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Survey results

Title: When one accelerant will replace several

Or what do consumers think of this

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During the time of intensive discussions on joining the food-processing industry and evaluation of potential consumer reactions to the unified performing of these companies, it is informative to review the results of research conducted by the advisors of SIGEM Business Consulting, when such connections only existed on paper. Besides the quality of work, the research also dealt with consumer opinion, displayed through a customer survey on the possibility of bringing together accelerants which have been separated until now.

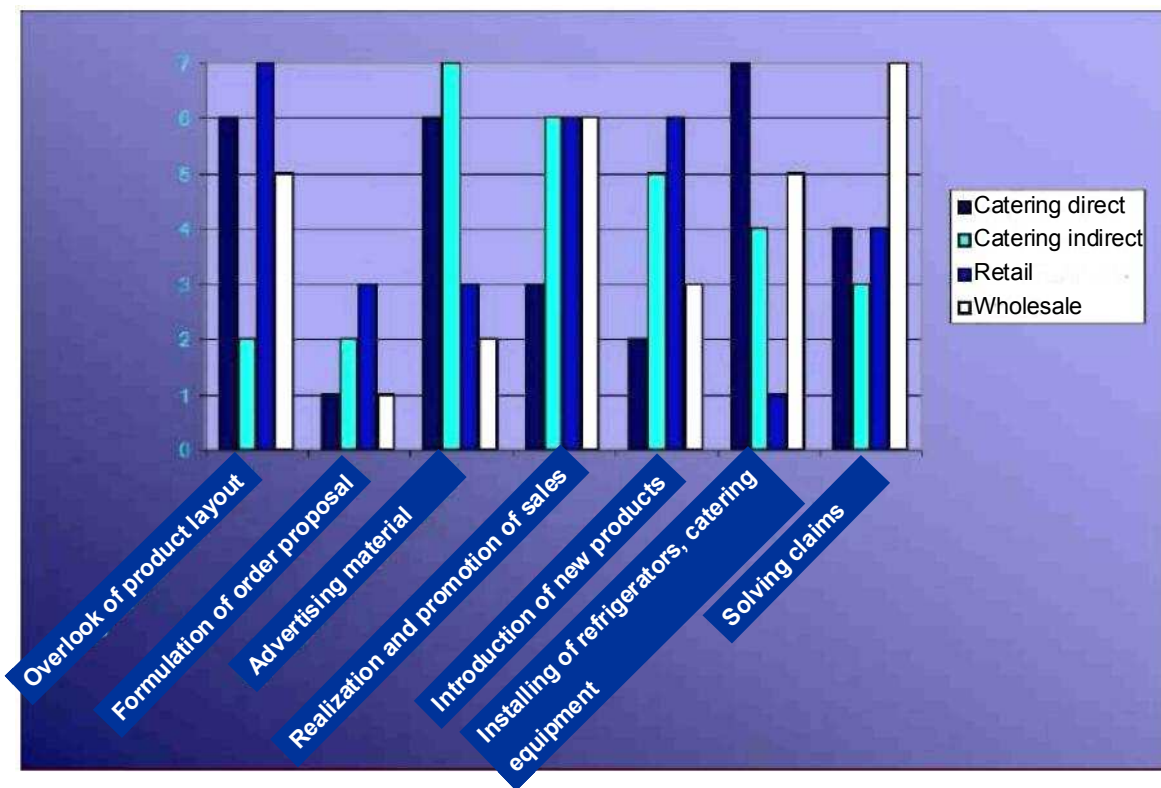
The survey on customer satisfaction was conducted for related companies in the food-processing industry whose goal is to establish unified commercial functions and who already have a common accelerating unit (while conducting the survey there were still separate accelerants in each company). 24 customers, chosen by companies A and B, consisted of 4 typical customer groups, namely: costumers in the catering industry, indirect customers, retail and wholesale establishments. Each group consisted of 6 customers and displayed specific characteristic regarding demand, range and method of ordering. Because of this, the average results for each group were taken into consideration (and not the entire average of all survey results). The results are, of course, based on the customers' assessments.

The first finding of the survey was the sales accelerants of companies A in B were visiting consumers at different frequencies, depending on the category of the consumer. It was interesting that the percentage of visits by accelerants of company B was higher in all categories of consumers. Namely, it had the highest results in retail, lowest in indirect customers in the catering industry. The answer to why accelerants of company A visited their customers less frequently lies in the greater number of customers of company A which results in a larger occupancy and more crowds in individual establishments.

The next bit of information we acquired from the survey had to do with the amount of time that the accelerants of each company devote to each individual customer. Once again, the results had shown the accelerants of company B devoted much more time to their customers in comparison to company A. For example: an accelerant of company B would spend an average of almost 37 minutes per month on a typical retail customer, while accelerants of company A spend 14 minutes less per month on average on customers of the same type.

The customers then assessed their monthly sale of products. The differences between companies A and B were not great. Namely, both companies earn the most through sales to wholesalers within all four mentioned categories of customer. As far as the frequency of ordering products from the customers' side is concerned, the difference between customers of companies A and B were not great, except in the case of wholesale orders in which orders were placed with company A 10 times per month and almost 15 times per month at company B. The general conclusion was that, on average, shops order more frequently from company B.

Data collected through the surveys on which collective activity of accelerants is most important to the buyer, is also interesting. As can be seen from the picture which displays the importance of each activity, the opinion of customers varies a great deal. For direct customers in the catering industry, furnishing of their place of establishment is of greatest importance, followed by putting out products and being equipped with advertising material, whereas indirect customers in the catering industry place more emphasis on advertising material and discount sales promotions. In retail, an overview of products is considered most important, and surprisingly, equipping shops with refrigerators is considered least important. Again, wholesalers assign greatest importance to solving claims and sales promotions, and least importance on formulation of order proposals.



Picture: Importance of activities of accelerants according to customers (7=most important activity, 1= least important activity)

It was very informative to learn what customers think about the quality of the accelerants' work in the activities mentioned in the picture above. In all categories of customer, company B has proved to perform work of a better quality when carrying out its activities. Direct customers of company A in the catering industry assessed the accelerants do not even cooperate in three cases. The same customers evaluated the cooperation of company B accelerants as excellent. The remaining customers evaluated the accelerants at approximately the same level.

The most interesting results of the survey were in regard to the influence of combining sales accelerants of both companies on the expected quality of customer relations which are displayed in the picture showing opinions on the influence of combining accelerants on the quality of work in both companies.

Here, the customers evaluated the effects of change in the complete presentation of all processes combined or their agreement or disapproval thereof. Direct and indirect customers in the catering industry were of the opinion the change brought positive effects. The opinion of retail and wholesalers was completely justifiably divided: the same number of customers was for and against the changes. When examining all the results, we see approximately half of those surveyed supported the changes; a somewhat smaller percentage of them felt the changes have nothing to do with them, the smallest percentage was of those who opposed to the changes, mainly because of their loss of bargaining power.



Picture: Opinion on influence of combining accelerants on the quality of work of companies A and B

Concerning the possibility of companies A and B supplying a common customer, most customers said it did not matter who their supplier was. Some saw more price options and faster delivery possibilities in possible combined purchases.