BACHELOR THESIS
BACHELOR OF INTERNATIONAL MARKETING

"How can Meltwater NEWS increase their customer retention in Singapore?"

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This paper is done as a part of the undergraduate program at BI Norwegian Business School. This does not entail that BI Norwegian Business School has cleared the methods applied, the results presented, or the conclusion drawn.
Acknowledgement

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First of all, we wish to dedicate a thank you to everybody who has contributed to this project in any way. In addition, we would also like to thank all of our interview objects that has taken the time to help us increase the understanding of the situation, through their knowledge, thoughts and experiences.

Furthermore, we want to dedicate an extra thanks to our project supervisor, Dr. Robert Kreuzbauer, for his assistance with advice and guidance during the process of developing this bachelor thesis.

Nanyang Technological University,
Singapore, 26th April 2012

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List of Abbreviations

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>MW</td>
<td>Meltwater</td>
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<td>MWG</td>
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<td>MWGS</td>
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<td>MWN</td>
<td>Meltwater NEWS</td>
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<td>CR</td>
<td>Client Relations</td>
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<td>CRM</td>
<td>Client Relations management</td>
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<td>NS</td>
<td>New Sales</td>
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<td>B2B</td>
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<td>Business to Consumers</td>
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<td>MNC</td>
<td>Multinational Corporation</td>
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<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarter</td>
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<td>APAC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific</td>
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<td>CSF</td>
<td>Critical Success Factor</td>
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<td>ROI</td>
<td>Return on Investment</td>
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Executive Summary

This project’s objective is to increase the customer retention. Further research shows that in order to do so, it will be crucial to read, meet and exceed the client’s expectations. Customers of Meltwater Group Singapore are generally happy with the Meltwater NEWS product. However, the findings shows that Meltwater in general lack understanding of their clients expectations. As such it will be difficult to anticipate what kind of activities to execute in order to make them more than satisfied.

In order to gain more knowledge on this subject, there has been developed and conducted both primary and secondary data through interviews, conversations, and available literature.

It is suggested to use the GAP-model to identify GAPs that needs to be closed. When closing the GAPs, Meltwater will enhance understanding of the customers’ expectations. Research advises that understanding is essential in order to increase service quality and customer satisfaction, resulting in an increase of customer retention. Additionally, KANO-theory suggests exceeding client’s expectations is needed in order to gain even more satisfied customers.

Therefore, there has been made suggestions to implement, in order to close the GAPs and create Attractive Requirements. Such implementations will be:

1. Develop standards on two-way communication
2. Be transparent
3. Develop an analytical report

These are further elaborated in Appendix A – Proposed Recommendations.
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Letter of Declaration

By René Selvig, Strategic Account Manager Meltwater Group | Asia

In the spring of 2006, Meltwater opened its first office in Singapore by introducing our Meltwater News online media-monitoring tool to the market for the first time.

The office consisted up until October 2011 of new sales divisions for our two products NEWS and BUZZ. The CR division who service existing customers has been based in our Hong Kong office since the establishment in 2007. So we have had one hub of account managers servicing the entire Asian Meltwater client portfolio.

On October 1st 2011, Meltwater Group Singapore CR office was established and on ground. Our main problem in Singapore and Asia in general, has been to establish long-term relationships with our clients and make sure they renew ending contracts.

As a result we have shifted our focus from having one large CR hub in Hong Kong to establish smaller teams servicing the national customers on ground, to improve relationships, increase client loyalty as well as adapting and learning more about the local markets and modifying our own methodology working towards these markets clients and business cultures.

We have never had local or on ground account managers here before, there is low loyalty among the clients, and our struggle is creating enough value to get them happy working with us and choosing to renew their contracts upon expiry. Today, APAC is the region in Meltwater with the highest percentage number of lost clients per year.
What we want is to change this around and become the most successful region and make Singapore the most successful office. In order to achieve this, we need to understand some underlying problems and how to best attack these issues to improve the way we work.

Acknowledgement of Issues

Among the issues addressed by Mr Rene Selvig is Meltwater’s recruitment program where the existing employees of MWG are trained to be global leaders. Moreover, Mr Selvig also addresses that this can become an issue due to the fact that MW’s foreign units will need local talents. As of now there are currently 14 employees, whereas only three are locals. However, there are a couple on-going employments of locals. They will contribute to MWG global success as they have enough/can acquire insight into the local market, and nevertheless have ease of connecting with local clients and therefore understand client’s needs better.

Singapore, April 25th 2012

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Mr René Selvig, Strategic Account Manager,

Meltwater Group | Asia
Introduction

Meltwater Group in Singapore is a newly (2006) established foreign unit to the Norwegian company Meltwater Group. The Singapore unit, in similarity to the other 54 units have experienced an enormous growth. Considering an establishment in Oslo, Norway in 2001 with a starting capital of US$15,000 to present day with 800+ employees, 18,000 customers across the globe generating US$100M annual revenue\(^1\).

Meltwater NEWS offers various services that monitor the Internet for pre-set keywords - also called *agents*. In example, BMW’s product development unit would like to know more about *steel, aluminium* or *rubber*. The *rubber agent* will then monitor the Internet and gather articles that concern the subject *rubber* into a report, which the customer receives in their mailbox every morning. As such the companies can keep themself updated on the current situation concerning them. The company’s customer varies from big MNCs such as; Apple, GE, Siemens to smaller companies. Even non-profit organization, such as: WHO, Save the Children, World Toilet Org., etc. use the service.

The importance of Meltwater’s services is somewhat due to the modernization of how information is being conveyed. Internet is being a new and exciting arena for many businesses. MWN is providing a tool to acquire information from what press are writing about a client. Moreover, how the clients disseminate and utilize the information depends very much on the businesses and its units. Some are using the information for marketing purposes, for crisis management, for PR, etc.

\(^1\) “San Francisco-Based Meltwater Group Acquires JitterJam”, 2011
PART 1

1.1 Problem Definition

Thus the company is doing fairly well in Singapore, the Singapore unit, among other Asian divisions have issues retaining their customers after the contracts have expired. In order to make a further research on this matter this problem definition has been developed:

“How can Meltwater NEWS increase their customer retention in Singapore?”

Based on the literature review that has been done in the inception of this thesis a conclusion has been drawn that the two following factors are important to the problem definition:

1. Service quality  
2. Customer satisfaction

1.2 Project Limitations

Regarding this project paper there has been made a decision to focus on service quality and customer satisfaction in order to gain in-depth understanding and knowledge about the subject matter. Therefore, other conditions are consciously excluded from the paper. However the findings may prove otherwise. Moreover, considering the direct contact with MWGS, current location and limited time and resources, the paper will particularly focus on customer retention related to this unit. Even though the whole APAC region is suffering a decline of retentive customers. In conclusion, the research paper will be evaluated whether the findings can be related to other places in Asia, although the main focus is in Singapore. Moreover, this research will mainly focus on the product NEWS in Singapore, as requested.

PART 2

2.1 Service Quality

Why is service quality an important factor? Parasuraman (1990) suggest that service quality is important for business providing service as a product. Meltwater can however not rely on that their product (software) can be measured by its package, durability and physical
qualities. Since the intangible state of the service cannot be measured. Therefore, providing an excellent service would lead to loyal customers. By managing the service product, the service environment and service delivery one is able to improve the quality of service. In the coming years these issues are likely to be affected by the several underlying trends, which points out how businesses must change to adapt in the future.

What is service quality? The service quality is a link between internal process quality and the quality perceived by the customer. Service quality is a subjective concept by nature, meaning that to understand how the customer thinks about service quality is critical to effective management. To understand this concept one must understand three related concepts, which are: customer satisfaction, service quality and customer value.

Customer satisfaction is a cognitive and affective reaction to a service incident or it could be a long-term service relationship as well. Dissatisfaction comes from having a service encounter and compare that encounter with was what expected. Service quality comprises of successfully managing three aspects: Designing the service product, designing the service environment and delivering the service. These three distinct aspects makes it clear that service quality is not only measured by satisfaction, quality and value, but it also has to involve the service product, service environment, and service delivery. The word satisfaction derives from the Latin satis (enough) and facere (to do or make) and is closely related to the word satiation, which loosely means “enough to excess”. These words illustrates that satisfaction implies and can be seen as a process that there is an expectancy of filling or fulfilment involved. Literature states that satisfaction can exist in both low and high quality:

“...satisfaction with low quality can exist whenever ones expectations in a given situation are

2 Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 15-16
3 Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 1
low and performance is adequate to the task”. In addition “dissatisfaction with high quality can ensue when some element of the service is delivery is not up to personal expectations”.5

2.2 Customer Satisfaction

Thus the perception of service quality arises from the affecting service satisfaction at the point of encounter. And later one can separate encounter experiences into an overall perception of the quality itself. Customer satisfaction is directly related to loyal customers.6 In depth there will be researched what features are the most valued ones, and can further on provide an insight where to improve Meltwater’s offerings to retain their clients. Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990) states: “...service-firm executives may not always be completely aware of which characteristics connote high quality to customers.”

2.3 Framework

The following model stresses one of two factors that are relevant. The GAP-model (Appendix B) developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml & Berry (1985) stresses service quality. The model is useful and easy to understand. The model is divided into two sections: marketer and customer. In this research customers and marketer has been simplified as external and internal analysis. Where the objectives remains the same as abovementioned. Even more essential are the different dimensions of the model, the GAPs between these dimensions in general research whether perception of both parties matches the given service, NEWS.

Another analysis tool that will be applied is the KANO-theory developed by Japanese professor, Noriaki Kano in the 80’s. The main function of the tool is to classify the level of customer satisfaction. To achieve a sustainable business, it is important to look at the

4 Rust & Oliver, 1994, p. 6
5 Rust & Oliver, 1994, p. 7
6 Raab, Ajami, Gargeya, Goddard, 2008, p. 59
findings and factors of what is perceived as customer satisfaction and what customers perceive as service. As such, satisfied customers will be less price-sensitive and more willing to spend on products they have tried. Also, attaining stable business relations will reduce the cost of attracting new customers and lowering the transaction cost for existing customers. This could be due to the positive quality image and the high amount of satisfied and loyal customers. Matzler, Hinterhuber, Bailom, Sauerwein, (1996) states “So far the customer satisfaction has been seen mostly as a one-dimensional construction – the higher the perceived product quality, the higher the customer’s satisfaction and vice versa. But fulfilling the individual product requirements to a great extent does not necessarily imply a high level of customer satisfaction”7. And this is one of the types of requirements that define how the product quality is perceived in relation to customer satisfaction.

One of Kano’s theories is that attributes might be valued differently, as such; by improving one attribute may not be beneficial for everyone. The theory can be integrated in the GAP-model in dimension as; how do the marketer translate the customer's expectation into service. Figuring what attribute is more important enables the understanding where the product fails or succeeds to satisfy the customers. The KANO-theory reinforces the findings and research with integration in the GAP-model.

2.3.1 Further Elaboration on the GAP Dimensions

GAP 1 – What customers expect from the service has a basis from word-of-mouth, personal needs and past experiences. Moreover, how do this correlate with how the management perceives customers expectations. GAP 1 is an important GAP, because it evaluates customers’ expectations and if the marketer perceives the expectations of their customers correctly. The more accurate the marketer is to interpret the customer expectations, the more

7 Matzler, Hinterhuber, Bailom, & Sauerwein, 1996, p. 6
likely it will affect the rest of the following GAPS.

**GAP 2** – How management perceive the customer expectations and translate these perceptions into service. This GAP very much evaluates how (if at all) the marketer customizes the product to client’s needs and expectations. KANO-theory would be essential in this GAP as marketer by now should be able to map what attributes are the most important.

**GAP 3** – The third GAP consider how the service is being carried out to the customer and maintained by the marketer, whether if these approaches complies with the service quality standard of the firm. According to the theory of the GAP-model the actual given service can differ from the standard of the service. An example can be that an employee is unwilling to perform according to the standards that have been set by the firm.

**GAP 4** – The fourth GAP consider how the marketer externally communicate this product to customers. This can be everything from how to approach the customers by phone or how to promote externally in media. Moreover, this dimension also affects the perceived service and customer expectations. What is common with all these steps are that the findings will be useful because it disseminate the issues of each joint of the service and how the product is being carried out. What are customers satisfied, indifferent or dissatisfied with.

**Customer GAP** – How do customers’ expectations of the service affect the perception of the received service? Because of the intangible-state of the service it would be hard for the customers to measure the quality because service is mainly about performance. Moreover, the customer GAP reflects what the customers’ expectations and how they perceive the product they are currently receiving. “The key to closing GAP 5 (customer GAP) is to close GAP 1 through 4 and keep them closed.”

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8 Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 46
2.3.2 Further Elaboration on the KANO-theory

The Kano theory has been identified as a helpful tool in addition to the GAP dimensions. The question is which product qualities are decisive for the satisfaction of the customers and which features only prevent dissatisfaction? It has been distinguished three types of product requirements, which influence customer satisfaction in different ways when met:

1. **Must be Requirements** – The basic requirements of the product. If they are not fulfilled, the customer will be extremely dissatisfied. However as the customer takes this for granted, their fulfilment will not lead to satisfaction. It will only lead to a state of “not dissatisfied”. The reason it is important to consider this is because if they are not met, the customer will not be interested in the product at all.

2. **One-Dimensional Requirements** – Are usually demanded by the customer. Customer satisfaction is proportional to the level of fulfilment, the higher the level of fulfilment, the more satisfied the customer will be and vice versa.

3. **Attractive Requirements** – The product criteria that have the most influence on how satisfied a customer will be with the product. Attractive requirements are neither expressed nor expected by the customer. Fulfilling these requirements leads to more than proportional satisfaction. However if they are not met, there is no feeling of dissatisfaction.

These types of requirements have been used in identifying the right GAP dimensions. Among the advantages of adding these requirements will be that it is easier to identify the product criteria, which have the greatest influence on the customer’s satisfaction through identifying the customer requirements. It can provide better understanding of priorities for product development. E.g. not invest in improvements on the must-be requirements, which are already at a satisfactory level, rather focus on one-dimensional or attractive requirements as
they have more influence on customer satisfaction. Discovering and fulfilling attractive requirements creates more opportunities for differentiation. A product that only satisfies the must-be and one-dimensional is perceived as average and replaceable. As such, the KANO-theory will therefore be used to find the importance of individual product features for the customer satisfaction and as follow it will create the optimal prerequisite for a process oriented product development activities\(^9\). With this in mind, the interview guide was based on KANO-theory.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 Objectives of Research

The findings will be used to develop recommendations for Meltwater on how to increase customer retention. Retentive customers are favourable, because they contribute to increased revenue, reduced customer acquisition cost, and lower cost of serving repeat purchasers\(^10\). Furthermore, customer loyalty also has word of mouth advantages, which is particularly important in the online environment\(^11\).

2.2.2 Research Methodology

In the literature of method it is commonly referred to three different types of research design: descriptive, exploratory and causal. The importance of choosing the right design is major because the questions needs to be answered properly, in order to have sufficient data to solve the issue underlying. For this analysis purpose, it has been decided to use exploratory research design\(^12\).

\(^9\) Matzler, Hinterhuber, Bailom, & Sauerwein, 1996, p. 6-18
\(^10\) Matzler, Hinterhuber, Bailom, & Sauerwein, 1996, p. 6
\(^12\) Gipsrud, Olsson og Silkoset, 2010, p. 38
Furthermore, critical incident technique is one method of gathering information, also known as incidents in this case, from domain experts (known as employees of MWG), and/or from less experienced users (known as clients) of the system to gain ability of how to improve the performance and effectiveness of the individuals involved. This method is applied to determine the cause of the product system’s problems and identify information on the performance of activity. In addition, it can identify both good and bad behaviours findings that can then be applied to the GAP-model\textsuperscript{13}.

2.3 Research Design

2.3.1 Exploratory Research Design

There are two ways of collecting data, respectively qualitative and quantitative method. Qualitative method consists of numbers of surveys, meaningful measures or questionnaires. Whereas a large selection often is needed to generate statistics when processing surveys. This is a good way of collecting data, but it is time consuming and requires a numbers of respondents to be regarded as reliable. Moreover, the qualitative method of collecting data can be by in-depth interviews or/and focus groups.

Since the subject matter is an unknown area and the primary goal with this study is to explore the topic further, an exploratory design is a suitable choice for this research. Also, quantitative research will not be an appropriate approach, due to time consuming factors. The method includes detailed descriptions of situations, events, people, interactions and observed behaviours, and can provide exceptional insight into the current issue.

A natural start in an exploratory design is to research and review if there are relevant literature about this topic and if there are other secondary data available.

\textsuperscript{13} Usability Body of Knowledge, 2012
Further, it will be applicable to do primary data collection. Such data will be collected by in-depth interviews with employees and existing customers. Also known as a quantitative measurement. In-depth interviews will consist of open questions, which will give the respondents the opportunity to speak freely. In addition, when communicating with business people it might be difficult to gather them for a focus group\textsuperscript{14}. Furthermore, the choice of having focus groups were excluded, since it would avoid group pressure or influence from other participants, in the direction of what is “correct” to answer. Also the hectic daily life of the interview objects, made the choice fall easy on an interview of 30 +/- minutes. As mentioned, the hectic daily life of the different interview object would be difficult to coordinate them to meet the same day at the same time. By having one and one interview object at a time, the more concentrated the interview object most likely will be. This is to retrieve valuable information from the object, which might include more sensitive information than with focus groups. When giving all attention to one person, the interview object will feel itself more in focus and this creates a different and stronger motivation to actively participate during the interview. Moreover, this method makes it easier to improvise and customize the interview to reveal deeper positions\textsuperscript{15}. This function researches the interview objects insight and impression on the service provider, which again will be connected to the GAP-model.

2.3.2 Research Design Limitations

The result of exploratory data may not always be used to make decisions, however the data can be applied to gain significant insight into the situation that has occurred. Furthermore, the result of qualitative research can provide some symptoms of “why”, “how” and “when” different situations arises, it cannot declare “how often” the situation occurs or “how many”

\textsuperscript{14} Gipsrud, Olsson og Silkoset, 2010, p. 39
\textsuperscript{15} Askeim & Grenness, 2008, p. 87-91
people involved.

In addition the term “value” does not necessarily represent the same for each of the respondents. Even more is this true for the customers as they all perceive “value” differently as they have different goals and requirements. Hence, the result does not necessarily represent the whole population and can be in some cases subjective and limited. The method requires a greater degree of interpretation and the result should be seen in context. Furthermore, qualitative measurements may contain errors in terms of judgments and not numerical equivalence\textsuperscript{16}.

### 2.3.3 Validity and Reliability

After the data collection, it is important to check the reliability and validity of the data. Reliability refers to how much one can trust the results that have emerged from the interviews, while validity refers to how well the interview measures what you intend to measure. Qualitative methods must be examined closely and there may be need to find alternative methods to determine if the investigation is both reliable and valid\textsuperscript{17}. Analysis and interpretation of data is difficult since it will be likely to ignore the data or draw erroneous conclusions in such work. Therefore, by having several attendants when analysing the data will be a good solution. Common interpretation of what the material reveals, contributes to strengthen both validity and reliability\textsuperscript{18}. Furthermore, when asking the questions it is important that the questions does not get too simplified for the interview objects to understand, in order to cover the objectives of the questions.

\textsuperscript{16} Gipsrud, Olsson og Silkoset, 2010, p. 49
\textsuperscript{17} Gipsrud, Olsson og Silkoset, 2010, p. 49
\textsuperscript{18} Askheim & Grenness, 2008, p. 143
2.3.4 Ethics

A key characteristic of qualitative research is the closeness between the researcher and the person interviewed. Thus arises a reciprocal relationship, which are not found in quantitative research. Therefore it is required that the relationships between these parties are characterized by mutual respect. Face-to-face interviews can never be completely anonymous. Therefore, the researcher is faced with a dilemma when rendering the interview as it fell, but with the possibility that others can recognize the respondent. This can be perceived as negative for the person being interviewed. Or mask the source so that it will be difficult to identify the respondent, but where reproduction does not fully cover what the informant really wanted to express. There is no standard answer to this dilemma, making it essential to consider the importance of this from an interview object to another. In this project the interviews are divided into two categories, employees and customers. Both will be anonymous unless other is preferred by the participant, quotes will occur however without names of companies or persons.

In addition, the relationship between researcher and informant is characterized by information asymmetry. The researcher knows more than the informant about the investigation and possible consequences for those who participate. It can cause dilemmas if the researcher recognizes that the willingness to participate is reduced if the participants have full information. Again there are no standard answers. In this thesis however, it has been decided that complete openness is the best alternative. There will always be ethical challenges in such a project. During the planning, it will therefore be very important to make sure that the survey does not harm or lead to negative consequences for some of the participants. Because there is
no standard for how breach of ethical rules can be avoided, it will be very important to be constantly aware of the challenges that may arise\textsuperscript{19}. 

2.4 Research Method

2.4.1 Data Collection Plan

1. Pre-collection: Before collecting data, who and/or where to collect data from needs to be defined to be able to gather valid information. Information about MWG will be gathered by company’s website, manuals, brochures, other public materials available and employees by qualitative interviews. Information about customer’s perception will be gathered personally, by qualitative interviews.

2. Collection: Data for this research can be collected from two sources, primary and secondary. In order to solve this problem area, there has to be collected relevant, representable and accurate primary data from personal interviews. Furthermore secondary data will be used to support the findings, which will be collected from web sites, journals, articles and academic literature.

2.4.2 Development

To successfully accumulate valuable information from the interview objects, it is crucial to develop an adequate interview guide in order to ask the “right” questions. The questions asked must be representable and correlate in regards to the GAP-model’s objectives. Furthermore, the questions that are prepared must be open-ended in order to get more explained and experimental answers rather than “yes” or “no”. This will also generate a more comfortable flow on interaction, where there is room to ask supporting questions which may appear along the conversation.

\textsuperscript{19} Askheim & Grenness, 2008, p.164-165
Another important factor is to avoid biased, loaded words or phrases. The questions asked are to encourage the interview object to describe experiences and real situations. Additionally, it is important to mention that the questioner are not obligated to follow the interview guide strictly, but rather to have it to generate suitable questions accordingly to the present situation and control the conversations. This structure of interview can also be referred to as “half-structured”\(^\textsuperscript{20}\).

### 2.4.3 Research Instruments

Due to some customers not being located in Singapore, conversations through phone have also been one approach to the customers. Furthermore, some customers have not had time to meet in person, therefore e-mail were another option to gather the information. However, the effect of using e-mails did not result in significant information of value. When the two-way communication is not present, there is no opportunity to add valuable questions if the answer is not valid. Other instruments that will be used for gathering of information will be personal computers and sound recorders. There may be limitations regarding the use of sound recorders, the sound might be poor. Perhaps the customer might feel intimidated by sound recorders, where they are afraid of saying something irrelevant or confidential. However, recording the interview can greatly benefit the research as it can be recapped.

### 2.4.4 Limitations with Different Approaches

By use of e-mail and telephone communication the opportunity to observe body language will be eliminated. When talking with the interview objectives there might be non-verbal leads that can be seen, in terms of hesitant speaking, pauses in their sentences. Body language can give certain clues and messages, to what words are describing, in terms of nervousness, confidence and more.

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\(^\textsuperscript{20}\) Gipsrud, Olsson og Silkoset, 2010, p. 90
2.4.5 Data Sample

The data sample has been gathered from four Meltwater employees and six customers through in-depth interviews by phone and in person. However, more specific details around the characters cannot be provided, as it is easy to interpret whom the personal detail belongs to. Doing so would void the anonymity codex that was ensured the interview objects at the beginning of the interview.

Employees of Meltwater range from circa age 25 to 35 at maximum. In a total of four employees, divided in different positions. Three of them have been positioned in other Meltwater offices globally, providing different experiences and knowledge. Customers possess high positions in their respective companies. The companies have been customers of NEWS from one to three years. Further research on these people on LinkedIn has proved that they are highly experienced in international businesses. Moreover, the characteristics of the firms are both profiting and non-profiting firms, as such they use the service for different purposes. It can be mentioned that the firms’ activities are: shipping, event planner, non-profit health organization, PR, naval defence and pharmaceutical industry.

2.4.6 Anonymity

There has been promised strict anonymity. However, as mentioned under Ethics, total anonymity is not possible. It was informed prior to the research that the customers might be reluctant to say anything negative as it might set their position in jeopardy, which in turn would decrease the reliability of the data. Additionally, due to the high context and saving-face culture in Asia, they might not provide all the information that is needed\textsuperscript{21}. In order to collect the most accurate reliable data as possible from the interviews it was necessary to

\textsuperscript{21} Walker, Walker, Schmitz, 2003, p. 114-117
ensure the interviewee anonymity for them to feel safe and emphasized with at all time.

PART 3

3.1 Data Analysis

Data analysis can be defined as “systematization of data so that any patterns and structures emerge”. When analysing the data, it is important to stay open to the material, in terms of not let the analysis get controlled by biased attitudes, but rather analyse it neutral regarding all possible thoughts and causation. Theory by Askheim & Grenness (2008)\textsuperscript{22}, suggests that the analysis process is a circular process, with no certain start nor ending. Still it is common that qualitative analysis is divided into three main operations:

1. **Describing** – The first step consists of describing the phenomena that is being studied, as detailed and accurate as possible. It can be referred to as “thick description”, which means to present significant volumes of data so that the reader can nearly get the feeling of “being there”. This step implies to emphasize and not only describe the incidents, but also to include the context in terms of the correlation to one's behaviour. Understanding meanings is context dependent, where the intention behind a certain incident may become more meaningful\textsuperscript{23}.

2. **Categorizing** – After collecting quantitative data, the materials must be structured, due to unstructured gathering. In other words, coding of data material propose that material should be marked by “codes” in order to construct foundation to gather them into essential categories\textsuperscript{24}.

\textsuperscript{22} Askheim & Grenness, 2008, p. 146  
\textsuperscript{23} Askheim & Grenness, 2008, p. 147  
\textsuperscript{24} Askheim & Grenness, 2008, p. 148-149
3. **Linking** – The simplest and most common method for analysing the output of the interview is called the "cut-and-paste technique." As the name implies, this means that the researcher cut statements that relate to a certain phenomenon, in this case the objectives that has been defined in the GAP-model, and paste it together with a statement of the same phenomenon from other people. This technique is simple, effective and representative. Here it will also be important that there is more than just one person doing this as the reliability of the collection will be greater

3.2 **Data Presentations**

3.2.1 **External Summary**

The clients were interviewed to give their reflections and attitude on the aspects value and challenges they have for the service. There has been recognized a consistent perception and opinion of the following aspects already mentioned above, even though the clients have diverse needs of the service. Both aspects, value and challenges, reflects the client expectations and perception of the service MWG is providing for them.

What the clients have communicated are aligned and what has been identified to be the most added value aspects are **first of all**, the numerous of sources that NEWS can provide in different languages including translation. One of the clients stated: “...*it was the media coverage, because what Meltwater does, and not quite that many does, is also the local language coverage. Which is, I think is not perfect, by all means it definitely not perfect, but they do have a lot of publications that they pick up from China, from Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, the Philippines*”.

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25 Askheim & Grenness, 2008, p. 149-150
This has also been referred to as “raw materials”, which clients further analyse for their own purpose. As stated by another client: “The most positive experience I get from it, I still think it is raw information so the best thing I get from it is what I am doing with it myself...”

The clients also serve different customers for their businesses, therefore a broad coverage targeting their customers segments in different countries in the APAC region, are of crucial value to them. Even more, the clients see the advantages of using MWG’s services in comparison to the competitors, which serves with fewer sources.

**Secondly**, they all agree that the service can take away a huge work scope from their business, which reflects the service to be a timesaving tool. Instead of having designated workers to monitor the media, the service will provide with coverage of the media that is interesting for the clients. This again leads to the added value that NEWS provides daily relevant updates right to the user. Furthermore, the clients appreciate that they can all get immediate support and are available for the clients if there were any matters of concerns regarding the service. After MWG opened a CR unit in Singapore, the clients have felt much more taken care of and prioritized.

A client state: “So it is very easy for us to identify, we can just solve the problem right now. If any questions, the person can come over and we just solve the problem. It is really good, so rather than go overseas like Hong Kong and the person might not know our problems.”

However, there have been identified certain challenges that customers face, which affects their perception of NEWS. When identifying what keywords to implement into the system, the clients all agree that they would appreciate more support, in terms of active interactions with MWG employees. As a client states: “…and maybe they need to be more proactive and ask more questions, despite this they just assumed that we were, we covered Asia meant that we covered all Asia, which is wrong.”
These are **One-Dimensional Requirements**, as they are explicitly demanded by the customers. The higher the level of fulfilment of these, the more satisfied the customers would be. This also works the other way around, so the lower the fulfilsments of these criteria are, the more dissatisfied they will be. This has led to the clients receiving substantial amounts of irrelevant content from publications and updates. Additionally, identification of imprecise keywords has contributed to customers missing out on important publication, which other simpler search tools has picked up. Again this has led to the perception of NEWS to be insufficient.

Clients also expresses that this problem could be solved if the MWG CR personnel would be more proactive in its CRM. This leads to a perception that the MWG is not as professional in their follow-up as it is stated in the guidelines. Another challenge the customers have pointed out is a lack of reasoning when the system fails to deliver as expected. The customers insinuate that the service is not as transparent as desired. As stated by a client: "**Oh, there’s a lot of wishes. In a perfect world I would wish that all publications that we deal with are on the system and they do not have a reasoning behind that not picking up the coverage as not hitting the system.**"

Moreover, a client has revealed that, even though the service eliminates a huge work scope as it is, it can eliminate even more. In terms of having features in the system that the client believe also other clients will benefit greatly from. By adding simple features to the system more clients will see the value in it. The client mentions examples such as an analytical tool that retrieves the client’s own “movements” in the system and in addition measures the value of the publications. This could be a rough estimate, which is very helpful to see the ROI. Also, this would help clients to use the service to its full potential. The client states: "**...the article in Time of India, will generate 10 cent per reader, and then you could estimate that you have a positive coverage of US$ 5,000. Then if an article is very, very bad, you may see -**"
US$ 5,000. The idea is to show some ROI on the system and on your PR and so. Because my company is doing PR, but they are not able to calculate what is the outcome of it.”

This can be viewed, according to the KANO-theory, as an Attractive Requirement. As of date this is not something MWG is offering their clients, so no one has really showed any dissatisfaction regarding this. Although one client has suggested this as the right direction for MWG, it is still not suitable to call it a One-Dimensional Requirement due to no demand for it or express it explicitly. However, if NEWS were to offer an analysis tool like this, this would lead to great satisfaction for exceeding the expectations. Also, after recent system updates, some features that have been actively utilized are now absent. This is an example of Must be Requirements, here we clearly see from our interviews that customers are very dissatisfied with how system updates are being conducted. There is no real warning from MWG’s side whenever this happens and usually no explanation either. Transparency is something the customers take for granted and MWG should consider this.

3.2.2 External Evaluation and Criticism

The purpose of the gathered information is to cover the customer GAP, which is the customers’ expectations and their perception of the service, NEWS (Appendix B – GAP-model). There is no given information of how often the challenges described occurs, who is involved in the mentioned challenges and all the incidents that has occurred during the period of receiving service, due to the fact that it may be several users on one “package”. Only the most significant situations that have made a huge impact on the customer’s perception of the service have been stated. The information gathered and presented here is a summary from all the interviews conducted with clients. (Appendix D – Clients Summary).
3.2.3 Internal Summary

Value added involves what the employees within Meltwater believe NEWS is offering their clients. Consistent aspects of value they believe their service and product is providing are the aspects of efficiency and time saving tool. This in turn will reduce the overall manual labour and the need of human resources usually related to collecting data.

Another perception of what added value they believe their service is providing for their clients, is the sheer amount of leads and sources Meltwater NEWS have all around the world. In other words, if you compare Meltwater with other search engines e.g. Google News, Meltwater NEWS have 162,000 publishers in 100 different languages, while Google News only have 25,000 publishers. Additional features would include real-time newsfeed, newsletter generator, Excel clip report, social media upgrade, and media list upgrade (Appendix F – Contract). In other words what differentiates Meltwater from the other media intelligence software on the market is the fact that they have more sources and leads than any other search engines. Meaning that even though you narrow down your scope and pin point what kind of information you would like to receive, the amount of information you will receive will still be of substantial amount.

Regarding management perception of customers’ expectations, and how they translate this into service shows that all interviewed employees conclude; the fundamental factor here will not change as the product is standardized. However, the factor that seems to be the deciding issue whether they sell or promote the product in different ways is decided by the background of each company in e.g. is it a local or a MNC. The company size plays a role, as well as different ways to use the product to enhance their clients businesses. Meltwater can further

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26 Meltwater Group, 2012
enhance what they can offer in terms what the client consider as service. In terms of providing service according to, or beyond product specification the interviewee seems to be consistent, saying that the product itself is standardized. Therefore “customizing” the product and service itself is impossible. However, it should be mentioned that what is considered as customization from the clients point of view may not be what is considered customizing from the employees point of view.

The service is module-based meaning that you can always “add” features on to the previous module much like “LEGO building blocks”. This is not seen as customizing from the employees point of view because this will require additional expenditure for clients, as they will have to purchase another “tool” to add on. So you could say that there is customization involved prior to purchasing the service and product beforehand to suit their current needs, but once that service or product is no longer sufficient, then they will need to purchase additional features.

Moreover, within the service itself there are options of how you would like to gather the information and how you want it to be displayed. What the employees seem to agree upon is the fact that many of their clients are not aware of the many functions that are already integrated in the service itself. Therefore any changes or notifications about what exist within the service may be perceived as a customization for the client. Picking out and adapting the right tool within the service for the specific use within the market is an alteration and tailoring, not a specific product-customization. As such, the employees emphasize the tool itself as the specific product quality and not what the employees give as service in addition to the product. One of the employees stated that: “...it is not so much about customizing the tool for their needs, it's more about educating the customer about the potential”.

There were some inconsistent conclusions in terms of whether the firm is providing a service
that is poorer or greater, than what has been communicated to the client prior to contract signing. Some of the interviewee stated that there is no possible way they can break their promises as everything is written in the terms & conditions. Meaning they are bound by the contract to fulfil their duty and promises as stated in the contract. However, there are also some which say that breaking of promises happens quite often as the system is not always stable and what the client expect from the service might be promised from the new sales department, which was untrue and unreasonable.

Furthermore, there might be a misunderstanding of what the service can actually provide, as Meltwater do not own any content. Hence, they do not save the articles or news that is given to the client they only saves the link. Additionally, there is the rising trend of content going behind “pay walls”, which means that Meltwater cannot reach the desired content for the clients as it is against their policy to “cash out” for a lead or source. Although, if it is a source that numerous clients desire, only then, will Meltwater consider the fact of negotiating an agreement with the desired source. An example of this would be “Straits times” in Singapore, where an agreement were made that the content were to be made open for Meltwater’s clients for seven days after publication.

In addition to abovementioned, the service Meltwater is providing is a web-based service, which requires access to Internet. Regarding this there are complaints about the service being slow and unstable, but these problems might be related to the Internet providers and not the service provided. The speed of the clients Internet is much dependent on their own subscription of Internet lines.
3.2.4 Internal Evaluation and Criticism

In this research project, the employees may feel inclined to hold back some critical information that they perceive as information for the company only. The information gathered and presented here is a summary from all one-on-one interviews conducted with employees. (Appendix E – Employee Summary). The information gathered from the employees will then cover the internal factors in the GAP framework from GAP 1 through GAP 4. This will therefore be used to uncover any issues, which may be found internally within the Meltwater Office in Singapore and how this may be linked up to the problem definition.

PART 4

4.1 Findings and Conclusion Linked to the GAP-Model

4.1.1. GAP 1 Findings

The difference between what customers expect and what management perceived about the expectations of the customers\(^\text{27}\). What added value do MWG think they are providing: MWGS’s employees unanimously agree that the added value NEWS is providing the customer is a time saving tool. The tool allows clients to efficiently and comprehensively keep track of what is written in the media, which is of value for the customer’s business-operations. Extensively this can mean saving of resources, time being just one of the resources the tool saves. Since the tool allows people to work more efficiently. In longer-term it can be assumed that the other added value is actually return on investment in terms of saving money as the employees cut down working hours and/or the efficiency rises significantly. Another added value Meltwater can provide is broader coverage when it comes to sources, the NEWS tool have in total 162,000 sources around the world. The value

\(^{27}\) Mokhtar, Maiyaki, & Noor, 2011, p. 2
proposition is the access to a lot of information right at your fingertips.

**What customers actually expect** – From the data collected there is a pattern between the clients regarding what they expect from the service provider. **First of all**, the customers expect MWG to provide daily updates and news pick-ups in several languages and broad coverage, respectively in the Asia region. That MWG will provide with all the publications that their keywords are explaining. This results in clients eliminating a huge work scope as a result. **Secondly**, the customers all agree that they expect the employees to be more proactive, in terms of taking more initiative when and how they are being approached. To not only address the problem that has occurred and understand that certain incident, but also to provide beyond the standards that are given. A client also expects that there should be regularly interaction with the client. The client states: “... *I think to regularly contact clients; to see how it’s going, have you been receiving the right data...*” **Thirdly**, clients expect that MWGS provide them with immediate support whenever there is a problem or error regarding the system. **Fourthly**, one client expects Meltwater to provide with reasoning’s to why the system is not working optimally and always keep them updated about the system and be transparent. This correlates to the expectations about lack of proactivity from MW, stated previously.

4.1.1.1 GAP 1 Conclusion

*Market Research orientations – Extent to which managers make an effort to understand customers’ needs and expectations, through formal and informal information-gathering activities.* In short Meltwater perceive that the core benefit of the NEWS product is a time saving tool that keep track of things, and provide the clients with relevant information. Even though the clients perceive the product as good, they do however expect more than just a tool.

The clients want more face-to-face service in terms of initial setup and follow-ups. Both
employee and customers have stated that there has been absence of communication after the contract has been signed. From the employees perspective they would assume that everything is good and working optimally. However, the customers perceive this as an absence of interest from Meltwater. Some of the employees of Meltwater are fully aware that this is an issue and that Meltwater, the Singapore unit in particular is lacking the ability to assist the customers fully.

Moreover, MW is communicating on their website that the firm is providing a consultative approach (referring to product specification), which from the customer analysis proves to not be true. Since the communication states so, it might create an expectation that exceed MW’s ability to deliver. In turn this affects the overall perception of NEWS’ quality. The contradiction of the perception can according to the GAP-theory be reasoned by; firstly, lack of interaction between Meltwater and their clients and secondly, lack of marketing research.28

4.1.2 GAP 2 Findings

How does the management’s perception of customers’ expectations translate into service?29 How MWG translate client’s expectations into service – Meltwater were vague in this GAP, the information gathered was the fact that the expectations are different, very much depending on the customer. Furthermore they are stating that the software is a fixed product, that fact making it difficult to translate customer’ expectations into service. Meltwater then refers to the fact that they already have a well-developed network of sources, which enables them to provide a huge range of information in many languages that should be able to provide new and existing client what they want of information.

28 Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 53
29 Mokhtar, Maiyaki, & Noor, 2011, p. 2
How customers perceive the service – This section is further elaborated in Customer GAP

4.1.2.1 GAP 2 Conclusion

An employee stated: “Everywhere that we are, the fundamental idea of what we are doing is basically the same – the way that we pitch it and the way that we attain the clients are different, based on the markets we are in and the culture.”

Management Commitment to Service Quality – Extent to which management views service quality as a key strategic goal. This factor elaborates whether Meltwater have allocated resources to improve the service. As for now Meltwater’s CR have just been in Singapore for a few months to improve the customer relations. However, the research indicates that as of now, MW has yet to emphasize the service aspect as much as they emphasize their sales goals. Supported by Meltwater’s clients that have expressed that they want more attention and proactivity from Meltwater beside the software they are providing.

Perception of Feasibility – Extent to which managers believe that customer expectations can be met. There is inconsistency in how the management perceives customers’ expectations, though everyone agree that it very much depends on who the customer is. This is because they may have different expectations of the service. Not knowing what customers expect can be linked back to GAP 1, which states that there might be lack of marketing research. Accordingly, in terms of customizing a product to customers’ expectations can be difficult as the software service has already been made and is somewhat fixed. This limits Meltwater to only do product modification when it comes to coverage improvements. This can be such as more sources, more languages or more feature modules to fit their customers’ expectations. Rather than reading their customers needs Meltwater are more concerned with
managing customers’ expectation. Meltwater’s client portfolio is diversified and being able to offer the information in several languages has been a great competitive advantage, in addition to benefit different customers. Firstly, covering many languages would return in an offering that is comprehensive. Secondly, in terms of customers, Meltwater is able to attain more clients than they would have done if the tool only picked up news in major languages. The downturn of extensive coverage can be excessive information. Relevancy of the information might be higher if the sources are covering local information for businesses that need local information. Since the amount of the information is so huge Meltwater need to assist the clients to utilize the tool and narrowing the scope. Narrowing the scope would mean a significant saving of time as it contributes to information filtration, which translates into efficiency.

4.1.3 GAP 3 Findings

The third GAP is between product specifications and product (software) actually provided\(^{30}\). Is MW providing the specifications that is stated – Meltwater highlights on their website that the following features are the reason that NEWS is the leader in media monitoring. Appendix G shows the closest to a universal product specification that all MW’s clients should benefit from; regardless of how the clients extract the information they are getting from NEWS. An internal issue is the limitations of MWGS ability to provide all their clients the help they need to utilize the tool to its full potential and according to the specifications provided either on their website, verbally and non-verbally communication.

In terms of specification it is already noticeable here that some customer are being mislead under “Consultative Approach”, which clearly states that the NEWS team works closely with each client to gain several benefits. Furthermore, under “Scalable” Meltwater states that

\(^{30}\) Mokhtar, Maiyaki, & Noor, 2011, p. 2
accounts can be tailored, a feature that will lose its functions when the customers do not know how to utilize it. This is an on-going pattern, also when you come to “Robust Search capabilities”, “Interactive Analysis” and “Seamless Distribution”. All of these features will have no value if the client does not know how to utilize the tool to see the full potential of these functions.

Due to the issues related to utilizing the service, the account managers have been forced to make additional efforts in terms of providing tutorial and assistance. Without having any designated customer care centre the help here will somewhat be limited. An example of practical issues MWGS is facing is malfunctions due to system upgrades and improvements of service not being thoroughly tested before airing. Shutdowns are met with complaints the content is inaccessible. Without having guidelines for noticing the customers, such irregularities might come as an unpleasant surprise, even though the upgrades and shutdown are meant to improve the product in general.

Slow Internet connection has also been a forming factor to the perception of the service. There have been experiences where the clients have complained about a dysfunctional service as the tool loads slowly, which in turn is more time consuming than time saving. Even though it is an external factor Meltwater cannot neglect that this is a real issue the clients are experiencing.

**What customers actually received in relation to product specifications** – The customer receives updates and news from numerous sources regarding their business, which is in correlation with their identified keywords. However, the following clients agree that they have not been fully supported in identifying the right keywords to successfully retrieve the publications that are needed. In other words, the communication and understanding is
deficient in the process of finding the right keywords. Moreover, clients have been receiving irrelevant and unwanted updates to their account, which may lead to time consuming in terms of clients having to browse through all leads in order to identify the relevant ones. This issue may be correlated to not having sufficient keywords. Furthermore, crucial news, publications and daily updates have been absent at times. A client states: “They have missed absolute-must key coverage for us. We’ve been waiting and we’ve entered the key words and our clients are calling us every day: is it out? And they miss it, we get it from Google Alert, and Meltwater misses the whole coverage”.

In addition, a client also expresses that the turnaround time has been more than a week.

4.1.3.1 GAP 3 Conclusion

This GAP is highly related to the providers understanding of the clients expectations. Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry (1990) states: “In some cases management does understand customers’ expectations and does set appropriate specifications (either formally or informally), and still service delivered by the organization falls short of what customer expects.” According to the findings from interviews of customers, it seems like the “Expansive International Coverage” NEWS is providing is one of the most valued specifications. Since Meltwater can provide so many sources it enables the clients to gather much more information from only one single platform, which in turn can be time saving. In addition to good access of information, another valued feature is the “Ease of Use”, which can be significant in terms of saving time.

Role Conflict – Extent to which employees perceive that they cannot satisfy all the demands of all the individuals, internal and external customers they must serve.

The employees perceive that they don’t have sufficient personnel helping the clients to utilize

31 Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 89
the tool efficiently. As such the clients may perceive the tool difficult to leverage.

Consequentially, Meltwater, from the clients’ point-of-view cannot fulfil the specification that has been set, making the tool lose the two most important selling points: extensive coverage and time saving tool.

**Role Ambiguity - Extent to which employees are uncertain about what managers or supervisors expect from them and how to satisfy those expectations.**

In short, the customers expect more from the employees than the employees perceive the clients do. Without taking the customers’ expectation into consideration and translate the expectations into a holistic service (GAP 2) will affect the dimension *Service Delivery*, that consequentially compromising clients perception of the service.

**4.1.4 GAP 4 Findings**

**Does what the employees communicate and promise the customer differ from the actual given service?** The managers unanimously agree that nobody in the firm should promise the clients beyond what the contract states as this is to ensure that there will be no contradictions about what the service actually provides. However, this issue may occur at the end of the month where the NS are under pressure to meet the required budget. The consequences of such incidents may result in a contract rebate, which later in time may be an issue of compensation due to the miscommunication prior to contract signing.

An issue beyond the above mentioned case would be that clients expect more than what has been promised. A lack of an extensive service as consultants to analyse the data and translate them into recommendations might lead to a perception of an incomplete service solution for some clients. Again, it is noteworthy to mention that since there are issues related to utilizing

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32 Mokhtar, Maiyaki, & Noor, 2011, p. 2
the service, the account managers have been forced to do extensive servicing in terms of providing tutorial and assistance. Without having any designated customer care the assistance MWGS is providing will be somewhat limited.

**What customers actually received** – Meltwater deliver to customers what has been promised prior to signing the contract. If this were not the fact, customers would have been entitled to sue for breach of contract. However, findings revealed that there is diversity in clients understanding and knowledge of the contract, which can be referred to their expectations. Other promises may have been made besides the contract and can lead the clients “behind the light”. One problem however is that customers may misinterpret what a salesperson has promised with regards to what Meltwater can actually deliver. This has happened according to some employees, in cases where NS have been too focused on the final agreement and not taken into account the consequences this might entail. Therefore, clients may not have gotten the “package” they were promised.

### 4.1.4.1 GAP 4 Conclusion

It is essential that the company communication is appropriate and accurate in regards to deliver the service that customers perceive as high quality. This GAP may occur when companies neglect to inform the clients of the service quality. Research suggests that there are two key conceptual factors that contribute to this GAP: inadequate horizontal communication and propensity to over-promise\(^{33}\).

**Horizontal Communication – Extent to which communication occurs both within and between different departments of a company.** What has been communicated to the clients may have been misinterpreted. Data reveals that not all clients are familiar with the contract prior to signing, and therefore what the sales personnel communicate verbally and what is

\(^{33}\) Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry’s 1990, p. 116
stated on Meltwater’s web site forms the basis of customers’ expectations. Data shows that there is an inconsistency in what the employees communicate to clients and therefore there is an existing GAP. Furthermore, data has also apprised that information given to clients from the NS department has been incorrect and inconsistent at times, and where the CR department has had to clear up in such fault. It has been identified that coordination and/or integration across the department has not been able to deliver quality service.

*Propensity to Overpromise – Extent to which a company’s external communications do not accurately reflect what customers receive in the service encounter.* Another reason for this GAP to exist is the existence of propensity to overpromise to clients. In this business there is an increase in deregulation and intensifying competition, and there may be established more pressure to beat the competition. To accomplish the “goal”, service providing companies have tendencies to over-promise, and this may not reflect what customers receive in actual service\(^{34}\). From the date retrieved above, there is an understanding among all interviewed employees that there should not be promised anything to the clients that MWG cannot account for, or that is not in the contract. There is an issue that some sales personnel may have promised more than MWG can actually deliver, an issue that has weakened MWG credibility and reliability. Resulting that client perceives the vendor to be untrustworthy.

### 4.1.5 Customer GAP Findings

*Is between the customer’s perceptions of service quality and their expectations of service quality*\(^{35}\). Research suggests that customers do not assess service quality exclusively on the outcome of service, whereas the process of service delivery is also taken into account.

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\(^{34}\) Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 123

\(^{35}\) Mokhtar, Maiyaki, & Noor, 2011, p. 2
consideration. There have been made discoveries that Meltwater’s clients perceived good service quality to be when MWG employees meet or and exceed their expectations. This is in correlation to the KANO-theory, that customers will not be dissatisfied when requirements or expectations are met, which has been elaborated in GAP 2. Their expectations were addressed in GAP 1. As some of the clients have previous experiences with other media monitoring providers, there have been developed expectations to some extent.

When salespersons have approached the customers, they often already knew what to ask and consider. In regards to what the client expected, they knew why they chose MWN over other vendors. Additionally, external communication with the service provider, MWG, plays a key role in shaping the customers’ expectations. As a client stated: “And there was (MWG employee), who is a fantastic sales guy, who noticed that we came to the region. And he contacted me two weeks after, and then we started the discussions.” One client states that “...Meltwater was able to convince me that they cover the regional publications better than anybody else. And that is the reason we decided to go ahead with them for the (APAC) region.” This leaves with the impression of wide coverage and numerous sources, which has been implied by all interview objects as crucial.

Moreover, coverage of local languages in the client's target market has made a huge impact on their perception. As stated: “...we don’t have the local language knowledge and I know that they do have the team with local language knowledge.” Furthermore, they perceive the system to be professional, and easy to use, in terms of the system only requiring a username and password to access the updates. However, there have been incidents where the system have not picked-up crucial updates and publications for the clients. Additionally, the system

36 Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990, p. 16
picks up too many irrelevant publications, which overloads the clients with useless information. Whereas there has been developed a lack of trust of the system, which again leads to adding more work for the client. Therefore, the clients perceive the system to not be credible. When the system and service does not meet the clients expectations, their perception of MWG as a whole changes. Also, the customers develop a lack of trust to the system, which again reflects over MWG in general. With the data retrieved, there have been identified seven general dimensions that represent the evaluative criteria the client have used to assess NEWS service quality (Appendix H – General Criteria).

4.1.5.1 Customer GAP Conclusion

The customer GAP is a result form the four GAPs from the organization's side. In other words, if the other GAPs are present (GAP 1 through 4), then the customer GAP will also exist. As seen above and address further below, there is a GAP between how customers perceive the service quality and their expectations of the service quality. One of the reasons for this is because their perception is not exclusively viewed on only the service itself, but also the how the process in delivering the service is undergone. Research has shown that clients expect more than what is being delivered; therefore their perception of the service quality and the company as a whole has changed during the time of receiving the service\(^\text{37}\). To sum up, there is a GAP between what customers expect of service quality and their perception of service quality.

- **Reliability** – The client has stated that the service has not performed as it was promised, in term missing out on important updates and publications. Also, sales personnel has at times promised more to the client than what actually MW NEWS can deliver. What the employees communicate to the client is crucial and clients would take their word since they know less, but the question is if they can trust everything that is being said and

\(^{37}\) Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 16
promised. Even more, it is important that what is stated in black and white, in terms of the contract, must not be breached. However, the specifications stated in MWG web site have not been held consistent throughout deliveries of the service. Therefore, clients may perceive the system to be unreliable.

- **Responsiveness** – The turnover time on replying clients enquiries have been over weeks at times. However, employees state that they will most often try to have a prompt reply with a turnover time of maximum 48 hours. This can be perceived by the customers to be unwillingness to assist the client, when there is an inconsistency in how long it should take to reply any concerns.

- **Competence** – Employees state that they do help the customers with their knowledge to educate them on how the system work and how it can be utilized to the fullest. There has been demos and good explanation of the service for the clients. However, clients have expressed that the employees competence have not reflected wholly on the system, in terms of clients not having the right keywords. Often synonyms in different languages and wrong keywords had captures irrelevant publications and updates. Further, the identified keywords have missed out on picking up crucial updates. The employee’s competences have not been utilized to assist their clients like they should, which makes the clients perceive that they lack in competence.

- **Credibility** – The client’s expectations are being developed from previous experiences with other vendors and external communications with the sales personnel from MWN. When their expectations have not been met, the clients change their perception. As stressed above, when the client does not receive what they anticipate, the service is seen as not credible. This is a factor, which MWG is held liable for.

- **Access** – Clients have their own contact person, also known as account manager. However, as stressed earlier; there is no call centre where the client has to wait for assistance, and will only receive this once the account manager is available. It also occurs
that clients are being referred to another person in the firm in order to get some help. Moreover, the employee also told that the client might want to only relate to one person and hesitate to contact other person in Meltwater to get assistance. Compared to previously it has been easier to get in touch due to the establishment of a CR division in October last year. Regarding the clients; they would like MW to be more proactive instead of reactive.

- **Communication** – An employee of MWG said that they rarely get in touch with the customers. In matter of fact they do not have any guideline to inform the clients prior to upgrades/system maintenance, nor do they inform the clients when the system is down. It is up to individual account manager to inform their clients. Without sufficiently informing the customers about such downtime might lead to a perception that it is a dysfunctional product as it do not work the way it should. A question that has been raised by clients is if MWG is withholding information.

- **Understanding the Customer** – Understanding is a major factor. The GAP-model starts and ends with customers’ expectations and perception. Understanding the clients is interrelated with all the other dimensions that have been mentioned. Without understanding the clients expectations there will be difficult to deliver service quality that accommodate customers needs. Nevertheless, exceed it, which is the special formula to attain loyal customers[^1].

Based on the internal analysis, the research shows that there are inconsistencies on what Meltwater perceive what their customers’ expectations are. The findings prove that Meltwater have limited understanding of what their clients actually need. The GAP-model/GAP 1 suggests that this is caused by the fact that it lacks (adequate) interaction between the customers and Meltwater. In addition there might be a lack of marketing research.

[^1]: Zeithaml, Parasuraman & Berry, 1990, p. 51
Lack of understanding also leads to misinterpretation of customer needs, as such it will give Meltwater a hard time to translate the perceived needs into service (GAP 2), deliver the service (GAP 3) and lastly communicate the service (GAP 4).

4.2 Closing the GAPs

As stressed above, the customer GAP exist due to existence of GAP 1 through 4, therefore right incentives must be implemented to close the GAPs. The biggest GAP has been concluded to be GAP 1 and this GAP leaves the other GAPs to open. (Appendix A elaborates more)

Theory suggests that researching customers’ expectations can close GAP 1, and this is essential in order to provide service quality\textsuperscript{39}. Regarding this GAP, understanding the clients goes beyond listening to complaints, but rather use complaints to become a part of process of staying in touch with the clients. Complaints from customers offer an opportunity for employees to interact with customers, thus acquiring detailed and rich information about product and services. This is further elaborated below. Additionally, it is important to stress that creating a customer panel allows Meltwater to receive regular and timely knowledge from and about the clients. Furthermore, direct and frequently interaction with clients adds clarity and depth to employees’ understanding of clients’ expectations and needs. These incentives are effective ways to use MWG’s knowledge and finding to improve quality of service. When the data are used properly to understand customers, the GAP 1 will decrease.

Further, findings shows that reasons for GAP 2 to exist can be in this case inadequate commitment to service and perception of infeasibility\textsuperscript{40}. When delivering the service the

\textsuperscript{39} Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990, p. 54
\textsuperscript{40} Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990, p. 73
employees’ needs to be committed. By being more committed, clients will be able to utilize NEWS services better. Also, by being more open to innovations is an incentive to close GAP 2. These considerations are possible ways to provide the quality service the clients expect and minimize GAP 2.

Regarding GAP 3, this GAP exists due to role ambiguity and role conflict in MWG. Providing role clarity may reduce this GAP. First of all, employees need to learn accurate information about their roles in MWG. This includes knowing goals, strategies, and objectives of the company. Additionally, to know their clients, who they are, what they expect and what kind of problem they encounter when using the service. Moreover, it is important to eliminate role conflict in order to reduce the GAP further. If MWG can define service roles and standards in terms of client’s expectation, role conflict will decrease. This may include reinforcement of changes with other human resource systems.

And lastly, GAP 4 is present due to horizontal communication and the propensity to overpromise. The communication to clients needs to be consistent in terms of advertising, what is stated on MWG web site and what the employees says in externally. Exaggeration will only put the service quality perception at risk, especially when the company is unable to deliver to the level of service that is being communicated and expected by clients. Additionally, to close GAP 4 it has to be developed appropriate and effective communications about the service quality. Firstly, communicating service quality begins again with understanding the aspects of the service quality and what are the most important factors for the clients. Further more, managing customers’ expectations, especially the ones created by MWG itself through external communications and price, are a critical part of

41 Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990, p. 94-95
42 Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990, p. 98-99
strategy to attain perceived quality service. Hence, ensure reliability in advertising is only appropriate when reliability is actually delivered to clients. By letting the clients know what can be and not be possible, and the reasons why, this GAP will be minimized\textsuperscript{43}.

**PART 5**

### 5.1 Conclusion

The research shows that Meltwater has not emphasized the customer satisfaction and service quality as much as their own sales goals. A fundamental idea of the GAP-model is to interpret customers’ expectations in order to provide a product that fulfils, better yet exceed clients’ expectations. Without having enough insight into customers’ mind, Meltwater experiences issues related to indifferent clients. Moreover, findings indicate that GAPs exists between the customers and MWGs. Theory suggests that these GAPs can be closed by implementing several activities that creates customer loyalty, which translates to customer retention. Based on this it has been developed some recommendations and suggestions in order to close the GAPs and create a state of *Attractive Requirements*. Resulting the clients to perceive NEWS as a service they cannot be without.

\textsuperscript{43} Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry, 1990, p. 123-125
Reference List

Books:


Journal:


**Electronic Sources:**


Appendices

A. Proposed Recommendation

Strategic Problem Definition

“How can Meltwater enhance their communication to better understand their customers requirements in order to increase the overall service quality of Meltwater NEWS?”

Customer retention can be managed firstly by the product itself, followed by the price of the product, the communication between the company and the customer and lastly, the modes of the distribution. Based on the finding from the research above, and further elaboration under Customer GAP – understanding the customer expectations seem to be the most crucial part.

In short, Meltwater need to improve their communication to their clients since the service, because of its fixed state, might be difficult to enhance.44

Critical Success Factor

Critical success factors (Exhibition 6.1) are the essential dimensions of activity that has to be implemented and performed well, in order to achieve the objectives and goals for this project. The CSF’s must be strongly related to the MWG (project) mission and strategic goals. In order to identify sufficient CSF’s, MWG objective and mission must be closely examined to determine which areas needs more attention.45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategic Objective</th>
<th>Critical Success Factor</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquire information</td>
<td>Develop standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>on two-way communication</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

44 Raab, Ajami, Gargeya, & Goddard, 2008, p. 83
45 Mind Tools, 2012
Build sustainable relationships | Be transparent
Increase service quality | Develop an analytical report system

Exhibition 6.1

Implementation

1. Develop standards on two-way communication

Developing a standard of a two-way communication will first of all contribute to acquire information, which in turn will benefit Meltwater to approach the strategic objectives. Furthermore, developing a standard will “force” the employee to interact with the customer and continuously gather valuable ever-changing customer information. That will be beneficial in terms of disseminating and utilize the information to better translate this into service. Understanding is the keyword and the purpose throughout the whole interaction, since understanding customers’ expectations is related to the other dimension in the GAP-model. As such, understanding client’s expectations and requirements will enhance Meltwater’s marketing and CRM effort.

Developing a “frequent” communication plan on how often Meltwater’s CR division and Account managers should get in touch with clients will contribute and reinforce a sustainable relationship. From the customer’s perspective there should also be a fixed standard on the turnaround time. The fixed standard on turnaround time concerns the time it takes to respond to an inquiry.

In that way, clients can predict when their needs and inquiries can be accommodated and assessed. This may be a comfort in situations where the clients might feel incapable or incompetent to address an issue on their own.

To illustrate the meaning of how a standard could be is as follows:
A. The members of the CR division including the key account manager, should be in touch with the clients at least once a month as that will further nurture the relationship as this will build trust.

B. In regards to “what should be asked, and how should it be asked” due to cultural contexts\textsuperscript{46}, it is important to take into consideration exactly whom is in need of support. To make sure the customers address their actual issues it may be appropriate to ask in these lines;

• “Have you experienced any irregularities the last month?”
• “Is there anything I can help you with concerning the service?”

In this way the cultural differences should be minimized in order to solve the problem.

C. As for “turnaround time”, it is proposed that it should not be no longer than two hours, which should be sufficient time to respond to their clients inquiries. Why two hours is due to workload and times where there might be a high demand of inquiries in e.g.: System malfunction.

2. **Be transparent**

In order for Meltwater to come across as credible and competent, it is critical to inform the clients even about the minor updates and errors to the system. As these alterations may affect their business in any scale, the client may feel that Meltwater is obligated to inform about ALL “changes” even if it is considered from Meltwater’s point of view as a insignificant “occurrence”.

As Meltwater is the provider of the Media Intelligence Software, they can be held liable for any software errors that may inflict damage on the clients business. Although, Meltwater can be held accountable and liable, by being transparent and accommodating,

\textsuperscript{46} Beer, 2003
Meltwater will be able to maintain a good relationship with the clients despite the event that has occurred. So if by any chance the Software were to malfunction or cease to work normally, an easy way to control and solve an unfortunate situation is to be quick to respond to the matters with the clients.

If something is preventing the possibility to make a press release concerning the unfortunate events of a system failure or an update that hinders Meltwater from contacting their clients, there should always be an alternative way to communicate to the clients and a back-up system.

A system that could handle these communication issues that may arise from a potential malfunction to their software would be beneficial.

To give an example of how this could be solved and implemented would be to have a system that works independently from the Meltwater software, which saves all the contact information about their clients, which you then could use to send a personal e-mail to their accounts or to their cellular phones.

3. **Develop an analytical report**

For MWG to achieve an increase in customer retention here in Singapore it is no question important to have satisfied customers. In order for this to be the case MWG needs to make sure that the requirements from the KANO-theory are fulfilled. As discussed earlier the “Must-Be Requirements” and the “One-Dimensional Requirements” will be covered if MWG are able to meet customer’s demands and expectations. This will lead to the customers being not dissatisfied with the service. However to be able to achieve a higher level of satisfaction, more specific fulfilling the “Attractive Requirements” of the product criteria, MWG needs to exceed what the customers demand and express.

Most of the customers feel that the following-up part of the service is not as good as it
should and can be. This can be explained by the lack of educating the customers receive as well as the potential of the service not being taken fully advantage of by most. By implementing an analytical report to the system, the customers would be able to measure the value in currency of the publications. Further this could lead to customers being totally dependent on the service as a guidance tool for their strategies. The idea is to offer some calculations on the ROI for companies in addition to the information they already subscribe to. This would be a added value that no other firm can offer here in Singapore and a great competitive advantage for MWG. The potentially added new function may also seem to be the most potent and feasible way to increase customer retention.

As Reichheld & Sasser (1996)\(^7\) suggests: “... an increase in the customer loyalty by 5 percent can increase the profit of a business by 100 percent due to the fact that satisfied customers will purchase a product more often or in bigger quantities”.

\(^7\) Reichheld & Sasser, 1996, p. 6
B. GAP-Model
C. Interview Guide

Internal GAPS (Employees)

GAP 2:

The difference between management’s perceptions of customer expectations and the translation of those perceptions into service

- What is customer service to you? (Any examples or demonstrations?)
- What to you (MWG customers) customers want?
- How do you measure what the customers want? (Any examples?)
- How do you know what they want?
- How are you able to give the customers what they want? (Any examples?)
- What do you think the customers expect from you as a service provider?
- What service is needed for your customer?

GAP 3:

The difference between specifications or standards of service quality and the actual service delivered to customers.

- What guidelines do you have regarding customers service? (Some examples?)
- How free are you to improvise regarding customer service? (Some examples?)
- How does your guidelines/standards of customer service differ from customer to customer?
- How important is it to you to give the proper service to customer?

GAP 4:

The difference between the service delivered to customers and the promise of the firm to customers about its service quality

- What do you think about your service quality?
• How does your service quality match the customers’ expectations?
• How do you manage the customers’ expectations?
• What can you promise to your customer in terms of value and service?
• How do you internally communicate regarding customer service?

**External GAPS (Customers)**

The difference between customer expectations and perception - the service quality GAP.

• How long have you been a customer of Meltwater Group Singapore?
• What was your first impression of the firm? (Why did you get that impression?)
• At that time, what benefits did you expect MWG to provide?
• What did you know about the company/similar services prior to the first interaction with MWG?
• Have you had any experiences with another provider with a similar service? How was it? (Past experiences).
• In terms of the service you are currently receiving, how do you perceive the services that MWG is providing? (Agents, CR, product. Please provide specific examples or incidents)
• Please describe your most positive experience with MWG, and why was it significant?
• What added value have your business gained by using MWG services? Why is it important?
• In a scenario where you are totally satisfied with the services provided by MWG, which factors could prevent you from buying this service again?
• Please describe what is the most negative experience with MWG, and why did this leave such an impression on you?
• What would you at least expect from MWG to be satisfied? Your minimum requirements from MWG, please provide examples or incidents that has occurred.

• What added value do you feel that MWG should at least provide to you?

• How do they fulfill your expectations? How satisfied are you with the service? (Please provide examples where the service have met your expectations)

• Can you recall any incidents that have occurred where the standard of the service has not been met, where the service delivered are not as promised? (Please provide specific examples)

• What do you think they can improve? (E.g. customers service, service/product etc. Is there any part of the service that you wish were different?)
D. Client Summary

(See Appendix I for Full Transcript)

Summary of Interview with Client 1

Profile

The client has been receiving the service from Meltwater Group for one year and three months. Client is familiar with other service provider similar to Meltwater Group, but did not know anything about Meltwater Group before a sales person (unsure if he is from new sales or CR) approached them. This company receives similar service from other providers worldwide. Meltwater was able to convince the client that they provide the best regional cover of publications. Meltwater Group’s sales person was a non-stop caller and had a very effective sales approach towards this client.

Value

A key reason for choosing Meltwater Group was the relationship developed during the chats and therefore Meltwater Group got more attention than their competitors. The sales person was always available for the client and had a customized customer service. In addition, they were given good demos and explanation of the service, and made a good basis to compare with the competitors.

News pick-ups in different languages are a major interest for the client, also that there is support from Meltwater that can describe the key words in a right manner.

A minimum requirement is that they get immediate support from Meltwater Group whenever they have a problem or error to solve.

Furthermore, the most value-added factors are Meltwater Groups coverage of the regional and instant news pick-ups. Also, to have all the publications they need in the system, is a crucial factor for the client.
Challenges

However, the sales person gave more attention towards selling and reduced the customer service, which made a negative impact on the client. When switching the customer relations to the Hong Kong office, the client felt that they were not prioritized or taken care of in the same way as before.

There have been situations where the system has missed out on picking up absolute crucial publications, which they have been waiting for. Even Google Alert has picked up certain publications before Meltwater Group. This has lead the clients to not trust the system, the need for checking manually on their own has been created due to this.

It also became clear that the client has had some trouble with the key words, where there is room for more scope of help. The client receives too many irrelevant publications, probably because of using wrong key words, which again generate wrong publications.

Moreover, the client feels that it is a lack of proactivity from Meltwater Groups Customer Relations Department. This can be connected to failure of having the right key words.

Another challenge that the client faces it the lack of reasoning when the system fails to deliver the publications that are expected.

Strategy

Obviously, CR plays an important role for the client and should not be absent at any time.

Further more, the system should not be missing out on important publications that the client needs. Reasons behind such incidents have to be explained/provided to the customers. There may be a correlation between absent publications and poor formulation of key words.
Meltwater Group needs to nurture the relationship with the customer, by continuously take initiative in order to gain more trust and keep the service optimal.

Regarding to the key words, Meltwater Group and the customer needs to develop them together in a tighter relationship, rather than have it in a one-way stream.
Summary of Interview with Client 2

Profile
The customer has been a customer of MW News for nearly three years. She was a former customer of APS Newswire, which provided a similar service. Due to the coverage and other limitations the service she received at the time, she perceived the tool MW is proving to be more accurate and more efficient than APS Newswire’s service. Although she wanted to switch over earlier she could not due to the current contract with ASP at that time.

Values
In comparison to the service she got from APS Newswire, she perceive that MW’s service was more accurate in such ways as; they provide the name of the source. An enhancement is also the ability to widen the coverage in terms of detecting keywords – also known as agents, with the old service the customer was limited to one or two topics. Whereas MW can provide up to 10 agents/keywords/topics.

Challenges
The customers claims that she had problems addressing the issue regarding the coverage of her organization and had some difficulties with MW in the initial phase. As soon they were addressed the problems were being taken care of and right agents and coverage area was set up accordingly. Further on she stated that the problems were based on assumptions of what her organization needed of information.

Another way of looking at this is the fact that MW were unable to address her interests right away - this is a fact that has to be considered as the customers might not tell you directly what’s wrong with the service.
**Strategy**

Based on the above mentioned you can assume that MW has to be better in analysing customer’s businesses, nevertheless the coverage of interests fields. Especially during the initial phase which is a crucial phase, mainly because establishment perception of the company and its service happens during this phase. A suggestion is to be more proactive in terms of providing set-up help, even though the customer might not request. As the customer already was aware of the service she might have already established a certain expectations of how the service should work. By making the transition more seamless MW’s will increase positive perception of the brand and increase probability of customer retention accordingly.
Summary of Interview with Client 3

Profile

The client has been receiving service from Meltwater Group for approximately one year and three months. They started with the Hong Kong office, before Meltwater Group opened an office here in Singapore. The change of CR from Hong Kong to Singapore has made an extremely positive impression on the client.

It became quite obvious that the client perceives Meltwater Group to be a professional company, who is providing a good and valuable service.

The client had never been in contact with Meltwater Group or similar services before the first approach. Hence the client had no previous experience with such service and did not know what to expect from the service provider. The client had little knowledge about the tool Meltwater Group is providing and found difficulties in understanding the system at first.

Value

At the moment Meltwater Group is their key updates provider. The most value-added factor that Meltwater Group provides to this client is the daily updates. In addition, the client favors that it can be reviewed at any place, as the only requirement is the URL, username and password.

The client values that there is a local office that can be contacted for immediate support if there are to be any questions or problems regarding the system.

Challenges

The main challenge faced by the client is the explanation of the keywords to use in the system. Providing particulars and specific keywords to the headquarter have been difficult for the client, since the material retrieved back has often been irrelevant and not useful at all. The client is fully aware of the fact that they can change the keywords on their own, but does not
dare to do so because of limited understanding of the technical and the system. The fear of not receiving any useful information at all is the reason for this.

In addition, there have been times where the client has not gotten the daily updates that are a part of the service.

Furthermore, another challenge faced by the client is the late replies. At times there have been slow replying of e-mails, and e-mails is the most common communication tool used when there are issues to be solved. At the longest, it has been over a week without a reply.

Another key factor that the client pointed out was the proactivity from Meltwater Group. There were room for more frequent contact with the client and customization, due to different clients have different needs.

Moreover, there are also competitors that are more competitive in price and what added value they can provide, in terms of freebies and customers service level, which can prevent the client from renewing the current contract with Meltwater Group.

**Strategy**

The key words that are used to the system needs to be identified together, Meltwater and client, in order to add value to the user.

Furthermore, for clients to have a better understanding of the system and network that Meltwater Group is using, it is important that they provide sufficient demo and explanations of it.

Daily updates are a key factor that should be in place for the customer at any time, there should be a reasoning for the customers if there have been some excluded.

Meltwater also needs to be strict and have a standard turn-around time, in regards to replying the client’s requests. Should they have any issues or problems, the clients need to get the support immediately.

Moreover, the client would appreciate if Meltwater were more proactive. By taking more
initiative, even when the customers do not ask for something special, it would add a lot more value to the service. Additionally, Meltwater should check up on a regular basis to get more understanding of the client’s business and see how they are doing.
Summary of Interview with Client 4

Profile

This interviewee works for a renown shipping company in the Singaporean office. The interviewee’s task in the office is to manage public relations and press releases and the way this person utilize the Meltwater service is to monitor rules and regulation in addition to monitoring in general about the shipping community as well as other media releases regarding the interviewee’s company.

The person was considered new or fresh in her job, therefore this person was not present at the time the contract was signed. From what this person knows about the company’s subscription to Meltwater’s service is that the company has been using the service for quite some time and even long before (The Customer) joined the company.

Even though they subscribe to Meltwater, the interviewee and some of the colleagues also uses several other services such as Trade media archives, but those are very specific media intelligence service and will mostly only cover shipping related issue, so the information scope is quite narrow compared to MW service.

Value

The added value this person feels that Meltwater is able to provide is the insight they gain by using the service and a easy way to monitor news about shipping worldwide. They are quite satisfied with the service overall. At least (The Customer) and some of her colleagues are very satisfied.

When asked the question about the most positive experience with Meltwater (The Customer) replied it was when Rene came by to demonstrate how the service works and what you can
do with it. (The Customer) mentioned that there have been a few changes in staff/employees lately so not everyone knows how this works, so it was a pleasant thing that (MW Employee) was willing to drop in to show them the service. And the fact he replies/responds fast to an inquiry as opposed to when they only had an office in Hong Kong.

Challenges

Although prior to the newly opened office in Singapore, (The Customer) thought the service was quite poor as it was a lot of Hard sell and No face-to-face contact. Everything was done through the office in Hong Kong and it was “unpleasant”.

In terms of service and satisfaction (The Customer) is quite satisfied with their contact person in MW which is Rene. What they like about The employee is the relaxed approach to things and he doesn’t try to hard sell anything, but just wants to have a talk and interact with them regarding their product/service and if there is anything he can help them with.

After opening a office in Singapore, them having The employee as their contact person the service was suddenly perceived as good or satisfactory as they had a lot more face to face and regular interactions opposed to only phone calls from Hong Kong in the past and the phone calls where just once in a while.

Strategy

When asked what (The Customer) would like to see Meltwater improve on (The Customer) replies that it is the software itself (The Customer) would like to see improvements. Things such as typing in keywords slows down your computer as sometimes the keyword you type in is to generic or you haven’t check which boxes to include or exclude making the computer slow as the vast information that flows in slows it down. (The Customer) thought the
computer was broken/ malfunctioned due to its “lag time” or response time to handle a task. So (The Customer) would like to see an notification about “are you sure you want t proceed with this action and that are you aware that this may slow down your computer while the information is gathered” type of notification. That you only need to respond to with and yes or no click.

Other things (The Customer) would like to see improve is the ease of use on selecting languages the articles are to be shown, something like check boxes and filter settings. (The Customer) does acknowledge that maybe is has been demonstrated or explained but (The Customer) just haven’t found the function yet or know how to do it herself so (The Customer) relies on Rene.

In addition (The Customer) would like the option to chose which publications will show up first when (The Customer) searches. And example (The Customer) gave us was that (The Customer) regularly checks Straits times and trusts its content therefore (The Customer) would like it to pop up first as it’s a source (The Customer) knows about herself and trust. In e.g. (The Customer) would like the option to select what sources will come up first as opposed to now where (The Customer) can only filter her sources via region and countries and so on and not sources.
Summary of Interview with Client 5

Profile
Customer has been using Meltwaters services for two and a half years. 6 months of this have been for free due to compensation on Meltwaters behalf for prior difficulties and unsatisfactory service provided by a account manager. Customer was not familiar with similar services prior to first learning about Meltwater.

Value
Customer sees Meltwaters services as very innovative and crucial for the Company he is working for. He is also very knowledgeable about the service as he use it approximately for three hours a day. The most value adding factor he receives from using the service is the analysis he is able to do himself with what he refers to as “raw information”. Also the cost of the service is seen as very reasonable compared to what is gained from having access to it.

Challenges
Has had very varied experiences with the employees of MWG. Today customer is very happy and feels that things have been sorted out in a proper manner. However one account manager had a lack of knowledge about the service which caused problems. In addition the customer has had issues with the contract as it does not state that he should be unable to access the information globally. This was also affected my miscommunication between offices internally at Meltwater.

The customers also states that there have been problems when the system has been renewed in the past, things have been different from what they used to be and no information were given about this.

Strategy
Meltwater is seen as a very useful tool in the day-to-day business of the customers. However if MWG is to really provide added value to not only this, but all clients, the customer suggests that they also provide with some analytical service to actually filter the information. This would not only save working hours for the customer, but also help selling the service to the leaders in the company.

Customer spends a lot of time on analysis the different ratings and believes that all customers of MWN would benefit from being able to roughly estimate the net worth of different publications as well as an indicator of ROI.
Summary of Interview with Client 6

Profile

The client has been a customer for two years. And have had little experience with similar services prior to signing the contract.

Value

The most value added factor this client points out is the innovative service and userfriendliness. Further, the client states that it is very helpful as a tool to keep updated on the media front.

Challenges

Client states that it would be more added value precieved if there were more bundled services in the package in terms of being more strategic.
E. Employee Summary

(See Appendix J for Full Interview)

Summary of Interview with Employee 1

Profile

An American, started in New York, since then served as the managing director in MWG in Sydney before moving to Singapore.

Value added

Difficult to say as it highly dependent on who the customers are and what they do. In general he says that the clients expect return on investment, keep track of things being said about them/industry. However, the main selling point here is the efficiency and time saving. In addition, the less need of manual labour in terms of collecting information and putting it together, but this was more of a minor added value. Sometimes the different value added was also the unexpected ways to keep track of things and coming up with different ways to find information. As The employee mentioned later in the interview

Perception of expectations

This employee perceive that the clients want increasing insight into the market by using this service. Further on he also believes that the service provided is generally good, but not necessarily satisfactory. In addition thinks the company is striving to make the service not only good, but develop it to a tool their clients cannot be without.

The employee perceive that there are two types of firms in the Singaporean market, locals and western companies, which is a interesting findings as the perception of customers are based upon who he identified is in the market. As the perception of customers expectation
derives from how we understand their need and the need definition are basically based on whether it’s a western or local company/organization.

E.g.: “In general I wouldn’t say it’s drastically different. At least not in so far as every clients sees a slightly different values. Everywhere that we are, the fundamental idea of what we are doing is basically the same – the way that we pitch it and the way that we attain the clients are different, based on the markets we are in and the culture.”

Basically the product is the same, the ways of pitching the sales differs from whom the sales are trying to persuade. Malaysian are more difficult to handle as they want to meet the representatives from MWG. This might symbolize the importance of relationship-oriented Asian market.

Customizing

MW (News) is always working to improve the coverage to their clients, very much based on the clients needs in terms of coverage. In general there are being offered more and more sources to give the clients comprehensive coverage. Adaptation to the local market is highly regarded. The way of pitching differs from whom sales are trying to persuade - the service is quite the same.

Breaking promises

Issues MW is facing, is the fact that many online publications are putting their content behind paywalls, and that sets a limit to how much information we can provide our customers. The service is being extended and improved as the firm continuously have people to undergo contracts to attain more sources. The MW will not pay for an article upon request on case by case, but rather do an agreement for benefits of the entire customer portfolio.
Summary of Interview with Employee 2

Profile

The employee started his career in Oslo and then transferred to Gothenburg before ending up in Singapore. He is one of the senior Key managers and helped starting up the CR division in Singapore. He was chosen through his well known performance in norway and given the CR responsibility here in singapore, which involves training the new members of CR department.

Value added

The function of the service is not that it does anything, but it just keep track of things. The tool is meant to disseminate information to their clients in order to gain insight in the industry that are highly relevant to the businesses operations and more importantly; save time. it is the aspect of the possible increase in efficiency and time management.

Perception of expectations

The service is providing the clients with valuable information for them to better understand their position and customize and improve the product(s) they are providing to their customers.

They are using MW News to break down and disseminate all the information and MW News is helping them sort of understanding what’s happening and how they can improve. Apart from clients using the tool to customize the product, the service can also be used for crisis management.

The customers are demanding more than the software that is the core service/product MW News is providing. At some point it’s difficult to accommodate the clients need as the demand might be greater than what is promised in the terms and conditions. Some of them
want consultancy in addition to the automated system.

The Singapore unit’s CR mangers have been finding ways to improve this by calling the client more often and ask them if they are satisfied and how they can make it better for the respective clients.

*Customization*

Some customers are not getting what they want because nobody has helped them to utilize the tool and/or tailored it properly according to the clients needs. And that affect how they look at us as a company and the tool might not be perceived positively as it doesn’t work the way the clients wants it to work.

MW News product is highly customizable, in terms of how much you want it to track. In terms of pricing it’s very much depending on the sales and how much it takes to bring the clients aboard.

Since the service is a module-based service, it’s fairly tailored according to what the clients need. Do they need analysis, do they need distribution, just monitoring, what do they really need? Do they need to know the journalist, press releases? MW News package the solution they want. Usually, most clients, 70% of the client, buy the standard and they will buy modules as it goes on.

*Breaking promises*

There are unsatisfied customer who feel like they have not gotten enough attention, after the contract has been signed as the system is very much automated.
We are getting complaints that it’s chaos internally when MW News’ system is down, because the cannot pass acquire and pass the information internally. Either way, the problem surfacing in the Asian market is the fact that customers says they are happy with the product, and it might seem different when it is time for contract renewal.

System downtime and malfunctioning are big issues, MW News is compensating by offering the clients extended subscription for free or trial subscription of other services provided by MW. Clients are not being notified beforehand, that is very much depending the account managers to tell their clients.
Summary of Interview with Employee 3

Profile

The employee has been situated in Singapore since October after being transferred from the Hong Kong office. He is now working in the CR Department.

Value Added

The employee quotes that 90% of his customers are using Meltwater’s service as a “lead generator”. The purpose is to get an overview on the desirable subject in an effective manner. The other 10% of the customers use the service for crisis management to understand what is currently happening. So the added value is receiving the most crucial information that does not need to be filtered as well as time saving for the clients. In addition, the customers get news at an early stage, in order for the customers business to act quickly. Furthermore, the client’s uses the tool to analyse what next step should be implemented in order to respond in a good manner to the industry/business or how to address any problems that has occurred. The customers expect to receive what has been promised to them from the service provider.

Perception of expectations

It is very important to manage the customers’ expectations, and not promise anything that they actually cannot deliver. Whenever this happens it is usually because newsales’ promise something, which is not delivered. In these scenarios it is crucial to contact the customer as soon as they are transferred to the CR department and arrange a meeting.

The employee thinks that it is very important to know each customer individually. This is because there are different perceptions on what is good service quality here in Singapore compared to Europe/North America. So they try to meet the customers face to face more often here in Singapore because they think that this is something the customers appreciate.
and values.

Also, the different clients are in different industries and requests of how the service should work, often differ. In regards to different needs, Meltwater Group does not provide all the tools and services that some of the clients request, in terms of paper clippings etc. The employee also states that when the customer’s need has not been fully fulfilled, the employee might try to sell the service even more in terms of convincing the customer that they need to have this service.

Moreover, the employee perceives the customers experience to be good, due to what they provide and the fact that they cover much more local sources than competitors. The employee also believe that the clients perceive the service to be professional

In other words, sometimes the clients expects to much from Meltwater Group, and in some situations Meltwater Group cannot meet those expectations. However, when such scenario happens, Meltwater Group try their best by compromising with something else instead.

*Customizing*

The employees are pretty free when it comes to customizing the service they provide to different customers. This has a lot to do with the monthly budget, which is always the minimum revenue target. Again it is important to analyse what kind of a customers this concerns, price may vary if the value is measurable.

The standard of the service is to provide the customers with URL to publications they are interested in. However, there have been incidents where the URL have been placed behind a pay wall, which means that the client have to pay extra to get to the URL that Meltwater Group has provided them with, such as “Strait Times”.
Further more, when clients does not have sufficient resources to pay for a “whole” package, then the client might get a “smaller” account for only one user. Then they might like the service and convince others to get involved and have a bigger package.

There have also been incidents where the clients have not gotten what they were promised, where the report that was delivered did not meet their expectations.

*Breaking Promises*

In principle this should not be the case because it is in the contract what they can and will deliver to the customers. However this has happened before where the sales person has promised the customer something that Meltwater actually cannot deliver (such as internal saving of articles).

Sometimes the search tool itself can also be dysfunctional, this often happens when there is a system upgrade etc. and bugs may appear. This can lead to the system being very slow and customers may waste time.
Summary of Interview with Employee 4

Profile

The employee has been working for Meltwater Group in Singapore since 2008, he is currently the only local born employee. His position today is the MD of the new sales division.

Value Added

The employee feels that the fact that the service is able to take away 70-80% of the customers work scope in terms of time usage on analysing news, is the most added value Meltwater offers.

Different customers means different expectations, some may use Meltwaters service together with another vendor to get 100% coverage, others may be satisfied with only Meltwaters.

The customers expect Meltwater to provide what is written in black and white (contract) and to make sure the customers do not expect more or less it is crucial to set the standards before the contract is signed.

The employee also states that there is not a problem working with western policies in the Singaporean market. In business, directness is viewed positively, the only difference is that it takes more time because the relationship focus is greater than the deal focus. As long as the relationship is built, the product will speak for itself.

Perception of expectations

Managements perception of what customers expect translate into them doing detailed analysis of the customers business when they first come on board. In this way Meltwater is able to supplement with ideas and suggestions to make sure the customer get the best possible coverage. This is always mentioned beforehand so that the customer do not expect anything unreasonable.
Customizing

The tool is very general so the standard is already set, but for different customers who need more attention, Meltwater will provide that. Some only use the tool to read news about themselves and here sales people may suggest competitor analysis in addition to make sure, again, that the customer use the tool to its full advantage. So instead of actually customizing the tool for their needs, its more about educating the customer about its potential.

Breaking Promises

The employee states that there is actually never a need for making promises, because it is all in the contract. What is written will be delivered. And the customers will never trust an employee from Meltwater as a person, rather what is written in ink.

Due to the fact that Meltwater is looking at the long run it is very important to keep clients happy and satisfied, that is why they offer such a quick turn-around time as well
F. Contract

Order Confirmation

meltwater group

Singapore

Effective Date: As Per Date of Signature
### Meltwater Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Meltwater Platform</strong>: 5 years S$25,000; 3 years S$20,000; 2 years S$15,500; 1 year S$12,500</th>
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</table>
| 1. Access by five (5) Authorised Users (defined herein) to Meltwater News’ online media monitoring service.  
*“Authorised Users” means those specific employees or consultants located in Singapore that Customer has authorised to use the Meltwater News Services solely for the benefit of Customer;*  
2. Five (5) Agents (defined herein). *“Agent” means a single search string comprised of an unlimited number of keywords used to search online global news sources and yield News Link Search Results (defined herein) through the Meltwater Platform. “News Link Search Result” means the search result that is displayed on the Meltwater Platform for a specific news article that contains a hyperlink text to the online media source where the article can be found.*  
3. Ad-hoc keyword search capability of online global news sources in addition to Agent-generated News Link Search Results;  
4. Archive, translation and online distribution capability of News Link Search Results generated through the Meltwater Platform;  
5. Technical support for the duration of the subscription to the Meltwater News Services; and  
6. Daily e-mail reports with News Link Search Results deliverable to Authorised Users. |

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<tr>
<th><strong>Newsfeed (Add-on functionality)</strong>: 5 years S$13,500; 3 years S$12,000; 2 years S$10,000; 1 year S$7,500</th>
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</table>
| 1. Customer receives one (1) HTML and JavaScript newsfeed(s) on Customer’s Internet website or intranet or extranet sites that mirror the News Link Search Results on the Meltwater Platform (a XML and RSS feed is provided without any additional layout or design) (“Feeds”); and  
2. Customer can export News Link Search Results to Microsoft Excel using XML Feed. |

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<tr>
<th><strong>Statistics (Add-on functionality)</strong>: 5 years S$13,500; 3 years S$12,000; 2 years S$10,000; 1 year S$7,500</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Customer can compare and analyse media coverage of Customer based on parameters selected by Customer</td>
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(e.g., key terms and/or media sources);

- Customer can create unlimited graphical illustrations using News Link Search Results from Agents or ad-hoc searches;
- Customer can create unlimited matrix overviews for readership figures of media sources and specific news articles; and
- Customer can export data to Microsoft Excel.

### Newsletter (Add-on functionality): 5 years S$13,500; 3 years S$12,000; 2 years S$10,000; 1 year S$7,500

- Meltwater will supply Customer with one (1) branded Newsletter template;
- Customer can use this branded template or the standard Meltwater News template to send customised/branded e-mail newsletters containing News Link Search Results from the Meltwater Platform and/or Customer-generated content to one hundred (100) Recipients (defined herein). "Recipients" mean the specific e-mail addresses (either internal or external to Customer's company) that Customer selects and includes on its newsletter distribution list.
- Customer can create an unlimited number of newsletters based on the template provided.

### Excel Clip Report (Add-on functionality): 5 years S$6,000; 3 years S$5,100; 2 years S$4,250

- Customer can export News Link Search Results from Agents to Microsoft Excel

### Social Media Upgrade (Add-on functionality): 5 years S$6,000; 3 years S$5,100; 2 years S$4,250

- Access by existing Meltwater News Authorised Users (defined herein) to Meltwater News’ online social media monitoring service. “Authorised Users” means those specific employees or consultants located in Singapore that Customer has authorised to use the Meltwater News Services solely for the benefit of Customer;
- One (1) Campaign (defined herein). “Campaign” means a search string comprised of an unlimited number of keywords used to search social media sites and yield an unlimited number of search results through the Meltwater Platform.
Social Media Upgrade results can be presented to show limited blog and social media coverage.

**Media List Upgrade (Add-on functionality):** 5 years S$6,000; 3 years S$5,100; 2 years S$4,250

- Access to comprehensive media contact database made available by Meltwater Press.
- Database updated on demand
- Search for media contact lists based on traditional criteria such as beat, location, publication
- Organize contacts using unlimited number of media lists
- Export results to CSV

**Optional features**

- **Additional User(s):** 5 years S$2,250; 3 years S$2,000; 2 years S$1,500
- **Additional Agent(s):** 5 years S$1,150; 3 years S$930; 2 years S$700
- **Additional Newsfeed(s):** 5 years S$6,000; 3 years S$5,100; 2 years S$4,250
- **Additional Newsletter Template(s):** Please contact your Meltwater contact person.
- **Additional Newsletter Recipients:** Please contact your Meltwater contact person.
Initial Term of this Agreement

- The initial term of the Agreement commences on the Commencement Date and continues for the specific initial term period selected below ("Initial Term"). Upon expiration of the Initial Term (and any Renewal Term as set forth below), and if Customer fails to provide written notice of its intent to not renew the Agreement at least sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of the then-current Term, this Agreement will automatically renew for periods of time equivalent to the Initial Term or the then current Renewal Term at Meltwater’s then-current prices and subject to these General Terms and Conditions of Use (each, a “Renewal Term”);

- All fees and amounts owned hereunder for the Initial Term and any Renewal Term(s) shall be invoiced and paid in advance;

- Discounts and/or special pricing and/or payment terms, if any, as indicated below shall only be applicable to the Initial Term and shall not apply to any Renewal Term, unless otherwise indicated.

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<tr>
<th>Initial Term</th>
<th>Start of Term</th>
<th>End of Term</th>
<th>Total Price (excluding GST)</th>
<th>GST (7%)</th>
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<tr>
<td>(# months)</td>
<td>(Commencement date)</td>
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<td>in SGD ($$)</td>
<td>in SGD ($$)</td>
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Special Terms for the Initial Term:

The company identified in the signature block below (“Customer”) hereby agrees that its use of the Meltwater Platform and any add-on functionality (collectively, the “Meltwater Services”) is governed by this Order Confirmation and the General Terms and Conditions of Use.

Customer may execute this Agreement by: (i) executing and faxing or sending via e-mail in PDF format a duly signed copy of this Order Confirmation to Meltwater or (ii) completing and returning a fully verified Echosign contract. By executing the Agreement in one of the foregoing manners, the individual executing the Agreement represents that he/she has the authority to enter into the Agreement on behalf of Customer and that Customer has read and understands and accepts all of the terms of the Agreement.
Customer
Name and Contact Information:

Meltwater
Name and Contact Information:

Meltwater Singapore Pte Ltd.,
The Central, 8 Eu Tong Sen Street, #19-95/96/97,
Singapore 059818
T: +65 6238 5289
F: +65 6238 5070
Company Number: 20104533M

Signature:
Name:
Title:
Date:
G. Meltwater NEWS Product Specifications

Meltwater News is the leader in online media monitoring for several reasons:

- **Ease of Use** – Meltwater News offers an intuitive Web-based interface that is accessible via any Internet-enabled computer or mobile device.

- **Expansive International Coverage** – Today Meltwater News delivers information from more than 162,000 global news sources in 190 countries and 100 languages, with translation capabilities.

- **Real Time Information** – Meltwater News continuously tracks news sources, updating its database continuously throughout the day so searches return fresh, relevant content.

- **Consultative Approach** – The Meltwater News team works closely with each client to strategically turn online news coverage into actionable business intelligence.

- **Scalable** – Meltwater News’ platform makes it easy to add users or change searches with a few simple keystrokes. Accounts can be tailored not only to an organization’s needs, but also to individual users in different divisions.

- **Robust Search Capabilities** – Meltwater News enables users to go beyond the basic keyword search, employing sophisticated Boolean logic to generate precisely targeted results.

- **Interactive Analysis** – With Meltwater News’ analytical capabilities, users can visualize the news, creating graphs and charts to determine trends, map press activity and identify target markets.

- **Seamless Distribution** – Meltwater News allows users to automatically filter specific news results to different individuals; establish newsfeeds for an intranet, a Web site or delivery via email; and create customized newsletters.

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### H. General Criteria

- **Reliability**: MWG ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.

- **Responsiveness**: Willingness to help clients and provide with prompt service when there is a concern.

- **Competence**: MWG possession of required skills and knowledge to perform the service needed, in terms of support to identify sufficient keywords for their use.

- **Credibility**: Trustworthiness and honesty of MWG service.

- **Access**: Approachability and ease of contact MWG, which is now located in Singapore gives the clients an easier access.

- **Communication**: MWG keeps clients informed in language they can understand, in terms of transparency.

- **Understanding the Customer**: MWG to make an effort to know customers and their needs.
I. Full Transcript Clients

Client 1

1. What was your first impression of the firm? (Why did you get that impression?)

a. At that time, what benefits did you expect MWG to provide?

b. What did you know about the company/similar services prior to the first interaction with the MWG?

c. Have you had any experiences with another provider with a similar service? How was it? (Past experiences)

How long have you been a customer of Meltwater Group? (Singapore)

A: This is now the second year and I think that this is 1 year and 3 months. Cognito have offices in London HQ, New York and Singapore. And I started in the HQ Asia 1 and a half years ago, here in Singapore. And I was searching for a system to do the media coverage tracking. And there was (Employee), who is a fantastic sales guy, who noticed that we came to the region. And he contacted me two weeks after, and then we started the discussions. Of course, Cognito world wide have different systems, but then Meltwater was able to convince me that they cover the regional publications better than anybody else. And that is the reason we decided to go ahead with them for (APAC) reagion. But Cognito globally, we don’t use Meltwater. We have other tracking systems in place.

Q: So how did they managed to convince you that they were the best option for you?

A: The employee was a non-stop caller. I think that their sales approach or at least The employee’s sales approach was extremely effective. He just couldn’t leave me in peace. So
every second we got to have a chat with him, we started to know each other pretty well, and in the end I think that was one of the key reasons. Why. Well, I paid a lot more attention to them that to anyone else. And also the system itself, they do have a very good coverage of the regional media and that was great. And also The employee, he was really there all the time. So it was very personalized customer service that I got from him at that time. So that was great.

Q: Have you heard about any other services here in Singapore, like competitors?

A: We were searching for some others, that we have been using elsewhere. But their regional coverage was not that good. So there were to reasons for the selection really. It was the media coverage, because what Meltwater does, and not quite that many does, is also the local language coverage. Which is, I think is not perfect, by all means it definitely not perfect, but they do have a lot of publications that they pick up from China, from Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Vietnam, the Philippines. Becasue we cover the whole region for our clients, and even though we don’t cover the local language at the moment. But we have the possibility and, when ever there is coverage in the local languages, we get the news pick ups. And then we can translate those if we need. We cover the whole Asia basically, from Korea to New Zealand, and India to Japan. I think also the Pacific Islands. The Pacific Island do belong to us as well, but no one is targeting them particularly.

Q: So you kinda knew, upon the first contact with Meltwater, you knew what to expect since you know? A: No, it was really The employee who did the demos and explained about the system, what it can do. And the same thing now, when we’re talking about Meltwater Buzz - which is for social media, they have a very good approach on how they demo the system in the beginning of the sales process. That they show what are the advantages, and how the system works, and all the different options that we can do and how
we can use the system. And I think that’s pretty good and that gives me a very good basis to compare them with other competitors. And also to know what kind of questions to ask. So I think that they got a very strong sales offering, and that they are pretty open on communicating does well. Which is good, because it is also sort of teaching the clients (on the/in a way), to ask the right questions from the competitors, which is quite good tactic.

2. In terms of the service you are currently receiving, how do you perceive the services that MWG is providing? (agent, CR, product. Please provide specific examples or incidents)

3. Please describe your most positive experience with MWG, and why was it significant?

Anna: I think it was in the beginning, really the co-operation with The employee was amazingly good. When he was there, and it’s just the personality and the dedication that he had for the job, it was great. When ever we needed anything in different languages, he was the one always i could call and said: this really goes out now in Japanese, (...) and simplified Chinese, and you make sure that we get the news pick ups. He put those key word immediately because he also knew the languages. So he spoke both Japanese and Chinese, or he had somebody else for Chinese. But it was like immediate service from his side. So The employee was the positive thing, and then he started to focus mostly on sales and the whole customer management dropped very badly. And I think that was sort of the worst experience with them. They changed the customer service to Hong Kong, and there was nobody who owned our account any more, and who was in charge, and who would respond or would do anything and pay attention to whatever request we had. So that was bad, and then they, I think that they realized it - that it didn’t work out, and then we got [A Meltwater Employee] here. It is definitely something good to have a dedicated person.

A/Employee 2: Yeah, whenever we feel the need of key word search or (syntext error?), there
is someone who can assist us at the moment, and solve the (curatives) instantly, that is a support which I think all clients require at any point.

4. What added value have your business gained by using MWG services? Why is it important?

5. In a scenario where you are totally satisfied with the services provided by MWG, which factors could prevent you from buying this service again?

7. What would you at least expect from MWG to be satisfied? Your minimum requirements from MWG, please provide examples or incidents that has occurred. A: Pick up their coverage that we generate for our clients, and that is something that they sometimes fail really badly. And that’s maybe the thing that we’ve been banging them in the head the worst. They have missed absolute-must key coverage for us. We’ve been waiting and we’ve entered the key words and our clients is calling us every day: is it out? And they miss it, we get it form Google Alert, and Meltwater misses the whole coverage. And it’s bad, that should not happening. That’s why we have them in place - that we get the news pick ups. That is sort of the least we should expect.

Q: Has that happened several times?

A: Yeah, and for different publications. I don’t know why. A/Employee 2: The reasons have been sited a few times. They once sited a reasoning that it was a system failure, which was not expected of the service that they provide.

Q: So how satisfied are you generally with the service?

A: Well, we did re-new the contract. And what happened was that also we were discussing with them about the Meltwater Buzz, but unfortunate the system is pretty expensive that they
offer. And our clients are not yet ready to pay for that service. And of course we need clients to be able to pay for the systems. That is something that we won’t move ahead with now, but other than that - I think’s OK, but still there is so many news out there and how to make sure that we got the right key words that we don’t get overloaded with coverage we’re not interested about. A/Employee 2: Yeah, that’s part of the challenge that we face in times. That it picks up a Chinese or Japanese letters, and we’re not interested in it. Or at times it picks up synonyms as well. So that is something that picks up a lot of irrelevant data, and screening that (...) becomes difficult at times.

6. Please describe what is the most negative experience with MWG, and why did this leave such an impression on you?

Q: Do you have any concrete experience which was the worst you had since using the tool?

A: There was this time when 500 hundred article suddenly popped in my inbox. When we were playing with some key words, and suddenly I had all these e-mails. We have a client called Bloomberg, and Bloomberg is a quite well known everywhere. And it is a lot quoted, especially like Bloomberg Data. It is a lot quoted in different publications throughout the world and carries in different languages. And when we sort of played with the key words, we just suddenly got everything that happened during that day that mentioned Bloomberg, and it came in our inbox. it was quite a lot.

A/Employee 2: Thanks to rescue that [An meltwater employee] came to and he modified those key words. Otherwise we would have been spammed out (...) A: And the system itself is impossible to scroll through and archive this stuff.

8. What added value do you feel that MWG should at least provide to you?
9. How do they fulfill your expectations? How satisfied are you with the service? (Please provide examples where the service have met your expectations)

A: I think that what’s...

Like what I said, we got with The employee was that immediate service with varies in different languages. And that was something that, I think will become very crucial for us at some point of time. And I think that, that is something the team should really focus on and to be able to help. And proactively offer that for us. Because now we haven’t been using that, but I know it will be upcoming and that. Because we can not that that ourself and we don’t have the local language knowledge and I know that they do have the team with local language knowledge. So, that we could say: Hey, this press release goes out and I hear there isn’t in English, can you please check the coverage with the local languages. Or who sent out the press release and then just pick up the key words from those. So that is definitely something that, I don’t think

[A Meltwater Employee] is that proactive. He’s been more focusing on training A/Employee 2: to do that, our selves, than keeping that service in-house. Which for me, the time that I was alone, it was really the only option that I had, and now it is a little bit different, but still I think that we would like to have maybe a little bit more support from [A Meltwater Employee]. A/Employee 2: So there are better times when he’s been actively replying to me, like add in to the key words that I have punched in or subtext that i use. I Think that there is more scope of help there.

A: And the pro-activeness is something that I got from The employee, and it was fantastic, and he came up with ideas, and he adjusted those, and he pick up the phone and said: hey, I was thinking this and could be try something. And [A Meltwater Employee] is not doing the same thing at all. So he responds if there is a problem, but there is this lack of proactiveness on his side. And also understanding that, what we struggle with. Or care to understand, I
think that’s maybe lacking at the moment.

When [Name of Employee 2] sends an e-mail and shouts at him that this is not working, not only to try to understand that; OK, what is the problem this time. But also to spend a little bit more time and ask that: OK, let’s check your keywords now, are you happy with this, and this etc, can we do something more for you, and that is not happening at the moment.

**Q: So the most valuable prospect that they are providing are the immediate publications and in different languages?** A: The coverage, yeah. It is definitely the coverage that we get from them. And in our business, we can see something with Google Alert, that we don’t pick up in Meltwater, because sometimes it comes a little bit later. So there is a little bit of delay, and that has sometimes also been a little bit annoying. So I think that REAL TIME coverage, A/Employee 2: (...) Goolge Alert, hits your inbox right, then and then. Whereas Meltwater’s, either you have to log in, which is not possible if you’re not in the office or at your desk. So something that is like (...) feeds that comes to my inbox would be a lot more beneficial for me. A: But of course, expecting that the key words are right and the coverage that we get is the right one. Because now I’m getting so much crap, that I rarely actually go through those e-mails. Because, it’s just so much stuff that I don’t need. And that’s not good, it’s quite annoying.

**Q: So do they help you with the key words, or do you send in suggestions?**

A/Employee 2: So we generally whatever is the problem, like you would try and changing the key words and there are some error that pops up, then they do support in changing and correcting the key words as well. I don’t know in previous situations if press releases where sent across and they picked up the key words them self, I’m not sure. A: Yeah, they did that. A/Employee 2: Currently, we are sending out the key words and they are changing and making the corrections.
Q: Because it’s maybe difficult to know which key words you actually wanted.

A/Employee 2: Yeah, because if there is one entire paragraph of key words that you would try to changing them. Even one bracket misses somewhere, it doesn’t work well. And we cannot really focus onto the error and find it at times. I think that [A Meltwater Employee] provides that when ever I sort of have that problem.

10. Can you recall any incidents that have occurred where the standard of the service has not been met, where the service delivered are not as promised? (Please provide specific examples)

11. What do you think they can improve? (E.g. customers service, service/product etc. Is there any part of the service that you wish were different?) A/Employee 2: Oh, there’s a lot of wishes. In a perfect world I would wish that all publications that we deal with are on the system and they do not have a reasoning behind that not picking up the coverage as not hitting the system. All publications should be in the system. And also if a proper reasoning where to if the key words are there in please, and why are we not picking up the coverage that is our there all ready. Either a correction onto the key words or a correction somewhere is needed.

A: Because I cannot trust the system. I need to go and check each and every publications that are keyed to us, one by one, if we’re looking for coverage for some specific, important press release or interviews. I cannot trust that Meltwater does that for us, and that’s bad.

Q: So what about the price? Do you think the price are actually worth it or, compared to?

A: I think there is still a little bit more expensive than some of the competition, but from my perspective it is definitely the coverage for the region that they offer that I have been able to
justify their cause so far to my management. But is definitely a hard negotiation every time. So I think that if they were a little bit cheaper, it might be easier to get through it. So then it would be something like, OK; it just an ongoing basis, I don’t need to, every year, to justify it and compare it to the other systems that are doing it and compare their prices, compare their staffs. Because that takes a lot of time from me and I’m not interested in doing that. I would like it to be straightforward continuous contract. But our management is not accepting it. I think that the cause from that perspective gets a little bit damaged from it. And we couldn’t select the Buzz, because it was so expensive. We have only News.

A: I think overall the team is good, they are smart, nice people to work with. And they accept our screaming and problems, which is good.
Client 2

Interview Guide External GAPS (Customers) Customer GAP (interview object: MWG’s customers) Definition: The difference between customer expectations and perception - the service quality gap.

Objective: Are there any gap between customers’ expectations and their perception of the service provided by MWG?

1. How long have you been a customer of Meltwater Group?

A: We’ve been customers for about three years now.

Q: What was your first impression of the firm? Why?

A: Well, the first agent to approach us was Cindy, we were quite impressed already with the service when she first approach us. At the time we were advised by news APS newswire – we had a one year contract with them. We said to them that we were quite convinced that Meltwater would be useful for what kinda work that we do.

We couldn’t sign a new contract as we were tied to the one year contract with previous provider. In terms of the features, we were impressed, that’s why when the contract with the previous provider ceased that wanted to sign up with Meltwater.

Q: Did you perceive it as a better alternative, or a better choice?

A: Yes, we did actually, because the previous actually just gave us the feed, but never told us the source of the news. That was the missing feature that Meltwater are able to provide us. That was what convinced us, basically. [...]

We were not looking for another service that time, we were approached by Meltwater. When
we got the ASP newswire service it was during SARS in the region. And we were more concerned about getting updates as quickly as we can. And not so much about how much of the news were being picked up. Not only did they give us wirefeed, but it was also only limited to one or two topics. Unlike, Meltwater, where we can have as many as 10 agents, so we have a broader coverage.

**Supporting questions**

c. At that time, what benefits did you expect MWG to provide?

d. What did you know about the company/similar services prior to the first interaction with the MWG? c. Have you had any experiences with another provider with a similar service? How was it? (past experiences)

2. In terms of the service you are currently receiving, how do you perceive the services that MWG is providing. (agent, CR, product).

A: In the beginning, we had some issues. We gave them the topics, since we were covering such a lot and depending on the situation we were now asked to choose some topics only. We had narrowed down to ten concerns. We believe that there were some confusion as they believed that we cover the Asia pacific. But in addition we cover the pacific islands states, as Tonga, Fiji and so on...

There are some countries that are not covered by our office. So Meltwater assumed that we were interested in news from countries that we were not interested in. We were able to address that, and told them which countries we wanted, and they were able to narrow it down.

**Q: Was the agent helpful, for further customizing**

A: yes she was very helpful, she was able to figure which agent, and kewords to include,
because I gave her already the list of the 37 islands that are member of our office, she was able to revise some of the keywords to narrow it down to what we really needed. So now, we are getting news south pacific island, unlike we used to be able to before. They were able to address this.

Q: Are do you have positive experiences with MW?

A. Yes, mostly positive...

Q: why is it mostly and not very?

A: as nothing is perfect.

Q: Because we really want to kinda find out what really is the core need of the customers and how company should satisfy their clients so im interested in what negative experiences you have with meltwater. A. i think for their part, in the beginning i told them that you know we are the west pacific region and i told them we dont cover all the asian countries we cover most asian countries but hte south east region is a different region and falls under a different ofice and they or nobody thought to ask us what specific news articles and countries or territory region we covered or supplied to and we noticed we were getting alo of news articles about certain countries werent a part of our region. so that is one of the things that was not so satisfactory. and maybe they need to be more proactive ans ask more questions,despite this they just assumed that we were we covered asia meant that we covered all Asia, wchich is wrong.

Q: So they werent kinda interacting with you enough?

A: yeah,maybe they should have asked more questions so that we could have adressed this in the beginning.beacuse sometimes clients really noticed that this is not what we really want
but when you are busy the fact of just sending an e-mail can be be put in the “back burner” it did took me a while to e-mail them but they did respond and that they learned that there is a problem but if you really wanted to improve the service you maybe want to ask the client in the very beginning to be very specific for what they need, which countries they are interested in covering to avoid this.

**Q: are you currently satisfies due to they addressed and fixed the issue.**

Bachelor Thesis / Summary and Transcript for Customer 2

A: yes, since now we are getting the new and articles of the countries which are actually part of our region and we are getting more news on the pacific islands, so the news we a kinda getting now is, and the quality has improved and this is actually what we want. It gives us more of the news we want.

3. **Please describe your most positive experience with MWG, and why was it significant?**

A: uhm, like i said.. we were able to cover a lot more ground compared to the previous service, because we were given a choice or band/subjects what we were allowed, like two subjects per each agents like tuberculosis & leprecy or dengue & malaria which are i guess figuratelvey speaking is two agents and they do allows that, because if you really analyze it, that the public health, well the scope of public health does really involve more then ten subjects or diseases so that is good. so that is good and that they basically allow us that two different subject in one agent. and that is positive for me and although (...) and they give us a articles and news in other languages languages as well so that is very positive. so....

4. **What added value have your business gained by using MWG services? Why is it important?**

5. **In a scenario where you are satisfied with the services provided by MWG, which**
factors could prevent you from buying this service again? A: If they suddenly provided us with news we don’t need i guess, well news monitoring is a big part of our work. Meltwater has been a quite the big help and for now we are happy, but if the service suddenly start to deteriorating, i dont really see us not really being the service, but i guess if its reversed back again to the beginning again, not providing us with the news we need, i think that could be a factor.

6. Please describe what is the most negative experience with MWG, and why did this leave such an impression on you? a. Any other negative experiences?

7. What would you at least expect from MWG to be satisfied?

A: I would expect that there is consecutively good service and so far they be providing us that and hopefully they could be consisten and keep it up and to have theire agents or customers service to as responsive to the clients concern so that is always a good thing to have, to have someone to approach and to have someone who is responsive and concerned so at least we know that they are doing something and thats always a important thing, the after sales service so you know. it sucks if you already signed on for thise service and if you already know you have a probabably but cant get their agents to abide to you or like they dissappear so after sales service is really important to us.

Q: so quick reaction time in meeting your requirements and demands and answering?

A: yeah, quick reaction time would be good but i know that their somethings that probably cant be addressed quickly but just to let us know that they will be responsive and that we know that they are doing something and if they arent able to fix the problem right away, that will be very reassuring for the client and that knowing that people behind this service is actullay
concerned and trying to fix the problem.

**Q: so have you experienced long waiting time?**

A: well so far i can only remember one experience where i wrote to one the agents and i dont remember what that concern was but it took her/him awhile to reply because i think that the person had gone on a months leave, the thing was probably the only thing i can comment on is that i didnt get an “out of Office” reply so i wasnt sure what had happened.

**Q: did the person apologize and respond as quickly as possible?**

A: well, when she replied she was apologetic and she did address the problem but it just took a while for her to reply. but this is just an isolated incident and most of the time MW is quick to reply to their client.

**Q: so in that incident she just didnt inform you that she was going to on a months leave, is that it?**

uhm..yeah..she...there was no prior information about and i didnt get any replies from her in awhile you know...

**Q: But do you usually get these notifications that they might go on a leave or something like that?** A: Actually i dont, but i know that our office does that alot and i mean if they are using outlook or most e-mail system have these features, so i dont actually know what happened, but anyway, well that was it and that is like i said an isolated incident that, but generally that is not good for business.

**Q: do you have anything you would like us to write down as a footnote...that somethings could be improved in MW and should be addressed?**
A: There is one, well one of our topics is health system financing, I realize there is not a lot of news that comes out about health system financing that covers Asian or the Western Pacific, so mostly we get a lot of news here about health systems financing in general so, well..this is quite a broad topic and it's a little tricky to or to big to actually monitor because it does involve the economy and you know politics you know and other aspects. So otherwise (..) so basically we are quite satisfied, but if they could get more news about health system financing that are actually part of our region that would really be of big help and a improvement in the service. (..)
Client 3

Q: How long have you been a customer of Meltwater Group?
A: I have to say about near 1 years, plus. One and a half year to be exact.
Q: Do you have a contract, like specific?
A: Yes, we do have a contract with them. We actually renew it yearly. (...) Asia and hospitality?

Objective: Are there any gap between customers’ expectations and their perception of the service provided by MWG?

1. What was your first impression of the firm? Why did you get that impression?
A: Okey, it was quite good and quite professional in the way that when I receive the updates daily, and it’s really nice to see (...) individual reports that can be translated. Yeah, that is the plus sign. From what I’m seeing, because we sometimes we marketing like to Indonesia (...), that is really, really helpful.

a. At that time, what benefits did you expect MWG to provide?
A: Hm, not much i guess, because during the first few months. Like, maybe to be exact like 1 year and 3 months, for example. We do not really had the (access) to the network. To actually, to know a little bit more and explain our key-words. So what we actually have is just to provide the particular or very specific words and just submit it to the head quarter. But the thing is when we actually retrieve it back is rather not to relevant. Sometimes you would be like seeing celebrities reports, updates, and this is not what we want.

Q: So the key-words were difficult to explain to get and retrieve the right information?
A: Yes, that’s right.
b. What did you know about the company/similar services prior to the first interaction with the MWG?
A: Ehm, no, not until they came to us.

c. Have you had any experiences with another provider with a similar service? How was it? (Past experiences).
A: Ok, there are many other providers. But what I can see so far for Meltwater, they have really done a good job. I’ve been dealing with the Hong Kong side that is like the head quarter, and the services wise is very, very good. But I don’t believe that, because Hong Kong and Singapore is like - they can’t really (cater to the time and you know). And sometimes that would be a like time constrain, like replying our e-mails and requests. So right now we have regional, local account sales person here, I think that is so much faster and we actually simply, you know it is really, really nice to have him here to service us.

Q: So have it been positive, besides the key-word experience? Have they been a good provider?
A: Yes, I have to say yes.

Q: So have you found out about the key-words now? Are they better?
A: Definitely better, but it is always room for improvement.

Q: What do you think that they can improve? Do you have any examples or any incidents that hits you?
Q: Is there any other part of the service that you wish were different?
A: Hm, maybe it would be nice to have some questioners for you to fill it up. So when you fill it up, the other receiving can actually look at it; oh, this is the requirements, this is the brief, this is the event brief, this is what we want. Ok, so, after that - when they actually look at the leads of key-words, the person can actually analyze how we can actually (explain) all the word together. Rather then you know, we just submit and they just - you know, key in and that is no point. Actually to be working on the key-words together. Rather then just one person. To have two-way communication.

2. In terms of the service you are currently receiving, how do you perceive the services that MWG is providing? (agent, CR, product. Please provide specific examples or incidents)
A: For customer relation, I have to say it’s that. The previous time might not be a good one, because of different country. I think that is something that we all know about it. And the other thing is we also understand about the billing wise. It is much different from here. So, right now we have everything here. So it is very easy for us to identify, we can just solve the problem right now. If any questions, the person can come over and we just solve the problem. It is really good, so rather than go overseas like Hong Kong and the person might not know our problems. It can be quite difficult at times. And I do understand that they do fly around.

Q: So you been a customer in Hong Kong first and then down here in Singapore?
A: Yes.

Q: So how long have you been here? How long have you be receiving the service from Singapore?
A: Hm, not long. The most is 3 months.

Q: Do you see any difference?
A: Yes, I see a difference. It is closer, the relationship is closer so I think it’s nice.

3. Please describe your most positive experience with MWG, and why was it significant?
A: I don’t think so at the moment.

4. What added value have your business gained by using MWG services? Why is it important?
A: Especially the (locking) website. And we can identify like what kind of settings that we want. We can just change what key-words that we want, I think that’s nice. But we don’t really dare to change to much, because we’re not that really into the technical. Just in case you might not get anything back. And we can actually (sees) the (live/life) time update news, that is good. Because sometimes you might not be able to receive the news update the next day, but you can just look at it at that time. And you can assess it at home, well as long that you have the link and the username, and password - you can just look at it. Yeah, that is really good for news update.

Q: But if they could, would you like that they could come more often and show more about the system? How it works, so that you can be more (...)?
A: Yes, definitely yes. Because at the moment, I do believe that that’s the standards for Meltwater that they have right now. But anything putting value at the whole network, that would be nice. Because, we want something more extraordinary. More customized, and we
want to make sure that all the news are really up to date. And what we actually wants to (circulate?) to our readers. Because each individual of our clusters, they are all very different and they are more like to B2B and want to know more about the business level rather then the consumer side at times, depending on the events that we are doing.

5. In a scenario where you are satisfied with the services provided by MWG, which factors could prevent you from buying this service again?

A: Ok, lower in price. That is very particular, I guess. Other brands that is actually competitive to Meltwaters (for example), they can provide us more value added services. Even though like, pricing they throw in a lot of freebies, more to it like customer service level or providing you with extra stuff. Definitely it’s a yes.

Q: But, do you see any competitors that do that now? Or might be in that range?

A: Might. But, nevertheless, Meltwater is still one of our key updates provenders. Because, we actually subscribe that as a whole, together with (company) flat, say that we have really found something that is really compatible with Meltwater, then (...). Because at the moment we have a contract, like a year contract so we try to utilize it and make sure that we actually benefit our readers and our clients, that is the most important part.

6. Please describe what is the most negative experience with MWG, and why did this leave such an impression on you?

A: Late replies. For example, like you send them e-mails at times it is very slow getting the response. So I always feel that shouldn’t be the way for that. It has to be like turn-over time would be like (turning fast/24), or the latest 48 hours. There must be a certain reason behind. Because we are the customer, and the customer is the most important part. Yeah, so replying
e-mails is very, very important. When there is no issue - no e-mails. When there is issues - there is always e-mails.

**Q: So what has been the longest time when they haven’t replied?**

A: More than a week. But the impression towards Meltwater never change, because of the updates, the regular updates that we have been receiving every day. So, no issue for that. It is more about the service internally. Like, for example, when I don’t receive the daily updates I’ll definitely call; like why is it like that and the other person the receiving end, like for example the Singapore support or Singapore accountants, he would basically investigate and get back to me within the day. That is much appreciated.

**Q: So that has happen before, where you haven’t gotten the daily updates?**

A: Yes, that has happen.

a. **Any other negative experiences?**

7. **What would you at least expect from MWG to be satisfied? Your minimum requirements from MWG, please provide examples or incidents that has occurred.**

A: That is quite general, I think to regularly contact clients; to see how it’s going, have you been receiving the right data.

**Q: Even though when you haven’t called them?**

A: Yes, you have to really try to make the contact, regular contact. Maybe not like every day, but maybe like monthly, just once. To just to check; whether are you ok with the news that you have been receiving if not, what kind, maybe you can let us know. You know, something
in that like. I feel that that is really nice to build up the personal relationship, so the other person, the account managers, will know what we are doing and putting into the events.

Yeah, so that would be better. (...)

8. What added value do you feel that MWG should at least provide to you?

9. How do they fulfill your expectations? How satisfied are you with the service? (Please provide examples where the service have met your expectations)

10. Can you recall any incidents that have occurred where the standard of the service has not been met, where the service delivered are not as promised? (Please provide specific examples)
A: At the moment no, no such request yet.

Q: So overall, you are pretty satisfied with the service, but could be better you think?
A: Yes, definitely. Because on my end, I’ve been dealing with the Hong Kong office before. So I basically, know about how they actually runs, because they are so busy. So right now I had just seen the change, this is so much better. So I’m quite satisfied with the time (being).
Client 4 was not taped up

Client 5

Q: So I have already asked you and you’ve been a customer of MWG for 2 years?
A: Yeah

Q: And, how satisfied are you?
A: Very, 8 out of 10. But of course it really depends on the person in charge of my account, so I have had some really good people, a girl in Hong Kong I think her name was May, she was very very efficient, Rene is very good, but in between sometimes there were people that basically knew the service less than me. So when I asked them about things they were not able to answer me because they did not know the product and so on. But both May and Rene is very good.

Q: That is good, so what was the first impression of the firm or Meltwater Group?
A: I would say I feel like the team is young and the product is quite innovative, they are not promising impossible things and so on so it is quite straight forward, which I think is very good. So it is not like over-promising, under-delivering, it is quite straightforward and so that is, I think, a good mindset.

Q: That is good. So were you familiar with the contract before you signed it?
A: The contract is very simple actually, and I think it also is a good thing. I had an issue on the contract, but basically what happened is my company in France they were contacted by Meltwater in France. And they know what I am doing with Meltwater here, but basically they did not follow up. (…….) So they received the Meltwater team in France and they did a free trial of the product and they said ”(…) so good and blablabla” and then of course Meltwater,
they showed me, and I said of course we already have it…And then the Meltwater team in France was very upset because I was using it globally and the price differentiates quite huge between France and here, and then the guy I think was in charge of my account he said ”ok I am going to cut all the ip-addresses that are going to France” and so they kept the access from France, and then I told him ”ok can I have look again at the contract?” And in the contract there is no such clause (……) Rene or so I told him, he assured me that for the renewal if you do something like this and he told me that he check again the contract and so on and there is no limitations as long as we contract from Singapore. So, but it was a problem or so was the account manager at this time, because he was not straightforward and honest in this. But Rene was also a bit junior and so he could not face the people in France and so on internally, but that is a small issue I had. I did not fight really out on it.

Q: Ok, very good. So upon your first meeting or experience with Meltwater, what benefits did you expect them to provide?

A: I think it is the quality of the information you can get compared to the price. It depends on how you use the service, me I am using it quite intensively so for some people (…..) maybe it is not so useful compared to Google search etc. But if you start using the analytics and so on, then it makes more sense. The issue I have is, and I spoke with Rene about it, is that many of the information I have online I can not download it. Like the rating for example the manual rating I am doing as well, I have to, I can not download the database, which is a problem because I have to do it manually beside the system. And I think, I don't think it is such a big issue and I don't even think there is a legal issue behind as well, I mean I can understand about for example extracting the articles in PDF and so on.. This is a legal issue about
copyrights and so on, but for the rating and so on this you could do and it would be adding a lot of value.

**Q: Did you know anything about Meltwater prior to your meeting or any other similar services?**

A: No, I went through another company doing some media monitoring and so on, but actually they were over-promising a lot and under-delivering. It was a big big company doing media monitoring, which is what I use Meltwater for and a bit of competitive analysis and so on, and the company was very expensive and basically what they were providing was not really good compared to Meltwater.

**Q: Was that in Europe or here in Singapore?**

A: It was here. The company I think it was "Media monitor" or something. It was a long time ago, but it was not so good. I did a trial and it was not like..... Also what is good with Meltwater is you can have a follow up on the trends because you use your sources and so on and you can add more sources so the scope of the research is going deeper, but still you can have trends, and this company was not able to have any follow up on how many sources they were monitoring and so on so basically you did not know what you were looking at.

**Q: In terms of the service you are currently receiving, how do you perceive the services that MWG is providing? (agent, CR, product. Please provide specific examples or incidents)**

A: I would say I faced a lot of issues when they launched the new system because I was one of the first to go on the new system and so on. And many features that used to be included in the first version were not in the second one so there were small things that were better in the
previous version, but it was very very small so and now it is much better. And in terms of customer service and feedback and so on with Rene and May (before from Hong Kong) it is very good. But sometimes I got very frustrated also because many things did not work and I was, and it is really depending on the person you have in front of you and as I told you there were some people that did not know the service and then they could not even understand what I was talking about. So maybe it is my english but I was writing and so on so… but with May and Rene it was always very very good.

Q: So the turnaround time is good?
A: Yes, now yes.

Q: Please describe your most positive experience with MWG, and why was it significant?
A: The most positive experience I get from it.. I still think it is raw information so the best thing I get from it is what I am doing with it myself, it so maybe this is a service they could add, I discussed this with Rene also, and some of the development I did is the rating and following (…..) and so on so I do quite nice analysis on the pr of my company so this is good, but Meltwater is not really providing it, the system as it is. So I think the issue customers have is that if they are just receiving information without doing any analysis at the back, they will not be able to og so far with it. So Meltwater may need to add some services for analysis to information treatment and so on. Because today maybe there is a lack of this.

Q: Yeah, because you have to do this by yourself?
A: Yeah.
Q: What added value have your business gained by using MWG services? Why is it important?

A: Okay the cost is very very important. And the cost is very very low. Compared to others and compared to what you will need to work/develop to get the same kind of information. For example my company in France when they do PR, just in France, which I think is a bit stupid, because I think 40% of our business is abroad. So they are not able to monitor what we do abroad in printing: newspapers and so on. So I am using Meltwater to be able to give them information on this. And the price is great, I think what I get from Meltwater in 2 years, is the same as my company gets in 2 months in France for the same cost. Because they need to pay for the copyright and so on.

Q: In a scenario where you are totally satisfied with the services provided by MWG, which factors could prevent you from buying this service again?

A: If you are totally satisfied? No. It would be because of the budget, but as of today the costs are very reasonable, the quality of the service is good, the information and so on is good, so I am not really worried about my company renewing the contract.

Q: That is good.

A: But, I can tell you also if you look at, if you discuss with Rene about my experiences with Meltwater and so on, actually it is more than 2 years its 2,5 years. I got 6 months free, because I faced so many issues, that the system went down, all the ratings I did disappeared, many things like this, but they have been nice enough to give me 6 months for free. To compensate. But it is also a lot to do with May and Rene because the guy before he was not really able to solve anything, he was not able to have any right interaction with the technical
team, so basically I was like doing on my own, having a lot of tough back clog on the analysis I could do and so on.

Q: **Do you know if he was a account manager? Or in New Sales?**

A: He was supposed to be account manager because the salesperson I had here at the beginning was actually really good.

Q: **Please describe what is the most negative experience with MWG, and why did this leave such an impression on you?**

A: This was it, if you see out of 2 years getting 6 months for free, is because I faced a lot of difficulties. And I am not saying I was begging for 6 months or what ever.

Q: **So do you have any other negative experience with Meltwater except the employees?**

A: No sometimes the frustration is the fact that some features disappeared and they are not yet implemented back, I think they are very simple, and i am not saying I am a programmer or something, but just things like being able to read which link I already opened or not, which existed before, and now you do not have it any more.

Q: **What added value do you feel that MWG should at least provide to you as a minimum requirement?**

A: The contract renewal at the same price, which I think is already agreed. And keeping the same conditions, meaning I can be able to access the system from France or whatever. Because my idea is it is quite innovative, my company is a state owned company, french government so it is like stuck in the past. So if you provide them with information from someone like this, plus they are used to printing magazines and so on, they do not see the
point. They say "yeah yeah, but the printed version has much more impact blablabla" So that is one issue we face. If I am not able to provide them the information globally then we have problem because I have to convince them. Now today okay it is taking time, but today they see the interest of the product, they see what we can do with the analysis and so on so then it is easier for us to ask for more license etc. So if the price is the same and I can use it globally, I guess there is no problem. Then in terms of features, if I could be able to download my own rating when I exclude an article to just, just what I am rating manually, to be able to extract it on excel then it would be…Because today I am doing everything manually which is a bit heavy work.

**Q: Can you recall any incidents that have occurred where the standard of the service has not been met, where the service delivered are not as promised? (Please provide specific examples)**

A: The only issue I face is with this ip-address in France and so on, they told be we have complains from our company in France, we cut the access and so on, I should not have faced that. At the end of the day when it comes to contract management it was not supposed to be like this.

A: I can show you the analysis that I am doing. Well, I spending maybe 2-3 hours a day on doing this roughly. The idea is to show what I am doing with the system, to show maybe what the company could be aiming at. A way to define what amount of money potential coverage you have. For example, if I write an article in Times of India, which is a big publication, and then you will have to rough cost for same advertising. So you have system to say, ok, the article in Time of India, will generate 10 cent per reader, and then you could estimate that you have a positive coverage of US$ 5,000. Then if an article is very very bad,
you may see -US$ 5,000. The idea is to show some return on investment on the system and on your PR and so. Because my company is doing PR, but they are not able to calculate what is the outcome of it. So maybe it is better to do advertising, maybe it is better to do PR they don’t know. And it is quite simple, you can for example put the top first year of publications on big news papers, TV and so on and say that 1 reader is US$ 1,000, then you are able to give a potential amount of coverage. And the end of the day you can see how much it costs and how much you “lose”.

Said he would send us an example of what he is using the service for, he uses it roughly 3 hours a day and that we could have a look at this to see what Meltwater could be aiming for in terms of providing analytical services in addition.

Suggested that Meltwater could provide “ratings” of articles in money. Say for ex: You have a article in the Times of India, and say that the article cost 100 000 SGD, each reader is worth 10 cents, then you could be able to see if you have positive/negative ROI. This is possible and just to provide a rough estimate for customers.
Client 6 by e-mail

Q: How long have you been a customer of Meltwater Group? 2 years.

A: Objective: Are there any gap between customers’ expectations and their perception of the service provided by MWG? No gaps. Perception met with expectations.

1. What was your first impression of the firm? Why did you get that impression?
   a. At that time, what benefits did you expect MWG to provide?
   b. What did you know about the company/similar services prior to the first interaction with the MWG?
   c. Have you had any experiences with another provider with a similar service? How was it? (Past experiences)

A: My first impression of MWG is a positive one. We haven’t invested much in media tracking/monitoring’ activities prior to this and I still do think that MWG offers a very innovative service, packaged in a very user friendly manner.

2. In terms of the service you are currently receiving, how do you perceive the services that MWG is providing? (agent, CR, product. Please provide specific examples or incidents)

A: Good service and timely delivery.

3. Please describe your most positive experience with MWG, and why was it significant?

A: A negative media but taken with a positive experience as MWG’s daily alert kept us abreast on the latest media publications on a negative incident that occurred to one of our product. It kept us acutely aware on the happenings – in the media world.
4. What added value have your business gained by using MWG services? Why is it important?
   
   A: **Keeping us up to date on the media front (via daily media updates)**

5. In a scenario where you are satisfied with the services provided by MWG, which factors could prevent you from buying this service again?
   
   A: **Nothing.**

6. Please describe what is the most negative experience with MWG, and why did this leave such an impression on you?
   
   A: **Not at the moment.**

   a. Any other negative experiences?
   
   A: **No**

7. What would you at least expect from MWG to be satisfied? Your minimum requirements from MWG, please provide examples or incidents that has occurred.

8. What added value do you feel that MWG should at least provide to you?

   **A: Bundle in more media monitoring/tracking services. Be more strategic,**

   **rather than being a news/update provider**

9. How do they fulfill your expectations? How satisfied are you with the service? (Please provide examples where the service have met your expectations)
10. Can you recall any incidents that have occurred where the standard of the service has not been met, where the service delivered are not as promised? (Please provide specific examples)

A: No
J. Full Transcript Employees

Employee 1

1. What added value do you think your customer expect from using your services?

A: It’s difficult to say one overarching thing, because we have client in every industry and, they are all using our services for slightly different things. Overall, I think what customer generally expect from us is that they are going to get a seamless ROI. They expect to keep track of what’s being said about their company/industry and make things more efficient. There are many ways to do what we do, but the main selling point is the efficiency. We can do it more organized and time effective way, in my opinion that would be the main benefits of using our services.

Supporting question:

Q: Could you tell us about a certain incident that proves your customers have had the benefits of using your services?

A: One of the more interesting cases I have worked with is a client I had in the US. Organization called Asian institute, it was set up by a guy that was writing about his experiences about living and working in Afghanistan/Pakistan, setting up remote schools there. Since the book became well known in the US. It came under a lot of controversy. The book covered how people spent the money and that they didn’t do like they said they were. [so by using our service they could keep track of what were said about them, and why they were talking bad things about them]

Q: Do you think local companies can benefit in the same way as western companies?
A: Yes, absolutely. Asian is the fastest growing market by far, and we tend to adapt very well to every market we enter, however, like every companies there are gonna be bumps along the way. One of the most important thing is that our service offer many local media sources and that’s something we are adding all the time, which is primarily based on our clients. And what the locals companies needs and that’s the foundation of appropriate choice of local media sources.

2. From the experiences at MWG, do you think customers are satisfied with your service in terms of fulfilling their expectations/requirements?

A: It’s different with every client; overall I’d say they are. I guess it’s a general statement, often times there are a bit more than we can do from taking the service from being good to make them satisfied but we want to take that extra steps, to make that to an interesting part of their work. Yes, most of our clients are satisfied. But our objective is to make it more important so that they can’t afford to lose MW.

Q: You say that the Asian market is your fastest growing market; do you think that has something in relation to Asian companies perceive the MW’s services are more valuable than the western companies perceive them?

A: Singapore is an interesting country, as far as Asia goes it’s very westernized, so you have a lot of expats, like myself, and we have a lot of western companies, and we do a lot of business with them. Then you have the local government/organizations that we work with as well.

In general I wouldn’t say it’s drastically different. At least not in so far as every clients sees a slightly different values. Everywhere that we are, the fundamental idea of what we are doing
is basically the same – the way that we pitch it and the way that we attain the clients are different, based on the markets we are in and the culture.

**Q: Are there any difference in the requirements you see from the western companies compared to Asian companies?**

A: I don’t see a massive difference, what I see is a cultural difference. How they expect to be maintained. What’s is challenging is the Malaysian clients. Particular, we find it’s extremely difficult when they want to meet us in person, which is difficult because CR are based here in Singapore. So that’s one of the cultural things that’s gonna be different from different markets we are in. In Singapore it’s easier to do business compared to Malaysia, Thailand or India. Those are the things that are more based on the culture, the city and how they are using our service.

**Q: Asia is the fastest growing market, is Singapore also the fastest growing country in this market?**

A: That I actually don’t know. It might be Japan, but don’t take that for certain. What we are doing in CR is a bit secondary, not so much attaining new clients and something like that. Because, our work is directly affected by that, but that is not what we are doing day-by-day. Singapore is certainly one of them.

1. Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has fulfilled the customers expectations?

2. Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has not fulfilled the customers expectations? How did you manage that specific situation?
A: One of the issues we are facing right now in the different markets are the online publication putting their content behind pay walls. And that’s a reaction to the fundamental change in the way where the press, the press, the media changing with fewer people reading magazines and newspapers and increasingly more people going online. The challenge they are facing is how to modernise that. And the challenge we are facing now is we can’t access that content, and as a result of that we can’t provide our customers that information.

3. Based on your perception of customers expectations - how did you implement this into the service?
A: We must focus on the limitations of the services, therefore we have to focus on what we can do, obviously we can’t promise the customers thing we are not able to do. It depends very much, case by case basis.

Q: What can you compensate with?
A: We can be flexible in a lot of different ways, but it all depends on what they want. Let’s say Strait Times, if they put all their content behind a pay wall we’ll discount the MW News subscription and compensate what we lose there. Others might be reporting, actually be able to analyze the press that they are giving over a month a year or like that.

It’s hard to answer the question in a macro way, because it’s different with every client.

Q: Would you go as far as pay for that article to provide it to your clients?
A: No, we wont do that, just because, that’s not how our business model works. We will not directly pay for content on customer’s behalf. It’s more about managing what we can do within the limit of compound of the systems.
Q: What’s the most important reason for not doing it? I mean you could do something like a monthly subscription in order to monitor the paid content and then provide it to paying customers?

A: It’s something we do on a company level, we have agreements and plans with Financial Times, and be able to track their content, even some of it is behind a pay wall. I mean, what we won’t do is paying for article case by case. That’s a more functional agency, and we are not an agency, we are providing a software client for the clients to use.

We do it on a broader company level for the benefits for the entire service/entire client base. What we won’t do is do it case by case. We won’t pay for an article to make a client happy. We have people working on this and they are trying to convince the publications that it is mutual beneficial because the service we are providing are dragging more attention to their content.

Q: But as of today, has the fact that the trend of businesses/articles going behind a paywall, is this becoming a problem that meltwater need to solve in the future/treath?:

A: its obviously one of the most important issue facing the industry, but its also yet to be seen how its going to play out longterm because weve seen a number of big sources going behind paywall for a period of time and realize there a significant drop in traffic that comes as a result that doesnt justify charging for content, so there is actually a couple of sources in australia that did that for 6-9months and the drop in traffic was so sinificant that they actullay liftet the paywall, so i think one the most important thing is to see is if this is actually going to be a permanent change in the industry and if thats the case then we will do everything we
can to adapt to it, but if not, it could be just a trend.

1. Give us one (continuous) issue that proves that the standard of the service has differed from the actual service.

A: yeah, it happens. I guess the biggest one of the problems we see right now is the way our one of the departments will sell the service just like you sell any service is based on the concept, right? You know, respective clients will try the service for a week or two, they kinda discuss in theory how they gonna implement it and do with it so they sell on concepts and on theory. Whereas in clients relations when we re-new a client, we re-new them not on concept but based on the actual value they receieved over the subscription period and if it’s you know, if they are happy with the service and its met or basically the value matches the cost then we are fine, but that’s I think maybe clients dont always go into it with a proper expectations with about our service can and not do, I mean that’s kinda nobody’s fault, but maybe a little meltwater fault and maybe little bit the clients, but I think cases where they percieve what we do to be more agency related where they expect us to do more press and marketing campaigns or do all this mangro work, that I think something like PR agency would do. But we dont and that’s because of our business model, so I know its not like a specific example, but that’s the general trend that we see and something that we are actually doing a lot to adress here, basically that disconnect between the actual initial sale and the value they see and what they actual see over the duration over the account time.

Q: A bit off topic but could you see MW in the future doing PR and marketing initiatives for the clients?

A: well you know, we have alot of different....we are always launching new products besides from meltwater NEWS, which is our first and our biggest product and to do more like
meltwater BUZZ obviously social media. We have one that is in Europe and the US, which is called meltwater Press, for media outreach and press release distribution... so we are always kinda developing new services to basically meet current demand. But as far as doing manual work and highly consulted stuff like PR agencies would do, I don't first see that is a direction we would want to go because we want to stay doing what we are, which is essentially providing a software service for the client to use.

2. Can you give an example where you improvised/customized the service you provided to different customers?

A: Yeah, I'll use again an American client as an example just because I worked there for 3 years, but the client was a professional hockey team in NHL and one of the things they wanted to do is to keep track of players who are playing in various minor leagues around the world they might want to draft and trying to acquire basically, so the team was based in Florida, but they wanted to keep track of players based in Russia, Sweden and so on. So we would track all the particular dimension in local news and Swedish newspaper and see what's going on with them and what the local papers are saying about them and you know, this goal keeper or this left wing that we might want to acquire because then this might give them a good idea of how they might fit in the organization, you know if they were acquired to the team. So I thought that was kind of an interesting way and non-conventional way to use this service.

Q: But was this service meltwater news or buzz or?

A: It was meltwater news, yeah.

1. What do/can you promise your customers in terms of value and service?
A: wow, erm, well it depends almost entirely on what the clients needs are, it depends on who you are talking to, if your talking to vice president or an executive then i think the focus has to be more on saving time and being more efficient, and if you are talking to a lower level person or a marketing pr then its actually taking them into the functionality of the system to see how it is and they are usually the one that will use this system on a day to day basis. But overall, like i said our idea is to provide a very comprehensive media intelligence solution, but doing so in a very efficient way too because i think that is the biggest value of the service in my mind and that is making it efficient, making it very organized and saving time.

Q: so the selling point would be efficiency and saving time and its a automated service also?

A: Correct.

2. Can you give us an example when you have promised a customer one thing, and actually delivered something else? Good and bad incidents?

A: Yeah, a client i worked with in australia was a non-profit, which worked with children with hearing difficulties and they were actually tracking (...) organizations, legislations and general funding news in their industry and what around the world tracking who is donating to similar causes and they actually found by using this service a rather reasonable sized donation in the UK that was given to a similar cause and they managed to get in touch with the corresponding company in australia, and said Hey did you know that your partners in Uk are actually working with similar organization doing this? and this way they were able to bolster their fundraising, which is not what they expected they were initially able to do, so this was kinda a happy accident and that they were being able to act on it.
3. How does your service quality match the customer expectations? (Can you give any concrete examples?)

4. How do you manage the customer expectations? / how do you manage the expectations you are creating for the customers?

A: Even though they come with unreasonable expectations you kinda still want to say that i kind fulfil your expectations even though you cant just to get the sale going? We really dont do that, especially in CR because i could promise a client something today even though if i know its unreasonable or we cant actually do it, but the reality is if i do actually close this sale, i still have to manage that account and if i havent been forthright about what this service could actually do then im gonna take the heat on that and the client is gonna take that out on me for misrepresenting the service, so that is definitly not something we do, but yeah sometimes clients do come in with... i wouldnt say unreasonable expectations, but more of a misunderstanding of what we do and dont do. so if they ask us to put together like a comprehensive report and do lots of manual work within the system, then you know to an extent we’ll do it, but not...again i think that is sometimes were the line gets a bit hazy between us and a PR agency.
Employee 2.

GAP 1 (interview object: MWG’s employees)

Definition: The difference between what customers expect and what management perceived about the expectations of the customers.

Objective: From the company’s point of view; what is the perceived value and service you think you're adding to your customers and what do you think the customer expect from you as a service provider.

1. What added value do you think your customer expect from using your services?

A: In terms of the service, it’s a tool meant to save time keep you update and gain insight into the industries, and what’s happening in the global markets. And In terms of what they expect from us – it is easy to handle, if they have inquires or questions and so on. In terms of responsibilities and exceed those expectations and quick reply and make them feel they are not dealing with a company, but a person as well.

Supporting question:

a. Could you tell us about a certain incident that proves your customers have had the benefits of using your services?

A: We have a lot of companies doing report for instance; they are doing analysis of media coverage or looking at […. of voice] Looking for competitors or products. For instance we have Goodyear, looking at different tire producers, and they want to see sort of how they are mentioned in APEC, the region. We have Indonesia, Singapore Thailand and a lot of big markets for them. As well there are fairly different where Pirelli, Bridgestone or Firestone whether or if it sports car. So they will try to analyze where the efforts is going, if it’s good or if it’s bad. They are using us to break down and disseminate all the information
and we are helping them sort of understanding what’s happening and how they can improve. By using existing media coverage.

We are like consultants, but we are consulting on how to use the service. But, we try to help as well on how to understand the media. We have also a lot PR agencies, that extracts their data and they’ll make a reports and comments, like: in this “in October this was the issue”. Whatever the PR agencies are doing are basically extracted from our system.

**Q: Have you customer actually told you that; because of your service we have actually managed to do this and this?**

A: Not really, our service doesn’t do anything, it just keep track of things. Like last weekend, it was F1 in Malaysia, so PETRONAS used it to look at coverage for that event for instance. And they wanted to see which countries mentioned it and the winner and events, and if something was written about the racetrack, and if something was written about parties…

So we really do not anything to promote or anything like that we just help them to monitor all the coverage. In terms of how we help and assistance, you can say it’s being used more in crisis management. Like this WTO riot, they were for instance are looking for epidemic and help or crisis in different areas, if it’s like for Tsunamis for instance then our service can help them discover quickly if something is popping up. So it’s pretty valuable because they have the western

So, it’s valuable because they have the western region they what they call it, what they call APEC, and they won’t be able to keep track of everything themselves, so our system will help them on what’s going on so in a way that they would NOT be able to do themselves.
In terms of what the system really is, it won’t really affect any rectification application. But MWG Buzz, is different, you can with the use of the system engage social communities, you can update status, promote service and products. Starhub – offering their products on Facebook. Therefore it can directly affect it.

2. From the experiences at MWG, do you think customers are satisfied with your service in terms of fulfilling their expectations/requirements?

A: Well, you know I am used to that in Norway and Sweden, but coming down here it’s not the same case. And that’s why we want you do have a look at what we are doing, what we should be doing. I have been taking over a lot of client who are not very happy because they haven’t been contacted that much. They have been set up by the salesperson, and then account manager suppose to help them out for a year or two years, and however long the contract is. And may be called once or twice, and says; how’s everything going, I am the guy you should call if there is anything. And they might have been getting 30 000 news every week or every month, so they got 2000 articles every day and they might want to have certain news, which in kind of way states that the service they are getting are not tailored correctly.

That will affect how they will look at us as a company and the tool itself is not good, as it never give me what I want. Nobody helping them customers to tailor the service so it is for the best benefit for them. Our service are only as good as the consultancy service can give and understand them what MWG can provide or tailor information for themselves – that is what we are struggling with down here, because we haven’t had the experience that work staff that hasn’t been at good at
helping clients utilize the tools. We have a lot of happy clients as well, but we have a lot of unhappy clients as well. And we want to turn them around and make them happy.

GAP 2 (interview object: MWG’s customers)

**Definition:** The difference between management’s perceptions of customer expectations and the translation of those perceptions into service

**Objectives:** How does the management’s perception of customer’s expectations translate into service?

1. **Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has fulfilled the customer's expectations?**

A: Yeah, well, for instance, renewable energy corporation they are doing a lot of efforts, they are having a lot of troubles as well, because they are shutting down operations in Norway, and all their production facilities outside of Singapore. They are really worried about the share price, and how they are perceived globally. And there is one European solar panel producer, they are fighting against Chinese. They are really dependent on market new in every country. Not only solar panels, but also competitive information on the different producers and so on. So delivering for them is basically intelligence portal – where everyone internally can view stuff we deliver into the Internet and sharepoint solution. It’s like invaluable, we get feedback that there are chaos internally when the system is down because the units don’t get the access to the information they want; Germany, US, India, Australia, Singapore and so on…
So they are really dependant on it. That is one example. We also have it like in terms of events or projects going on then the clients need to look at what’s happening before and after an […]. That’s what they will be using it for.

Other clients will be using us just for business opportunities, like new contracts, new projects going on, tenders like GEBIS. So, the dependent on their income and sales for the company will be depending on how many leads we can pick up for them for instance. If they stop coming through then they won’t have as many options in terms of selling their own products.

**Q: Have they showed satisfaction to you? Such as feedback**

A: Yes, we send out quarterly customer satisfaction survey and stuff. Most of them are usually pretty happy. But in Asia they would say that they are happy, even though they are not. If I call somebody in Malaysia people will say; yes we are very happy, and then you call them to renegotiate a new contract then they will say NO WAY we are renewing this, its not relevant – then it’s like ok, you just told me two weeks ago that it was very relevant and everybody loved it. It’s a bit hard to understand or ask the right questions to make certain people like it.

**Q: Do you have customers that have certain requirements and they need to fulfill and you fulfill it and still they are not happy**

A: yes, we have difficult clients like Media Corp, they are a very difficult client of us. A guy there he will call couple of times a day and he’ll expect an answer within ten minutes. You know I can be in a meeting, so I’ll say I’ll respond to you, but if you need immediate help you should call my colleague who can help you. The usually, he doesn’t know how to extract the information from the system. And he wants me to do it for him. Then I say, I can show
you how to do it, but I need to be in front of a computer. I am in a meeting right now, give me 30 minutes. But, he probably does that 3 times a day, usually. He’s like I am expecting an answer on this - that might be a fault in our system, then it will be a problem everybody knows about and we go through the same procedure again the next day. That’s kinda of our fault as well, like the salesperson, has not managed his expectations in terms of what we can do and what he should be expecting. He signed a contract it clearly stated what we can do, and what he can expect in terms and condition. And he still expect more than that. Usually, our problem with the clients is that we rarely hear from them again. The system is automated and you get the email notifications. And that’s it, and we rarely hear from them unless they have requirements. Some people, if they work in PR they will call if they need this or that. If it as sales manager and he will look at the email and carry on with his job. We never hear from them, they can be either happy or unhappy. We need to actively call them; are you happy, how do you use it, why do you use it? Would you renew a contract if it was opted for today? And so on…

So we need to basically ask them all this uncomfortable questions all the time just to make sure. They wont contact us. They expect it to be what they expect it to be – established by the person who sold them. The salesman, they say whatever in order to get a contract, which can be problematic.

The clients expect us to do all the media coverage for a year, we want to see the media coverage for several countries. I can show you how to do it, but I can’t do it for you. If you want me do it for you, then it’s a consultancy report, then I have to charge you for that. And then some clients might be very angry about that. That’s not what we were told. It’s
miscommunication basically, it doesn’t say in the contract. We see something like that from
time to time. Their requirements are usually what they need from the service.

2. Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has not fulfilled the
   customers expectations? How did you manage that specific situation?

3. Based on your perception of customers expectations – how did you implement this
   into the service?

GAP 3 (interview object: MWG’s customers)

Definition: The difference between specifications or standards of service quality and the
actual service delivered to customers.

Objectives: Are there any differences in the standards given to the employees and what the
employees deliver to customer?

1. Give us one (continuous) issue that proves that the standard of the service has
differed from the actual service.

A: It’s a software service, so everything is online, and everything is Internet based, we are
also depending our providers. Sometimes, the servers might go down and nothing is available
and we have a problem a year ago. And it happened for a two weeks time, and nothing
worked. And we had 32 000, and none of them, in that time period were able to use the tool
for several days. We can’t do anything about it, our system is live and working, but the
servers are not working. Basically, we won’t have contact with our own content. When stuff
like that happens, It’s not working like it says its working. We usually upgrade our system as
well, for, like, two months something like that. We improve some stuff, and include some
news stuff, usually when that happens, the tech people are rushing patches and upgrades and
fixing bugs and stuff, so they haven’t tested everything, so it might not work as they suppose
to do. Sometimes when we are launching an upgrade it will be down in the weekend, when
most people are not working. Then the following Monday that things are not working the way
it should be. Then you get a lot of shit from your clients. They will call and let you know that
things are not working. Last June we had a big upgrade of CRM system of chains, but it also
changed a bit in the service. Due to an error/change in the URL the links very inaccessible.
Then we have to look at compensation and how…it happens from time to time.

Q: May I ask how do you usually compensate to your customers?

A: Usually, depends on the how severe the problem is, what we usually do is that we add on
extra time, let’s say that you have had this time of disruption, I’ll give you two months extra
free of charge. We don’t want to give back money, so what we trying to do is give away, let’s
say free test of MWG Buzz (social media) for a month or something, I’ll add this to you.
Usually, the users of the service are pretty good at talking too, and they like the service,
usually, they also want hits or that. If you are starting to talk to legals or finance, or
procurement, they always; how can they get the money out of this, you have to sign this
agreement that this won’t happen again, and that we can sue you for 100 million, we are not
signing that. Then we have a problem – depending on who you speak to as well. We had an
incident two weeks ago, the service stopped working for two/three hrs, and some clients
called in because they actively, others only read the report, so you won’t hear anything from
them. Heavy users will notice it. For MWG Buzz, it’s experiencing a lot of problems down
here, mostly because of it’s such a big tool, and covering social media, scanning 300 million
different sources, twitter, FB, scanning 7M post on FB every day. So a lot of content.
Depending on your Internet speed. The system will be affected on how quick can you move
around. In singapore, it’s not working the way it’s suppose to, it should be faster than this –
this I partly our fault. We are working on to make it operate quicker, for companies with slower Internet.

For social media, it’s not living up to the expectations. MWG NEWS, it’s running fine. The new product we launch is always in the start phase, we are trying to figure out how to make it work, it’s usually by clients saying we want that and that (requests) and we see that some of that stuff are not working very good.

What is happening then is that the clients won’t renew the contract, since the clients are not happy about what they got out of it. Or it didn’t work the way they wanted it to work – so again it’s the expectations.

**Q: Do you notify customers about your upgrades?**

A: Very rarely we do it, because it’s done in the weekend. For the social media product, then we give notification, it’s inside the platform saying; we gotta do this, then and it’s gonna do this and fix these issues… It’s basically up to the account managers to tell their clients what’s happening, it’s not like automated by the company.

In case there is an issue; we don’t want to tell them it’s an issue there if they don’t know about it.

2. **Can you give an example where you improvised/customized the service you provided to different customers?**

A: That is again done by the sales, depending what they have to do to get the client onboard.

We have a standard package, up to 5 users. The reason why we do this is because when we incur all our cost when setting up the service, because we have to pay for servers and pulling
all the content. So therefore there are upfront payment as well. If you want the small solution
the cost will be almost the same. Off course, we have a lot of NGO’s and small companies
that cannot spend that much amount, therefore we try to tailor for them. Really depends on
what we want to do. The sales team has to consider their budget – what do they have to
do to meet/exceed their budget, especially hectic in the end of a month.

- Push

- low price, fast decision

- confidential

We are trying to be strict on how we do things. Since it’s a module-based service, it’s fairly
tailored according to what the clients need. Do they need analysis, do they need distribution,
just monitoring, what do they really need? Do they need to know the journalist, press
releases, this and that. Basically, we just package the solution they want. Usually, most
clients, 70% of the client, just buy the standard and we sell the module as it goes on.[…..]

Many clients will just say, ok let’s start here, and we will see how it goes.

World toilet organisation, very cheap contract.

We have the Vatican city as a client, I don’t think they pay the full price either, so the pope
will get the reports.

It doesn’t matter how you get there […..] on meeting budget requirement.

We want to get as much money from our clients, there are guidelines, but the offer price
will be set according to the size of the client – what they can afford.

Q: have you gotten any feedbacks where the clients feel rushed?

A: yes, that is usually the sales as we want a quick decision usually within the months. Due to
procurements and this and that (...) it sometimes might take long time until they actually sign
the contract, then again what we can do is that if you sign today we can give a 50% the first
(...) but then it need to be done today and there is always incentives involved.

For us the cost will be how much time as time is money and how much time am I spending
on this prospect and the company. So if you can do it quickly then we can give you a better
price and if not then look at the prices on what you will have to pay. It depends on how open
the clients are (...) doing the process quickly and who can do the closing off the doors and
OK, are we ready to do a decision.

So if someone says I need to speak to legal to approve the contract then he says OK I will call
on Friday, but then you call on Friday and they say “ I forgot to speak with them, it will take
four weeks” but if you say “I want to speak with financial department” you can speed it up
and finalize it faster. Companies and NGO are people who are not used to making decision
and might be feeling pressured about this kind of approach. And you need to you know and
sort of feel how they feel and if you ask for money they might become uncomfortable...(...)

It’s about understanding the companies and people and we will always try to make the
decision as quick as possible and the decision process is just a formality you know. It is about
trying to do that, but it usually doesn’t work that way. For instance I talked to Rolls Royce
and they are a pain in the ass because of the procurement. They say lets meet on the middle
way and the middle way is for you to meet on our terms. And then I was like that is not a
middle way, this is our terms and you agreed to it before and the service is ending today, so
basically so we are turning it off if you don’t sign today.
Then they talk to the procurement and they say we don’t know what this is and then they say we don’t like this and we want it this way. And then I say, but the your users like it(...) And then they respond with “I might go with the competitors” they say, but then again your users don’t like the competitors software. They want us you know, then you suddenly start to talk with someone completely differently and then the process may take 6 months again.

Like GENTING for instance is a big company down here, they are also that way. You have to accept their standard, terms and condition and usually terms and condition for big companies are for physical good or like engineering projects and so on. Like what we are doing is like software right?, like its online and we just turn it on and its delivered right now. And in their terms and conditions they say they are gonna pay x days after the delivery of the product and it doesn’t really apply right?

That is why we need to use our terms and conditions as they feel like they are bigger so you have to accept our terms and condition or we are not gonna work with you. That is usually a big problem and this takes a lot of time of negotiating everything. So, sometimes big corporations might be difficult to do business with unless if you are like a already registered vendor, then it is really easy because they say I got a budget and here’s the PO number, I want it and OK, then you can say here you go and send us a invoice. Like STATOIL for instance do that. So as long as you can speak to a guy that wants it, then you can say here you go I will invoice you 30 000 dollars.

Q: what do you see as the major issues in terms of the conditions are the payments or are?

A: Well, from the clients point of view our terms and conditions are usually upfront payment
and because you pay everything upfront even if you sign a 5 year contract with us ,you pay for all the 5 years straight away. And you know, most companies are used to paying monthly right?

Even if its cellphone or supplies or whatever yes? You get a monthly bill. We have a fixed costs so you know what it is gonna cost you for the period you buy it, but for since we have all the cost setting up the product we say we want the cash in. We are a growth company right? We are a startup, so we say we want the cash straight away so we can count it now, you know, that is the way we want it. Of course, some clients have split payment agreement and stuff because then it’s being negotiated with them. And that is usually some companies that say they will never pay upfront for two 3 years, never.

[2nd Interviewer] ask a question (cant hear it clearly) : 6:30 min

Yes, we usually have a auto-re-newel clause which is like for cellphone or sell plans, since its subscriptions its just continuous until you say I don’t want it anymore. And then send them a new invoice and say that the news(service) ended.

Since we are acting on a two-year contract then they say “no way, two new years? I just want a month” and usually a company say we don’t want to auto re-new. The company will also act on the liability clauses since some companies would like the opportunity to sue you, what we say is that you can sue us for liability but it can never exceed the amount of money you paid the service, since you cant sue us for 100 thousand if the product only cost 15 thousand. (...) So some company might react to that as well.

Q: so how do you manage those difficulties in those terms.
A: Well, usually like most clients they don’t usually read the terms and conditions and our T&C is just 2 pages and its just for telling them what our responsibilities are and then you know. (...) And if you got legal or procurement reading it then, usually they will say that this is pretty straight forward, but there are something we don’t really like and that is upfront payment and the auto re-newal. Usually. The rest is fairly fine.

Then we have some company saying this is fine enough and then they say, but “we also want you guys to be signing ours”. That’s the conflict and that happens and they might say we can sue you amount of money. The terms and conditions is usually not a problem at all. But sometimes it is, it is usually the big corporations and procurement and legal team viewing the contract and say this is not how we do it. Otherwise its like its the end user who usually confirm the end contract and say this if for my unit or team and I can sign the contract myself. We just send the contract per email basically and they will review it and sign it and then send it back, that’s we expect that person to be to sign on behalf of the company right, so yeah, the contract signing is usually really quick. Takes a minute.

**GAP 4** (interview object: MWG’s customers)

**Definition:** The difference between the service delivered to customers and the promise of the firm to customers about its service quality

**Objectives:** Does what the employees communicate and promise the customer differ from the actual given service?

**1. What do/can you promise your customers in terms of value and service?**

Q: That is basically like having your product right?
A: Yeah, so it usually depends on the value points we have, its basically our strength if you look at free tools for instance. And if you look at Google its easy to use and everyone use it to find information. And what differs us from with the paid service is the extent of coverage you get, so Google has like 25 thousand sources globally, we have 170 thousand globally.

Google is mostly US and Europe based, while we have sources in every single country in the world so we have local content in all markets and we scan in local language as well. So you can put in mandarin for instance it will look for mandarin. And then the search tool is much more advanced of course. You won't be able to do simple search like this word plus this word, but we can say this word must be in title or ingress or it must be in combination with these words and the maximum distance between each other and so on.

You got all this adjustments you can do. Then you have you go backwards in time and look at information that is couple of years old and we can distribute it to you and it really depends on what you want. Basically what you are getting is extensive tool and you get free support as well, we set it up and you shouldn’t really have to use the tool everyday, you will get the report and as long as its working it will save you time so you don’t go looking for the information yourself.

Q: in addition to that, I was just wondering, in the beginning you said you hopefully try to exceed the client’s requirements and expectations, right? But in what way can you exceed?

A: Well, this is usually how I do it. For instance, you know not everyone will understand. They the get the idea of what the service can do and what they want. I'll send you what I want.
For instance, Nestlé, they say they want to know about coffee and you know baby food and all, but if I get those words its like, ok, should I just put in the search for baby food globally and add in all of our sources. We will just be pumping you with information like you wont believe it. If you just look for coffee then you will get blog post saying “I just met Jones for coffee and it was awesome” and he will say hmm this is interesting. It doesn’t really matter, so how we try to add value is to advice on how to actually find information for them. If you know and try and understand positions and companies, you know, so if I know this guy working in sales I will try to say “ok you are probably interesting in sales right?” because you are working with companies.

One guy might say I am interested in competitor and then we say you don’t want everything about competitor, you would want share price and news for that competitor or when they enter a new agreement or contracts. So we help them in getting what they want so usually what we do is when we try to sell something as just want to have an excuse to call them up and say “hi I just had an idea about how you should be doing” or “should this be interesting for you to do this and that”.so we try to being proactive in terms of how we can optimize what they can get from it. Usually like what simple sales like thinking as well, you will always exceed expectations by adding things they want so you try to show them all the possibilities and all so you can actually distribute new and adding newsfeed and all.

But not many know of this function. But maybe the sales guy just want to do a quick sale so he might even have shown the newsfeed option and maybe that is the most important thing for them actually, you never know.so yeah, it's really how we how we yeah add value to the
client and the users is what they really need and then we look at what we can deliver and then we try to advice on it.

**Q: Personal service is also something you can add value to? In terms of you saying for example; hey I got an idea and would this be interesting? Is that a tactic?**

**A:** Some clients love the fact that you now that I come for instance come and do a workshop for them and show them how to use it or all those things. Like Siemens for instance the other they wanted me to come to an event at Marina Bay Sands where they just wanted me to come and see how they do things and speak with their clients. Also how they showcase their stuff, its pretty cool and just hang out and say “hello” and we talked a little bit about expos and trade shows.

Yeah, this is what is happening and we would like to know these things and if they know and see any happenings at their booth, you could pick that up. It's just about building trust and relationship and feel that we care and how they use the service and that they are actually using us as a tool.

**2. Can you give us an example when you have promised a customer one thing, and actually delivered something else? Good and bad incidents?**

**A:** Yeah, for the social media product for instance it has some problems so usually what you say will happen is that it wont or it wont be happening or it wont be performing what it should and it has happened that sometimes clients complain about the speed of the service or those kind of things. So of course you get some complaints in those regions.

We have another service called Meltwater press, which is finding journalists and sending out
press releases and finding media contacts basically. Usually that is such a simple tool so usually that exceed the clients expectations and you can give them 10min training and then they can do it themselves and they will use it actively as well if they send press releases. So usually the feedbacks from those clients is that they are super happy. And that it saves them time and don’t need agents to send out press release or gather media contact list for instance because usually you have to pay, Burton, Martello or some those other companies.

So, we want to send out a press release for plastic bottles for coca cola and those things, they will say “Okay we know journalist I will give you a list of 200 that is relevant and that will cost you 10thousand “.

Well our service cost 15thousand for a year and you can search and find everything you want so its so much easier because they can do everything themselves in house so yeah, they will probably usually be very happy. We try to be very careful about what we promise because if you cant deliver what you promise then you know you got a big problem so usually what we see is that what we promise is what supposed to happen and if the service doesn’t work then you promise that something that should work and usually that is the issue and its because of those things that these issues arises.

Q: yeah I think we covered most of it I just have a top of my mind question if you could give us or tell us about a funny incident or anything were you kind of needed to use or pursue you're customers. I mean a lot of times I remember you talked about saying that you go to dinner with them and talk with your clients and I was then wondering if you have any other persuasive techniques?

A: Usually, well if you have existing clients its usually about understanding those people, its not really hard to start a relationship since you have his phone, mail etc., so usually what is
difficult is to expand your contract to that company. For example you would like to try selling to another division, and how do I do that? Then you are starting on scratch and then its like how do I do how do they do and how do they usually present stuff, what would be interesting for them.

If you have a good relationship and you built trust with the existing guy then its usually easier since you say “Hey how do you think about the R&D department, what do you think they find interesting, who should I call, who do you think will be able to use this service?”, and if that guys like you he would say, “yeah you should call that guy John, hes the guy, he can make decisions quickly...ill call him for you”.

Usually what you end up doing if you want to try from scratch is that you have to prospect and there is a lot of ways to do that you can meet them at events sit down with clients and have a meeting with them, usually what you will do is looking at home page, contact, possibilities, linked in, Facebook, usually you just want to contact or you know whatever. Usually it’s depended on whether you are already working with the company or you are just trying from scratch. You say inform Meltwater and I want to show you and whatever, so its always easier to have contact or reference that can help you out and so that is what you want, that you have a good contact that will be happy to help you out and these are the guys I think you should call for instance. I like the service then I will say you should buy it and as long as you got that going you, the sky is the limit and how big the company is and every person can use this service.

If you are clever enough, you know how they can use this service or how they might use this service and people are good at different things, and in this company as well. Some might be
very good at presenting and showing value for hotels and others might be really good at chemical industry. You know industry companies and some might be good with agencies and its really like people like try to specialize a little bit and its more like business equipment and understanding and try to figure what they are doing and what they should be doing and how can we help them.

If you are good at that then you can basically sell to any company you want.

What we see is that successful people in sales for instance is that they find the company is that if they do a sell for them they contact all their competitors as well and say we worked with these guys and they are using the service and we think you should use this, and I want to show you how this works. They will say that sound interesting and that is what usually works. So one of my colleagues for instance, he just been working with ABB, its a Swedish company, for 3years, its a big company with engineers and stuff. He sold 60 contract to them over 3years,and thee are the only company he calls and he just uses the guys who gets him on-board and asks who is the general manager for Nigeria and they say its this guy and etc. (...) He then gets contact and then he just uses like I’m working with these guys and they like OK that’s interesting and that start new purchases that way.

Sometimes you know, I have never met clients, but only through phone and some clients they just want to sit down and invite you to events and you know free drinks and stuff. We had DHL had a big event recently and we just joked around with them on the event and said we want some DHL balloons. The day after there came this courier with this big balloons and stuff. So one guy remembers this and its pretty funny joking around with these guys and it helps building a relationship with them. So, a lots of tricks, but usually its your personal skills that determined how you relate to your clients right? Some will just be very professional only
and some guys like The employee joke a lot with his clients, he is like talking about pork meat with the Muslim customers in Malaysia and just being stupid and they like it, so its very different.
Employee 3

GAP 1 (interview object: MWG’s employees)

Definition: The difference between what customers expect and what management perceived about the expectations of the customers.

Objective: From the company’s point of view; what is the perceived value and service you think you're adding to your customers and what do you think the customer expect from you as a service provider.

Q: What added value do you think your customer expect from using your services?

A: Well, a lot of my clients are using for example the service for lead generating. So that is one main thing that we use. Specially when it comes to the offshore and marine products, because it is easy to find good projects. And in the power industry you know, so there will be new power plants and built in Vietnam or Sri Lanka, or what ever. And they can see that in a early stage to pitch to them so (...). And then the most general thing is obviously to get the good overview of what’s happening in the industry about the sales and all that. Yeah, that’s probably what 90 % of my clients are using it for anyway. And then of course you have crisis management, and those kinds of things. What’s going on right now, what do we actually need to do. For example, British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. They, during the London riots there was a lot of news about that in Malaysia. Because one of the students from Malaysia was actually robbed or something. So there was a lot of mentions about that in Malaysian news papers, and they were really like; should we address this, should we not address this. And then they used our analysis to see like; what’s the viral, how much of this is being mentioned now, is it actually dying out or should we go out from the High Commissioners point of view and say, ok this is bad, this is good, and you know; what do we have to say about this. But, when it’s already, actually came to that you know; should we go
out and say anything, the viral of doing that, the story is already dying out. So they decided to not publish anything because that might, you know, add some oxygen to that fire.

**Q:** So they kinda use it for some kinda a riot control thing?

A: Yeah, a little bit. You know, because you don’t want to (...). The most important thing is to understand, listen and understand. And, if you can understand what’s going on, then you can address the problem in the right way.

a. Could you tell us about a certain incident that proves your customers have had the benefits of using your services?

1. From the experiences at MWG, do you think customers are satisfied with your service in terms of fulfilling their expectations/requirements?

**GAP 2 (interview object: MWG’s customers)**

**Definition:** The difference between management’s perceptions of customer expectations and the translation of those perceptions into service

**Objectives:** How does the management’s perception of customers expectations translate into service?

**Q:** Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has fulfilled the customer expectations?

A: Lots of times. I like one of the Norwegian clients, it’s “Østfold Gress”. And they are pretty much doing/dealing with new grass, on football pitches, on parks and stuff like that. And they are three people in that (administration staff) and they use our system to pretty much find out
if, for example one of the top football teams had a bad pitch, because then they can call up
and say; hey, we notice that you had a really crappy pitch. (That was mentioned in the news
paper). And let me come over and fix that for you. That is pretty fun, because we have a lot
of big companies like Coca Cola, and all of those. But “Østfold Gress”, is like just the
smallest company of probably all of them and they are using Meltwater in an unique way.
That’s pretty cool. But, since we are trying to make sure that each company and individual
that gets our news is tailored to fit their needs, because so it s like lot of different value props
for each persons so. (i can clearly see on the top of my mind)

Q: Do you have any examples from Singapore?

A lot of the times, for example for a PR agency, they are having their client to make sure, like
ok, where have they been mentioned, and they have a press release that came out, so one
thing for example that one of my client are using it to, is that to make sure that; where is that
press release mentioned and then they conduct reports to their clients. So for example, when
Bloomberg sending out a big press release; who was actually picking this up, and which
countries did they (...). We were targeting Thailand, did we actually get any mentiones in
Thailand. So that’s pretty much how all my PR agencies clients are using it (...)

2. Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has not fulfilled the
customer expectations? How did you manage that specific situation?

A: Yeah, we had one client that really had some specific need when it came to value add.
Like how much, to calculate how much that mention was worth. And we can do some of it,
but since they have really old school traditional way of doing it. So for example, which page
is this on. Because then you can calculate how much is that worth. But that does not really
work online, because if it’s on the front page, it is a little bit stranger. So it was sold to the
client and it wasn’t maybe communicated well enough that we didn’t do that traditional paper clippings. And then of course it can create some problems because of that.

Q: So how did you manage that problem?

A: It depends, right. But sometimes that, what I’m trying to do when it comes to problems like that is to sell our system even more. Like; why is it that 22 000 clients are using Meltwater right now. And I try to explain to that person that is upset or not happy with the service right now. Because usually we can find something if you prove enough to that this is really important for them, but we can’t give them. And then, of course you try to be flexible, if someone has promised something and doesn’t deliver, or a source that they really need is disappearing behind a pay wall. We try to find something that makes them happy again. Maybe they really needed the news on that homepage, then you can say that they will get a discount on the price for that or you can get something in return to make sure that they feel that they are appreciated.

Q: So, I have a question to add on. Have you had any clients who has actually where you met their requirements, but still they weren’t happy and that then what did you do to make them satisfied again?

A: Sometimes you can’t right? I had one client in Malaysia, said it was a great system and everything. But what they needed paper clippings, and we don’t provide that. They had used our services for a couple of years and then just because the budgeting and other things they had to cut us. Because the management had decided that they had to really focus on the local paper clippings, and Meltwater don’t provided that. So there are many things that you can’t do with. Of course, we try do deal with those cases, when they say that they no longer have any needs for the media monitoring. And then we try to say: do you have any news letter or
news (leads/feeds), social media. I usually pitch for the social media part, because that’s kinda hot right now. Try to save the client by selling something else and find some other value proposition.

**Q: Based on your perception of customer expectations - how did you implement this into the service?**

A: Hm, that is a tricky. Because I work in client relations, and so when I come in 90 days after the system has been sold. So some times, the other business guys, they really want to close that deal, so they promise something crazy. Like, you can get Social Media in the Meltwater News system as well, they might say. And they bend the facts are little bit. One of the most important things that I feel (that I am doing, I have to do by implementation), is to manage expectations. Because, the clients will not be happy if they have the wrong idea about what we can deliver. So, contact very fast after they have been transferred to me and here in Asia there is also very important to meet with your clients. The relationship is (...). I come from Sweden and were working in Scandinavia. The relationship there is not necessarily, you don’t have to always meet people. It’s (...). But if you don’t meet your clients down here, it will be trickier to renew them. (... couples of years now).

**Q: What is your perception of the customers experiences/expectations?**

A: Pretty good, and especially down here in Asia. Because, we don’t really have, or of course there are competitors, but... Everybody knows Google, but Google has like 25 000 sources or something like that. And those are mostly based in North America and Europe when it comes to Google alters. And we have 25 000 sources only here in Asia, and 160 000 in global. So, people (...). The ones that wants to have both international coverage and local coverage are very happy about what we can provide. And as long as nobody has promised something that
we don’t. Like if, you say that this is a media, online media monitory tool than they are happy with that.

**Q: So basically, what do you think are the value prospects you are providing to the customers?**

A: (information you don’t need to filt) Because, it is so many information sources out there. You have social media, traditional media, and who should they listen to. So we think the most important value proposition is that we filter out all those different sources, and make sure that, that is the busiest, critical information. That is what I think is the most important.

**GAP 3 (interview object: MWG’s customers)**

**Definition:** The difference between specifications or standards of service quality and the actual service delivered to customers.

**Objectives:** Are there any differences in the standards given to the employees and what the employees deliver to customer?

**Q: Give us one (continuous) issue that proves that the standard of the service has differed from the actual service.**

A: Well, in Australia now for example. We’re having (…), same thing that has happen in America a couple of year ago, when they are putting up pay walls. So, what we do is online media tracking. We are reliable of the papers that is out there is open for our clients to use. So, for example now some of the really important ones Australian sources, within the “Murdock Group” for example is now put behind a pay wall. So all of our clients that has been reliable on that specific source. Now suddenly need to figure out what we want to do with that right, because all the sudden they might need to buy license within that paper to get...
that content to get behind that pay wall. So that’s an issue that might come up because people (...). We are only searching the internet and gathering the information, but we don’t own the information that is provided. So, if some decides to put up pay walls, then it’s kinda hard to do anything about that.

Q: Has that happen here in Singapore?
A: Well, we have a couple of sources like “Strait Times” for example, which is behind a pay wall. But then we have an agreement with them that you can read the article within seven days or so. After seven days it will be behind a pay wall (...). So sometimes of course it is (...) clients may not know that, because nobody has told them or they didn’t listen, or mishear something. And then it might be that they maybe feel that; what happen, I need that story, it’s been more than seven days and I really need that story.

Q: so what happens when the customers really needs that story after the pay wall appears?
A: Well, then they have to (...) Because, you know, we don’t own that and then they have to go to the main source. Say, then they have to go to the “Strait Times” and buy that specific source.

Q: So they have to do it them self and not you?
A: Yeah.

Q: Can you give an example where you improvised/customized the service you provided to different customers?
A: Since we sell to users and we have different categories in each system. So if we have five different users in a system, it might be that those five different people have different needs for information. Then one guy is working in the marketing team and communication team and then they want to hear a lot about the competitors and their own brand name for example. But the sales director doesn’t really care about that he wants to have leads. So then you set the system that each category is reflecting what each individual would like to have. Would you like specific example or?

Right now I’m working with ABB, and revamping that system a little bit. And then we have a lot of different people in that system. We have communications department, business development, we have for low voltage, sales directors, and there are also head of different markets. So we have set up like for example that the sales director for South East Asia is now getting power plants, solar panels, and new products that is going on there. But the communication manager, she does not get any of that. She only gets like; what’s going on in the industry new right now. And that’s pretty standard, (...) to find out what is it each individual needs.

**Q: And that you can customize all in the same package?**

A: Yeah.

**Q: And that’s a fixed price that package?**

A: Exactly. What we do is that we don’t want to have to many in the system in either. For example, if all the sudden these guys says; we need to add four or five more users to the system for the sales team, because we have these different markets we want to have a lead generator. Then we try to sell a sub-license instead, because it’s easier to manage five persons
in one license, than to have 20 in different categories (agents) as we call it, and have 20 people in the same account.

Q: But can you charge a lower price then for example, if they say that they don’t want to pay the same as the others?

A: It depends. The good thing about the sales leads and those kind of things, is that they are directly generating money right, so they can say: ok, if we can get one news that will lead to sales that is (...). Sometimes it depends on what kind of package they get, if you have a big group or like “Kongsberg Gruppen” or either big enterprises, can have like (ramme avtale). Then they get special prices when they want to have more than one license for example. (Depends on how we set it up).

GAP 4 (interview object: MWG’s customers)

Definition: The difference between the service delivered to customers and the promise of the firm to customers about its service quality

Objectives: Does what the employees communicate and promise the customer differ from the actual given service?

Q: What do/can you promise your customers in terms of value and service?

A: Well, we promise them that we are going to deliver what we say we are going to deliver, and that’s in the contracts. We get into trouble if we don’t do that. What we deliver is that they get the news that is out there, so if we say that we have a source and that ABB is mentioned in that source then we say that we will provide that information to you. (What they need the monitoring for). If they say that they don’t have the 50 000 to buy this, maybe they get a smaller package for only one user (...). And then we show that this system is good for
them and then you can of course (up sell them more value) to them. And then they will probably get more people involved in that system as well. Because you have shown and proven that this is a good system.

Q: I was wondering how you can add more value into the service to the package you are already selling?
A: Well, it's very important to understand your clients. So if you don’t understand and what they do in their business. So one of the most simple thing is to ask: how do they make money and what’s their KPI’s. So the marketing manager maybe wants to have more exposure and if you can show in a way that they can reach put to more journalists, then you can add more value to the system.

Q: Can you exceed the expected value? If so, how would you exceed the expected value?
A: Well, if we sold to someone for example that don’t really know what it is.

Q: Can you give us an example when you have promised a customer one thing, and actually delivered something else? Good and bad incidents?
A: when i first came down here to Asia, one of my former colleagues had sold a media report and it was really bad. He didn’t do a good job at all. They were very clear about what they wanted, but he had just not delivered. And then I had to make it all from scratch again. So the client got their media report maybe six months later. And they were not happy when I first talked to them for course because when they been sold a report that hasn’t been delivered in the way that they felt was satisfying. But then when we actually showed them the report that we had done correctly then, now they are happy clients, happy (campers) that’s what we call them.
Q: How do they actually show their satisfaction?

A: They tell you, and that is the biggest things that you can’t go around and assume things. You have to ask, and I think that’s one of the hardest things to do when you’re new is to be very direct. Like; ok, I understand that you are not happy with this, but why?. Because if they don’t express that you can’t really fix it. And then afterwards like, in this case there was a school that wanted to see the mentions about their faculty members and (publications) and stuff like that. Then they said that the principal was very satisfied with the report and we got an email about that. Then the bad air was cleaned out.

Q: When you said in your example when the media report came six months later than originally planned. Of course you fixed that problem, but did you need to compensate in any way for those six months that were missing?

A: No, not really. They had already (bought it) and the only thing that they were upset about was that they didn’t get what was promised to them for various reasons, but I think the thing that we lost most there was trust. This was almost a year ago and now it id back to normal. It probably took seven-eight months before they were satisfied again, hundred percent. Because they trusted in me, when they were promised so many things previously. And then it didn’t get delivered, well I delivered, but maybe I wouldn’t do it the next time. So it took a long time to rebuild that trust. I think that was lost. And the only thing you can do is to do your job correctly, to establish that trust again.

Q: How does your service quality match the customer expectations? (Can you give any concrete examples?)
A: I think that Meltwater News is really good, when it comes to how we present it and how people are getting the information. How it is distributed to the clients. Because it looks very professional, especially when we are going more and more from the print and clippings to online. And some of the reports that you get its clippings and pdf, looks pretty bad. Because if someone has (...), scanned and things like that. So, I think that. I heard one client that does that for example, when we sent out the news letter, because then we tailor it to be like. It doesn’t say it is Meltwater it’s their own company and they are (sending) news from the Meltwater system. And they like: ok, this looks very professional and I can send this out to my clients.

Q: How do you manage the expectations you are creating for the customers? (Any examples)

A: Of course, you’re selling it right. You try to find out where is the pain for this person and how can I solve it when it comes to this information flow. And then how do I manage their expectations. I think it start with that you dont over promise, as soon as you overpromise you shoot your self in the foot a little bit. Its better to be restricted when it comes to that. Because, we have a good service and I’m proud of the product I’m selling. And if you don’t over sell it, you let them (understand) that this is the good product. So you don’t have to do that much.

Q: Do you think you have any issues with the sales men here that they don’t believe in the product, but that they try to push it to the customers?

A: Sometimes maybe, in some of the markets that we have here are starting up a new system. Meltwater News have been around now for 11 years and we’ve proven that this system is sold and it’s people like it right. The pope is using it. But when we’re launching a (...). When I started out, I worked in Meltwater (Talent), which is a management software solution,
streamline recruitment. And that was very new, we didn’t have anything like that before, so that was very hard in the beginning. Because you know that nobody has sold this before, and that is like; ok, should I believe in the product because it’s good or because (...). But after you do that first sale and you get a client to say that; this is saving a lot of time for me and I no longer have to write by hand or e-mail to all those hundred clients they (applicate?) and stuff (...). And then you start to believe in that. Maybe if you’re new and if you have a new product then it can be hard some times. Or in a market that is hard to sell. Like India is a hard market, because we are so much more expensive than the local vendors. So then I think that, well I am not sure, but what I would assume is to see from the Indian colleges that they sometimes, they cut the price a little bit to get the sales in. Because they may be not believe in the value that much because it’s so expensive. And you know the system in India is costing what an average manager is earning in a year. So, like for them it’s enormous amount of money that we’re trying to sell. But you have to remember, it’s not persons it’s businesses that has millions of dollars in revenues each year.

Q: Just a curious question though, as you are in client relations right? You manage expectations and so on, I was just wondering. Do you sometimes, do your clients come in with a positive attitude towards the product upon talking/interaction with you?

Ander: Yeah, the brand is now more (...) during (the end of the month), but not everybody has used Meltwater before. So when it’s been sold it’s like; oh, is it this easy or oh (...). I had a bank the other day, she was so happy. She had have one of our competitors before and she’s like: it took forever to set up and you know, bla bla bla. This is very good, I have no problem with renewing. And then your happy right, because it’s kinda nice to get that feedback. You believe in the product you sell and you get that confirmation that it’s actually good for your clients as well.
Q: Have you had any negative feedback yet?

A: Oh, yes. Once again when the expectations hasn’t been managed from the start. Maybe you say that something and that it’s something else. One guy he told the client that, or the soon to be client, that we were saving all the articles internally on our (...) server, which is not true. We don’t do that. We just provide the link, and that is we save the link and save the phrase that were been picked up. But if the article was deleted from that URL, then it’s not on the internet anymore and you can’t find it. And for this client it was very important to go back and do reports from previous years and they needed the full articles. When they realized that this wasn’t the case, of course they were pretty upset.

Q: How did you managed that?

A: Ah, we’re still managing that. Again, then it’s like ok; what is it that is really important for them? Do they really need to go back to 2007 and read that entire article or do they need to know that they have been picked up. Like, ok, my company now (...) name has been picked up 50 times in January 2011. If you can try to sell that idea in, of course it’s hard when they have already made up their mind, that they really need that article. You have to like, come up with an example or try to sell in the new idea that. So they get happy with us.

Q: So the negative feedback has been, wasn’t directly on the product itself, but more on the expectations that the sales people where providing?

A: When we had (...) system now in September, there was some bugs of course as it’s always is, one of the couple of clients had really, really slow systems. So it’s like they clicked on the service log in, and it could take for a couple of minutes before they came in. It’s not like we have the 56 K modem anymore, YOU WANT IT NOW. So that was of course directly bad
Feedback on the system. It’s taking too long, I can’t get my (...) out of the system because it’s too slow.
Employee 4

A: When I started, I was the only Singaporean here. After today, we just hired another one. So, we’re going to have a few more joining us in June/July. So we’re expending the locally as well.

Q: So you are in the New Sales Division?

A: Yes, news. I’ve been there throughout the carrier, so no I run the operations for news. Managing Director for News Department. It’s a new challenge everyday.

Q: Since it is Norwegian Business, do you find any differences?

A: Yeah, well before Meltwater I was with a Japanese company, Toshiba. It is a bit more hierarchy. And you don’t get to (say) your ideas a lot or as often as here in Meltwater of course. And we sit together with every one, that’s the fun part of course. It is a different culture, which is more encouraging I guess for people to really show off their talent and the potential.

Interview Guide

GAP 1 (interview object: MWG’s employees)

Definition: The difference between what customers expect and what management perceived about the expectations of the customers.

Objective: From the company’s point of view; what is the perceived value and service you think you're adding to your customers and what do you think the customer expect from you as a service provider.

Q: What added value do you think your customer expect from using your services?
A: I think as a service provider the easiest to see is the technology, and it’s suppose to take away like 70-80 % of their job scope. So they can focus on something else that is important.

Q: Could you tell us about a certain incident that proves your customers have had the benefits of using your services?

A: So I can use ministry of men power. (... in Singapore). So I believe what they do on a daily basis is that they have a team of 20 people on a (...) division. So everyday, each of them would get a few news papers to read up manually. And they look for the right key words, man power, income issues, wages issues. And if their happy, they will start clip on it, scan, send it to a corrector for the day. The corrector will look through every thing from the 20 people. Then decide what is important and (push) it into a news letter and send it to the top management, which includes the ministers, and so the biggest people in the country. But using MW, they are cutting down the timing that they need to spend to look for the news. And they got a new letter feature where by some (... of some buttons) and set up a news letter, and just click on it and send it. So it cuts 70-80% of their time on the daily basis.

Q: From the experiences at MWG, do you think customers are satisfied with your service in terms of fulfilling their expectations/requirements?

A: So far I would say yes. But of course, there are different companies who work differently. Some who has special needs. So sometimes why use a separate vendor to cover 100%. I think that there is no perfect vendor out there, that can do everything.

Q: So do you think they are kinda matching up two vendors, as you and some other?

A: Some do that, yes. So they would use a PR agency together with us.
GAP 2 (interview object: MWG’s customers)

**Definition:** The difference between management’s perceptions of customer expectations and the translation of those perceptions into service

**Objectives:** How does the management’s perception of customers expectations translate into service?

1. **Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has fulfilled the customers expectations?**

**Q:** Can you recall an incident where you have felt that your service has not fulfilled the customers expectations? How did you manage that specific situation?

**A:** Not fulfilled, hm. There was one, (Bengle from America), I worked with them in Hong Kong as well. So the expectations where a little bit different. So they where looking for a tool that was supposed to take away all their work. But, there are no such things right. It is just expectations. It’s like when you drive a car, you still have to drive it yourself.

**Q:** Based on your perception of customers expectations - how did you implement this into the service?

**A:** Usually, what happens when the client come aboard. We do a lot of (news) analysis, so to understand what they are actually require. And we set up, or tailor the service according to that. And usually, before they come aboard, they already know this part. But we will give them more in-depth analysis. And that’s when we tell them what we can do and whatever we can’t. Which they probably have to do manually with staff.
GAP 3 (interview object: MWG’s customers)

**Definition:** The difference between specifications or standards of service quality and the actual service delivered to customers.

**Objectives:** Are there any differences in the standards given to the employees and what the employees deliver to customers?

**Q:** Give us one (continuous) issue that proves that the standard of the service has differed from the actual service.

A: Well the easiest one is black and white. In the contract it says: if we can’t do (whatever pitch), they have the right to cancel the service. Yeah, we do protect our clients as well. But generally, because it’s just a software service company, so we do media intelligence, nothing that is too different or complicated. So usually, the needs are very general, it’s just that different companies will need different types of news. So it is not that tough actually to meet their requirements.

**Q:** Has there been any incidents there the system or service hasn’t worked as it should be?

A: Having being here for four years, I think there has only been ones that was down. But the down time wasn’t because the system wasn’t working, we were just upgrading something new. And it just happend recently for 45 minutes. So it wasn’t like a down, down time.
Q: So the employees have standard to follow right, and the standard that are delivered to the customers, do they sometimes differ from employee to employee?

A: Employee to employee, I think generally wise is always the same. Because we have our core of conduct, what we can do, what we shouldn’t do. So there is quite a standard, but for different clients, they sometimes have different needs. Some of them would need some more attention, so we pay more attention to them. For the rest they are very apprehension, they do it them self, so it depends on the client.

Q: Can you give an example where you improvised/customized the service you provided to different customers?

A: For the tool wise, it is very rare that we make adjustments, because it is already built. But we sort of educate then how it can be useful for them. Like for Rolls Royce, we with them here in Singapore. So initially, they would just reading news about them self, so they have no idea why they need competitors information and stuff. They are a very small team, and they don’t know how to do (corporate combs?). So for our job is to educate them how similar companies (use them/system). So rather than improvising the service, we teach them, or improvise how they can work and how this information will be useful for them.

GAP 4 (interview object: MWG’s customers)

Definition: The difference between the service delivered to customers and the promise of the firm to customers about its service quality

Objectives: Does what the employees communicate and promise the customer differ from the actual given service?
1. What do/can you promise your customers in terms of value and service?
A: There is never need to promise, because it is all written in black and white. Black and white(...) the customer service that we have. Usually, we have a very quick turn-around time. If you call a (...) vendor, they will tell you that it is 48 hours turn-around time. But we have cases where we have like 20 minutes turn-around, just to help out our clients, make them happy, satisfied. Because we’re looking at the long-run right, but there is never a promise to be honest, because it is all black and white, they would never trust you as a (person).

Q: So you always stick to the contract? That’s what you promise?
A: Yes.

Q: Can you give us an example when you have promised a customer one thing, and actually delivered something else? Good and bad incidents?
A: No.

3. How does your service quality match the customer expectations? (Can you give any concrete examples?)

Q: How do you manage the customer expectations? / how do you manage the expectations you are creating for the customers?
A: It’s a lot done at the front, before they come aboard. So we actually, fully understand what they require and telling them how the system will be and fulfill that. And we tell them, of course what are the areas that we cannot cover for them up-front. The only reason we do it up-front is because, we will not wait until the stage where there signing of the contract, and
suddenly we pick up something that we cannot do and they go: ok, maybe we have to re-think about that. So usually, we do it at up-front.

**Q: So do you have any competitors here in Singapore, like direct competitors?**

A: Hm, I think that people may compare us to Factiva, they are US (...) company. So they have very US based sources. We have Media Monitors Asia, they are in Malaysia, or actually in Australia, but they started to buy up/out companies. They are considered to be the main competitors.

**Q: Do you consider them to be as strong as you are?**

A: Well, they have different service, because they are more into print and broadcast, and we are fully online. Sometimes they uses (concurraly?)