duration was approximately one hour and thirty minutes. After the interview, Mr Melander showed to the author Varian’s equipment and answered extra questions that came up during this process (i.e. Are treatments painful?; If there was a chance, would hospital switch to Elekta?). The answers were not audio-recorded as the interviewee didn’t accept it, thus the answers were taken down on a piece of paper. This interview helped the author to formulate appropriate questions when discussing with the other respondents.

Kristina Nilsson  
Radiation oncologist  
Uppsala University Hospital  

Doctor Nilsson has been contacted and asked for the face-to-face interview for the 20\textsuperscript{th} of February 2013 at 11.30 am at Uppsala University Hospital, one day before the interview. The interview took fifty five minutes and was recorded on phone recorder, with the permission of the interviewee where it was transcribed and edited later. After the interview, Dr Nilsson showed us Elekta equipment. The presence of Supervisor Fregidou-Malama brought fruitful discussion. The interview answers are presented in Appendix F.
Håkan Sjöstrand  
Engineer at Radiology Department  
Uppsala University Hospital

On the 21st of February, 2013 Mr Sjöstrand, an engineer recommended by Dr Nilsson from Uppsala University Hospital, was contacted by phone and asked for the phone interview on the next day. The list of questions has been emailed to Mr Sjöstrand on the same day, enabling the respondent to see the questions before and prepare answers (Appendix G). The interview lasted 45 minutes and been recorded on audio recorder, transcribed and edited later.

Thomas Jansson  
Biomedical Engineer  
Gävle Hospital

On the 21st of February, 2013 Thomas Jansson from Gävle Hospital (suggested by Pär Hållström, the physician, who was not available for an interview at that time) has been phoned for a phone interview on the next day, the 22nd of February, 2013 at 12:00. In order to enable the respondent to prepare for interview, the list of questions was emailed to him. As the respondent could not attend the phone interview at that time, he answered the questions emailed to him and send them back the next day. The answers can be found in Appendix H.

Staffan Björk  
Manager of Product Marketing for Neuroscience  
Elekta headquarters

Mr Björk has been suggested by Gustaw Schwang from Elekta headquarters and been contacted on the 21st of March, 2013 for an interview. The agreed date was the 6th of April, 2013 at 1pm at Elekta headquarters. Before the interview list of questions have been emailed to the interviewee for preparation. The interview lasted 45 minutes between 1 pm and 1:45 pm and has been recorded fully on audio recorder, then transcribed. Answers can be found in Appendix I.
In total, there were three face-to-face semi structured interviews, one phone interview, two observations and two email questionnaires selected as a source of primary data. The questions before being sent to all respondents were discussed with the supervisor. Relevant information that was collected, is presented in the empirical part of this research, where later is compared with relevant theories applied to entire research and presented in analysis part. From recorded interviews, all the answers were transcribed word by word and extra information was summarized. The information that has not been used in this work as found not relevant can be found in Appendix section.

3.4.2 Direct Observation

Direct observations have been done on the 14th of December, 2012 when visiting the Hospital in Gävle to interview Mr Melander and on the 20th of February 27, 2013 when interviewing Dr. Kristina Nilsson at Uppsala University Hospital. The observations provided the researcher with significant data that could not be gathered through other data collection method. The researcher had the opportunity to observe the equipment and medical staff using it when treating a patient. Also there were questions asked regarding medical staff satisfaction i.e. “does medical staff provide great service to all the patients?”.

3.5 Data Presentation and Analysis

Regarding data presentation, all data collected is summarized and at the end, presented in tables and graphs. Comparison between Elekta and Varian and significant data regarding services marketing in home market is presented in tables and findings from primary data were added to the domestic services marketing framework. This is easy way for the reader to read the data without confusion.

In order to make the study beneficial for others and reliable, data collected needs to be analysed and understood. Qualitative data analysis, helps to develop the theory from researcher’s data and identifies relationships between categories (Saunders et al., 2009). As qualitative data collection method has been used, qualitative data analysis was needed. Saunders et al., 2009, identify three types of qualitative analysis processes: summarising
(when researches summarizes the data he/she thinks is important); categorizing (creating categories and adding relevant information to particular category) and structuring (data presented according to respondent’s experiences and personal interpretation) (Saunders et al., 2009). In this research, categorizing method was used, where in analysis section, primary and secondary data collected is compared with theory and later, research questions are answered. Main categories identified are: adaptation/ standardization, network, trust and cultural aspects.

### 3.5 Reliability and Validity

Reliability is an extent, to which outcomes are consistent over time and an accurate representation of the total population of the study and ability to reproduce results of the study under a similar methodology (Golafshani, 2003). Validity on the other side, is concerned with the findings being about what they appear to be about (Saunders, 2008, p.137). Basically, definition of reliability refers to the research being replicable, where validity in terms of measurements is accurate and if they measure what they were meant to measure (Golafshani, 2003). For reliability of this research, the author applied the same research method as other researches have applied in studies on Elekta operating in Philippines, China, Russia, Egypt and Brazil.

Selected respondents, were people who could provide significant information who work for Elekta, work with Elekta’s equipment or have contact with the company. Regarding information about Varian, it was gathered from staff working with equipment. Respondent’s answers and opinions were needed in this study to make it comprehensive. Recommendation letter, intention letter and interview questions with answers were placed in Appendix section to let other researches use them. In terms of better validity, dates were presented in all activities and the same questions or similar ones were used in interviews.
Empirical Findings

This chapter consists of five sections and presents the data collected during the research. Firstly, Sweden as a country is introduced, followed by Elekta and Varian company descriptions. Thereafter, findings delivered from the respondents are further presented in relation to trust; adaptation/standardization; network and culture variables. Differences and similarities between Elekta and Varian operating in Sweden are presented in a table at the end of the chapter.

4.1 Introducing Sweden as a Country

Sweden is a Scandinavian country in Northern Europe located between Finland and Norway with the Stockholm capital. The country is well-known for its life rate, high individual taxes, large public sector and for being a friendly ‘green’ country—clean and full of forests (Salam, 2011).

Total number of inhabitants is 9,546,217 (Scb, 2011), regarding religion, 87% consists of Lutherans, resulting to the other 13% consisting of Roman Catholics, Orthodox, Baptists, Muslims, Jewish and Buddhists (Salam, 2011). Regardless of the variety of religion within the Country, the official language is Swedish.

Health Care

Sweden has one of the highest levels of eldest population as a proportion of the national total within Europe. The statistics shows that the Swedish government and other regulations/authorities look after their residents by providing them good quality health and medical care. This is a shared responsibility between central government, county councils and municipalities.

The central government establishes the principles and guidelines which together sets the political agenda for medical and health care. It is been accomplished through laws and agreements between county and municipality representatives. Health and medical care in
Sweden is accessible to all residents at reasonable prices. Even if visits with specialists are more expensive comparing to doctor’s visits at local hospitals, there is a ceiling for medical consultations called högkostnadsskydd. This means that a patient’s cost for 12 month period is up to SEK 1,100, that is maximum he/she can spend, after that, all the visits and treatments are free of charge. Another limit covers yearly prescription medicine costs up to SEK 2,200. (Swedish Institute, 2012).

**PESTEL Analysis of Sweden**

According to Wild et al., (2010), it is significant that each country has its own set of characteristics that have an impact on business activities and economic growth. The characteristics are as follows: political, economic, social, technological, cultural and legal (PESTEL). Table 1 presents main characteristics, describing Sweden as well developed European country.

Table 1. PESTEL analysis of Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>Safe country and politically stable, low corruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental</td>
<td>As one of the “Green nations” attractive for tourism and study destinations,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social</td>
<td>High education level, high literacy level, successful social welfare oriented country, skilled labor, low crime, low competition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technological</td>
<td>High level of technological adoption, high innovation,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic</td>
<td>Preventing long term unemployment,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal</td>
<td>High individual taxes, large number of rules regarding establishing the business,</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Salam, 2011, with own modification.
4.2 Elekta Profile

Elekta is a medical technology company aiming to improve, prolong and save lives through clinical solutions for treating cancer and brain disorders. The company develops clinical treatment solutions for radiation therapy and radiosurgery, plus workflow-enhancing software systems across the spectrum of cancer care. Elekta’s products are: hardware, software and service in four product areas: Neuroscience, Oncology, Brachytherapy and Software.

Elekta values are trust and responsibility, long-term relationships, resourcefulness, responsiveness and creativity where their mission is to protect life (Elekta 2011/12, p.5). A high level of customer loyalty is significant for Elekta’s growth. It increases the potential for sales of accessories, software updates, services and new systems among customers, especially the satisfied ones who are considered as ambassadors for Elekta (Elekta 2011/12, p.60).

Elekta does not have competitors that produce the same product. For example Gamma Knife, is Elekta’s unique product where there is no other company with a similar product (Björk, 2013). However the main competitor in the field of radiation therapy, is the American company Varian Medical Systems (Elekta 2011/12, p.78).

Elekta is based in 35 offices in 26 countries and has 3,366 employees working globally (Elekta 2011/12, p.III).

Elekta in Sweden

Elekta’s headquarters are based in Stockholm with the majority of clients being from the hospitals in Sweden the most popular Elekta’s products within Sweden are: Elekta Synergy linear accelerator, Oncentra treatment planning, Mosaiq, Microselectron after loader and Leksell Stereotactic System (Starndberg, 2012).
Home market is really small, only 2% of Elekta business is done among Sweden, where another 98% abroad, with majority in the USA (Strandberg, 2012; Björk, 2013). The change of equipment language from Swedish into English, proves that Elekta is more focused on international business rather than a domestic one (Sjöstrand, 2013; Nilsson, 2013). As the market is small, the company does not have advertising campaigns in Sweden. Marketing is done through sales people and Elekta distributors (Björk, 2013). On the other side, what Elekta can get in Sweden, is a good reputation and good references from Uppsala University Hospital which is Elekta’s Reference site (Sjöstrand, 2013). Also Elekta cooperates with university hospitals working on development of Elekta products i.e. research dedicated linear accelerator at Karolinska University Hospital (Starndberg, 2012; Björk, 2013). As this is home market, Elekta always tries to have close contact with its customers and to enhance its performance (Starndberg, 2013; Nilsson, 2013, Sjöstrand, 2013). However in Sweden there are regions called “Landsting” where politicians in the regional preferences regulate and shape the market. When it comes to health care, everything is dependent on them. They have power and if they are not happy with Elekta’s products, they will not let the hospital buy it. Thus there is a need for tenders, presenting what is been included and at what price (Björk, 2013).

4.3 Varian Medical Systems Profile

To make study more unique, researcher investigated also how Elekta’s American competitors operate in Sweden. The researcher compared significant procedures that companies do the same/differently in order to develop and improve.

Varian Medical Systems is the biggest Elekta’s competitor in Sweden; it is based in the field of radiation therapy. With its headquarters in California-USA, the company is at the fore-front as the US is a global leader in producing medical devices and software for treating cancer and other medical conditions with radiotherapy, radio-surgery, proton therapy and brachytherapy. Varian also like Elekta, provides software and hardware for cancer clinics, radiotherapy centre and medical oncology practices. With a company goal to save millions of lives around the globe every year, it has been more than 6,000 of Varian’s accelerators for cancer radiotherapy and radiosurgery in use. Regarding Varian employee distribution, there are over
5,500 people working at manufacturing sites, sales and support offices around the world (Varian, 2013).

**Varian Medical Systems in Sweden**

Doctors; nurses; physicians and physicists must go through equipment training in order to operate Varian equipment. Training to doctors and nurses are giving at hospitals, the rest of medical staff are send abroad (Jansson, 2013). To update and keep customers informed about new products and developments, Varian’s promote it on the company’s homepage, where it also organizes various meetings for engineers and Users Meeting (once a year) for its customers among Scandinavia. When it comes to networks, Varian has its Scandinavian service office in Denmark, which is a contact centre on a Scandinavian scale (Jansson, 2013) and has been chosen to equip New Proton Therapy Centre at Skandionkilniken which is opening in 2013 (Varian, 2013).

**4.4 Three Variables of Domestic Marketing Process and Culture**

In this study “the process of international services marketing model” by Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) has been adapted and guided the study. With application to Elekta and Varian services in Sweden, those variables are discussed below.

**4.4.1 Adaptation/Standardization**

According to Starndberg (2012), Elekta offers the same solutions to everyone and everywhere as this is standardized market, and try to make as less adaptation as possible. This means, both Swedish and international customers, will purchase standardized products and services for their hospitals. However in mature markets, which is Sweden (Sjöstrand, 2013), Elekta does some minor adjustments depending on customer’s needs (Starndberg, 2013).
Product- Elekta’s equipment is standardised with possibility of customisation according to customer’s needs. For example the hospital in Uppsala could choose a level of energy used for radiation during the treatment (Nilsson, 2013).

Price- In general, equipment prices are standardised, however Elekta negotiates the prices with its customers. Due to regulations and rules in Sweden, hospitals interested in buying products or services have to call companies and ask for tender first. Then the company presents its offerings (Björk, 2013).

Training- for equipment users is standardised; all the engineers are send for training to England or Netherlands and the rest of medical staff i.e.: nurses, physicians and physicists are trained in hospitals at which they work at (Sjöstrand, 2013). Also training can be provided in local language or in English (Björk, 2013).

Language- Regarding language of the equipment, respondents said that majority of it is in English. Most users are good at English and this is not a problem, however at Uppsala University Hospital, in order to meet the hospital’s needs Elekta had to provide instruction booklets and provide training course for nurses in Swedish language. All the manuals can be provided in local language, depending on the customer needs (Nilsson, 2013; Sjöstrand, 2013; Björk, 2013).

Other- Elekta and its customer’s sign an agreement in which, the company needs to make some adoptions in order to meet customers’ demand and those adoptions differ from one hospital to another. Some adaptations can be made by local Elekta offices (Björk, 2013). Hospital in Uppsala for example, signed an agreement saying that Elekta has to provide the hospital within 24 hours with solution/ new part of equipment to fix what has stopped working (Nilsson, 2013).

According to Elekta’s competitor Varian, the majority of equipment is standardised, however the hospital in Gävle uses hospital network and hospital servers, which encouraged Varian to make some adaptations too in order to satisfactorily meeting the hospital needs (Jansson, 2013). When it comes to training for Varian users, it is standardised like for Elekta users too. All engineers and physicists are sent to Las Vegas, CA where nurses and physicians are trained at the hospital (Melander, 2012). Language of the equipment is standardised, which is English, however courses for nurses and quality reports are in Swedish language (Jansson, 2013).
4.4.2 Trust

Elekta builds trust between the company and its clients by delivering what they promise, by providing high quality product, making sure to give enough training and giving as much support to customers as possible. For Elekta, customers come first and their satisfaction, otherwise, there is no chance to proceed (Strandberg, 2012). For the hospital that is Elekta’s customer, personal contact and being listened, matters a lot. Knowing who you speak to, makes everything easier as the person knows the product and how to solve to problem. By being concerned about a customer, the company makes its customers feel important, which leads to trust building. Reliability plays important role in trust building too. For instance, Uppsala University Hospital has an agreement with Elekta, when something gets broken then the company has 24 hours to solve it. Elekta needs to be reliable and has to meet the hospital’s requirements in order to get trust. Constant contact, being so close and long experience also helps to build trust (Nilsson, 2013).

According to Jansson (2013) who deals with Varian equipment, when it comes to communication, updates about innovations and good service is important. However, one of the Varian’s disadvantages is service office located in Denmark instead of Sweden where long distance may cause difficulties with communication and close contact.

Country of Origin

Uppsala University Hospital is happy that Elekta is Swedish company and finds it beneficial to the hospital. Elekta is intact with Swedish culture and has close relationship with the hospital resulting to easy communication and cooperation which in turn leads to the company meeting customer needs and trust building (Sjöstrand, 2013). For the hospital in Gävle that uses Varian equipment, it also matters where the product comes from. Varian is American company and all Varian’s products have an “American” culture that differs from Swedish culture. This equates to difficulties between the parties at the beginning of contractual terms regarding adaptations in accordance to the differences such as language; costs; equipment and procedure made the American way (Melander, 2012). Opposite to Elekta, which is open for suggestions from hospitals regarding modifications and improvements, in Varian case, one of
the disadvantages is difficulty in making changes to the equipment, due to American company’s culture (Jansson, 2013). Patients do not pay attention to what equipment they are treated with and where it comes from. For them, the most important is to be cured and hospitals do not advertise the brand of equipment they treat patients with (Melander, 2012; Nilsson, 2013).

When respondents from Gävle Hospital where asked why the hospital went for Varian Medical Solutions, they said that at that time, ‘Varian was the market leader and had the best offer’. The hospital has been with Varian for around 10 years as they are happy with Varian, thus they do not have a need to switch to another service and product provider. Another reason is that Varian’s equipment cannot be connected with equipment from other companies (Melander, 2012).

Customers are loyal to one brand, therefore if customer buys one company’s product, they will usually go for company’s planning treatments system, its service program which also includes the long term agreement between both parties and all the equipment users having the essential training. Taking all this into concept, no one wants changes (Björk, 2013). Regarding Gävle Hospital, that was one of the reasons why the institution did not want to switch to Elekta. Accordingly, Varian’s equipment cannot be connected with other providers. If hospital wants to switch, in that case they would have to replace the equipment completely and re-train medical staff (Melander, 2012).

4.4.3 Network

To increase awareness of Elekta new solutions; developments and new products, the company participates in congresses and organizes various meetings. Every other year there are Elekta User Meetings and European User Meetings organized by the company, representative’s group from the hospital are sent to the meetings.

During those meetings, users give presentations to all the users, share ideas and experiences. Members are provided with the quest list, where everyone puts ideas and then they are discussed what can and cannot be done (Nilsson, 2013; Sjöstrand, 2013). According to Varian Medical Systems, the company also organizes User Meetings every year within Scandinavia where all the hospital representatives gather together, where their ideas and experiences are discussed too (Melander, 2012).
Another activity organized by Elekta worldwide, are meetings for Elekta Paediatric Research group, where all the members gather together and discuss how to make equipment working more effectively, what needs to be changed and how. Also members that belong in that group can communicate with each other any time (Nilsson, 2013). Elekta collaborates closely with research institution which is Karolinska University Hospital that works on development of linear accelerator and with Uppsala University Hospital that is Elekta’s reference site. Constant and close communication helps to find solutions quickly and save more and more people’s lives (Strandberg, 2012; Nilsson, 2013).

When it comes to communication with customers, Elekta is very active. The company keeps its customers (hospitals) updated with new products and developments by coming to the hospital or inviting customers for meetings (Nilsson, 2013; Strandberg, 2012).

**Uppsala University Hospital**

As a reference site for Elekta Company, the hospital has many visitors from all over the world who come to see the equipment and ask for opinion regarding Elekta products. The visitors who come to Uppsala are customers; potential customers; people from government or health ministers (Sjöstrand, 2013).

Hospital members can easily identify Elekta’s people and welcome their visits to the hospital any time. There is two-way communication and when it is needed, the hospital calls Elekta to gather information too. Sometimes Elekta calls the hospital asking if they can send visitors from other clinics to Uppsala to see equipment. The hospital in Uppsala as a reference site, suggests ideas for improvements and modifications. For example, Elekta liked the idea that the hospital introduced visualization in a treatment room for patients to keep them relaxed and feel comfortable (changing pictures on the ceiling, movies for kids). Elekta, in return require medical staff at Uppsala University Hospital to be honest about Elekta and always give positive or negative feedback regarding the equipment (Nilsson, 2013; Sjöstrand, 2013).
4.4.4 Cultural Aspect

There was not much focus on culture when collecting primary data; however cultural aspects have been noticed, such as the link to Hofstede national dimensions. In both companies, all adaptations are made in order to relate to cultural differences like language. Elekta’s and Varian’s equipment and training are conducted in English. As in Sweden, Swedish is a national language, some of the personnel who may not speak English had been trained in Swedish (Melander, 2012; Nilsson, 2013). Elekta has close contact with its customers i.e. hospitals. There is always immediate possible ways to contact a specific person directly and quickly as it is home market and Elekta headquarters are close (Nilsson, 2013). Even if Elekta is focused on international business, the company tries to be as Swedish as possible. That means the way the company deals with customers and acts on the market, is done in a Swedish way (i.e. hospital visits and making customer feel important) (Björk, 2013). Also Elekta values local distributors since this helps to get to know local cultures (Björk, 2013). As Varian’s equipment operates in Sweden, they have no option but to adapt to differences because of the culture variation. Due to American products of Varian and long distance (USA-Sweden) it is difficult to make changes, thus adaptation from customer’s side is needed (i.e. learning to use equipment in English) (Jansson, 2013; Melander, 2012).
Table 2. Aspects of marketing strategy in the health care industry, based on Elekta in Sweden.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Aspects of marketing strategy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna-Carin Starndberg</td>
<td>Delivering promises; Adequate training; Product quality</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Adaptation/ standardization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna-Carin Starndberg</td>
<td>Standardized product as the market is standardized; In mature markets minor adjustments depending on customer’s needs</td>
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<td>Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna-Carin Starndberg</td>
<td>World congresses; Cooperation with Karolinska Hospital University Hospital and Uppsala University Hospital</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
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<td>Anna-Carin Starndberg</td>
<td>Adaptations made regarding cultural differences</td>
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<td>Steffan Björk</td>
<td>Long term commitment; Quality; Communication</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Standardized marketing, Prices negotiable; dependence on authorities; Adaptations possible through Regional Elekta offices;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steffan Björk</td>
<td>User meetings; major international and small Swedish congresses; Cooperation with Karolinska and Uppsala university hospitals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristina Nilsson</td>
<td>Personal contact; Being listened; Country of Origin; Long experience with the company; Quality and effectiveness of the equipment; Honesty expected from Elekta when giving opinion about the equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kristina Nilsson</td>
<td>Training in English apart training for nurses (Swedish); Certificate of accomplished training; equipment with possibility to customize</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kristina Nilsson</td>
<td>Nordic/ European user meeting Pediatric Research group; Uppsala Hospital as Elekta reference site and training center; Keeping hospital updated with new products and developments; Elekta’s visits</td>
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<td>Kristina Nilsson</td>
<td>Close contact with Elekta people, Some adaptations regarding meeting customer’s needs (i.e. language)</td>
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<td>Håkan Sjöstrand</td>
<td>Country of Origin; Constant communication; product quality and effectiveness</td>
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<td>Håkan Sjöstrand</td>
<td>Training in English apart from training for nurses (Swedish) Certificate of accomplished training; equipment with possibility to customize</td>
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<td>Håkan Sjöstrand</td>
<td>Nordic/European Users meeting; Uppsala Hospital as Elekta reference site and training center; Elekta’s visits</td>
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<tr>
<td>Håkan Sjöstrand</td>
<td>Adaptations regarding customers’ needs affected by cultural differences (i.e. language); Elekta’s Swedish business culture different from its American competitor Varian.</td>
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</table>

Source: Own construction.
Table 3. Differences and similarities in services marketing between Elekta and Varian in Sweden

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VARIABLES</th>
<th>ELEKTA AB</th>
<th>VARIAN MS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COO</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment language</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Language</td>
<td>In English for all personnel apart from nurses</td>
<td>In English for all personnel apart from nurses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Users training</td>
<td>Nurses and doctors on a site, physicians and engineers in particular place abroad</td>
<td>Nurses and doctors on a site, physicians and engineers in particular place abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service office</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>Denmark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment openness</td>
<td>Equipment can be connected with other company equipment</td>
<td>Equipment cannot be connected with other company equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>Through sales people</td>
<td>Company website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Personal and close communication as it is a home market</td>
<td>Good cross country communication, however not personal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>User meeting, Pediatric research group, networking with Karolinska and Uppsala University hospitals, international and small Swedish congresses</td>
<td>User meeting, networking with Skandionkilniken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness for changes</td>
<td>Open for suggestions, dependence on ability</td>
<td>Rather not due to American culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural aspects</td>
<td>Swedish business culture, distributorship in order to get closer with local business cultures</td>
<td>American culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardization</td>
<td>Product and marketing are standardized</td>
<td>Product is standardized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptation</td>
<td>Some adaptations made in terms of meeting customer needs and depending on authorities</td>
<td>Some adaptations made in terms of meeting customer needs and depending on authorities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: own construction.
Table 3 presents differences and similarities in service marketing between Elakta and Varian in Sweden based on primary data collection. Both companies have standardised product, language of the equipment is in English, however training booklets and financial reports can be presented in Swedish; equipment training is provided in English for doctors, engineers and physicians and for nurses in Swedish. When it comes to training for engineers and physicians, it is conducted in particular countries abroad. Both companies organize user meetings for their users on a world and European scale, when everyone can give opinions about equipment and give suggestions for improvements. In contrast to American Varian, for Elekta it is easier to make changes, to communicate and promote products, as it is home market, where everything is accessible with possibility to personal contact between Elekta and its customers. Both companies make adaptations in order to meet customers’ needs and both companies are networking. As Elekta is focused on international business, it can get good reputation and references from university hospitals that the company is networking within Sweden.
Analysis

Chapter Four, discusses the results of the study and links them to the theoretical framework created in this research. Firstly, the process of domestic service marketing is presented and explained. Later, it is followed by analysis of three variables which are trust, network, adaptation/standardization and cultural aspect that closes the chapter.

5.1 Process of Services Marketing

In this study, the model of international services marketing process is adapted from Hyder and Fregidou-Malama (2009) and Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) has been adapted and modified in relation to the theory and empirical findings discussed in previous sections. As the research focuses on domestic services marketing in Sweden, the name of the model has been changed to domestic marketing process (figure 5).

Figure. 5 The process of domestic services marketing model.

Source: Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011, with own construction.
The broken line between adaptation and standardization variables, divides them as they differ from each other, however they are presented as one in theoretical framework. The continuous line with arrow at one end means one variable influences the other one. Adaptation has an impact on trust, as the changes that a service provider makes for its customers to meet their needs, helps in trust building. As standardization goes in line with adaptation, it has influence on trust, depending if standardization concepts are accepted by a customer. Regarding network, which is set of activities and relationships between service providers and its customers, once the relationship emerges then trust is developed. For instance, the more effective Elekta’s networking with research institutions is, the higher trust company gets. Thus, effectiveness of the network influences trust variable. Interesting fact is, when examining marketing services in domestic market, it was found that cultural aspects exist in such marketing too and have influence on other three. Those three variables connected together with culture, face the issues of heterogeneity and intangibility in domestic service marketing.

5.2 Three Variables Against Heterogeneity and Intangibility

Trust

There is confidence in trust between both parties, as the partner behaves in regards to the other partner’s expectations (Erdem, 2003). If trust between a service provider and a customer appears, then it influences the heterogeneity of services making it more homogenous and makes them more visible. Elekta towards its customers creates an image of itself as being trustful by reliability of the products, its high quality, enough training provided for equipment users and constant communication. Country of origin develops initial trust (Fredigou-Malama and Hyder, 2011) and is considered as an important tool for driving consumers’ intentions to purchase a product (Josiassen & Assaf, 2010). For hospital in Uppsala it is a benefit that Elekta is Swedish. On the other side, when hospital in Gävle was considering buying the equipment, the hospital went for a market leader which was American Varian Medical Systems. Even if respondents from Gävle hospital are happy with the equipment, they still would prefer it to be Swedish. It is significant what a company’s culture is in software and
hardware. As American and Swedish cultures differ from one another, it is more difficult and time consuming to get used to differences and their adaptation.

In summary, trust in Sweden can be developed through personal and constant communication, long experience with the company, COO and quality of product, service and training. When the trust exists from customer perspective, then services become more visible in customers eyes.

**Adaptation/Standardization**

Standardization exists when a company wants its services and products to be accepted in foreign markets and keeping the basic concept of marketing mix, where adaptations means company making changes in marketing mix in order to meet customers’ needs (Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011). At this is international strategy, this variable is significant in international business rather than in home market. Elekta operates in very standardized market, so the company tries to sell its products with as few adaptations as possible. According to findings, in home market, no significant adaptations has been noticed, apart providing a training in Swedish language for nurses and equipment being assembled to specific needs and requirements of the hospital. The possibility of equipment being customized depends on the equipment and maturity of the market. As Swedish market is mature and is a home market, there were still some changes made. According to respondents, training for doctors, engineers and physicists, it is standardized as it is conducted in English taken in particular training places and completed courses come with a certificate/license as a proof.
Network

Network is defined as set of various interactions and relationships and is called a “secondary function” of a relationship (Gadde et al., 2003; Anderson et al., 1994). The need for networking is to get access to company’s resources that company wants to collaborate with, and while networking the customer’s needs are met resulting to the trust is built (Hyder and Fregidou-Malama, 2009). This means, the way how networks interact with trust and together with influence of culture and adaptation/standardization, face issues of tangibility and heterogeneity of services.

From empirical findings section it can be seen how highly Elekta is involved in networking in Sweden. They contribute to networking by attending world congresses and minor ones in Sweden, by organizing user meetings on Nordic and European levels and cooperating with Swedish research institutions. The company collaboration with Uppsala University Hospital which is Elekta’s reference site and Karolinska University Hospital in Stockholm, where Elekta is investigating a dedicated research on linear accelerator. For Elekta, cooperation plays significant role in order to find out what needs to be changed, how to developed and to get good reputation about the company. As Elekta operates worldwide, Uppsala University Hospital is willing to meet everyone and listen to suggestions proposed in order to meet customer’s needs. What is more, the company requires honesty from its clients when receiving feedbacks.

5.3 Cultural Aspect

Empirical findings say that only 2 % of Elekta’s business is done within Sweden, where the company is rather focused on cooperation with university hospitals for development, research and reference purposes. It is difficult for international company to make different countries adapt to Swedish culture, thus Elekta as international company tries to be local by getting to know local business cultures and making adaptations in order to meet customer’s needs. Grönroos (2000); Hofstede et al., (2010) say that a company dealing with different groups and societies willing to make some changes within them will need to negotiate and make the second party satisfied. In order to be successful, company has to respect cultures that it deals
with. As there is no such thing as a business culture that can be applied to all the markets, there is a need for adaptations and getting to know local cultures through distributorship. Elekta being an international Company operates in English which is the business language, however the company tries to be as Swedish as possible, this can be seen in the way company represents itself on the market and treats its customers in a “Swedish” manner. Empirical findings show that Elekta’s marketing process in Sweden depends on country’s national culture. Thus national culture dimensions are considered as cultural aspects in this study. According to Hofstede’s national dimensions, in low PD countries there is loads of information exchanged and direct communication between parties (i.e. Sweden) (Hofstede, 2013; Meeuwesen et al., 2009). Those elements appear when Elekta collaborates with university hospitals when it comes to product development. These are personal visits (i.e. product promotion) and constant contact (i.e. product/service satisfaction) which lead to information exchange. Dealing with queries and finding solutions make customers feel important and ability to find out customers’ needs. In Sweden, empowering direct communication and relationships are favoured (Hofstede, 2013) and this is what Elekta actually do when collaborating with university hospitals. Thus, communication and information exchange seem to be significant for company operating in domestic market.

Sweden as an individualistic country values tolerance, harmony and non-competitiveness (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.100). When looking at Elekta, which is aiming to build trust through collaborations with health and technology institutions and communication with its customers, the link with IDV dimension can be found. For the company, it is important to get to know business local cultures through distributorship in order to get closer with target markets.

In feminine Sweden, every individual counts and in order to make both parties happy, negotiations have to be in order to solve all the problems. In masculine societies’ competition regarding the importance of earnings play important role, however in feminine societies’ relationship with managers and colleagues counts the most (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.139). These characteristics relate to Elekta’s collaborations with university hospitals and relationships with its customers, which are hospitals. Elekta’s success is achieved through relationships and trust building, not competition. What is more, Elekta has no competitor with same product i.e. Lexell Gamma Knife (Elekta, 2011/2012), thus the company’s strategy makes Elekta unique and reputable company.
Sweden is a short term oriented country that values cooperation (Hofstede et al., 2010, p.332) and this can be seen in Elekta’s marketing process in home market by interactions with the company and university hospitals. The reason why it takes place is the need for fast innovations and development in general. Another link found is regarding being honest when it comes to receiving feedbacks. Elekta expects from its customers (Uppsala University Hospital) to give honest feedback about Elekta equipment.

Also the country scored low uncertainty avoidance index, which shows respect to traditions and cultural differences (Hofstede, 2013). When Elekta dealing with new markets, company tries to understand and respects the differences of other cultures, what makes Elekta a successful organization worldwide (Hong and Lin, 2010; Fregidou-Malama and Hyder, 2011; Rydback, 2011 and Bazyleva and Zaytzeva, 2012). In order to meet customer’s needs that differ from culture to culture, the company applies adaptation/standardisation strategy and gets to know better the local culture through distributorship.

To sum up, culture is important variable that influences network creation, how adaptations can be made, communication leading to customer satisfaction and trust building. It is also significant that empirical findings show that Elekta’s domestic marketing process is linked to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions of Sweden.
Conclusion

Chapter six concludes the entire research and its findings. Firstly, the research questions are answered and discussed. Secondly, critical reflection of the study is presented. Further, implications and limitation of the study, followed by suggestions for the future research are discussed.

6.1 Discussion on Research Questions

The aim of this study was to investigate how Elekta company markets its products and services in home country, Sweden. To find this out, four variables such as trust, adaptation/standardisation, network and culture adapted from Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) framework, have been used as they influence heterogeneity and intangibility of services. To achieve this aim, four questions have been formulated and answered below.

RQ1. How does adaptation/standardization of services and products take place in domestic market as being considered an international marketing strategy?

Elekta as international company uses adaptation and standardization strategy when marketing its products in domestic and international market. Regarding adaptation in Sweden, Elekta has its products at standardized prices; however the company has to negotiate prices with its customers. Local Elekta offices are able to make adaptations in order to meet customers’ needs and requirements. Uppsala University Hospital had a choice to choose the energy level used in equipment when treating people. Another adaptation is possibility to provide all the manuals in local language. Also training can be provided in Swedish i.e. for nurses. As Elekta is listed on Nasdaq OMX Stockholm, the company needs to provide financial reports and press releases in Swedish.

Elekta’s training, marketing and products are standardized. As the company operates in standardized market, it provides same solutions to everyone and tries to make as few adaptations as possible. Elekta focuses on international business, thus in order to meet requirements of customers from international markets, standardization strategy is needed.
Combination of adaptation and standardization perceived by Elekta, helps to make services more visible in customer’s eyes and more homogenous.

**RQ2. How is trust developed in the local environment and how does it help to overcome the intangibility and heterogeneous nature of service offerings?**

Trust in Sweden can be developed through personal and constant communication, long experience with the company and quality of product and training. Uppsala University Hospital finds Elekta being a Swedish company as a beneficial, by presenting “Swedish business culture”, especially by the way how hospital is treated. Being listened and making a customer feel important matters a lot and leads to trust development. When there is trust between both parties built, services become more visible and similar in customer’s eyes.

**RQ3. How are networks established and how do they help to overcome the intangibility and heterogeneity of service offerings?**

When it comes to networking in Sweden, Elekta is very active. By organizing User Meetings on a European level, a meeting for Elekta Paediatric Research Group- where Elekta invites and supports the group member and organizes conferences all around the world is successful. During such meetings, everything is discussed, regarding new ideas, modifications and developments what makes the company to develop and stay a market leader. Also Elekta attends major congresses organized worldwide and there are some in Sweden too. Elekta is collaborating with research institutions such as Karolinska University Hospital and Uppsala University Hospital. Collaboration with research institutions focuses on looking for product development and new solutions to treat cancer and brain disorders. Also hospital in Uppsala is Elekta’s reference site, where everyone is welcome to come to see the equipment, ask for opinions and obtain references. Thus, successful networking helps the company to overcome issues of heterogeneity and intangibility of services, by making them more visible in customers’ eyes and more homogenous.
RQ4. Can Elekta’s domestic marketing process be linked to Hofstede’s cultural dimensions?

The way how Elekta operates in domestic market and deals with its customers is influenced by Swedish national culture analysed by Hofstede. For Elekta, it is important to have close and constant contact with customers to keep customers satisfied and make them feel important. During communication between Elekta and university hospitals, there is loads of information exchanged, such us feedbacks about equipment and ideas for improvements. This leads to greater product development and greater business in general. Elekta focuses on their international business as they wish to be successful overseas. The company by respect to other cultures: applies the adaptation/ standardisation strategy, operates in business language which is English and open local offices to get to know better the local cultures. It is also significant, that empirical findings show the link between Hofstedes’ theory and Elekta’s domestic marketing process.

6.2 Reflections, Implications and Suggestions for Future Research

In order to make the research reliable and valid, the author of the research collected data from six individuals who work for Elekta and Varian companies or have working experience with those companies’ equipment. For reliability, the questions presented to the respondents were similar or remained the same and can be found in Appendix section.

As a contribution, this research may help to increase awareness of Electa’s services and products and can be added to the set of studies dedicated Elekta operating in different countries with application of Fregidou-Malama’s and Hyder’s framework. After all analysis and conclusions, it is possible to apply the model to domestic market too.
Implications

The present research has a number of practical and theoretical implications.

Firstly, from academic perspective, the results show that trust, networking adaptation/standardization together with culture, are important in services marketing in terms of international and domestic marketing. This and quality of service provided, will help to build trust and will lead to company’s greater success.

Secondly, adaptation and modification of Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) framework in this study, contributes to the scope of studies dedicated the Elekta company. The research is unique itself as it focuses on domestic market. This has not been explored before and there are studies about Elekta’s marketing services operating abroad only.

This study can assist business people who want to do business in Sweden. Also it shows that it is important to study national culture and get to know Hofstede’s dimensions as the way the researcher presented Sweden in his theory, links to Elekta’s services marketing process. For service providers, it is good to keep the balance when following standardisation/adaptation strategy as too much or too little standardisation or adaptation, may influence the service delivery to the perceived requirements and profitability of the business. Network development and trust building in services marketing, influence how services are perceived in customers eyes, whether they are more visible and similar or not. Regarding culture, Hofstede’s national dimensions are one of cultural aspects and are significant variables not only when it comes to international business, but in domestic market too.

Regarding managerial level, research shows that Fregidou-Malama and Hyder (2011) framework can be applied to both domestic and international marketing by managers considering entering new markets. This also gives valuable information and guidelines what to look for and what to expect (i.e. in Sweden direct communication, focus on networking and trust building is important and leads to success). Also it was found that business people interested in doing business in Sweden, need to consider distributorship to get to know local culture and be aware of “Landsting”, which have power to regulate the Swedish health market and decide whether to accept the business or not.
Limitations

Limitations found in this research are:

- A case study based on single company and one country only.

- Application of model of international services marketing to domestic marketing and its modification.

- As there is loads of data regarding international business, thus theory applied to domestic marketing was adapted from general marketing theory.

- When collecting data, only one hospital that uses Elekta’s equipment has been investigated. Interviewing medical staff from other institutions that use Elekta’s equipment would different results.

- Email questionnaire sent to one person from Elekta headquarters was not efficient way of data collection, some of the questions were misunderstood and the answers were briefly answered so they could not contribute much to the research. With possibility of conducting face-to-face interview, questions that were misunderstood could be explained and additional issues could be discussed.

- It is possible that another researcher would come up with different outcome when examining Elekta’s operations in its domestic market. Different results would be obtained when the research is done at different time, place and when other data collection method is used.

- Quantitative data collection method also would bring different outcome and contribution, when measuring customer’s satisfaction from product and service provided by Elekta.

Suggestions for future research

This study by application of “process of international services marketing” model to domestic market, contributes to development of services marketing theory in the health care industry. It also shows how the company deals with complexity of heterogeneity and intangibility of services in a home market. A comparison of all studies dedicated Elekta’s marketing services
in different countries, by looking for similarities and differences could be an extra contribution and extension of this study.

As it was first research on Elekta operating in Sweden it need improvements. Thus, it could be improved by interviewing medical staff from Karolinska University Hospital that works with Elekta’s equipment development and interviewing more than one respondent from one department. The more answers from one source, the better validity and reliability of the research.

Also investigation which hospitals are Elekta’s customers and questioning medical staff about networking, training, relationships and service satisfaction, would benefit to this study.

In a wider perspective, questioning patients of chosen hospitals who were treated with Elekta equipment about their satisfaction with the service provided, would be also contribute.

Finally, regarding culture when focusing on domestic marketing, organizational culture is another important cultural aspect and should be examined when questioning respondents.
References

Books


Scientific Articles


**Electronic Books and Other Sources**


Appendices

Appendix A: Recommendation Letter

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION FOR AGNIESZKA NADOWSKA
TO WHOM IT MAY

Agnieszka Nadowska, born 1987-01-21, is a Master student in Marketing Management at the University of Gävle, Department of Business Studies. She started her studies at the department the year 2012. Agnieszka Nadowska has been successful in passing her courses. She studies in English and writes now her Master Thesis.

I can say I know Agnieszka as her supervisor and teacher. She is ambitious in her studies. She is good in writing; she uses a logical structure in her presentations and critical thinking through the assignments she presents. She can handle complex issues, describe problems and suggest appropriate solutions.

At the department of Business studies a research project is ongoing. I myself and my colleague Akmal Hyder did research and published an article about Gamma Knife in Egypt. We continue with Gamma Knife in Brazil and several of our students research Elekta in different emerging countries.

I hope Agnieszka will be able to continue her thesis writing by getting the opportunity to research Elekta in Sweden! We need that investigation to get the possibility to compare the Marketing Strategy Elekta uses in Sweden and in Emerging Markets. We hope you will give her the chance to explore and research your company.

To write a thesis she needs at least to conduct six interviews but the number of interviews depends also of the size of your company. I believe she can write a good thesis which can also be used of your company in the future. Thank you in advance!

Sincerely yours,

[Signature]

Maria Fregidou-Malama, Ph.D. Assistant Professor
Departmental International Co-ordinator
Phone: 0046-26-64 86 87 or 0046-70-620 16 01
Appendix B: Letter of Intention

Dear Mr. Strandberg,

I am a student of Masters in Business Administration (MBA) at University of Gavle. I am doing research on marketing services in health industry for my master thesis. The aim of my research is to investigate how the products and services of Swedish company Elekta operate in Sweden, the country of origin. For this purpose, factors such as adaptation/standardization, trust and network connected with culture, are used to find out how they influence the successful strategy. The supervisor for this thesis is Dr. Maria Frejddeu-Malma. I have been given your email address from Mr. Gustaf Schwing, as he recommended you as the best person who could help me with my academic study as you are dealing with Nordic and Baltic Business Unit. I would appreciate if I would be able to conduct an interview with you in person. As I live in Stockholm I would be able to make it at your convenience. Also I would be grateful if you could suggest me other people and contacts to contact with for my master thesis about Elekta Company. (Thought of someone else from headquarters, form Karolinska University and Uppsala unit that uses Elekta’s equipment).

Above you will find my supervisor’s recommendation letter attached.

Thank you for your precious time and look forward to hearing from you soon!

Kind regards

Agnieszka Radovska
Appendix C: Interview with Christer Melander 14/12/12

1. How long have you been working at Gavle Hospital? 32
2. What is your position and responsibilities? Manager of Radiotherapy Department. Responsible for personnel and economy.

Medical equipment/ staff and its training

3. How long have you been using the Varian equipment for? 10 years
4. In what language the equipment is used? English. It would preferably be Swedish; however it is not an issue as all medical staff speaks English.
5. Number of doctors working with radiology equipment at the institution? 7
6. How many doctors went through training to use the equipment? 7
7. Where was the training held? Las Vegas, CA for engineers and physiotherapists, Gävle for doctors and nurses. The training is planned to be moved to Switzerland.
8. How long does the training take? For nurses 1 week, for engineers 2 weeks
9. Is there retraining provided too? yes
10. Are the trainees provided with evidence i.e. certificate? yes
11. Can software of radiology equipment that hospital uses be updated? yes

Networking

12. Are there any meetings or conferences, events organized by Varian? If yes, please provide an example. There is ‘User Meeting’ organized every year somewhere in Scandinavia (Copenhagen, Oslo, Stockholm etc.) for Varian equipment users. Usually Gävle sends group representatives (1-2 radiotherapists and nurses).
13. Who organizes and finances those events? Varian

Patients

14. Is the number of patients interested in using radiology equipment growing? 99% are patients with cancer. Within recent years the number seems to be steady.
15. Are the prices for treatments with radiology equipment standardised? (Do they remain the same everywhere in the world)? Rather not as prices are based on social system, where in Sweden the total cost for a patient is maximum 15000 SEK a year. After this limit it is for free. That is why the prices may differ.
16. Do you try to make relationships with your patients (from your experience)? If yes how do you do it to maintain them? They do. By providing the highest quality services they get patients’ trust. After some time from the last treatment, doctors also contact with patients to find out how they feel, and if there is anything else they can help them with.
17. Are your patients when coming to the institution aware of the product or rather “listen to what the doctor says”? There is no patient’s interest regarding what sort of equipment they are going to be treated with. They rather relay on doctor’s knowledge.
However, years back, through LANDSTING (community in Sweden) Gävle Hospital was the first one in Sweden that introduced Rapid Arc technique used by Varian. This lead to going to press and television. After that there were some patients calling and asking about Varian equipment, what to do to have the treatment done etc.

18. Do you think patients pay attention to product’s country of origin? No, they want to be cured, and they rely on Doctor’s opinion who they know what is best to help them.

About Elekta

19. Have you ever heard of Swedish Elekta company? Yes
20. Have you ever been contacted by Elekta company member regarding their services and product they offer? If yes can you provide me with some info (When and how)? Firstly there is a rule in Sweden where hospitals when changing the service\equipment provider they have to contact with different companies and after that what had been offered, decide which company the hospital should go for. The Gävle hospital has been contacted by Elkta sales representative some time ago and also the Hospital has called Elekta when considering getting a new accelerator. However they refused as it would be difficult and to switch to another company. It will be extra training for equipment operators, extra costs for new equipment. The hospital is using 3 machines by Varian that have the same software and network together. New machine from different make is impossible to join the rest that is why; the most convenient way was getting a new accelerator from Varian. (Good to have the same software and hardware from the same make). Also, the hospital is happy with Varian, and at that time when Hospital bought first equipment from Varian, the company was the leader in that industry.

There are little things that bother a bit, the language (not a big issue as all equipment users speak English, and instruction is also translated into Swedish) end “US way of thinking” regarding, costs, the way equipment is made. American thinking is different comparing to Swedish, what makes equipment users to adopt different. (However it may change soon).
Appendix D: Direct Observation at Gävle Hospital 14/12/12

The list of issues discussed during observation

1. How often do you go for Varian’s trainings or events? Training at the beginning, then there is User Meeting once a year.
2. Is it difficult to use it? There must be proficiency presented. Everything must be perfectly performed, otherwise it may cause side effects or do not work (i.e. placing the patient on the bed with laser help. The body must be ideally placed on bed up to one millimeter).
3. Does it take long to learn how to use the equipment? Session takes 15 minutes. This includes: setting up the equipment, monitoring, corrections, and 1 minute of treatment.
4. Are customers always satisfied with the treatment? It does not take long, it is painless, and must help, so patients are rather positive about it.
5. Do they ask many questions about Varian or they know already about the company and its services? Patients are not interested in what sort of equipment they are been treated. They rather expect it to help them to get rid of the tumor.
6. Do patients ask for recommendation and listen what the doctor says or rather say, “I want to be treated by this equipment”? Everything depends on patient’s home doctor what he/she says. The doctor must recommend what is the best for the patient. The patient can be sent to different city in Sweden to be treated. Depending, how on patient’s condition (Gavle hospital may not have this equipment to treat the patient, so he/she is send to different hospital where this can be done.
7. Do you provide the same quality of service as everywhere in the world? It is our personnel’s responsibility to provide the highest quality service, to cure their patients and keep them healthy.
8. Do you try to make relationship with customers? (I.e. if customers comes again do you know his/her name and trying to get to know the customer)? We provide relaxing atmosphere and positive atmosphere. We do not want to keep our patients to feel, stressed and uncomfortable.
9. Does equipment break down frequently? No, but it this happens, we have our engineers and there is also possibility to use another machine as all of them are the same make and have the same software.
10. Are you happy with Varian equipment and working with it? Yes
11. Do you think hospital should change the equipment provider or is satisfactory enough? We are happy with the Varian and it would be too many changes if we switch to another provider.
Appendix E: Questionnaire for Anna – Carin Strandberg

Introduction

1. What are your functions within Elekta?
   Business Unit Manager Nordic & Baltic Countries
2. How long have you been working for the company?
   16 years

Elekta operating in Sweden

3. What are Elekta’s most popular products in Sweden?
   Elekta Synergy linear accelerator, Oncentra treatment planning, Mosaic, Microselectron after loader, Leksell Stereotactic System
4. Who is your customer?
   All major Swedish hospitals and hospitals worldwide. We have 6000 customers.
5. How did Elekta expand in Sweden?
   Sweden is not our largest market. USA is. We have 98% of our business outside of Sweden.
6. Apart from Stockholm, Uppsala and Linkoping where else Elekta operates?
   We have our own offices in all EU countries except for Nordic and Baltic where we have the office in Stockholm. USA, China, Australia, South Africa, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Dubai and Sao Paolo-Brazil. We have factories in Canada, USA, China, Netherlands, UK, Germany, Sweden and Italy. In all other countries we have distributors. Nothing more than you mentioned in Sweden.
7. Is Elekta planning to expand in Sweden or rather focusing on international business especially in emerging markets?
   We are of course always striving to better in our home market.
8. How do you contact with new and potential customers (hospitals)?
   In the Nordic we know our customers. They simply contact us or we them. In other parts of the world congresses are an important vehicle to find new leads.

Marketing

9. How does Elekta promote its products and services within Sweden?
   By customer visits mostly.
10. What do you do, to increase the awareness of Elekta company?
    Customer visits and participating in congresses and some advertising. In order of priority.
11. As Elekta is successful overseas especially in emerging markets, how do you attract Swedish markets? (Do they differ?)
    This is our home market so we try to be Swedish, but also as a cooperation need to take our social responsibility to review what we can do for Sweden. For Example
are we now investing in a dedicated research linear accelerator to Karolinska. Research is necessary to find the best way to treat patients.

Training and development

12. What kind of training do you provide people who buy your equipment?
Full applications training, physicist trainings and engineering training.

13. How long does the training take.
Depending on training it varies 2 days for some applications to several weeks for engineering training.

14. Do you provide retraining?
Our policy is always to give the training that the customer needs to be comfortable using our equipment.

15. Do you provide trainees with evidence (i.e. certificate)?
Of course

16. Where all the trainings are held?
Applications training on site with the customer. Physicist and Engineering training in Crawley England.

17. Who organizes and finances trainings and events?
Training is included with each sell. In other words it is part of the package that the customer purchases. Organization comes from our Order fulfillment group in the Business Unit,

Trust

18. Trust and long term relationships with customers are one of Elekta’s values
- How do you build trust?
By delivering on what we promise. Make sure to give enough training and give the support that the customer needs. Customers come first.
- How do you create relationships and how do you maintain them?
- Again customer visits, we do seminars about our products and solutions at various clinics or some time just pass by to say hi! Or we meet at congresses to discuss, phone and mail.

19. Do you think that relying on quality of the product and training is important in building trust with your customers?
Absolutely, you have to have a high quality product and be best in class otherwise you do not have a chance.

Competitors

20. Are there any companies that produce something similar to Gamma Knife?
Absolutely, many different brands made in China, outside of China none. However, two of the Chinese brands are trying to enter the international market.

21. The hospital in Gavle uses Varian’s equipment. Is it Elekta’s biggest competitor?
Yes it is our only competitor.
22. Why do you think hospital in Gavle is Varian’s customer not Elekta’s?
   I suggest you ask them. They made a choice for Varian and they have remained with them since.

Networking

23. How are you networking within Sweden and who with?
   Not sure I understand the question. I think I have already answered it.

24. Do you organize any events, conferences for Elekta’s equipment users and future users? Yes we do, every second year we have a Nordic users meeting. Since most clinics have something from Elekta they are all welcome to come. We also organize these meetings yearly on a European level. We think it is very important as a corporation to be close to our users so we understand their clinical needs, otherwise we do not know what to develop.

25. How do you make your services attractive in Swedish market?
   Again by information, but also by listening to the customer needs and tailor make our offerings.

26. Are there any institutions in Sweden that work on Elekta’s equipment development? Uppsala

Culture and standardization/adaptation

27. Which product do you enter new markets with?
   All

28. What do you consider as important when entering new markets in Sweden?
   What new markets in Sweden?

29. What are the obstacles when entering other markets in Sweden?
   There are no new markets.

30. Do you think that studying culture of new Swedish markets when entering them play important role?

31. Do you enter new markets with the same product or make some changes, regarding training, policies, instructions, software etc. Is everything the same everywhere or differs at some aspects)?
   We offer the same solutions everywhere it is a very standardized market. We have a low end machine for emerging markets. For the mature markets it is minor adjustments depending on what the customer wants to treat.
Appendix F: Interview with Kristina Nilsson 20/02/13

Kristina Nilsson is an radiation oncologist responsible for development and education on radiation/oncology department. Working for 12 years on oncology department and 10 in general. Uppsala University Hospital has started using Elekta equipment since 80’s 90’s. The Gamma knife equipment has been created and developed at the hospital. It is second site in Sweden that got MOZAIQUE system (software for records and verification) There are 7 doctors and 3 engineers working at the hospital dealing with Elekta equipment. Uppsala University Hospital is a reference Elekta centre, what enables everyone to come and see the Elekta equipment, to share ideas and get an advise. The hospital usually gets 15 visitors a year from all over the world.

Why Elekta?

At the beginning hospital had 4 accelerators and two of them were from Elekta, and other tow had to be replaced by new equipment either from Elekta or Varian. The hospital has chosen Elekta as they come up with the better offer when it comes to price, and the hospital was already familiar with the Elekta company.

Training

Uppsala University Hospital has training centre for physicists, physicians and nurses as it is a part of agreement with Elekta, where engineers are sent for training to England. The nurses get a licence as evidence, they know how to use equipment, and some of them are allowed to train other nurses.

Standardization/adaptation

The equipment the hospital has purchased from Elekta is standardised, with a possibility to customise. For example, they could choose the energy level used for treatments which can differ in other hospitals in Sweden and even abroad. The hospital has chosen low energy level which is less dangerous for the patient as the radiation on the human body is also low. Also there was an agreement between Elekta and Uppsala University Hospital that all machines should work with other equipment. Which means Elekta had to get to know the hospital’s products and make changes to make things work.

Language of the equipment

Equipment is used in Swedish and English language or sometimes Swinglish. At the beginning it was in Swedish but it has been changed into English. For physicists and engineers systems in English were not an issue as they know the language; however nurses were unsatisfied and the formulas had to be translated into Swedish what was time consuming. The software for machines and MOZAIQUE program for records and verification are in English, however notes can be taken in Swedish.
Network

Elekta organizes a User Meetings, where representative group is send from the hospital. Within Nordic and Baltic region, meetings are organized once in a year and every second year they are organized within Europe. During those meetings Elekta provides members with a guest list, where everyone puts ideas and then it is discussed what can and cannot be done.

Electa Paediatric Research Group- Elekta invites and supports the group member and organizes conferences all around the world where everything is discussed; how to make equipment to work more effectively; how it can be modified; and what needs to be changed. Members can communicate with each other any time.

When it comes to contacting, Elekta is very active. The company tries to keep the hospital updated with its new products that Elekta has to offer by visiting the hospital. Elekta also sends out invitations for different meetings to show new products and discuss it with its clients. Hospital members know personally the Elekta’s people and they are welcome to visit hospital any time. It is also two –way communication and when it is needed, the hospital calls Elekta to gather information. Also Elekta calls the hospital asking if clients from other hospitals or even abroad can come as see equipment.

Medical staff from the hospital also contacts Elekta by asking and suggesting improvements that can be rejected, accepted or registered. Elekta liked the idea that the hospital introduced a visualisation is a treatment room for patients to keep them relaxed and feel comfortable (changing pictures on the ceiling, movies for kids) However when the hospital needs its equipment to work, when something gets broken, then it has to be done, and Elekta has 24 hours to fix it, or send new parts (as part of agreement). There is also 24 hours service where engineers can contact with Elekta and get solutions from.

Trust

For the hospital that is Elekta’s customer personal contact and being listened matters a lot. Knowing who you speak to makes everything easier as the person knows the product and knows what to do. By being concerned about a customer, the company makes its customers feel important what leads to trust building. Constant contact, being so close and long experience also helps to build trust. As hospital is Elekta’s reference centre, is required from medical staff to be honest about Elekta, and always say what is good and what is bad about equipotent.

Patients

The number if cancer incidents are increasing slightly every year. Thanks to technology improvements and innovations, now more patients can be treated one day comparing to previous years. Before, 80 patients per day could be treated and the number has risen up to 100.

Regarding making relationships with patients, it is medical staff responsibility to treat patients well and make them feel comfortable, safe and satisfied.
Patients coming to the hospital do not know what make of equipment they will be treated with. Hospital does not advertise Elekta on its website and brochures because as they think it is not important for a patient. What important for the patient is, to make him feel safe and comfortable.

Advantages of Elekta

Varian, biggest Elekta competitor has one solution for everything, and all equipment has to be by same make, otherwise it will not work. However, Elekta is “open” what means that company’s equipment connected with equipment from different make will be working. Elekta equipment is effective.

Suggestions?

To show from the best side that Elekta has in offer a good product.
Appendix G: Phone Interview with Håkan Sjöstrand 21/01/13

General Questions

1. How long have you been working at Uppsala University Hospital? 27 years
2. What is your position and responsibilities? Engineer for radiation therapy department

Medical equipment/ staff and its training

3. When did you purchase first Elekta equipment? In late 60’s, the hospital had equipment from Philips, however years after Elekta bought the company’s medical systems accelerator part and in 1997 the accelerator division. First Elekta equipment with Elekta name on it was bought in 2000.
4. What Elekta equipment is in use at the moment? The hospital has 4 accelerators, MOSAIQ system, brachytherapy treatment unit, brachytherapy planning system (bought from Nucletron).
5. In what language is the equipment used? At the beginning Elekta equipment was in Swedish, however it is has changed into English in terms of the market size (Swedish market is small and there is focus on international business). At the moment all equipment is used mostly in English. When MOSAIQ system appeared, it was difficult for some of the nurses to use it as they did not know English. However, notes can be taken in Swedish; Elekta provides the hospital with instruction booklets in Swedish and training course in Swedish for nurses.
6. Who does go through training to use the equipment? Engineers, nurses, physicists and physicians.
7. Where was the training held? For engineers in Holland, England, the rest at the hospital.
8. How long does the training take? For nurses the starting up system training in Uppsala and takes around 1 week, technical training may take from 1 week up to 2 weeks. There are several courses. For technical courses there is trial finishing with the test. In order to receive certificate and be able to use equipment, the test needs to be passed.
9. Did the company have to make any changes to meet the hospital’s requirements and needs when purchasing Elekta equipment? If yes, then what changes? Training course in Swedish for the nurses. The equipment is optimized for hospital demands. When the hospital buys the equipment it has some demands that need to be met by Elekta.

Networking

10. Which events, activities, conferences organized by Elekta did you participate? Nordic Elekta User Meetings every second year and European Elekta User Meeting also every second year. During those meetings, users give presentations; there are ideas and experiences discussed. Also Elekta organizes conferences where gives presentations about new versions of products and introduces new products.
11. How do you/hospital find out about new equipment and other innovations? It can be found on the website, there are vendors coming to Uppsala giving presentation about new products and their offers.
12. Do you provide Elekta with any ideas, improvements? As Uppsala Hospital is Elekta’s reference site they have cooperation and run meetings regarding the equipment the hospital uses. Regarding suggesting changes to Elekta equipment, it depends whether it is an urgent matter, improvement or new function.

13. How do you cooperate with Elekta company? By email, phone; when it is urgent the hospital calls Elekta to come to Uppsala for a meeting to discuss the things that need to be followed up.

14. When looking for solutions (i.e. repairs) how do you contact with Elekta? (how often, how quickly you get responses?) When it is urgent they need a quick response with the information how to solve the problem.

15. How do you find the hospital as Elekta reference site? The hospital gets many visitors who are customers, potential customers, government, health ministers, also visitors from other countries. Market in Sweden is mature, but it doesn’t grow much. What Elekta can get in Sweden, is good reputation and references from the hospital for other clinics in growing markets if they ask.

16. How do you feel about the relationship with Elekta? What is important? They obtain important information and can have impact on the modifications of the product. For the hospital it is also important that Elekta is a Swedish company. It is a great benefit for the hospital as Elekta’s company culture differs from American Varian which is Elekta’s biggest competitor (people behave differently in both cultures)

Trust

17. What are the advantages and disadvantages by using Elekta equipment and cooperation?

Reliable product that works well. Varian makes its customers to keep on buying its products as they cannot be connected with other makes, otherwise the equipment will not work. However Elekta is “open” and allows its products to be connected with other makes and work perfectly. Disadvantage is that Elekta’s products are not integrated much in different systems. The hospital noticed, that Elekta has improved within past couple of years and stays competitive on the market, even if there is no much differences in Elekta’s and Varian’s products any longer.

Future, challenges /wishes

18. What challenges do you see for future? All the products integrated with each other. It also would be easier when MOSAIQ system was in Swedish, as it is easier to understand and solve the problem that arises on the screen, when it presented in mother language.
Appendix H: Questionnaire for Thomas Jansson

1. How long have you been working at Gävle Hospital? Since 1994
2. What is your position and responsibilities? Biomedical Engineer, reparation of equipment, problem solver,

Medical equipment/staff and its training

3. How long have you been using the Varian equipment for? Since 2000
4. In what language the equipment is used? Is it a big issue? Mostly English. No since the most words that are common and Varian’s Swedish translations are pretty bad. In this case I’m sure Elekta should be much better.
5. How did you manage with personnel who doesn’t speak English? (i.e. translation from English into Swedish, Swedish equipment trainer? Varian have Swedish equipment trainer and we have to make quality documents in Swedish anyway
6. Who does go for training regarding Varian equipment? All personnel
7. Are all Varian products you have purchased standardized or the company had to make changes to meet hospital’s needs? Mostly standard but we use hospital network and hospital servers so Varian has been doing some adaptation.
8. How would you grade the functionality, quality of Varian equipment? (Excellent, good, bad)? There are always some small problems but I think the functionality is excellent.
9. What are advantages and disadvantages of Varian equipment? Advantages: reliable, good functionality, good service training, good service. Disadvantages: Hard to get changes to the equipment, very “American” company, service office in Denmark instead of Sweden.

Networking

10. Which events, activities, conferences organized by Varian did you participate? None
11. How often and where do you go for engineering meetings? They are every year in different locations in the Nordic countries; I try to go on them every year.

12. How do you/hospital find out about new equipment and other innovations? Homepages, colleagues on other hospitals, engineering meetings
13. How would you describe your cooperation with Varian? I have very good cooperation with the service department
14. Do you provide Varian with any ideas, improvements? Yes Is Varian taking this into consideration? As I wrote before, this is one of Varian’s disadvantages. The Scandinavian office is always very helpful but if it has to go longer it will take very long time.
15. When looking for solutions (i.e. repairs) how do you contact with Varian? To the office in Denmark or directly to the service guy (how often, 2-4 times/month how quickly you get responses? During office time, almost always directly.
16. What is the most important with cooperation with Varian? For me: good service, information about updates

17. Could you explain if it matters for the hospital/you, which country the product comes from? The hospital has an environmental goal so if the Elekta machines were made close to us in Sweden, but they are not. So the difference is if they are transported from England or USA and to be honest it’s not a biggie. I think that it should be very nice to have machines from a Swedish company and I think that Elekta have a nicer way with more open software and I really like that.

About Elekta

18. What do you know about Elekta company? Swedish company with accelerators made in England, Gamma knife, Medical intelligence tabletop’s, Mosaïq management system

19. Is Elekta keeping in touch with the hospital? (Do you get any information about new offers, you call Elekta with questions regarding equipment?) Elekta have been to our facility 2 times in 1 1/2 year and we got very good info.

Future/challenges/wishes

20. Is there anything regarding equipment or cooperation with Varian, you would like to be different or improved? There is always room for improvement, the True Beam is a new machine and have problems that needs to be solved. Better adaption from Varian when it comes to improvements from users.

21. What challenges do you see for the future? We always work to get better and more accurate treatment for the patients so we look for better equipment, better patient alignment, better harmony for patients and personnel, better working environment for personnel (and patients)

22. If there is a possibility, would you switch to Elekta? Yes of course but there must be good reasons

23. Could you explain if it matters for the hospital/you, which country the product comes from? The hospital has an environmental goal so if the Elekta machines were made close to us in Sweden, but they are not. So the difference is if they are transported from England or USA and to be honest it’s not a biggie. I think that it should be very nice to have machines from a Swedish company and I think that Elekta have a nicer way with more open software and I really like that.
Appendix I: Interview with Staffan Björk 06/04/13

Position: Manager of Product Marketing for Neuroscience

Function: responsibility for marketing neuroscience product portfolio including Gamma Knife and equipment for open brain surgery

Sweden is a small market comparing to other countries. Only 2% of Elekta operates in home market, where the biggest one is in the US. When it comes to competition, Varian Medical Systems is the biggest one making similar accelerators, however Gamma Knife is unique and no one produces similar product.

Cultural aspect and country of origin

Elekta is international company and in general has Global/English-American type of marketing culture. It is difficult to be local and make international markets to adapt Swedish culture. However, Elekta has Swedish business culture to some extent. The way Elekta is acting on the market and treats its customers is Swedish.

It is advantage for Elekta to have its headquarters in Sweden and university hospitals that cooperates with in terms of research and development. There are many knowledgeable people here who can help Elekta customers when it comes to service support.

Networking

There are two main institutions that Elekta is collaborating with. Karolinska University Hospital and Uppsala University Hospital. In Neuroscience department Elekta collaborates with Karolinska University Hospital, where Uppsala University Hospital is Elekta’s reference site. When it comes to Oncology department Elekta collaborated with the UK. In each major local Elekta office has network and exchange with local hospitals for instance in The UK or the USA. What is very important for business, working close with customers. Especially when developing products.

Elekta organizes user meetings and takes part in general congresses in Europe and around the world where presenting company’s products. There is no major congresses organized in Sweden, Swedish doctors and health people travel abroad and collaborate a lot with hospitals abroad. The articles are written in English and published in international magazines. Nowadays it is international community, however it is also important for Elekta to look for home market and provide the best solutions for them.

When international customers are interested in Elekta products and services first contact headquarters and then are send for a visit to Elekta’s reference site which is Uppsala University Hospital.
**Standardization/ adaptation**

Regional Elekta offices can make some adoptions. In Sweden Elekta is placed on a stock market and according to law, the company needs to provide financial information, press releases and annual reports in Swedish.

All the manuals coming with the product can be translated to local language. And more and more things translated into local language. Authorities have a power and can require that from service providers due to security reason for example. Trainings can be provided either in English or Swedish. There is educational training in Stockholm and when doctors and physicians coming from around whole world, then the training is held in English. Product prices can be negotiated. Marketing department is Stockholm when contacted by sales people from different country asking for help in some exhibition in their country, marketing people will prepare things in country’s language.

Issues meet when approaching new customers are politics and budget restraints. How you can solve problems that hospitals and health care organizations dealing with to get more efficient health care to a lower cost. This is a challenge to provide products that solve all those issues.

**Marketing**

The way Elekta promotes its products and services is standardized. When creating and developing marketing strategy, it is done from international perspective. However there are tenders company that keeps track on, and you will know the hospital that wants to buy certain product then you can go with your offerings. On a very long term commitment, it depends on relationships a company builds up with customers and how acts on the market. On the other side, prices, quality are also very important in buying behaviour.

When you think it is home market, it doesn’t mean it is easy to marketing products and services in Sweden as marketing developed by Elekta is done for international markets. There are few marketing activities that focus on Swedish market. From general perspective, there are sales people working on a Swedish market by visiting hospitals and working on relations. There is no Swedish advertising campaigns as market is too small for that. Due to regulations and rules, hospitals have to call the company and ask for tender. Marketing in Sweden doesn’t differ much comparing to international one. In each country Elekta has its own distributors and local offices. In general principle is the same. Differences can appear only on a local level. Everywhere where Elekta is present everything works more or less same way. Brand and relations building, tenders are the most important in Elekta business.
Trust

Building trust is a part of brand building. Customers can rely on the company that provides high quality products and services; you get treated well by Elekta products.

Buying behaviour depends on how market is politically organized. In Sweden there are different regions called “landsting”. The regions and politicians over there regulate and shape the market very hard where you are dependent on them. For instance one health care region in Sweden can say they don’t like Elekta and do not want Gamma Knife and they will not purchase it. On the other hand, it can be other health care region who will be very satisfied with Gamma Knife. To sum up, long term commitment, quality, communication, for realizing what was promised play important role in trust building.

When hospitals are buying equipment it is strict and informal. They invite manufactures like Elekta or Varian who write a tender what you have in offer and what is the price and what is included in new product. Hospitals, regions “Lanstigen”, they make own requirements and say what they want and what can be offered to them. Then the company writes a tender saying you can get this and this for that price. Then the company tries to meet customers’ requirements. All the tenders must be neutral. Then the customers go for the best solutions and deal not whether it is Swedish or not.

You rather are loyal to one brand, if you buy Varian, you will go with their planning treatments system, their service program, and thus you tide up for longer period. You also have long term agreement and all the equipment uses have been trained, so no one wants changes. Even if is possibility to connect Elekta machines with equipment from third parties, customers are rather loyal and stick to one product/service provider. However it is different when it comes to unique products like Gamma Knife that do not have prototypes and are not copied.

Extra info regarding culture asked later:

Elekta also find local business cultures important. The reason why we are striving to open local offices or work with distributors is to get closer to our markets. For example, we are having a distributor in Poland, because only a Polish will understand the Polish business culture. So, being local and close to our customers is extremely important.