Halmstad University
School of Business and Engineering
Master of International Marketing
Spring 2008

Conciergeries: Is the Swedish market ready?

Dissertation in "International Marketing", Credit point level: 30
Date of the final seminar: 2008/05/28

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Preface

The market is flooded with new concepts, some of them are working better than others. The concept conciergeries is a relatively new concept on the European market, which is well known on the US one. However, entering a new market with a new concept is not always easy as there are some factors to be considered by the company.

The objective of this thesis is to provide the reader with a theoretical part, which is led by our defined model in the introduction. In the empirical part the gathered information is presented in order to compare the theory and the data gathered in the analysis. Furthermore the aim of this thesis is to prove if a particular market – namely Sweden – is ready for introducing such a concept. During the survey, the Swedish market and the Swedes has been regarded in more detail to compare it with the pioneer (US) and the given market (France). To confirm/not confirm the first statement, the authors made an interview with one potential customer in Sweden. In the end a conclusion and some recommendations are given to the reader.

Acknowledgment

The two authors of this paper, Damien Burnon and Roswitha Huber, want to thank several people for supporting them with their work.

Firstly, we want to thank Harald Castler (Getinge AB), who gave us the possibility of an interview, which was necessary for us to ask some important questions to a potential customer.

Xavier Jadoul and Charles Dessart (e-Conciergerie), who were giving/gave us the first inputs for our topic of the thesis. They were going/went with us through all the process of the paper and were always open for questions, which appeared during the writing process.

Pathy Maxant (Comme à l'Hôtel), who gave us some first inputs and insights in one conciergerie. This was important for us to see how the system behind conciergeries is working.

Raphaël Choserot (Nestor et Nestor) was helping us after defining our topic, he was important for us, as he gave us a lot of information concerning the background of conciergeries and he was also trying to help us defining the model and definition of conciergeries given by us.

Last, not least, we want to say our special thank to our supervisor Svante Andersson, who has directed us from the first idea of the work to the final version.

Unforgettable people we also want to thank are our families and friends who gave us mental support. Especially, Gérard Burnon and Filiz Rude were important in the end of the work, as they were giving us the final suggestions and were reading the final paper before handing in.

Without all these people the presented work would not have been possible in this way.

Damien Burnon and Roswitha Huber

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1 Introduction

In this first chapter of the thesis the background, the research question and the purpose should be introduced to the reader.

1.1 Background

In the past few years, some new business concepts have appeared. Of course, not all of them were successful. One of those new concepts focused on the basic problems that arise in the daily company's life, can be seen in conciergeries, deriving from the French word *concierge*. This kind of person, who was usually found in French buildings, could be a staff member of a hotel or apartment complex, someone who assists guests or residents, by handling the storage of luggage, taking and delivering messages, and making reservations for tours. He can also be a janitor for a building and usually lived on the premises [1].

In this paper, the word "conciergerie" will represent the concept of a company being the middle-man (concierge) between services providers and the end customers.

The term *concierge* is related to the old French *cumcerges*, a word coming from the Latin *concervus*, meaning fellow slave, but the term slave has always had a bad connotation [2]. However, the connotation of the word has been changing for many reasons, one of them is that the society itself is changing. Nowadays, most of the workers confess that they do not have enough time for their daily problems. As 20 percent of their time is spent at their desks which normally would be devoted to handle those problems, the productivity of work can be considerably reduced [3]. The conciergerie is now seen as a way of making the company's life easier (Jadoul and Dessart, 2008).

Such concepts have been more and more common in the US. This can be drawn by one example found in an article of "Black Enterprise" (2008). Here, the story of one entrepreneur is shown – namely Scott A. Graham. He is the founder of the company Xtreme Personal Assistant Concierge Service (XPACS) in Newport Beach, CA (Robinson et al., 2008).

In 2006, the concept of conciergerie was already concerning one out of three workers in the US. In a world where the company expects its workers to always be more and more available for it, and time is something nobody can afford, the workers are asking for more freedom and more time to handle their own problems [4], as stress costs € 20 billion to the European companies per year [3].

For example in Belgium, 45 percent of the active population is female and 80 percent of them have at least one child to take care of. It is clear that the pathologies linked to stress are a major issue. On the other hand, companies have issues developing the loyalty of their employees. Following the Canadian Human Resources Development, 71 percent of the managers have difficulties to keep their qualified workers [3].

In this context, the proposed service by conciergeries is emerging on a market in need. Procedures of management and human resource techniques have to be developed. In the 20th century, management emerged and evolved, trying to find out the best answers to the question "How to push the human resources to contribute the best to the production, functioning and development of the company?" The management has always to adapt to the society continuously as the society is moving into employees more demanding with new life styles [3].

To summarize this, it could be said that on a practical level, conciergeries offer a tailored service, effective and adaptable, clear and profitable for the company. The conciergerie provides different solutions for the employees, finding the contacts they need to solve their daily and professional problems. This includes baby-sitting, company gifts, household issues, gardening, parties, food, taking care of the car or the clothes, pressing, events and administrative affairs. Therefore it can be said that conciergeries improve the life on the inside and the outside of the company, give a better implication and productivity of the employee.

Conciergeries can be seen as a micro, small and medium enterprise (SME), as the concept is relatively new. This should not automatically mean that conciergeries have no starting position as a big firm, but as mentioned before the possibility of finding a large company within this concept is very low.

According to Carter and Jones-Evans (2006) a SME can be characterised as followed:

Enterprise category	Head count	Turnover	Balance sheet
Micro	< 10	€ 2 million	€ 2 million
Small	< 50	€ 10 million	€ 10 million
Medium-size	< 250	€ 50 million	€ 43 million

Source: Carter and Jones-Evans, 2006, 9

Figure 1: EU definition of small and medium enterprises (SMEs)

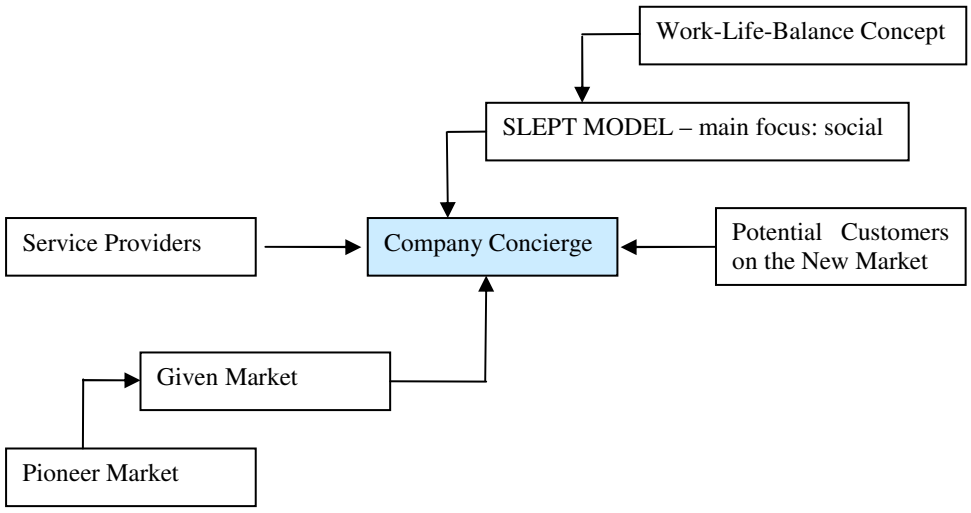
Furthermore the distinction between small and large companies is essential as the small ones differ in their management style, structure, independence and ownership (O'Farrell and Hitchins, 1988; Buckley, 1989). In addition to it, small companies are more limited in the financial, management, human and information resources (Buckley, 1989).

1.2 Developed Model

While trying to find a clear concept of conciergerie it could be found out that a model, also showing the influences concerning a conciergerie, is missing. In addition, there is no definition found in the literature. With this knowledge a concept was build up by the authors with the following influences – SLEPT model, service provider, customers on the market and a given market. If a new concept is introduced to a market there is a high possibility that the concept is influenced by a pioneer market. Therefore the pioneer market has to be considered in this model as well. Like every company, a conciergerie also needs a market on which it can operate in future to expand the business. As this company can be seen as a kind of middleman (operating between the service provider and the customer) both directions are important for this company. Last, not least the so-called SLEPT model is influencing the company as well. Beside the legal, economical, political and technological environment, the social one plays the main role in influencing a conciergerie. All the influencers will be described in detail in the theoretical framework.

Furthermore the below shown model is important to answer or research question in a proper way, as it is essential to know how several influences of a market concept can control the introduction of it on a foreign market. Therefore it was necessary for this paper to define a conciergerie and to show which influences can be fundamental for introducing this concept to a foreign market.

With these thoughts, about the concept conciergerie and the background knowledge about this, a model can be drawn. This model shall be shown in the next figure:



Source: by authors of this paper
Figure 2: Influences for a conciergerie

As this concept is working in some countries and not known in some other European countries, the question appears if this can be introduced in these countries.

1.3 Research Question

With a deeper look on these reasons the authors have decided to narrow the subject down to one country and they want to answer the following research question:

Conciergeries:
Is there a need on the Swedish Enterprise's market for a concept of conciergerie and is the Swedish market ready for it?

1.4 Purpose

In this paper we want to answer the question above and to provide an appropriate model which can used to define a conciergerie and its influences. As the study should give a proper answer to this question the analysis is based on two different sides, firstly a market comparison of the three markets connected with the Hofstede's model and a case study of two successful French companies and one from Belgium and finally an interview with a prospect customer on the Swedish market. These different sides should provide a broader view and should give the authors the possibilities to compare the results and to draw some suggestions for the introduction of the concept in Sweden. The analysis should help us to compare the several markets and to reveal the answer to the question why the concept is working on the US and French market (the Belgian market being very similar to the French one). The analysis of the Swedish market should help us to gain a better knowledge and to give us the possibility to put side by side the markets. To find out if there is a need on the Swedish market for such a concept, one potential customer was interviewed.

2 Theoretical Framework

In this chapter the reader should gain knowledge on the theoretical background to achieve a better understanding for the empirical part.

2.1 Introduction

The theoretical framework should give the reader a clear overview of the introduced model and the concept of conciergerie. In the end all the influences presented in the model will be described to give an understandable definition of what a conciergerie is.

2.2 Services

In this chapter the reader will gain a relevant knowledge about services and all information needed concerning them.

2.2.1 What Is a Service?

"*A service is an act or performance offered by one party to another. Although the process may be tied to a physical product, the performance is transitory, often intangible in nature, and does not normally result in ownership of any of the factors of production.*" (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004, 9).

In comparison with a good the service provides unique characteristics – namely intangibility, inseparability of production and consumption, heterogeneity and perishability (Zeithaml et al., 1989), and services can not be seen, tasted, touched and felt like a good (product) (Kotler et al., 2001). With inseparability of the production and consumption is meant that a service has to be produced and consumed at the same time (Carman and Langeard, 1980).

A service, provided to a customer, can be imagined as a visit at the hairdresser's. The production (cutting of the hair) and the consumption (the consumer consume the hair cutting) taking place at the same time. In this example the meaning of inseparability can be seen. Heterogeneity means that no performance of the service will be the same for the provider and the consumption (Zeithaml et al., 1989; Beaven and Scotti, 1990).
Back to the example of the hair cutting: the hair cutter provides the service hair cutting, but the service will never be the same. Every hair cut differs from the other and therefore a high variability of performance can be identified. Every customer is different and demands an individual service. Also if the demand of the service is the same the end result will vary every time. The last characteristic of a service can be seen in the fact that a service is perishable. This means that a service can not be inventoried (Bateson, 1995; Kotler et al., 2001).

Many service companies are providing more than one service. In this case the company has to decide which services are the core ones and which are the peripheral ones. The distinction between them is that the core service is the main service and the peripherals are the ones which are offered in addition. It is up to each company to decide if the peripheral services are essential for the core service or not. If the peripheral ones are essential they can be seen as an additional offer to complete the perfect bundle (Carman and Langeard, 1980).

However, not only the distinction between core and peripheral service can be made. Erramilli (1990) divides the service term in soft and hard services. With the term hard services he describes, among other things, education, life insurance and so on. Food service, health care,

laundry and lodging can be summarised as soft services. Of course this distinction cannot be made in all cases and some services are somewhere in the middle (Erramilli, 1990).

2.2.2 The Service Sector

The service sector is a sector which offers its services to everyone, without distinction – to the individual customer, the business customer, to government agencies and so on. In today's economy the service sector can be seen as one of the biggest job providers. The size of the sector is increasing. In several countries the productivity and the automation in agriculture and industry has been increased as well. However, this combined with traditional and new services, which have been developed over the last years, results in an immense increase on the service sector (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004).

Furthermore companies have begun to outsource internal services, like cleaning, production and so on. As soon as internal services are outsourced the service is counted on the competitive marketplace and in a consequence the service is calculated on the service industry (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004). Especially the years between 1980 and 1998 documented basic changes in the service marketing, like globalisation of the markets, decline of the barriers and the emergence of new technologies (Knight, 1999).

Western European countries became a dominated service-based economy, as more than 60 percent of these countries are in the service sector nowadays. Furthermore the importance of the service industry has become higher in the last years. In the 1980's the competition in the service sector, for the companies operating on this market, was less important than nowadays (Payne, 1993).

However, after the World War II the service sector has begun to get more important as the restructuring of the European economy brought new investment projects. But still the goods industry had had more importance as the service sector. The service industry began to rise from 30 to 50 percent until the 1990's. In the last 60 years this industry has developed to a dominating one in the economy, known as the Second Industrial Revolution (Payne, 1993).

2.2.3 Service Provider

Special problems, a service provider has to deal with, are the characteristics of the service as described above. The services cannot be protected through patents, neither can they be displayed or communicated, like in the way of a good. A further problem is that a centralized mass production is not possible, better said nearly impossible. Moreover the services have to be produced immediately on demand and therefore they cannot be stored (Dahringer, 1991). It can also be said that like in the case of goods, the service quality should meet the customers' expectations of the customer additionally the service should be made easy enough for the customer be understood (Irons, 1997).

The service provider always has to bear in mind that the marketing of services are different from these of goods. In the service area the human begins are playing an immense role, he or she is the main base of marketing services. The service provider has to rely on the customer to provide the best service offer. Therefore, the communication plays an important role within the service provided (Irons, 1996). With this in mind, it can be said that the customer's behaviour is one of the most central concerns a service provider has to deal with. This is one reason why the customer's behaviour will find place in the general model presented in the introduction.

To summarise: when providing a service the focus should be on who the customers are, where they are going, what their needs are, and what they are willing to pay for. It also means knowing the newest developments in technologies and the key components of the customer's business (Anonymous, 2001).

2.3 Analysis of the Market – Given and Chosen

In this chapter it should be described why the analysis of a market is important and how the segmentation of a service company can look like. But first of all a short description about what a given and a chosen market is, according to this paper, will be shown.

2.3.1 Given Market

The word "given market" should not be meant in the way that the market is given by the environment, and the company has no chance to change it. The term given market, used in this paper, represents the existing market on which the company operates and from which it is looking for entering into a new market.

Companies are not able to offer the services to the entire market. This means that the company has to choose which segment of customer it wants to appeal to with the service, as the customers can vary in their wants and needs (Kotler et al., 2001). In the given market the segmentation has already been done, therefore there is no need to make a further choice of the appropriate segment anymore. In the presented model the given market should help the company to search for a new market and use some characteristics from the existing market to compare it with its future market.

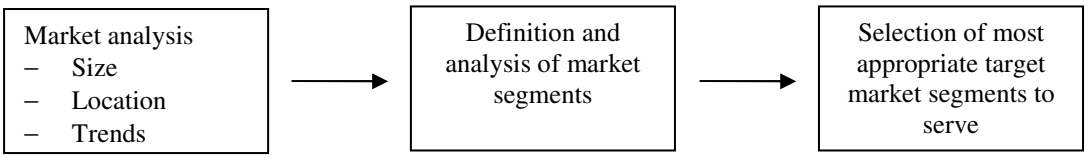
2.3.2 Chosen Market

Before choosing a new market the company has to be sure in which market it will enter. Especially in thinking about going international the company has to determine the regional economic groupings, individual countries and the target segment in which it wants to serve in future (Bennett, 1995). In doing so, the company has two approaches, according to Bennett (1995), to segment its market:

- The characteristics of the potential customers on the foreign market have to be defined carefully. After that the company has to study the countries one by one.
- Alternatively a company can find out the markets on which its products are the easiest to be sold and adapt the company's output.

2.3.2.1 Segmentation

According to Schiffman and Kanuk (2000) segmentation can be defined "*as the process of dividing a market into distinct subsets of consumers with common needs or characteristics* […]" (Schiffman and Kanuk, 2000, 33).



Source: according to Lovelock et al., 1996, 157
Figure 3: Steps for searching for the target market to serve

First of all a market has to be defined. This means that the company has to search for a proper market on which it can satisfy the needs and wants of the customers (McDonald and Dunbar, 1995). To find out the wants and needs, and if they are matching the offers of the company, a market analysis has to be done (Bennett, 1995; McDonald and Dunbar, 1995).

It is obvious that a company cannot select information about every foreign country at the same time, in consequence the application of a logical, disciplined and structured research is important for a company to find out the most appropriated foreign market for its services. To get a first overview about potential markets a market analysis can be made by the official statistic homepages (Bennett, 1995). This market analysis can include the size of the market, the location and the trends on the market (Bennett, 1995; Lovelock et al., 1996).

In a further step the potential markets should be narrowed down and a definition and deeper analysis of the chosen market segment should be made. After this the appropriate target market should be defined and described. In doing so, the potential customers should be described by their characteristics (Snellman, 2000). According to Sissors (1966) the customers can be divided among other things into two categories, namely the physical attributes and the behavioural characteristics. Before describing the customer behaviour more in detail a short description of psychographics should be made.

2.3.2.2 Psychographics

According to Bennett (1995) the consumers can be divided through their psychographic characteristics. In this segmentation the customer is described by the attitudes, purchasing behaviour and perspectives, opinions and prejudice. Among other things he lists lifestyle, interests, the type of personality, activities in the leisure time, opinions and so on. Through these characteristics the demands for certain products can be identified, as these are the key factors of a consumer type and personality.

What people are (their age, family structure, income, occupation, and so on) and where they live, provide a useful information for segmenting markets. However, other factors are strong determinants of their use of goods/services, like what people do (their activities, buying behaviours, interests, and media exposure) and how they feel about life (their attitudes, opinions and values) (Weinstein, 1994).

Many researchers limit this segmentation to lifestyles or activities, interests and opinions (AIO's), whereas others endorse personality, values and trends. Those techniques are considered to provide meaningful marketing information and one of the most powerful segmentation approaches (Weinstein, 1994; Wedel and Kamakura, 2000). Although personality can be used to segment markets, it is difficult to reach targets found by such traits as sociability, self-reliance, or assertiveness (Weinstein, 1994).

The strategic information gathered through psychographic segmentation can be helpful for all strategic areas in a company (Weinstein, 2004, 118):
- Positioning new products/repositioning existing products
- Improving products or services to better meet the segment needs
- Recognizing the importance of price factors in a given market
- Promotional strategies, in particular selecting appropriate media vehicles, advertising messages, and sales appeals
- Exploring new distribution methods or improving existing channels of distribution

2.3.2.3 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour "*is the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires*" (Solomon et al., 2006, 6). Therefore it is a process that involves many different participants and market segmentation is an important aspect of consumer behaviour (Solomon et al., 2006). According to Solomon et al. (2006) consumers can be segmented along many dimensions, including product USge, demographics and psychographics.

Source: by authors of this paper according to Solomon et al., 2006
Figure 4: Consumer behaviour influences

Concerning the concept of conciergerie not all influences on the customer behaviour are of interest. Only the interesting points of the figure, shown above, should be described more in detail in the next section.

2.3.2.3.1 Perception

The term perception can be understood as "*a process through which individuals are exposed to information, attend to the information, and comprehend the information*" (Mowen, 1995, 73).

2.3.2.3.2 Motivation and Values

Motivation refers to the processes that lead individuals to their perceived behaviour. From a psychological perspective motivation occurs when a need arises which the consumer wishes to satisfy. Once a need has been activated, a state of tension exists which in turn drives the consumer to reduce or eliminate the need. So, the role of marketers can be seen in creating products and services that will provide the desired benefits and permit the consumer to reduce this tension. The magnitude of this tension determines the urge the consumer feels to reduce the tension. This degree of aroUSl is called drive (Solomon et al., 2006).

There are two types of needs: biogenic needs, which are the ones people are born with to maintain life like food, water, air, and a shelter. The second ones are called psychogenic needs which are acquired as persons become part of a specific culture. These include the need for status, power, affiliation, and so on. However, a distinction has to be made between needs and wants. A vegetarian will not fulfil the need to eat in the same way as somebody attracted on a

big piece of meat. In addition to the distinction between biogenic and psychogenic needs, the needs may also be utilitarian (a desire to achieve some functional or practical benefit) or hedonic (an experiential need, involving emotional responses or fantasies) (Solomon et al., 2006).

2.3.2.3.3 Attitudes

An attitude is "*simply an overall evaluation of an alternative, ranging from positive to negative. Once formed, attitudes play a directive role on future choice and are difficult to change.*" (Engel et al., 1995, 144).

According to Solomon et al. (2006) an attitude has three components, the so-called ABC model : affect, behaviour and cognition. Affect refers to the way a consumer feels about an attitude object, whereas behaviour involves the person's intentions to do something with regard to an attitude object, and cognition refers to the beliefs a consumer has about an attitude object.

The functional theory of attitudes is explained by Katz (1960), who explains how attitudes facilitate social behaviour. According to him, attitudes exist because they serve a function for the person and they are determined by a person's motives. For marketers, it is helpful to know why an attitude is held before attempting to change it.

When testing a new product or service, also in the case of the concept of conciergerie, an attitude will be created in the mind of the potential customer. According to the Fishbein model introduced by Fishbein (1963), which is the most influential multi-attributes model, the relationship between the beliefs and the attitudes toward an object, is complex. Many factors might interfere with actual behaviour, even if the customer's intentions are sincerely (Fishbein, 1963). According to Fishbein (1963) a consumer's overall attitude towards an object can be computed by combining these elements.

2.3.3 The Consumer Decision-Making Process

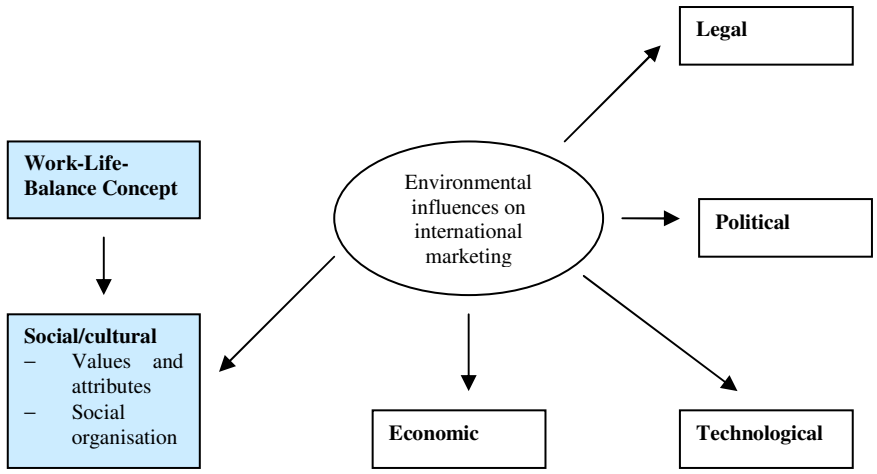
Let's start with an example: Jenny needs a baby-sitter for her niece tonight. She is not used to look for a baby-sitter due to the fact that she has not got any children. Her sister just left for the week leaving the baby to her. She could try to find a baby-sitter by herself but before the effective search for information, she asks some colleagues of hers. They assure her that the new concierge service is the fastest and securest way to find a babysitter. The evaluation of the alternatives is rather easy and, of course, she calls the conciergerie. The outcomes are simple: no worries for the evening, no worries about the quality of the baby-sitter and no time lost in solving the problem.

In this example it can be seen that studying the consumer decision making process is essential when launching a new service.

Traditional consumer researchers have approached decision-making from a rational perspective (Solomon et al., 2006). In this view, people integrate as much information as possible with what they already know about a service, evaluating the pros and cons of every alternative and finally taking the best solution in a calm and careful way. It has to be said that consumers do not always follow this step process every time they ask for something. Some of the consumption behaviours are just simply irrational and do not seem to serve a logical purpose or plan at all. (Kotler et al., 2001).

When a thoroughly considered rational approach is necessary, consumers invest a lot of energy. Otherwise, it comes to short cuts or fall backs that 'automate' these choices by experience (Payne et al., 1992).

2.4 SLEPT Model and the Work-Life-Balance Concept



Source: by authors of this paper according to Doole and Lowe, 2001, 10
Figure 5: SLEPT Model and the Work-Life-Balance Concept

Before describing the several influences the figure should be drawn out. The SLEPT Model describes which influences can play a role in international marketing. In the model shown above the work-life-balance concept is integrated. The thought of integrating such a concept in the SLEPT model is that the work-life-balance concept describes which factors are important for people nowadays, in which way they can keep the balance between their work and their daily life. This, in turn, influences the social/cultural influence in the SLEPT model, as this has a big influence on the values and attitudes of the customers and the social organisation.

2.4.1 SLEPT Model

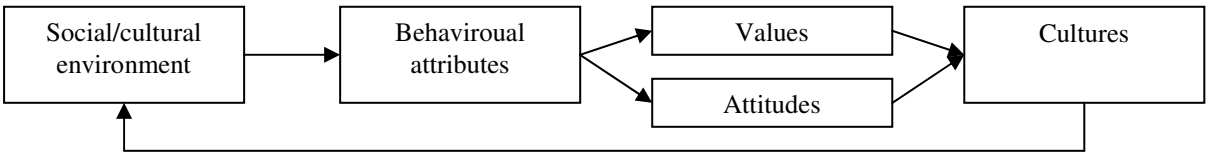
The marketing environment is influenced by different factors, namely the legal, political, technological, economic, and social/cultural factors (Bennett, 1995). In this paper the focus should be put on the social/cultural aspect, but the other factors should be mentioned briefly.

The importance of all factors is that each country has its own legal, technological, political, environmental and social/cultural system. Especially the environmental factor has to be taken in consideration by the company and it is not controllable. The political factor is influencing the company in the way that the government says where the limits are, concerning the performance of the company. The political environment influence the legal ones in which the company operates, as they give the framework of the limits (Bennett, 1995).

2.4.1.1 Social/Cultural Environment

According to Kotler et al. (2001, 140) the cultural environment is "*made up of institutions and other forces that affect society's basic values, perceptions, preferences and behaviours*". Every society is building up a definition about its own stereotype. These population

characteristics are important to be known as they vary from country to country (concerning, among other things, the behavioural attributes) (Bradely, 1999).



Source: by the authors of this paper according to Bradely, 1999, 141; Doole and Lowe, 2001, 66

Figure 6: The social/cultural environment and the connection with behavioural attributes, values, attitudes and culture, a cycle

As figured out above, the behavioural attributes which are influenced by the social/cultural environment, can be divided into values and attitudes. These, in turn, build up the culture (Doole and Lowe, 2001). When taking the figure into deeper consideration the culture influences the social/cultural environment because of, as mentioned before, the specific stereotypes of each society. This means that the culture can be described by the several stereotypes and therefore the environment of the culture is influenced as well, as the environment is reflecting the stereotype in the behaviour.

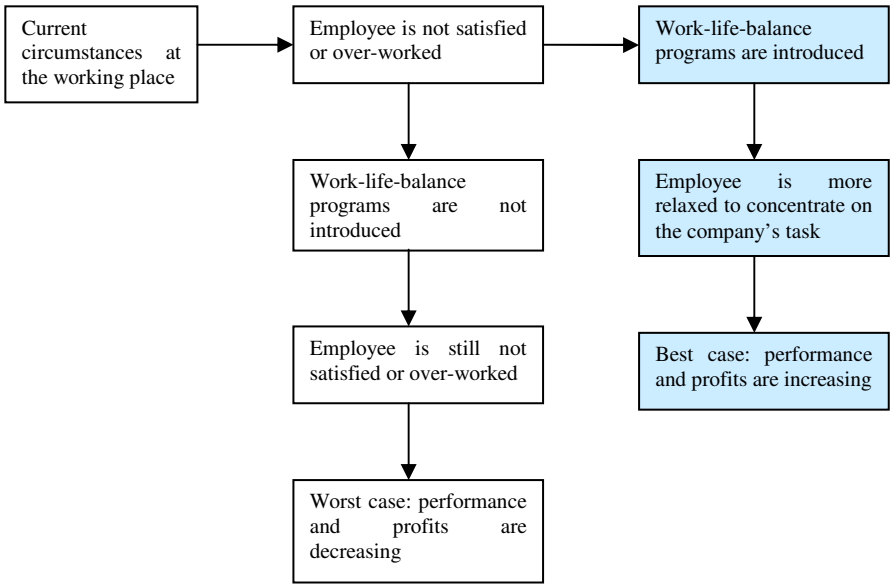
The values and attitudes can be influenced and strengthened by the work-life-balance concept, which should be explained in the next chapter.

2.4.2 Work-Life-Balance Concept

According to Bennett (1995) the style of living is important to everyone. Therefore it is necessary to define the term in more detail. Bennett (1995) defines it as "*the consequence of many interacting variables: income, upbringing, experience, relationships with others, cultural influences, etc. It involves a pattern of living habits, leisure pursuits, types of entertainment purchased, degree of involvement with the community and so on*" (Bennett, 1995, 57).

Many employers introduced work-life-balance programs to achieve higher employees' commitment, as a good relationship between employer and employees is getting more and more important. This results from the change of the demographic and labour force trends (Phipps, 1996). One of these trends can be described in the way that the relationship between employer and employee switched from paternalism to shared responsibility between the several members of the company (Scott, 1995).

However several employees still believe that the number of work can be associated with the involvement in it. They are trying to spend as many hours as possible in the company, especially in the early years of the career (Sturges and Guest, 2004) and therefore they do not pay attention to such programs. But it can be said, according to several authors (for example by Phipps, 1996), that work-life-balance concepts are essential in companies as in a consequence the company's performance can be increased. This should be shown in a figure:



Source: by the authors of this paper
Figure 7: Work-Life-Balance Concept

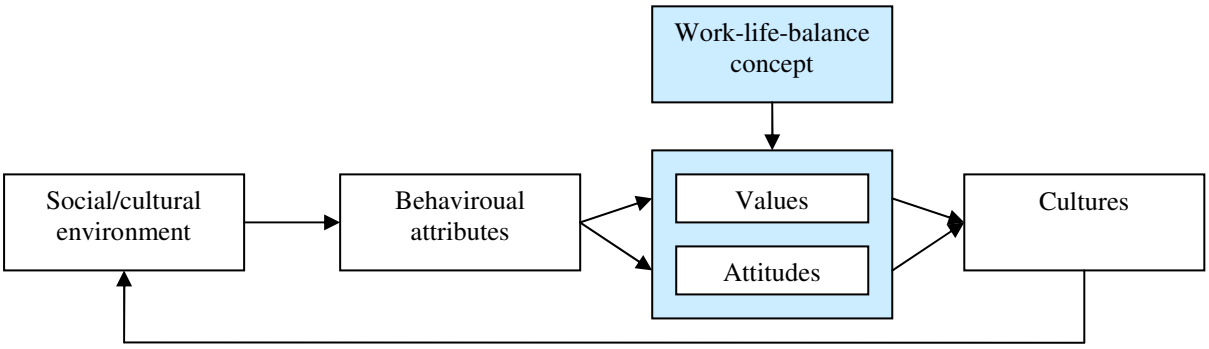
In this figure it can be seen that such programs can increase profits, as the employees are happier with their working places. However, it has to be mentioned that such a measurement is hard to make, as individual performance is affected by the productivity. Concerning the measuring of the satisfaction of the employees and the influence of work-life-balance concepts the time of absence, tardiness and turnover can be adducted (Conrad, 1995). One positive point concerning work-life-balance concepts is that it help to improve employee morale and productivity (Scott, 1995).

These programs can include resource and referral services, direct subsidies for child and elderly care and family care networks (Conrad, 1995). With such programs the objective to balance work and lifetime can be tightened and the employee is able to integrate their personal needs, their family needs and the career (Sturges and Guest, 2004). The philosophy for this concept can be explained in one sentence: "*Work for live, not live for work*" (Sturges and Guest, 2004, 10).

Especially overtime working can lead to damages in the familiar life. Therefore the programs try to help the employees, never mind of martial or parental status. It is not so far off that the introduction of such programs means further costs for the employer, but regarding this from a long-term perspective this investment will be profitable (White et al., 2003). Sexton (2005) mentions that for example long working hours and unexpected job demands can lead through stress and dissatisfaction on the employees' working places. This furthermore can influence the private life as the feelings which were gained during a working day, could be transfered to the family members. Especially men transmit their dissatisfaction to their wives while women are calmer and able not to transmit this feeling to the children (they want to protect them and therefore they hide their feelings).

2.4.3 Combining the Two Models

In this chapter the work-life-balance concept should be connected with the values and attitudes of a society. This connection can be seen in the figure below:



Source: by the authors of this paper
Figure 8: Work-life-balance concept and the influence on the vales and attitudes of a society

In this model several influencers are integrated. Before, the terms values, attitudes and work-life-balance (WLB) concepts were shown. Here the integration of these terms should be mentioned. It can be said that the work-life-balance-concept influences the values and attitudes of the people as the WLB-programmes can support them. In a society of values concerning family and family care a WLB-program can support a family life in harmony. This, in a consequence, can influence the whole culture, as the society can be seen in this case as family-oriented. This in turn influence the social/cultural environment and the behavioural attributes.

2.5 Hofstede's Cultural Dimension

Before the cultural dimensions are described a definition of culture should be given. Cateora (1987, 95) defines a culture as "*the sum total knowledge, beliefs, art morals, laws, customs, and many other capabilities and habits acquired by humans as members of society*". Mühlbacher et al. (1999) and other authors define the term culture nearly in the same way, but they also mention perception, evaluation and behaviour, all factors which are shared between the members of the social group (Terpstra and Sarathy, 1994; Mühlbacher et al., 1999). This enlargement of the definition is important in this paper as the main focus will be on the customers' behaviour.

Hofstede (1982) defined four dimensions – namely individualism, power distance, uncertainty avoidance and masculinity, which can describe cultural values and beliefs. The study was based on 116.000 IBM employees in 60 countries (Bradely, 1999) and all dimensions are scaled from 0 to 100 (de Mooij, 2004).

In the next chapter the four dimensions, as well as the later introduced fifth one – time perspective – are shown.

2.5.1 Individualism

This dimension describes to which degree an individual is integrated in one or more social group/s. A high individualism degree is given when an individual is not integrated in a social group and therefore does not search for high belongings to others (Solomon, 2007).

According to Hollensen (2001) a person in an individualistic society can be defined as self-centred and there is little need for being together with other members of the society. If there are any connections to other members of the social group the relationships are not deep and the belief that everybody is responsible for himself is high (Bradely, 1999; Cateora and

Graham, 2005). This society can be called "I" society which promots its self-interests (Cateora and Graham, 2005) and the people want to be differentiate themselves from others; they want to be unique (de Mooij, 2004).

On the other side, if the individualism is low the individual searchs for strong relationships. Hollensen (2001) describes a collective society as one in which the members posses group mentality. The belief that everyone is loyal and everyone protects everyone else is immense (Bradely, 1999), and therefore the society can be referred to as "WE" mentality (Cateora and Graham, 2005). The personality and identity are based on the surrounded social system and the harmony within the system is important (de Mooij, 2004).

2.5.2 Power Distance

Here, the degree of how an individual acts on power is measured (Bradely, 1999). According to Cateora and Graham (2005, 106) this measure can be defined as "*the tolerance of social inequality, that is, power inequality between superiors and subordinates within a social system*".

In high power distance countries the power concentration is shared through a few people at the top. This means that these people present the decision makers of the society (Hollensen, 2001). These societies are hierarchical, their members prefer clear defined social roles, manipulation of others and the inheritance of power and status are common instruments (Cateora and Graham, 2005). On the bottom of the society the people just accepts what the leading top decides and carries out the decisions without questions (Hollensen, 2001).

On the other hand, lower power distance countries have a wide spread power concentration. In these societies the people share the decision making process and power is carried out collectively (Hollensen, 2001). The question about how people handle power distance is of importance as it gives an indicator how people react and accept given authority and if everyone has his/her place in the society. In covering a positon in this society the person gets his/her authority automatically (de Mooij, 2004).

2.5.3 Uncertainty Avoidance

According to Cateora and Graham (2005) this index concerns the acceptance of uncertainty and ambiguity among the people acting in the society. Therefore it can be said, that in this dimension the degree to which the people of a society desire rules, and if regulations and fixed patterns of the life are included. Furthermore, the risk taking behaviour should be included in this dimension as high uncertainty is related to risk aversion and low uncertainty with the philosophy "take the day as it comes, make the best out of it" (Hollensen, 2001; Helgesson, 1996).
People, who have high uncertainty once, avoid tend to be more intolerant of ambiguity and therefore they do not trust new ideas and and/or behaviours. Therefore these people prefer having a high regulated life, based on historically tested behaviours and patterns. They feel stressed if something is not figured out like they want it to (Cateora and Graham, 2005).

2.5.4 Masculinity

Here the society's cultural dimension can be measured through the masculine and feminine values (Hollensen, 2001). Countries, which are more feminine, tend to focus more on social security, fairness and attracting working conditions (Bradely, 1999). Both, men and women

can hatch into the traditional feminine role as here status and money is not emphasised, but on the social interaction among its members (Doole and Lowe, 2001).

On the other hand, masculine countries are characterised by achievement, success and performance. Furthermore the status of each several person is important and to show the success (Helgesson, 1996), just "being a winner".

2.5.5 Time Perspective

This dimension is also known as confucian dynamism, later this dimension was renamed in time perspective (Hollensen, 2001). This dimension is not based on the original study; in this case only 23 countries were presented (de Mooij, 2004). Here, the time perspective is checked out in detail. This means if the company prefers to take a long-term or short-term view about the concerning issues. The long-term perspective is more future related and the consequences can be, among other things, persistence and ordering relationships by status (Hollensen, 2001) and people are open to changes and perseverance (de Mooij, 2004). On the other hand the short-term perspective leads to personal steadiness and stability (Hollensen, 2001).

2.6 Definition and Concept of Conciergerie

In this next chapter the definition and the concept of conciergerie should be introduced to the reader.

2.6.1 Definition and Concept

In this section the definition of the concept conciergerie should be made. With the help of one French entrepreneur, Raphaël Choserot, who created Nestor & Nestor in France, the basic information was gathered and analysed. In the opinion of the authors the concept is not limited with the services mentioned by Raphaël Choserot therefore the concept is enlarged with the thoughts and information gathered by the authors.

According to Raphaël Choserot, the objective of a conciergeries is to provide a pool of different kinds of services to the employees. The conciergerie can be seen as a provider of a menu card on which the customer will find several services. Therefore the conciergerie has several contracts with service companies which offer services by themselves. The conciergerie can be seen as a middleman, who searches for the service the customer demands for.

Source: by the authors of this paper
Figure 9: Conciergerie as a middle man

The system behind the concept can be described as follows: the end consumer calls the conciergerie and explain which kind of service he/she wants. The conciergerie searches, in turn, among its partners (service providers) for the appropriate service. After this the service is directly offered to the end customer. These services can be divided, according to Raphaël Choserot, in two main groups, namely the daily and the less ordinary services. The most demanded services will be shown in the next figure:

- The daily services
  - Household
  - Ironing
  - Clothes retouch
  - Shopping
  - Baby-sitting
  - Private classes
  - Gardening
  - Wellness services
  - Car cleaning
- The less ordinary services
  - Catering
  - Events organisation
  - Birthday parties
  - Company gifts
  - Seminars
  - (Business) Trips
  - Gifts

Source: by the authors of this paper according to Raphaël Choserot
Figure 10: The daily and less ordinary services provided by a conciergerie

In opinion of the authors the limits of the provided services have a broad border. This means that the conciergerie can take all services into account. The only point to keep in mind is that the conciergerie has to have a partner under contract who provides the service. In one way the conciergerie has to be careful as it also has to make the decision about which services are provided in which way. Essential criteria are the quality of the service and also the recognition by the customer. Also the choice of the service providers has to be done carefully as the image of the conciergerie is also involved in the provided services. This can be explained in the way as in the eye of the customer the conciergerie is the provider of the service, because he/she has direct. As soon as the service provider offers a bad service the customer is unsatisfied and will release his/her anger to the conciergerie and not to the service provider. The conciergerie is the one who gets in contact with the customer. Therefore it has to be sure that the offered service is good enough. Here, it can be seen that trust and relationship plays an immense role in the whole system.

In practice, there are two types of conciergeries: the first, where there is one person presented on the clients' work place, called physic concierge and the second, the flying concierge, who is available through a phone call or the Internet. The second type of concierge is more likely to work with companies employing between 30 and 100 employees, while the first is best suited for companies with more than 100 employees.

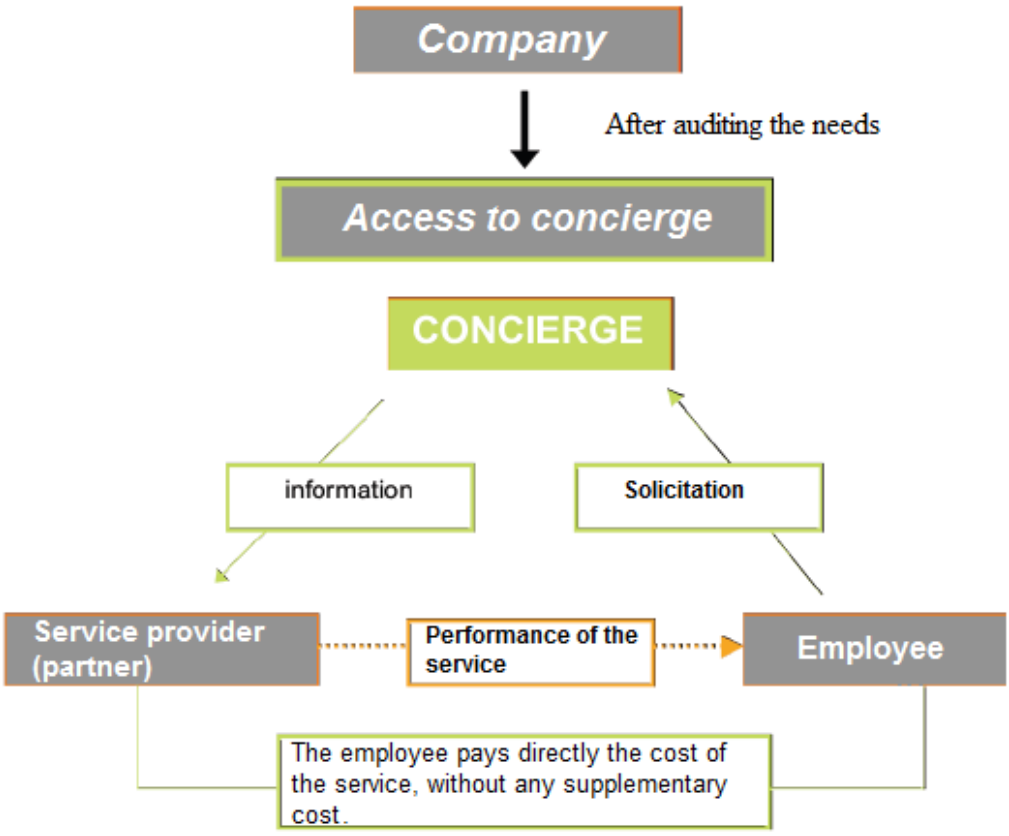
The company willing to use the services of conciergeries pays a subscription (between 5 and 10 € per employee and per month). It has to be said that the employee can be seen as the real client of conciergeries, as he/she is demanding for the service. As said before, the company pays a subscription and the employee will pay for the service, which was claimed. If the concierge finds a baby-sitter, the employee only pays the cost of the service of the baby-sitter and the company the subscription per month.

To give a clear definition of conciergeries it can be said that:

"*A conciergerie can be seen as a middleman, who is between several service providers and end customers. Conciergerie lists a menu of the services provided by the service companies and communicates them to the end customer. Normally the monthly fee (subscription) is paid by the company and the employee must pay in addition for the claimed service (the performance). The employees are given access to conciergeries after auditing the need of their company and the payment of the monthly fee by it. The conciergerie gets the solicitation*

from the employees. The conciergerie gives it to the services providers who will perform the demanded service to the employee." (by the authors of this paper, 2008).

The detailed steps of the concept can be seen in the figure below.



Source: by the authors of this paper according to [22]
Figure 11: steps of the concept of conciergerie

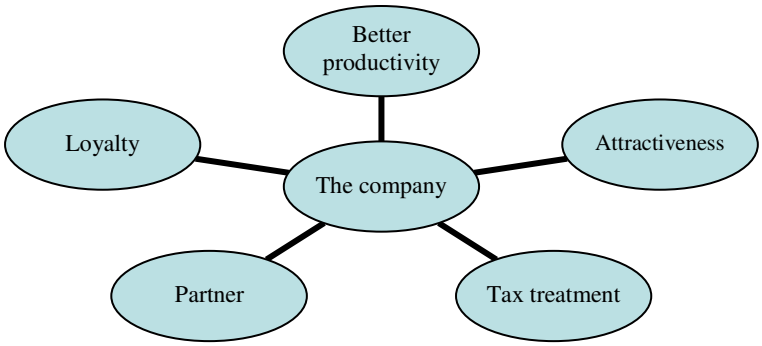
2.6.2 Advantages for the French Employer and the French Employee

To set up a better analysis, the authors developed a new model presenting the advantages which come along with the concept of conciergerie. Its role is to enhance all the pros, representing the positive attitudes towards conciergerie of the French users. This model is a basis for the analysis of the interviews conducted on the Swedish companies. It was developed by using different sources of research like: companies web-sites, blogs, company contacts, originally situated in France and Belgium.

2.6.2.1 Advantages for the Company

- Productivity improved by decreasing absence, stress, time spent on personal problems of the employees, and therefore optimisation of the working time
- The company has a more attractive human resource policy (HR Marketing)

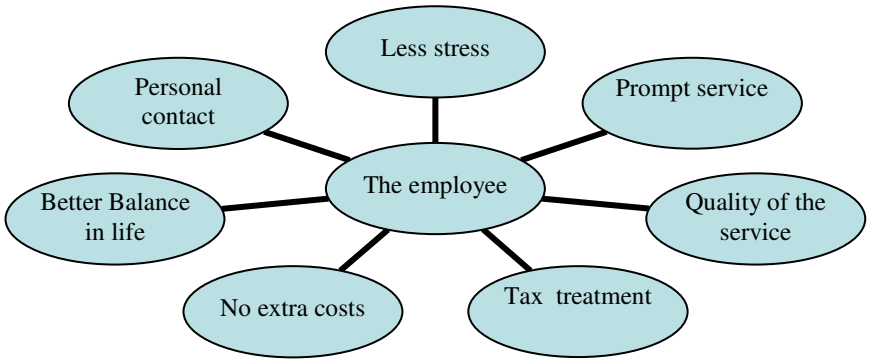
- More advantageous tax treatment[1]: Tax exemption (this is the case on the French and Belgian markets)
- Develop loyalty of the employees towards their company
- The firm can be a partner of change or simply a life partner, helping by providing the services of a conciergerie



Source: by the authors of this paper
Figure 12: The positive attributes of conciergeries for the French companies

2.6.2.2 Advantages for the Employees

- Less stress, the consumers of a concierge service is free minded from all the daily life problems
- Every service on the menu of the conciergerie is possible in just a click or a phone call, no time lost, the customer asks for it, the conciergerie has it
- A more personal contact, the conciergerie represents a link between the employee and the services providers, the concierge knows its clients
- A better balance between professional and personal life
- Quality of the service choice made by the concierge
- No extra cost, the company pays for the subscription, the employee takes only the charges of the service itself
- More advantageous tax treatment: Tax exemption (this is the case on the French and Belgian markets)



Source: by the authors of this paper
Figure 13: The positive attributes of conciergeries for the French employees

[1] The French governement offers tax reductions on diverse monetary helps aimed for the employees. If the company spends € 100 or services offered to its employees, the real cost can be reduced to € 42 [22].

3 Methodology

This chapter should help the reader to understand the choice and direction the study had to take. The aim of this chapter is to prove the validity, show the limitations, and make the best choices possible to conduct a study in concern with the purpose, the research question and the theory the paper would have been used for the analysis and the final conclusion.

3.1 Introduction

"Although marketing research is indeed a valuable management tool, managers should not expect too much from it. For instance, the data collected may be of exceptional quality but the wrong decisions may be taken, perhaps because the data have been misinterpreted and/or wrong prognoses have been made." (Chisnall, 2004, 5).

To avoid this problem we were thinking about an appropriate method of answering our research question. In the following chapter the methodology of our study shall be introduced to the reader to give him/her an overview about the study and the perspective of the background thought behind this study.

The first stage of a research is crucial because it draws out the nature and the orientation of the study. The marketing problem has to be clearly defined before being analysed. Some exploratory researches are always welcome to help defining this problem. The second stage is the research proposal which describes the problem, the population involved, the factors affecting the market behaviour and the methodologies (Chisnall, 2004).

In a first step the topic of introducing the concept of conciergerie to a new market was narrowed down to define the marketing problem, in this case if there is a need on the Swedish market for such a concept. After this, we were thinking about an appropriate way of answering the research question. In our case the customer research covered a main point in our study. Chisnall (2004) sees the customer research as an investigation into the buyer behaviour. In this research method the main focus was on the influences which can affect the purchasing decisions – namely social, economic and psychological. The customer research studies can be divided into the decision levels. This means if the decision is made on the trade distribution level, the consumer level or the industrial level (Chisnall, 2004).

In our study the customer behaviours in the case of conciergeries were investigated with the help of an interview we have taken with one Swedish company. With this interview we tried to find out what a potential customer was thinking about the whole concept and if in the interviewee's opinion the concept would have a chance to survive on the Swedish market.

Furthermore to get some idea about the concept, as this concept is not described in books or similar sources, we had to define it by ourselves and we had to think about a definition to make it easier for the reader to understand the concept. An additional point to get more detailed information about the French conciergerie market was that we wanted to get an idea about the reason for which this concept is working quite well in France. In addition, it was a purpose to clarify the positive points a company can gain using a conciergerie. Therefore, after contacting some conciergeries in France, we were able to define the attributes given by French companies and to show successful examples of the French and Belgian market. As the Belgian market is quite similar to the French one, we were disregarded to make a further market analysis about the Belgian one. This first phase was helpful to design our frame concept for this study. The interviews in France and Belgium took place through the Internet

(mails and homepages). The face-to-face interview with the Swedish company was with one of the managers, as the managing department takes the decisions about introducing new concepts in the company. It was important to underline the fact that this survey was the first on the Swedish market and our task is to gain new insights, feel the response and this means testing the needs on the market.

3.2 Research Methods

In this chapter the research methods should be introduced to the reader.

3.2.1 Deductive or Inductive

Generally it can be said that the deductive study starts with a general theory and narrow it down step by step to become more specific. It can be called a "top-down" approach. The narrow down process happens through hypothesis and to confirm the hypothesis an observation has to be made. The inductive research works exactly the other way round, as from an observation the pattern is drawn and the hypotheses are developed. The last step is to create a theory, which is in connection with the first observation [5].

Our study can be defined as a deductive one, as the start of the research was beginning with a model, developed by us and as the deductive research is more suitable for testing and confirming hypotheses [5]. Instead of building a hypothesis we were defining one research question, if our model could work on another market as well, namely the Swedish market. The development of the model was based on the American concept of conciergerie, which transpose on the European market nowadays. Especially on the French market this concept is well known and this was the reason why exactly this market was selected as the given market. The Swedish market was chosen as we were writing this paper at the Högskolan I Halmstad, Sweden and the interview took place at a company surrounded to this area (Getinge).

3.2.2 Qualitative or Quantitative

A true differentiation has always been made between the qualitative and quantitative methods. In a lot of social sciences, more respect is given to quantitative methods. According to Berg (2004), qualitative methods are not predominant for many reasons: it takes much longer, requires greater clarification of goals during the design stages, and cannot be analysed by computers programs.

Every market researcher has to decide if a quantitative or a qualitative research is more useful for finding an answer to the research question. Qualitative research "*used to uncover consumers' motivations, attitudes and behaviour. Focus-group interviewing, elicitation interviews and repertory grid techniques are typical methods used in this type of research*." (Kotler et al., 2001, 275). In other words the qualitative research tries to find information by collecting, analyzing and finally interpreting this material. Furthermore, it has to be mentioned that, by using this method, only a small number of people can be investigated [6]. Therefore qualitative research can be seen as a proper instrument for finding deep, open-ended answers. Quantitative research, on the other hand, provides information that helps managers reducing risk in decision making (Bennett, 1988), as it is a "*research which involves data collection by mail or personal interviews from a sufficient volume of customers to allow statistical analysis*" (Kotler et al., 2001, 275). With this method the finding of proper solutions can be shown in numbers, percentage and average values can be calculated [6].

This paper is based on a totally qualitative research, as the information is gained by interviews, personal contact and through with the help of e-mails. Especially the contact in France was conducted through e-mails. In Sweden the responsible people were contacted and a personal interview took place.

3.3 Type of Research

There are different types of research. In this paper the only instrument to be named shall be the tool of interviewing. It was followed throughout the whole research. According to Berg (2004, 74) an interview possesses several characteristics, depending on the type:

Standardised interview	***Semi-standardised interviews***	***Un-standardised interviews***
More formally structured	More or less structured	Completely unstructured
No deviations from question order	Questions may be reordered during the interview	No set order to any questions
Wording of each question asked exactly as written	Wording of questions flexible	No set wording to any questions
No adjusting of level of language	Level of language may be adjusted	Level of language may be adjusted
No clarifications or answering the questions about the interview	Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications	Interviewer may answer questions and make clarifications
No additional questions may be added	Interviewer may add or delete probes to interview between subjects	Interviewer may add or delete questions between interviews
Similar in format to a pencil-and-paper survey		

Source: Berg, 2004, 79

Table 1: Interview structure continuum of formality

The aim of the standardised interview is to propose the same stimuli to the respondents so that the answers are comparable. The questionnaire has to be well structured and comprehensible by every average person inside the surveyed universe. The un-standardised interview begins with the following assumptions, the researchers does not know all the necessary questions in advance and the respondents might not find equal meaning in like-worded questions (Berg, 2004). According to Schwartz and Jacobs (1979), this kind of interview will result in appropriate and relevant questions arising from interactions during the interview itself.

In our case, we had a qualitative study, including one face-to-face interview in Sweden and three ones through the Internet in Belgium and France, which were uni-standardised. This gave us the opportunity to ask additional questions and not to follow the question guideline in detail. Furthermore the semi-standardised interview gave as the chance to re-ask some points, as we both were not native Swedish-speaking persons. This was the reason why the interview was held in English. In the case of the French and Belgian interviews the questions were asked in French as one of us is a native French-speaker. The participants in this survey were four managers in the above mentioned countries. In the beginning we were sending the question guideline to several companies in Sweden, France and Belgium. In France and Belgium we found three managers, who were helping us to gain a deeper knowledge about the conciergerie. They also gave us detailed information about the successfully working concept. In Sweden we were phoning companies to ask for a personal interview. In sum we got 10

contact addresses to send our question guideline to. In the end we received one positive answer with a meeting date for an interview. The other 9 companies were sending us negative answers with the comment that there is no need for such a concept in the companies.

In the beginning the aim of studying French conciergeries and analyse them was a way to define the concept. We used a lot of information from the French and Belgian contacts to define the concept in our own words, to get a better idea of how the concept is working since the Swedish companies were still seeing it as a butler service and not really advantageous. Furthermore, we used the data to draw our models which we used in the interview with the Swedish company Getinge AB. Their answers also found place in the introduction and theory part. We had three interviews with the following entrepreneurs,

- Xavier Jadoul and Charles Dessart, from Belgium, who started *e-Conciergerie* a year ago (2007) in the region of Namur (by e-mail and personal interview)
- Pathy Maxant from Comme à l'Hôtel (2007), situated in Toulouse, South of France (by e-mail)
- Raphaël Choserot from Nestor et Nestor (2007), situated in Toulouse, South of France (by e-mail)

The aim of this survey was to test the employees' and managers' attitudes towards a new concept, namely conciergeries, but also to gain information about how they feel to introduce such a new concept in the company.

In addition it should be mentioned that the question guideline did not cover all the theory provided in this paper, as some of the introduced theory cannot be connected with the market analysis of the three markets. The other parts of the theory stand in connection to the question guideline and can be taken for the analysis in the end of the paper. Furthermore, the question guideline should be just a guideline for us and for the interviewees to guarantee that the interview will provide us some basic information which we needed for answering the research question. Beside this, some additional question were asked during the interviews.

3.4 Sampling

The population (universe) can be seen as any group of people or objects which is similar in one or more ways (Chisnall, 2004). According to Hillierly et al. (1999) the finding of samples can be divided in different types. This differentiation depends on the way how a sample should be discovered. Two general types can be identified, namely the probability and the non-probability sample. Where the probability samples can be identified as a random sampling without bias the non-probability samples can be seen as those where random sampling is not involved (Berg, 2004). According to Berg (2004) both sampling types can be divided further in sub-units:

- **Probability sample**
  - Simple random sample (every person in the universe stands on equal chances to be surveyed)
  - Systematic random sample (every n^{th} person on a list has the chance to be sampled)
  - Stratified random sample (first the customers are divided into value segments after this the sample is randomly within each segment)
- **Non-probability sample**
  - Convenience sample (people are chosen who are easier to reach and available)
  - Judgment sample (experts are using their knowledge to choose a proper sample for the survey)

- Quota sample (people are divided in demographic attributes, like age, gender and so to represent the rest of the population)

Berekoven et al. (2006) also mentions the cluster sampling with in this category. Here, the whole population is divided into so-called clusters. After clustering, the sample, with all the elements which describes the sample, it is chosen at random. Here not the single element represents the population, but the group of elements. The clustering can be done by geographical reason (area sampling), where just one area is chosen to represent the population.

In our study we used a combination of samplings. The convinience sampling was chosen in the case of the interviews in Sweden, as our prospect interview partners in Halmstad were easier to reach and were available for us. A further thought of the convinience sampling can be seen in the case that we studied at the Högskolan I Halmstad and companies situated more in the North were simply out of our reach, for logistical reasons. However, the choice about the companies was simply a stratified one as we were writing e-mail and making telephone calls to any company which could help us in this matter.

The cluster sampling can be seen in the constraints of searching for companies in France and Belgium. This area sampling was necessary as we wanted to gain more information about conciergeries in both of these countries. Within this sampling a stratified one had also been done, as we were picking some conciergeries from the before done Internet research about this kind of companies.

3.5 Primary and Secondary Data

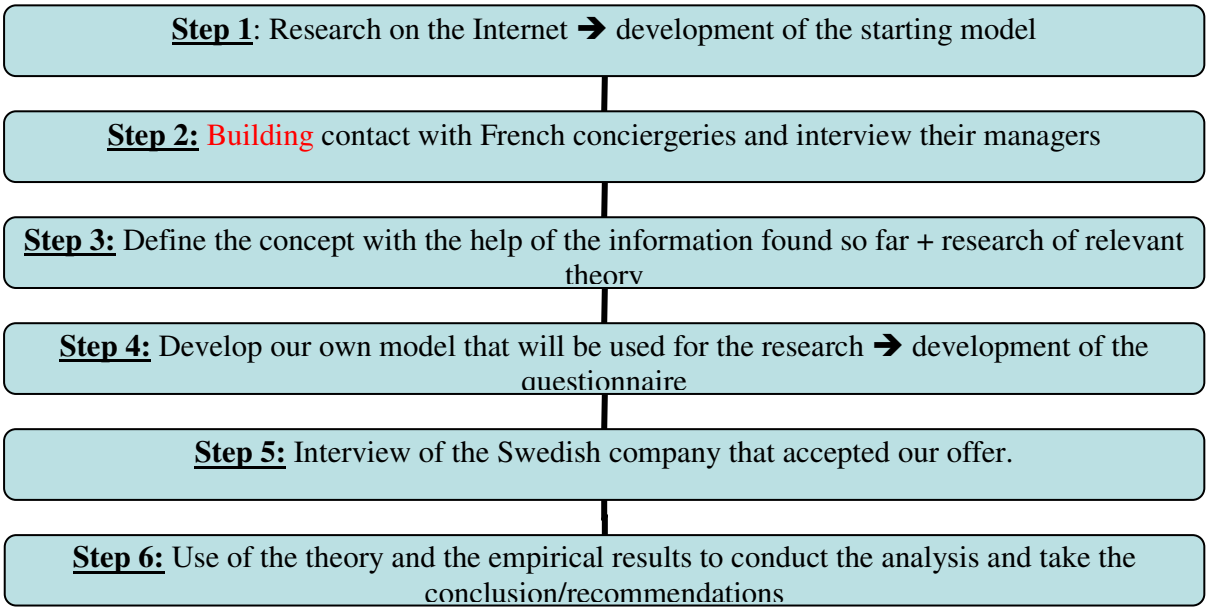
The main data classification made is the one between primary and secondary data. According to Chisnall (2004) primary data can be seen as the data which has to be collected for the first time by either one or a blend of different modes, namely observation, experimentation and questionnaires. The secondary data can be gained through existing information which may be useful for the purposes of specific surveys, both internal and external.
Secondary data contains the following advantages: the material is immediately available, quicker to search, often more accurate and generally much cheaper than primary data. Secondary data can be found in an internal and external way. Within internal secondary data it can be found, among other things, sales records and annual reports. This is material which is normally available within the company. External secondary data, on the other hand, can be found in libraries, general business or academic publication, annual report, government publications and a lot of other kind of sources (Lehmann, 1985).

This paper was based on both – secondary and primary – data. The theoretical framework could be seen as a mixture of both, as the literature review is taken from other authors. However, also new models and thoughts were introduced by us. It should be mentioned that also our own thoughts are influenced by a gained knowledge which was gathered through secondary data. In the empirical part, secondary data was used to analyse the markets (US, France and Sweden) and the primary data was gained through interviews, which were situated in Sweden, France and Belgium. Because of the distance to France this contact were mainly through e-mail and the Internet. The Swedish companies were visited to take the interviews with the managers. For getting some data focusing on the US market, the information was found on statistical homepages which clarifies it as secondary data. The empirical data of the French and Swedish market were a combination of both as we were using homepages to gain the data for the market analysis. Also interviews took place to get some more detailed

information to answer our research question in a proper way. The case study of French conciergeries, which should show the successful concept, helped us to gain more information about the concept and its success and to give some suggestions in the conclusion part.

3.6 Steps of Our Research

In this chapter the steps of our research should be shown to the reader to give an overview about our study.



Source: by the authors of this paper

Figure 14: Step of our research through the whole process

3.7 Data Analysis

In this chapter the limitation, reliability and validity should be shown to the reader.

3.7.1 Limitation

First of all a limitation in this study could be seen in using secondary data, as secondary data was collected in the past for another purpose (Aaker et al., 2007). Therefore the data did not match the request for data to a total extent.

Furthermore a limitation in this study was that only one company was interviewed, and this could not be seen as a representative population. To draw a picture of the situation and to make more general statements for the Swedish market more companies should be interviewed. In our case one company was enough as it should only give an idea about what Swedish companies may think about this new concept.

A further limitation can be drawn in the fact that the Belgian market is regarded exactly like the French one. Even if there are little differences which makes it not directly comparable.

3.7.2 Reliability

According to Chisnall (2004, 34) "*reliability refers to the stability and consistency of the results derived from research: to the probability that the same results could be obtained if the*

measures used in the research were replicated. Essentially, reliability is concerned with the consistency, accuracy and predictability of specific findings." To make our survey more reliable the questionnaire was send to our interview partners in advance. In doing this the interviewees were able to prepare themselves and to think about the answers in advance. Furthermore, we were trying not to interrupt the interviewee, not to influence him and therefore to gain more reliable data. The question guideline was helping us to always find back to the main topic and not to lose the central theme. As one interview (France) was taking place with the help of the Internet some information could be lost or misunderstood. To make these data more reliable the interview with the French company were in French and translated to English afterwards. These data can be seen as reliable as one of us is a native French-speaking person. The other interview in the Swedish market was held in English as we are not able to speak Swedish in such a good way to lead a conversation about a specific topic.

3.7.3 Validity

Validity can be described with the word truth (Silverman, 2000) and therefore the research results lead the people to believe that they are true (Krippendorff, 2004). "*Validity refers to how well a specific research method measures what it claims to measure. The three types of validity are: internal validity (of the measures), face validity (common sense), external validity (could it be generalized).*" (Chisnall, 2004, 34). To guarantee that our data were valid we recorded the face-to-face interviews and saved the other ones, as these were through the Internet. The storage of the data enabled us to have several looks on the data, especially in the cases if we were not sure about a specific point, and therefore not losing important information during analysing the data.

4 Empirical Data

In this part of the thesis the data gathered will be shown to the reader. Furthermore the data should help to complete the analysis by comparing the theoretical framework with the empirical data and finally to draw a conclusion.

4.1 Introduction

In the empirical part the gathered data should be presented to the reader. In a first step we are going to present the market analysis of the three markets – US, France and Sweden. In a further one we are presenting the data gained by the French and Belgian interviews. Finally the interview wit the Swedish company is completing the chapter.

4.2 US Market

We see the importance to describe the US market because the concept of conciergerie appeared on this market first of all. With this we want to find out why this concept was and is still such a success on the US market.

4.2.1 Data of the US Market

The data shown in the next section is provided by the "Census Bureau", which is completed by several other sources, such as "National Restaurant Association", "the American Hotel & Lodging Association" and "Universal McCann" [7] and the "The World Factbook" [8].

In our opinion the most important services, we have to look at are the ones which can be provided by a conciergerie. This makes sense when we keep in mind that this is the potential market for such a company. As soon as these kinds of services are provided by a conciergerie the life can be perceived as more comfortable. Furthermore, the US market should only provide us help to understand the success of the concept of conciergerie. As a consequence the data is not detailed and as a consequence, described as short as necessary. It also has to be mentioned that the exchange from $ in € can be vary from the date of writing and the date of reading, as the exchange was counted on the 2008/04/11. The exchange rate shall make it easier to compare the several markets, as all the mentioned markets have a different currency (US - $, France - € and Sweden – SEK).

The US can be seen as the largest and most powerful economy in the world. As private individuals and business companies are making the most of the decisions the economy can be seen as a market-oriented one. Furthermore the economy can be seen as a "two-tier labour market", which means that those situated at the lower end show a lack of education and of professional/technical skills compared to those on top. Furthermore they fail to receive comparable and increase in wages and other benefits. The purchasing power parity[2] in the US amounts $ 13.86 trillion, which is € 955,509,244,835.76, the composition by the service sector is 78.7 percent, the unemployment is 4.6 percent (whole work force) and the labour force (excluded the unemployment) is 16.5 percent in the service sector in 2007 [8]. The problem is that in the data from this source does not become clear what is meant by other services and which kinds of services are included. Therefore we have to look at the data of

[2] „*Purchasing power parity is an economic technique used when attempting to determine the relative values of two currencies. It is useful because often the amount of goods a currency can purchase within two nations varies drastically, based on availability of goods, demand for the goods, and a number of other, difficult to determine factors.*" [9]

"Census Bureau". Here, under other service can be seen as repair and maintenance, personal and laundry services and religious, grandmarketing, civic, professional, and similar organisation [7].

In the next section some data of the service sector are described. The data is shown in the years between 2000 and 2005, only the data of accommodation and the food services identified from 1995 – 2005, are calculated in millions of dollars [7]. The detailed data can be seen in the appendix.

Under the professional, scientific, and technical services for us the area of the computer systems design and services are most interesting, as this is a service which can be found through a conciergerie. This group of service includes everything concerning computer-related services. In 2000 the US citizens were spending $ 186,402 millions (€ 128,505,652,421.27) in these services. After an up and down of the spending the amount was $ 189,042 millions in 2005 (€ 130,325,670,030.48).

With a deeper look on the area of administrative and support and waste management and remediation services we can identify several services of interest, as administrative and support services, business support services, and travel arrangement and reservation services. In the area of administrative and support services (including office administrative services, facilities support management, and employment services) the numbers also show an up and down from 2000 to 2005. In 2000 the US citizens were spending $ 412,624 millions (€ 284,463,237,114.80) in this area of services and in 2005 the amount was $ 547,309 millions (€ 337,315,158,211.99) (for a more detailed list see the appendix).

In the area of accommodation and food services sales an upswing can also be diagnosed. In the year 1995 the sales were $ 322,818 million (€ 222,550,925,973.59) and in 2005 it can be seen an enormous upswing to $ 547,799 million (€ 377,652,964,510.67).

Within the group of other services we are taking a deeper look on repair and maintenance and personal and laundry services. Fascinating here is that this is one of the areas which has a continuous upswing. Here the estimated revenue for employers firms was $ 179,859 million (€ 124,001,798,239.08) and in 2005 $ 216,570 million (€ 149,303,490,010.16).

All these ups and downs in the spending behaviour of the US citizens, except other services, can be seen in the terrorist attack in 2001 and the war between the US-led coalition and the Iraq. Whimsically is that the hurricane Katrina (2005) did not have such a big influence on the spending of the US people [8], as it can be seen in all numbers shown above the spending was increased in this particular year.

4.2.2 Hofstede's Dimensions

The US can be considered as the most individualistic country. Therefore the individual is more important than the group thinking. The person itself and its family members are the most important issues. Also, when it comes up to the masculinity, the US can be ranked higher than the world average. This means, as outlined above, that the masculine factors, as for example money, is more important than corporation [20]. Also, time plays a very important role in the American culture. This culture seems to always be in a hurry because time is valuable for them (like the saying tells "time is money") (Onkvisit and Shaw, 1993). In case of the long-term orientation it can be said that the US is ranked as one of the lowest in this dimension. This means that the US population follows cultural traditions and in the

meeting of obligations. Also, when it comes up to the power distance index, the US is ranked on a low position. This can be indicated because of the equality among the societal levels, as government, organisations, and also within the families. Also the index of uncertainty avoidance is very low compared to the world average. This can be seen in the appearance of fewer rules and not controlling all the results and outcomes. Furthermore, the space for own ideas, beliefs and thoughts are greater than in any other countries [20].

4.3 French Market

The French market should help us to identify interesting points concerning the conciergerie market. By surveying this market, we can identify the core services and the whole offer, as this kind of companies already exists on the French market. All the information provided in the next sections concerning the French market is taken from the INSEE, National Institute for Statistics and Economics Studies [10] and la France en bref [18].

4.3.1 Data of the French Market

In 2005 about 827,000 companies were providing commercial services, with a total turnover after taxes of 552 billions Euros. Furthermore, the market provides 4.7 millions full-time jobs and an interesting point is that 93 percent of them have less than 10 employees [10].
The companies, which are offering services to other companies, can be counted with the number of 412,000 and 3.1 million full-time employees can be found in this special sector [10].

The sectors with the biggest amount of companies are consulting companies (53,800), companies administration (41,000), law activities (40,500) and engineering and technical studies (33,600). Here, also 9 out of 10 companies have less than 10 employees [10].

In France 3,050 companies enumerate more than a hundred employees. They represent less than 1 percent, but employ 53 percent full-time equivalent employees and make 51 percent of the whole market turnover. Those big companies are especially active in the sector of temporary jobs, like companies in charge of taking the domestic trash and the call centres. The whole sector is characterised by the fact that 1 employee out of 3 is working part-time [10].

To give more detailed information about the French market a figure should be presented, showing the whole working situation on the market:

	Women		Men		Total
	Full time	Part time	Full time	Part time	
Non-payroll workers	**661**	**197**	**1 766**	**94**	**2 719**
Payroll workers (wage- and salary-earners)	**7 248**	**3 318**	**10 961**	**675**	**22 202**
Temporary workers	131	35	360	22	548
Apprentices	80	26	194	35	335
Fixed-term contracts	591	406	582	134	1 713
Public sector	203	140	139	42	523
Private sector	388	266	443	93	1 190
Interns and subsidized contracts	112	135	116	72	434
Public sector	32	64	29	20	144
Private sector	80	72	87	52	290
Open-ended and other contracts	6 335	2 717	9 710	411	19 172
Total	**7 909**	**3 516**	**12 727**	**769**	**24 921**

Source: [10]

Table 2: Economically active people in employment aged 15 and over (in thoUSnds)

The situation on the service sector is of special interest, as 75.9 percent of the employees were working in the service sector in 2007. A further interesting point can be seen in the general employment situation, if divided in male and female. It can be pointed out that in 1990 more men (64.2 percent) were working than in 2005 (61.7 percent), but considering the situation on the participation of the women on the employment situation it can be discovered that here an upswing can be diagnosed (1990: 45.3 percent; 2005: 49.3 percent) [18].

With a deeper look on the employment it can be figured out that 14.7 percent of the whole working people were employed as managerial and professional, 23.1 percent in the intermediate white-collar occupation and 29.0 percent in the offices [18].

4.3.2 The French Society

In 1999, there were 23.8 million households counted in France. It can be said that the situation concerning households and family structures are changing, especially reflecting the change in behaviour. It can be identified that the number of people living in a household together is getting smaller. There has been a substantial increase in the number of unmarried couples, childless couples, and one-parent families. The normal situation, concerning the numbers of persons living in one household, comprises one or two persons; 1 out of 3 dwellings is occupied by a person living alone; 1 out of 4 dwellings is occupied by a childless couple. Furthermore it can be noticed that the average age at childbirth is getting higher as well (in 1990 28.3 years, in 2000 29.3 years and in 2005 29.8 years) [10]; [18].

This table represents the way the French people spend their time beside the professional life in general.

	Women		Men		Total	
	1986	**1999**	**1986**	**1999**	**1986**	**1999**
Personal care, meals, sleep	11 hrs 40	11 hrs 48	11 hrs 28	11 hrs 32	11 hrs 34	11 hrs 40
Gainful work, study, training	3 hrs 16	3 hrs 27	5 hrs 47	5 hrs 30	4 hrs 30	4 hrs 28
Domestic work	5 hrs 07	4 hrs 36	2 hrs 07	2 hrs 13	3 hrs 39	3 hrs 25
of which:						
Housework, shopping	*4 hrs 10*	*3 hrs 40*	*1 hrs 10*	*1 hrs 15*	*2 hrs 42*	*2 hrs 28*
Childcare	*0 hrs 42*	*0 hrs 38*	*0 hrs 10*	*0 hrs 11*	*0 hrs 26*	*0 hrs 25*
Gardening, construction, repairs	*0 hrs 15*	*0 hrs 18*	*0 hrs 47*	*0 hrs 47*	*0 hrs 31*	*0 hrs 32*
Free time	3 hrs 13	3 hrs 31	3 hrs 53	4 hrs 09	3 hrs 32	3 hrs 50
Travel	0 hrs 44	0 hrs 38	0 hrs 45	0 hrs 36	0 hrs 45	0 hrs 37
Total	24 hrs 00	24 hrs 00	24 hrs 00	24 hrs 00	24 hrs 00	24 hrs 00

Source: [10]

Table 3: Hours and minutes spent through the day of an "average French" (people aged 15-60, excluding students and retirees)

The table above describes the daily hours spent by French female and male in 1986 and 1999. It can be seen that there is an increase in the hours spent on personal care, meals and sleep. When it comes up to gainful work, study and training, women spent less hours on it in 1986 than in 1999, but in the case of men we can figure out a decrease. Regarding domestic work, it is exactly the opposite when you look at the summed time. However, with a deeper look on the detailed information it can be said that especially the trend concerning men is to spend more time on domestic work, whereas women are spending less. This can be a result because women spending more hours on gainful work, studying and training. In case of spending free-time, the trend is to spend more hours on personal issues, whereas time of travelling is decreasing for both groups.

4.3.3 Hofstede's Dimensions

Compared to the world's average of 55 in the power distance dimension, France can be seen as more bureaucratic. There are a lot of rules set up between the societal levels. When it comes up to the individualism level France also shows a significant difference to the world's average. Therefore it can be said that the French population is more individualistic and relationships between the members are looser than in other countries. The French lays more focus on the handling between the gender issues (masculinity). This means that the women have the same values like men and women have the same status, it does not matter if it is in the professional or in the private life. They have the same rights like their counterpart and also men can carry out household/children/and so on issues without earning criticism in the society. When it comes up to the uncertainty avoidance the French people can be seen as highly rated. This can be reflected in the handling with this topic as the French are more emotional and motivated by the inner nervousness when it comes up to uncertainty [20].

4.4 Swedish Market

In this section the Swedish market should be described to give the reader a little impression of it. In a further step the "typical Swede" is described.

4.4.1 Description of the Swedish Market

Sweden can be seen as one of the largest countries in Europe, but compared with other European population numbers, Sweden is a relatively small country. The economy can be characterised by high internationalization and a broad business sector. Especially in the service sector, there is a huge activity in the public sector. After having been a poor agrarian country in the mid 1850's Sweden grew to the fastest growing economy in the world, beside Japan, between 1850 and 1970. In 1970 Sweden could be seen as the third richest country in the world (measured in Gross Domestic Product) [11]. This resulted from several factors, namely [11]

- Exports of iron ore and timber products to European continent
- Investment in the education
- Expansion of infrastructure
- Modern democracy
- An efficient, non-corrupted bureaucracy
- and some more

The Swedish business sector was based on the goods which were existing in the country. In the late 19th century these goods were the base for a broad manufacturing sector. The combination of this industry and the household consumption has build up the base for the private service sector. The manufacturing sector received quite fast an international touch, as products were exported. However, not only the manufacturing sector was exporting products, but also a number of services were operated abroad [11].

The base of the business market was build by the goods which were existing in the country. Furthermore, this resulted in a broad manufacturing sector, and the Swedish economy could turn this in an economical advantage. The combination of the industry's demand and the household consumption created the groundwork for the private service sector. Especially within the fourth wave of internationalisation, the service sector began to operate abroad as well and it can be said that the service sector increased. This can emphasised when it is talked about the knowledge-intensive service sector. Although Sweden is in the European Union since 1995, Sweden decided not to introduce any transitional rules [11].

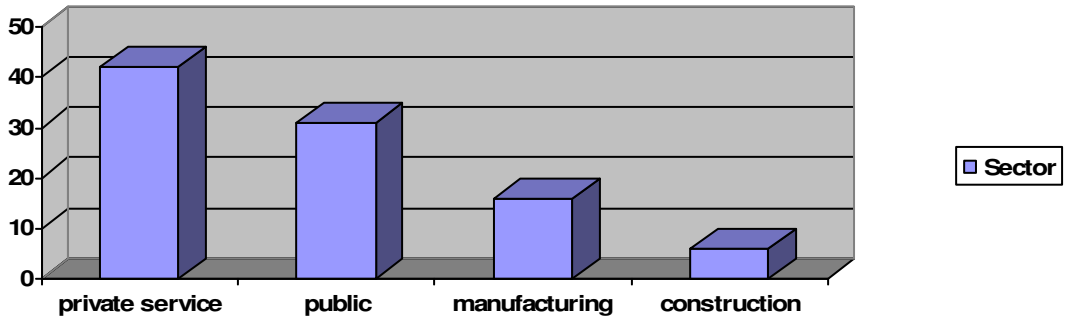
4.4.2 Data of the Swedish Market

In 1997, nearly 80 percent (about 1.9 million people) of the working people were employed in the service sector. This sector can include for example transport, cleaning, car leasing and education. New information and communication technologies have made it possible to reach the customers through call centres, client reception desks and tele-banking to provide them the services [19].

In the area of wages in the business sector a forecast can be drawn of an increase by 4.4 percent per year in 2008 and 2009 [12]. Especially in the private service sector the employment is a continuing upswing process, but the rate in 2008 is lower than in 2007. Service firms are not losing their optimism that this trend will last and the demand will increase as well [13].

The unregistered unemployment is expected to remain at the 4 percent border (2007: 5.2 percent [23]), but the increase in productivity means that the wages and price pressure will remain on a lower level. Particularly in the traditional household service sector

(retailing/wholesaling) employment has been increased. To announce some number the employment's rate of Sweden should be shown briefly:



Soure: [11]
Figure 15: Sweden's employment in 2005, in percent

Furthermore the forecast announces an occurrence of employment growth in the service sector. This can be explained in the phenomena that the manufacturing sector will continue to be the main role in exports, but this is influencing the service sector indirectly as well [11].

4.4.3 The Typical Swede

The main interests of the Swedes can be seen in money, job, home, ice-hockey and family (in this order). All decisions they are making are essential (you can call it a matter of being dead or alive) and he is taking all possibilities in account. Before deciding one thing he is trying some other possibilities before to be sure to make the right decision. At the weekends they are spending a lot of time with sport, if possible in the nature [14]. Also, if the family is not ranked at the first position the Swede loves to spend time with the family members [15].
One of the most important things about Swedes is that they have a huge sense of equality. This means that everybody wants to be the same like everybody else, most Swedes earn the same amount of money (after taxes), dress themselves in the same way. In addition the same taste in furniture can be seen in their houses [14]. As a consequence, Sweden can be seen as a country with relatively small class differences [16].
Furthermore, the discussions between Swedes are less heated up, and they are trying more to convenience somebody with offering some good arguments, but not with putting too much emotional energy in these discussions. This is the reason why foreigners estimate the Swedes as formal and under-cooled, but this rationality and objectivity can be found in the private, as well as in the professional life of the Swedes [16].

4.4.4 Hofstede's Dimenions

Normally the Swedes are willing and able to do a good job. The Swedish manager sees him-/herself as being a coach than a commander. Tasks and authority is often passed to the staff as on every level the Swedish are allowed to make decisions and to solve turned up problems by themselves. The manager is taking advantage of the natural creativity and motivation of his employees, but he does not lead them through his power or formal position [17]. The power distance can be seen as one of the smallest of the world, as hierarchy is most of the time replaced by personal responsibilities. The personal status has no great importance and they often use their first name at work, it does not matter at what "hierarchy level" they are. Swedish managers are more willing to take risk than in some other countries. In some studies it could be shown that the Swedes have the lowest "uncertainty avoidance index". It can be said that the Swedes are not afraid about doing the "right" thing as long as they are trying to

do their best [17]; [20]. Furthermore, the Swedish society can be seen as completely feminine, as the roles between the genders are not important for this population. The woman has the same rights like the man and the man can take over the same daily tasks like the woman. The Swedes follow their traditions and fulfil the social obligations. Also the protection of one's face is really important in Sweden and the society is more future related (long-term orientation). When it comes up to the individualism index Swedes can be ranked higher than the world's average. Swedes can be characterised as really introverted and not really open for others. They care more about themselves and the family members [20].

4.5 Interviews with French Conciergeries

In sum we had three interviews, all information gain here shall be presented in this chapter.

4.5.1 Xavier Jadoul and Charles Dessart

The contact with "e-conciergerie" was between February and May 2008 and was held by mail and personal contact.
The entrepreneurs are two fresh graduated with a Bachelor in Marketing, who set up this company in 2008 (see website: www.econciergerie.be). They started with the hardest jobs: finding reliable service providers and clients. The concept works exactly the same way as in France. The service offer can be adapted. One example of the offer is the following: the company subscribes for a one-year period for its employees, the services provided are charged to the employee. Concerning the provision of the service, the clients can contact e-conciergerie by e-mail or telephone from 08h30 am to 06h00 pm. The services available are varying like all the other companies in this field: pressing, household, ironing, clothes retouch, shopping, baby-sitting, private classes, gardening, wellness services, car cleaning, catering, events organisation, birthday parties, company gifts, seminars (business), trips, gifts, and some more.

The advertisement message focused on the reliability by choosing wisely the services providers, respected by keeping reasonable prices, confidentiality and satisfaction. Following them, conciergeries answer many problems presented in today's companies: an increasing of the time spent in the working hours dealing with daily life problems, a spreading of the services offers and an increasing competition between the services providers, a productivity at stake and the dilemma between professional and personal life.

Following them, the advantages for the companies using their services are:

- Gain in time: loads of employees are complaining about the time. Employees would spend around 20 percent of the hours at their desk dealing with personal or family affairs.
- Gain in productivity: less worrying and stressing for the employees.
- Gain in money: outsourcing that kind of butler services costs less than hiring an employee intern.
- Gain in value: wellness is really important for new candidates, the image of the company is improved, and a concierge is a serious plus-value for the employees.

In the following part the personal interview should be summarised (the pros and cons, the Belgian market and the typical client).

1. What are the advantages that you use to sell your service?

As showed above, the biggest argument put forward is the gain in time. In the majority of the cases, that is what potential clients are looking for. The companies also like the idea of having only one number to call in case of need. They stress out the fact that a gain in time is a gain in productivity. Finally, the consequence of offering such a service is a gain in value for the current employees and candidates.

2. What are the fears emanating from your potential clients? (The cons they see)

Their clients are not too resistant towards the services, some are just not open for this offer saying that the companies can do without it as they have done for the last years; they have always been managing without conciergeries, so why should they need it now. In that case, they change their minds pretty fast after using the service for a while.

3. Do you think that the Belgian market is ready?

According to Xavier, the Belgian market is not mature enough. People just do not know the concept. They heard about it on television or on the radio, but nothing more. The mature enough markets to accept the concept are the US, the UK and France is getting to it as well. In Belgium, people tend to take quite a while to think about it and this means a longer setting down process. He thinks that the market might take a few years to really take off.

4. How would you describe the typical client using concierge services in Belgium? (On the employee and employer level)

In any case, the clients and potential clients are people having no time to "loose" taking care of daily life affairs. They need, for instance, to find an organisation to make their shopping because shops are closed after their working hours. A lot of people are also looking for a reliable contact person to receive advices for a service provider making a good job. When they began the company, they thought that the age of the potential clients would be situated between 35 and 45, but this turned out to be wrong, the age is not a determinant factor.
Concerning the structures aimed, the big companies are, of course, essential but they were surprised by the amount of SME interested in their offer.

4.5.2 Pathy Maxant

This contact was a commercial one and the date of contacting was on the 28th of February 2008 by the Internet.

Comme à l'hôtel (Just like in a hotel) defines itself as a four star conciergeries, "a link between you and your envies", aimed for companies and particulars.

Pathy Maxant explained us that her company would like to increase the services offers in the next 5 years. She wants to attain a better stability, more clients and expand geographically. Currently, their clients are from all kinds of sectors, very different from each others. The city where they operate is getting more and more open for the concept of conciergerie even if it took some time. Strangely for us, she said that Spain, Portugal, Italy and Central Europe were interesting markets for the future while we would expect Scandinavia or Benelux.

According to Pathy Maxant, the clients are scared of how the performance of the service will occur. They are also concerned about the prices.

She is not sure if the Swedish market is ready to welcome this Anglo-Saxon lifestyle, even if she knows that the Nordic countries are considered as advanced in some points like work

maternity, paternity holidays, ecology, etc. The thing to look at is the work rhythm, if it fits with their life style. The elements to look at are the working hours, the distance between the work place and their home, domestic habits, if the Swedes are demanding for service providers and which ones, at what conditions, why, etc.

4.5.3 Raphaël Choserot

Raphaël Choserot is the founder of Nestor et Nestor and the date of contact was on the 4th of March 2008 by mail. As the information given by him helped us to define our concept and definition and his points of views are shown in the chapter "Definition and concept of conciergerie" we refuse to re-tell the former given information in this part again.

4.6 Interview with a Swedish company – Getinge AB

In this chapter an interview with one potential customer using the service of a conciergerie shall be shown to the reader.

Getinge AB is located in Getinge, Kommun Halmstad, Sweden. The company operates in a segment that is called infection control, which is concerning hygiene and control of micro organisms in hospitals and pharmaceutical manufacturing (Getinge AB, 2006).

The interview with Harald Castler, Managing Director of Getinge International, took place on the 18th of April 2008 at 3pm in his office in Getinge AB. During the approximately 30-minutes interview we tried to find out some information needed to answer the research question, if there was a need for the concept of conciergerie on the Swedish market.

According to Harald Castler the concept of conciergerie is not completely unfamiliar in Sweden and he knows that the concept is about a kind of butler service. In the beginning of the interview he announced that the concept is known in the big cities in Sweden like Stockholm. Especially during the boom of the IT business and when the competition for labour was enormous this kind of service concept was introduced. However, this concept was not a big success in Sweden and especially in the countryside, where the competition between the several firms was less important than in the big cities, the concept of conciergerie was not, and is still not, needed.

In Getinge AB, for key employees, who have to work abroad for one year, the company is getting a provided service for the issues concerning the household, like cleaning. This will be arranged by Getinge AB to guarantee a better life for the employee's family during the time of absence. The way of this procedure is that the employee has to fix everything by himself and afterwards he sends the bill to Getinge AB, to pay back the expenses. Beside this Getinge AB does not provide any work-life-balance programs.

Harald Castler sees the point of the big success of conciergerie on the US market in having more then 1000 employees working in the companies and that the whole mentality is different from the Swedish market. In big US cities like New York, Los Angeles and Miami people are living the lifestyle "time is money" and therefore the concept can work there. In Sweden maybe the Swedes in Stockholm are living this lifestyle as well, but in cities which you can find around Halmstad, South of Sweden, this lifestyle is not lived. If you need a daily service, for example a baby-sitter, the phone call is to the grandmother to take care about the

grandchild. In America, where the people are moving everywhere, this is impossible and there is a need for a baby-sitter outside the family is given.

On the Swedish market the personal life is on a change and the companies are trying to get more women in the top positions and, in addition, there are more families in which both parts of the parents work in top positions. In general the demand for more professionals is increasing, there are more projects running at the same time, the employees have to be available more often and meetings take place all over the world. The workplace is not only the office anymore and the normal family affairs suffer from these factors.

Also the demographic shift plays a role in the company life nowadays. The employees, born in the 40's are on the way of retiring and the potential employees born in the 80's are supposed to replace them. However there is a lack of labour as the potential employees are not numerous enough to replace the old ones. Introducing additional pluses, like the concept of conciergerie, can attract prospect employees and improve the image of company.

Because of all the reasons mentioned above the concept of conciergerie could have had a chance on the Swedish market, and all the reasons justify some support in the future, especially in the daily used services, like child care, laundry and gardening. Also providing such a service, like the concept of conciergerie, will attract people to work for the company.

According to Harald Castler the service can be successful if it is cost-efficient. This means that the cost of using the service of a conciergerie finds itself under the normal costs of the company. He gave an example to demonstrate his thought: If the company can save 5 percent because using a conciergerie as a middleman and using the service of a conciergerie costs 3 percent, the company is saving 2 percent in the end. Harald Castler pointed out that using this concept should not have any influence on the customers of Getinge AB, because as soon as its customers have to pay more for the provided products, Getinge AB will lose customers. This can be explained in the fact that all additional costs for Getinge AB will be revolved at the customer, who has to pay more for the products provided by Getinge AB. It is all about the costs of Getinge AB in the end of the day.

Harald Castler can imagine that in the case of working abroad, the employee can use the service of a conciergerie, which is arranging everything for him/her. But in his mind at the beginning of the interview the concept was a bit misunderstood. He thought that the company had to pay the subscription and the service used by the employee. Therefore the using of the service has to be deducted from the salary of the employee and the employees not using the service of a conciergerie at all will receive a higher salary. Therefore he saw a not useful system behind the concept of conciergerie. However, before explaining him the whole concept in detail, he would not give the concept of conciergerie a try in the near future, as he felt not ready to introduce it in Getinge AB. He also doubted that the employees would use the concept to these circumstances (employee has to pay for everything, subscription and service claimed). He accompanies his statement with an example: Getinge AB is offering dinner in the canteen to its employees. If the price is going to be risen by 5 SEK, people would not go there anymore, because Swedes can be seen as really price-sensitive.

After having shown him the table of the questionnaire guideline (number 5) he was explaining that the less ordinary services, like events, are organised by Getinge AB, or the people are outsourced. Sometimes the companies paid for butler services, but it is not organised and the employees have to contact the local service provider by themselves to demand for the service.

It can be said, after this interview, that the concept of conciergerie, or better said the butler service, was almost unheard 10 years ago, nowadays it is known in big cities and there is a possibility that in 10 years the concept is known on the B2B market. However, it has to be mentioned that the implementation is a long way and it will not work from one to another day, but the basic idea of the concept is on the way of getting known.

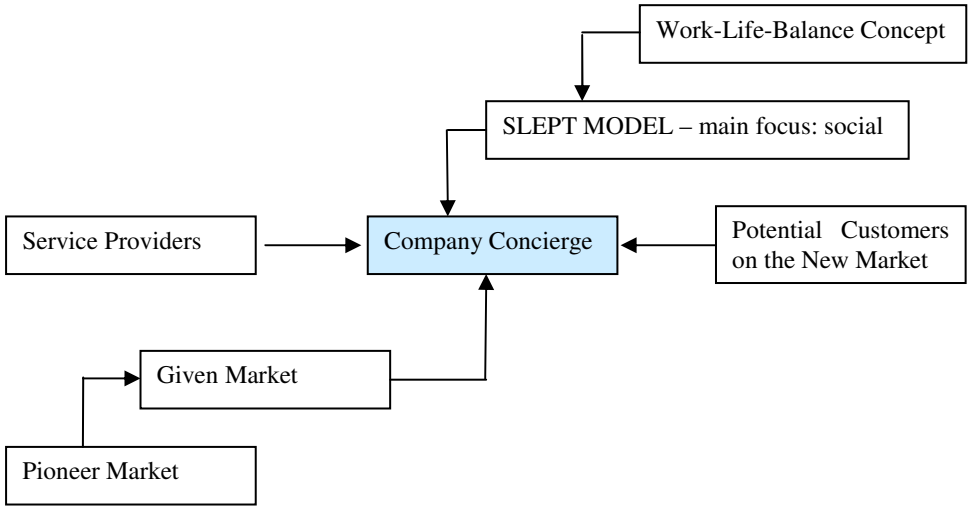
All in all, he thinks that the concept of conciergerie will not be such a hit like in the US, as it will not be profitable for the companies. If the concept is going to find place on the Swedish market, it has to begin in companies which are located in big cities, which employ a high degree of high educated people (bachelor and master degrees), where career is considered on providing a high status and where productivity is of importance. Harald Chastler thinks about business fields like IT, consultants, accounting and lawyers companies, software providers, financial advisors and companies in the financial sector, like stock brokers. From there the concept has to start and maybe gets the chance to spread to other sectors. In addition, some categories of employees would take the concepts of conciergerie (especially the daily services) in a positive way to handle the career and the private life in an appropriate way, especially women and dual-earners (both parts of the parents are working in top positions) can take advantage of this concept.

Additionally Harald Castler pointed out that the concept of conciergerie may not work in his opinion because of the fact that a conciergerie has contracts with several service providers and nobody can guarantee him that the provided service is the best one. The question, which he asked himself in this content, was, if such a company can be that specialised in all the services. Because if it is not so, the company will fail without any doubt.

Compared with the advantages of French companies using conciergeries (question number 10), Harald Castler explained that he could understand only some of them. In the case of loyalty, partnership and attractiveness, he agreed with the French and ranked them as important. Especially with attractiveness he mentioned women and that this concept could be very important for them to call the employer attractive. In the case of better productivity he ranked the concept in the middle, as he was not sure about introducing the concept will be cost-efficient for Getinge AB. When it came up to tax treatment he ranked it as not relevant, as it is actually not a negative tax treatment. Harald Castler described the Swedish market as a black-market and also here he gave an example. He used the service of gardening by himself. If he would send the bill of the gardening service (100 SEK) to Getinge AB it would be regarded as salary. Therefore the company had to pay 300 SEK that the gardener would get 100 SEK, but after this he had to pay taxes and in the end he had 50 SEK in his pocket. Therefore it would be easier to give the gardener 50 SEK directly after his work and he can put it in his pocket without the procedure mentioned above, as it would cost the company 6 to 7 times more.

5 Analysis

The whole work started with this model as a statement, saying that those are the influences to consider when studying the concept of a conciergerie. It is now our task to resume, compare, analyse and conclude our findings. Different theories were found related to every element. In the empirical data, we tried to research as many aspects as possible.



As time passed by during our survey we realised two things: there is a certain need for on the market using the service of a conciergerie, even if the market might not be mature enough to accept and implement it. The following analysis will show the reader the reason for our statement and help to understand by putting all the elements together. Let's start with the services providers point and the conciergerie concept itself.

5.1 Service Providers

In the next chapter the focus of the analysis should be on the service providers, the service itself and the service market.

5.1.1 Services

It can be confirmed that according to Lovelock and Wirtz (2004, 9) a service offered by a conciergerie "*is an act or performance offered by one party to another*". This can be seen as reflected in the fact that the conciergerie offers the menu to the end customer and forwards the wish of a demanded service to the service provider, therefore act as a middle-man. When it comes to the classifications of a service given in the literature, we can say that we do not agree with all of them. For us, the attitudes of intangibility, heterogeneity and perishability (Zeithalm et al., 1989; Kotler et al., 2001) are totally agreeable, but when it comes to the inseparability (Careman and Langeard, 1980), we have to mention that the service of both, conciergeries and service providers are separated in the time of production and consumption. This can be said as the service is given further to another person. This can be explained by an example: Jenny, who had searched for a baby-sitter for her niece called a conciergerie and explained her problem (need of a babysitter). As soon as Jenny hung up the phone one of the employees of the conciergerie called one of the service providers, who offered a baby-sitter service. After this phone call the employee of the service provider is calling one responsible person who will go to Jenny's house to take care of her niece. In this act, we see the consumption of the service, but there is more than one production in this example. Only the

last act (baby-sitting) can be seen as an example for the inseparability of production and consumption. In the other cases the consumption did not take place at the same time but shortly afterwards. The production happening within the conciergerie after Jenny called can be mirrored in the phone call to the service company.

An essential characteristic of the conciergerie is that it should not be seen as a terminated process. Of course, the concierge provides a service but this service is included in a bigger process. When Jenny asks for a baby-sitter, the role of the conciergerie is to find it. However the whole service process of having a baby-sitter is not completed yet. Most of the services present on the market are designed with a termination in answering the demand. The demand in the case of Jenny is not completed just by calling the conciergerie. The services can live without another service provider, the conciergerie cannot.

When it comes to the distinction between core and peripheral services, it has to be mentioned that here the classification between service provider and conciergerie has to be settled. In the case of the service provider we can agree that it is up to the company if it provides just a core service or some peripheral in addition. According to Careman and Langeard (1980) peripheral services can be a perfect complement to the core offer. Taking a deeper look on conciergeries, we can assert that these companies provide just a core service, the menu (where all the services, which they can organise, are outlined) for the prospect customers. Also the distinction between hard and soft services is not clear for both kinds of companies. The service provider can offer both as the soft services can be seen in the area of food services, health care and laundry and hard term, for example life insurances (Erramilli, 1990). After having acquired a deeper knowledge about conciergeries, we can define the service of this company as a soft one, as it is providing the service to find the demanded service for a customer.

To summarise we can say that conciergeries offer soft services and the company lay a focus on one service (menu card). In contrast, the service providers can offer soft and hard services and they can decide to add peripheral ones to the core service to present the customer a better package.

5.1.2 Service Sector

It is essential to take a general look on the history of the service sector. As we provided the theoretical framework on this case we also chose three markets to compare the current situations there and to draw a first step of a conclusion to answer our research question. The service market can be seen as a consistent growing sector all over the world (Lovelock and Wirtz, 2004). This can be confirmed after having had a deeper look on the three chosen markets – US, France (including Belgium) and Sweden. In all three countries the service sector has increased over the last years. The US can be seen as the largest and most powerful economy in the world [7] and almost everybody knows that “What is chic in the US will spread to Europe some years after”. Exactly the phenomenon is to be seen with the concept of conciergerie and its first steps on the European market. The concept is well known on the US market and after some years the first conciergeries tried their luck on the other side of the Atlantic. In France and Belgium this concept seems to work out and therefore these two markets will offer us a good base to compare it with one market where the concept is not known as presented in our work. In the case of the Belgian and French market we can say that the mentality of the people is really similar and therefore we just explain the French market. However, we had an interview with two entrepreneurs of Belgium, who were helping us to understand the concept.

Back to the original topic, the growth of the service sector: It is noticeable that on the service sector on the US market only 16.5 percent of the workforce is working (2007) [8], but in France and Sweden the percentage is seriously higher (France: 75.9 percent in 2007 [18]; Sweden: about 80 percent in 1997 [19]). We should mention that the dates of the years are not the same which represents a difficulty for comparability. With this numbers we just want to show how appealing the service sector is for the population in the several countries.

Concluding, we can say that, just regarding the structure of the service sector France and Sweden offer a potential market for the concept of conciergeries. In France the concept was introduced some years ago and it seems that it is working out succeesfully. Sweden is the potential market and we have to have a deeper look on this market to answer the question if the Swedish market is a suitable market for the concept. Just putting the growth of the service sector into focus, we can answer the question with yes.

However, the interview proved us that the competition between the service providers is lower than in other countries and especially in the Swedish countryside. Harald Castler made it clear that the importance of a concierge cannot be as big as in France or in the US. People have the same needs; the services are pretty much the same, but less competition implies less importance carried to the act of finding the service, it is simply easier. The service sector cannot be called really developed as there is a further growth in the service sector forecasted [11]. Coming back to the point above, the conciergerie is included in the whole service process, but is not an end to it. The concept is a searching-service. If it is easy to find a service provider to make the job for you, a middle-man like the concierge is not needed.

5.1.3 Service Provider

Concerning the service provider, we can agree that both sides have to be careful when they provide the services to the customers. The reason for that is that a conciergerie can be seen as a service provider in a narrow sight. Especially when it comes to the characteristics of the service – intangibility, heterogeneity and persishability (Zeithalm et al., 1989; Kotler et al., 2001) – we can point out that the service provider has to handle these very carefully, as the customer expects the best solution for him/her. Otherwise he/she will change to another conciergerie or if the conciergerie is not satisfied with the service of the provider it will search for a new one and the partnership between them is over. This is one of the reasons why the service provider should know his customer well and especially his behaviour (Irons, 1997). In this chapter we do not want to go deeper in the detailed information about the role of the customer behaviour, as this area will come a bit later in one of the next chapters.

For a conciergerie, it is important to ensure common demands on the term service to be sure what a service is, how the service provider can be defined and how the service market looks like on the new market. A company starting with a new service or even with an existing service does not have to study the whole market, but just its competitors, direct or indirect. The situation is different for a conciergerie because the company does not work on the market but also with the market and all its actors.

5.2 SLEPT Model and the Work-Life-Balance Concept

The SLEPT-Model is of importance for this paper as it describes different influencing factors of an economy, among other things the social/cultural influence. The demographic shift in all shown countries is changing in many ways. The people are getting older, the average age of

marriage is higher than a few years ago and the trend is transforming to a concept of dual-earner families, especially women in top positions. All these factors influence the social context of every country and every population demands other things depending on the wants and needs. This will be explained later in the context of the Hofstede's dimensions. In addition, we can confirm our thought that the work-life-balance concept influences the social context as well. This can be said as providing work-life-balance concepts in a more family-orientated society can help the employees to spend more time with their family members. In our opinion such concepts can also be provided by conciergeries and therefore it is of great importance that the conciergeries know their potential customers to gain knowledge about what to put on the "menu". The French market can be seen as a very family-orientated society, this means that the family members care about each other. Surprisingly women spent only 38 minutes and men 11 minutes per day with childcare in 1999 [10]. An interesting point in this case is also that the time amount of spending time with the children was decreasing in the last years concerning women and increasing concerning men. Here a new trend can be presumed that men are getting more involved in childcare. In the case of housework and shopping the French people spend in average 3.5 hours per day, also this time amount was decreasing in the case of women and increasing concerning men. Finally we can point out that the French society was changing over the years and men are getting more involved in the daily issues concerning housework and children. In our opinion this could be one of the reasons why conciergeries are well situated on the French market as the potential to carry out daily issues can be taken over by conciergeries and the families can spend more time together, as the family does not have to spend so much time on the daily work tasks, like household cleaning, shopping, gardening and so on.

The Swedish market consumer can also be seen (according to the stereotypes) as a person who loves money, job, home, ice-hockey and his family. Therefore we can say that the Swede loves his family, but not concerned too much about the others in the society. They love to spend time at home with the family members in their cosy houses and everything should be comfortable, the Swede has to feel good in his environment.

In some ways they are similar to the French society and this leads us to the conclusion that the social context also argues for a successful introduction of the concept conciergerie. This can be convoyed from the thought that the Swedes want to spend more time with their families, but they also love their jobs. When offering the service of a conciergerie the time which is wasted with daily issues, gardening, cleaning, and so on, can be reduced and the Swedes would be able to find a perfect balance between job and private life (family).

The social aspect and the work-life balance are considered as a plus in today's business world. To conclude we can say that after having studied through the theory of the work-life-balance, the advantages provided are the same as the conciergerie. There is no doubt that if a company wants to cooperate better with employees, the conciergerie fits perfectly.

5.3 Influencing Markets

Comparing markets is a hard and delicate matter. Sweden is lucky in the sense that the concept has already been introduced to many other markets. In this work, the focus is put on the pioneer market; the one everything started (US) and the given market, namely France. In marketing, taking lessons from the past and its success or failures is not a matter of choice but a crucial necessity to progress and improve. The way it works abroad might not work in Sweden, but lessons have to be taken and it can certainly help to apply the concept on the Swedish market.

5.3.1 Pioneer Market

In this paper the pioneer market can be found within the US market, as the concept was spread to the first European countries over from there. We can point out that conciergeries on the US market were able to fulfil the customers' wants and needs in a proper way. According to Kotler et al. (2001) this is the main aim and the company has to be sure about these issues, before entering a new market. After a research in the Internet and some papers, found in the database of the library, we can say that the concept works out and that there is still no breakdown in sight. Although the percentage of the labour force is not really high on the service sector it seems that the people are demanding services. This can be confirmed by looking at the composition by the services amounts 78.7 percent in 2007 [8]. One interesting point is that after big catastrophes, which were influencing the whole US market, the market has recovered, the economy has increased and the spending has risen again. This can be seen in all numbers presented in the paper in the empirical part, but there is only a choice of spending in the service sector shown, as the whole amount on numbers would have confused the reader and, in addition, they were not necessary for us to analyse the market in detail.

Now, why is this concept working in the US? Well, the answer can be given from multiple perspectives. Even if Hofstede gives some insights, here are selected elements. First of all, the US culture is based on the idea that "time is money". It is all about productivity. If there exists something, a service that can help the company to save time, they want it. In Sweden, time and money are not inevitably related to each other as strong as in the US. This comes back to the point about the importance of time in Sweden which is unlike. The American need for a middle-man to manage their time-limited lives is greater. Secondly, the company is seen as a partner of the employee. Harald Catsler and his experience in the US stated that the company is really important in the eyes of the employee. Thus, the company has to take greater care of its employees. We can also say that the concept has been implemented the right way as it has been working for some years now. This right foundation, a matching structure and the presence of willingness, to satisfy the needs form a well-working mill for conciergeries.

5.3.2 Given Market

France can be seen as the given market and after the interview with some French companies we can confirm that the concept came from the US and that the pioneer market has an influence on the given market. Like on every market segmentation plays an immense role, as a company cannot provide the whole population (Kotler et al., 2001). On the French market the advertising on the Internet is really good, as we found out after giving the word "conciergerie" in the searching field of Google. We were not expecting such an amount of links to several conciergeries. For this we can say that the segment of conciergeries is not exactly defined, but everyone who needs help in finding a service is a potential customer of conciergeries.

The reason for the conciergeries' success can be regarded from various points of view as well. We started the work proving the need with the help of some statements as in Belgium, 45 percent of the active population is female and 80 percent of them have at least one child to take care of. This leads to stress as the work life is more demanding. Annually, stress costs European companies € 20 billion [3]. The society is changing, in the US and in France, but also in Belgium, UK, etc. The success of the conciergerie is explained by the fact that the concept is integrating and perfectly adapted to this situation. As society evolves, the need for a conciergerie is growing.

Secondly, in 2005, 827,000 companies provided commercial services. Among them 412,000 offered services to other companies. As a consequence, tough competition can be perceived and noticed. The French society has changed, and still finds itself in progress, as among 23.8 million households in 1999, many of them divorced, the number of unmarried couples, childless couple and one-parent family increased radically [18].

Finally, the concept has been introduced in a good way, presenting advantages for every actor. In Sweden, the concept is seen as a butler service. The cost is taken away from the employee's salary without causing costs to the company. In France, the company pays the subscription and gets the advantage of providing a good service to its employees. On the other hand, the employee benefits from a conciergerie looking for services for him/her and charging only the actual cost of the service. If the car-wash costs 50 SEK, the employee will pay 50 SEK. The cost of taking the car to the car-wash is paid by the company; the employee does not have to care about taking the car there. Both actors are beneficiating from the conciergerie. One of the most important marketing concepts is the WIN-WIN relationship. The conciergerie offers this relationship.

5.3.3 Segmentation

As said before, a clear segmentation cannot be made when it comes to conciergeries. This company has to make segmentation in two ways, which end customer needs its service and which services shall be offered on the "menu". Only the segmentation concerning the potential customer should take place in this paper. Among other things the most important segmentations are the psychographics and the behavioural segmentation. According to Bennett (1995) the potential customer is described by his/hers lifestyle, interests, the type of personality and so on. Concerning the concept conciergerie this segmentation type seems to be intelligent as the service of the conciergeries is to make the life of the end customer easier. For example: In France and Sweden the members of the families care about themselves, but also about their closest family members and in their free-time, particularly noticed in Sweden, love to spend the time with their families. This is an advantage for a conciergerie as its task is to find a proper service provider. This can be simplified with an example: Mister and Misses Svensson is a hard working couple in Sweden. As soon as they come home they want to spend time with their family, but there are a lot of things to carry out in the household. All this tasks can be carried out by a service provider and Mister Svensson just needs one phone call to explain the demanded services to the conciergerie. Within a few minutes he can organise everything and when he comes home he has time to spend the free-time with his family. In this example it can be seen that psychographics are really important to be know for a company. Fortunately, also these characteristics can serve the company as a proper description of the customer. In our paper we can say that the three markets are in some cases very similar to each other, but this shall be described on the following pages (market analysis and Hofstede's dimensions).

The segmentation has been important for the work in the sense that, before starting up a company, especially on a new market, it is essential to choose the right target and attract the right consumer is essential. The conciergerie has no limit in the search of clients, however to start, Harald Castler thinks that if the concept is going to find place on the Swedish market it has to begin in companies, which are located in big cities, which employ a high degree of high-educated people (bachelor and master degrees), where career has a high status and where productivity is of importance. He thinks about business fields like IT, consultants, accounting companies, attorneys, software providers, financial advisors and companies in the financial sector, like stock brokers. From there the concept has to start and maybe gets the chance to

spread to other sectors. In addition some categories of employees would take the concepts of conciergerie (especially the daily services) in a positive way to handle the career and the private life in an appropriate way, especially women and dual-earners (both parts of the parents are working in top positions) can take advantage of this concept. Following the two entrepreneurs in Belgium, the typical client interested by the concept and who could be a pioneer or early adopters is somebody who has no time to loose, a family with both parties working, the age not being a determinant factor. They also state that some people just look for advice, in other words, a reliable contact. They thought that only big companies would be interesting to aim but after a while they realised the great amount of SME's. Probably this can be seen as a recommendation for the future entrepreneurs.

5.4 Hofstede's Dimensions

This point can be included in two parts of the model, the potential customers (described later on) and the market analysis of the pioneer and given market described above.

Before describing the societies by means of the Hofstede's dimensions a table should be shown to the reader to give an overview of the ranked dimension according the country.

Dimension / Country	Individualism	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Masculinity	Time Perspective
US	High	Low	Low	High	Low
France	High	High	High	Low	---
Sweden	High	Low	Low	Low	High

Source: by the authors of the paper

Table 4: Overview of the Hofstede's dimension concerning US, France and Sweden

The Hofstede's model is a model which provides good thoughts about revealing the differences of culture in general issues, but in this study the model is not appropriate to answer our research question in all dimensions. By comparing the three markets it can be found out that in some dimensions the Swedish market is either similar to the US or to the French one, but only the individualism dimension can be identify as the same level (high). Furthermore the individualism can explain why the concept of conciergerie works on the pioneer and given market, and therefore has a chance to be successful on the Swedish market as well. All three countries have in common that the individual is just caring about him-/herself and the close family members (Hollensen, 2001). This implement that the family life is important to them and that the three societies want to offer their families a harmful life. French and Swedish people are really close to their family members and they want to spend time with them. Moreover the several society members want to be unique and differentiate from each other (de Mooij, 2004). Particularly in Sweden the family members want to spend their free-time together. The relationships to other members of the society are loose and not deep (Bradely, 1999; Cateora and Graham, 2005). To conclude the individualism dimension we can say that it is useful to take it in deeper consideration.

According to power distance it can be said that the US and Sweden are ranked on the lower end of this dimension and France on the opposite direction. This means that France is more bureaucratic than the two other ones and that the margin between the chef and the employees is, for instance, bigger in France than in Sweden. In high power distance countries, like in France, the people at the top are the decision makers of the society. In countries where the power distance is low the "normal employee" is embedded in the daily work-decisions and that the manager is seen more as a coach than a boss. This can be seen in the fact that the

manager wants to be part of the whole company and he/she cares about the employees as a partner, the employee is not subordinated, but equal. This can lead to a better working atmosphere and proves that the manager wants to provide some additional incentives to support the working atmosphere (work-life-balance concepts).

In the case of power distance the three countries are not showing the same level, France can be seen as being more bureaucratic than the two other ones. We also can identify that the lower the power distance is, the better the partnership between the employee and the employer. This could imply that the employee is speaking with the employer about private life issues and in doing this he could get part of the solving problem process to strengthen the relationship further (offer the employees the service of the conciergerie). It is surprising that in a country, like France, with a high power distance the concept is working as well. Therefore we can say that regarding the power distance can be an advantage, but we think it is not really necessary as the result is not really reliable.

Especially in France the uncertainty avoidance is high, this means that the society is living after rules, regulations and fixed patterns to avoid doubtful situations (Cateora and Graham, 2005). In countries were the uncertainty avoidance is low the living motto can be described as "take the day as it comes and make the best out of it" (Helgesson, 1996; Hollensen, 2001). The US and Sweden can be seen as a society which is living after this motto. In Sweden where no "class thinking" exists, this means that the several people are seen as equal. This can be observed in the fact that the Swedish work force is almost earning the same money and class differences are not given like in other countries.

We think that considering the uncertainty avoidance the Hofstede's model provides a good way of defining the customer behaviour. In countries, where the uncertainty avoidance is high the people are getting easier stressed about issues they cannot be handled easily. This means that the conciergerie has a great potential to overtake this services. This can be explained by an example: a French person wants to move to another apartment, but, as defined in the Hofstede's model, the French can be seen as high uncertainty avoid. He is feeling really stressed and it is more than he can handle. This can be avoided in calling the conciergerie, who is handling the whole movement for him. In this one successful factor on the French market can be seen. The Swedes are seen, according to Hofstede, as low uncertainty avoid and therefore we could say, regarding the example shown above, that they need more input than just to avoid uncertainty. In the case of conciergeries we could find out that the dimension could be an indicator why the concept could work or not, but as the concept is working on the US market as well (and the dimension is ranked at the lower end) we can say that such considerations are just a plus for the market analysis.

Concerning the masculinity dimension the US can be seen as a masculine society, whereas France and Sweden are feminine. In feminine countries the gender issues do not play an important role and the gender issues are divided equally. The man can overtake the roles of the woman (household issues, childcare and so on). Also in the professional life the manager function can be done by a woman and this is not regarded as an abnormal situation. Particularly in France the hours men are spending on household issues and childcare were increasing over the last years.

Concerning the masculinity we can mention that masculine societies, like the US, are taking the status and gender roles really serious. In feminine countries, like France and Sweden, there is a trend to mix up the roles and a clear distinction cannot be drawn between the gender roles. Both of the genders are working in top positions. According to Harald Castler female

Swedes are welcome in top positions and the way is open for them. This, on the other side, means that the gender roles concerning the family and other issues are not only handled by the women anymore. The gender chances can be seen as great potential for the conciergeries, as their family life can suffer from dual-earner families (according to Harald Castler). In these cases the conciergerie can be a great opportunity to overtake the daily issues that the family can spend time together (as one of the members does not have to take care about the issues anymore). In addition the searching time for finding an appropriate service provider can be decreased, as the conciergerie is doing it for the customer. For this dimension we can mention that it cannot be wrong to take it into consideration. But without regarding the current trends and changes concerning customer behaviour in this dimension is not enough to look at.

Regarding the time perspective, we were just able to get information about the US and Sweden. Here, we can say that the US is situated on the lower end and Sweden on the higher one. This means that the US society does not care about the future. In stricter words, the focus is on the present and the near future. Decisions are made with a short-term perspective and the people are more open for changes and perseverance. Sweden, on the opposite, is long-term oriented and decisions are made really carefully, because the result can influence the future. In the decision-making process all alternatives find place to exclude all the risk factors and to be sure that the solution is well thought.

When it comes to the time perspective we can point out that this dimension has not been regarded at all, as it just gives information about if a society is short- or long-term related, and this is not relevant for the introduction of the concept conciergerie.

Finally we can say that the Hofstede's dimensions are giving a good first general view about the market and the customers, but in the case of conciergeries it is not enough to just consult at Hofstede alone. Therefore the customer behaviour should be analysed in detail in the next section, as the concept is more influenced by the lifestyles and other attributes of the potential customers.

5.5 Potential Customer Behaviour

Out of all the factors influencing the customer behaviour, only some of them interested us: perception, motivation/values and attitudes.

According to the theory, perception can be understood as *"a process through which individuals are exposed to information, attend to the information, and comprehend the information."* (Mowen, 1995, 73). During the interview with Harald Castler from Getinge AB, he exposed that the concept is not completely unheard; he defined it as a butler service (Butler: a manservant, now usually the head servant of a household, in charge of wines, pantry, table silver, etc. [24]). He said he knew the concept as a butler service worked in Stockholm, especially during the IT boom. But after a while it turned out that he knew the concept in a total different form. His perception of the concept of a concierge is not the same as it exists in France. He thought that the company had to pay for the subscription and the service itself which is then deducted from the employee's salary. In his mind, this concept would be a disadvantage for the employee. The one who does not use the service gets a higher salary. The employee using it has more advantages in finding the service by himself. Thus Harald Castler doubted that such a concept would be used by the employee. In France, both actors are beneficiating from the conciergerie. One of the most important marketing concepts is the WIN-WIN relationship. The conciergerie offers this relationship. This misunderstanding is exactly the phenomenon that Xavien Jadoul explained in Belgium.

According to him, the market is not mature enough. Some potential customers say that they do not need the service of a concierge for the simple reason that they did without it before and always managed. Through a short research on the Internet, it is not difficult to see the entire Buzz Marketing around the conciergerie in France. Xavier said *"People in Belgium, they just heard once or twice on the TV or radio, which explains why they don't know about it"*. In France, the TV shows, radio, websites, blogs and forum emerge fast, just like the amount of conciergeries. So, even if the money, the offer, the competition between the service providers, and so on influence the maturity of the market, the communication and fuss around it make it familiar and thus might provide a more mature market to the conciergeries.

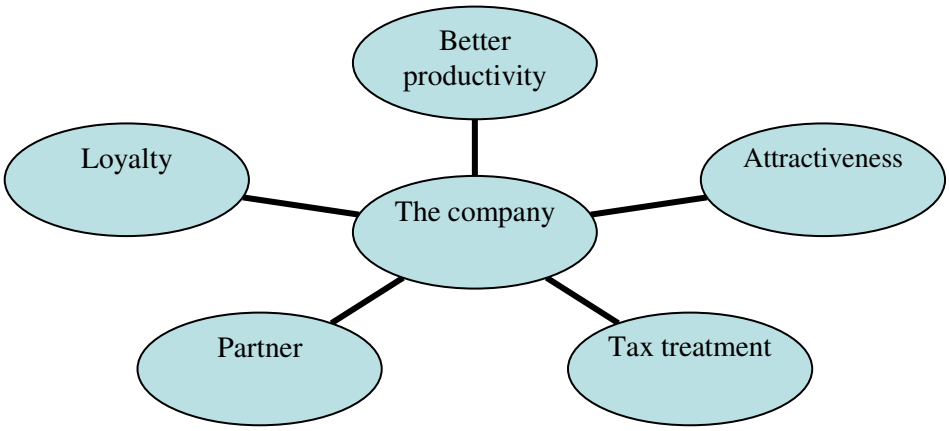
The second factors, motivation and values, refers to the processes that cause people to behave as they do. The magnitude of the motivation depends on the needs the customer will feel. His motivation to fulfil the need will depend on how strong this need is. (Solomon et al., 2006) Naturally and as seen in the interview, the magnitude of the needs will depend on the customer. In this case, the factors underlined by the Swedish people are first, the geographical situation. This can be linked to the segmentation point above. The conciergerie services might be more needed where the competition for services is higher, in big cities for instance. Getinge AB is situated in the countryside where the motivation might be less important. In France, the conciergerie services have spread all over the country. It started in big companies or companies situated in Paris. The two companies who agreed an interview were situated in Toulouse, a city with 500,000 inhabitants and 700 km south of Paris. In Belgium, e-Conciergerie is based in Namur, a rather small city in Belgium, with 100,000 inhabitants [25]. The clients of those companies are not always in the center of the city but rather in industrial area where the competition for service providers is pretty weak. Harald Catsler was right, the conciergerie services have to start from some place where the competition is high for services, perhaps in big cities and for big companies. All in all the market becomes mature enough to accept the concept eventually.

The third factor is the attitude. An attitude is "*simply an overall evaluation of an alternative, ranging from positive to negative. Once formed, attitudes play a directive role on future choice and are difficult to change.*" (Engel et al., 1995, 144). Even if the attitudes model cannot predict the future behaviour, we can take some conclusions after the interview. The point of studying attitudes is also to know why an attitude is held before attempting to change it. The attitudes as we could see in the interviews were really different between a French and a Swedish company. The conciergeries in France and in Belgium defined their clients as being fully satisfied and the proof to this is the amount of conciergeries created in the past few years, proving that the market exists and is mature enough to accept a conciergerie in their lifes. The attitudes from the side of Harald Castler are different. Although the advantages proposed in the model are important for Harald Castler, the cons are strong and defined by his perception. If we look at the model, Harald Castler rated 4 of the 5 advantageous attributes as "important". He could not tell about the tax treatment even if he scared that it would be disadvantageous in Sweden. This means that he recognized the potential and the plus that a conciergerie can bring to Getinge AB. The cons were mainly caused by the misunderstanding of the concept. Would the employees use it? Getinge AB is not that much time/money oriented. Or that the investment is not worth trying. He said that the competition between the services providers is not that big.

e-Conciergerie said something essential: the clients realise the potential and the utility of the conciergeries after using a few times their services.

It is important in the analysis to point out some problems due to the nature of the conciergerie concept of conciergerie concerning the consumer decision-making process. The company makes the decisions to use the services of a conciergerie but the end-users are the employees of it. The decision-making process is therefore different. According to Solomon (2006), consumer researchers have approached the process from a rational perspective. So people integrate as much information as possible with what they already know and take the best alternative. Consumers spend a lot of energy on making a good choice (Payne, 1992). In this perspective, the choice of the conciergerie should not be seen as an end in the decision-making process but more an element in it. Will the consumers use the conciergerie? Yes if it fits into their wishes. They sometimes uses shortcuts in their research of the best services provider, they use automatic responses learned from previous experience. The conciergerie must be this experience. Is there a need for the concept in Sweden? First of all the concept must be replaced where it should be: as an element of the consumer decision-making process, that helps the consumers, sort of an automatic response.

To complete and conclude our analysis, we must come back to the figure shown below we used for the survey.



An interesting point to answer our research question is that Harald Castler, when we showed him this figure, could not held denying the importance of those positive attributes. He acknowledged that all those, except the tax treatment, because he was not sure about it in Sweden, are or might become important for Getinge AB. The conclusion to derive from this is that Sweden might not be mature to accept the concept of conciergeries but the labour market suffers from exactly the same issues like the other European markets. The unemployment is low, 5.2 percent in 2007 [23], and this means more competition between the companies looking for skilled employees. As Harald Castler told us, a company nearly needs to market itself to attract interesting candidates. A conciergerie presents all the advantages which would push a candidate to choose Getinge AB if the company used one.

For this part of the analysis, we can say that the French companies gave us some new insights about what is important in the consumer behaviour, good or bad attributes. As the theory said, no consumer behaviour can be predicted, it is only by identifying and analysing the influences forming it that you can try to change or control the perception of the customers. In this work we tried to identify, the negative and positive aspect being brought into the process from every party, conciergeries and customers.

6 Conclusion and Recommendations

In this part of the thesis we want to conclude the findings of our research and we want to give some recommendations as well. The end of the chapter is built up by further researches, where we want to explain which researches can be done in future to get to the next step in the topic of the concept of conciergeries.

6.1 Is There a Need on the Swedish Enterprise's Market for the Concept of Conciergerie?

After having studied the concept, thoroughly we would wish to give a closed answer, such as Yes or No, but is more complicated than that. What we can do is to say why it is supposed to work or not. After having regarded the market analysis we can say that the Swedish market is definitely ready to introduce the concept of conciergerie.

First of all, the changes that are occurring in the Western European countries are also valuable for Sweden. The changing society will strike Sweden. The conciergerie fits in the needs created by the structure changes on the French or the UK market. The unemployment is low, more couples are divorcing, both parties in the couple are working while having kids, the competition between companies to hire the best candidates is increasing, we can talk about hire-marketing from the company's side. As the society is changing, the company has to adapt. The concept of conciergerie has been proved to be a great fit into these changes, in the US, but also on the French market. The successful entrepreneurs in France and in Belgium showed us their way of selling their offer by stressing on these changes, proving that the conciergerie responds to a real need. Now, this need might be latent in some countries like Sweden, but nobody can deny its advantages. According to Harald Castler, the positive attributes sound interesting; this can lead to a future need. According to our theory, the attributes cannot predict the behaviour. However, he feels that this concept is coming to the customer's mind if the way of introducing is the best suitable way for the Swedish market. Harald Castler stated that the genesis of the concept of conciergerie should be in big cities such as Stockholm where the need has to be found as it has already been existing under another form and from there spread over the country. In France, the conciergerie found its sources in big cities as well and then spread over the country. In addition, one manager does not represent the whole population as the segmentation is essential when launching a company based on a new service concept.

The Swedish service sector is growing as the automation production process has been increasing for the past decades. Therefore the competition between the service providers will increase and the need for a middle-man will arise.

If the need has been found on the Swedish market the conciergerie has to be taken into consideration to define the service and to find appropriate service providers. As Harald Castler said, getting the best service is important for the customer. We can agree with this statement as we mentioned in the theory that the contact to the end customer is made up by the conciergerie. If the service is not meeting the customer's expectations the customer will not take the service the next time. On the other side, if the conciergerie is coming up to the customer's mind and it is not failing in reaching the expectations the reputation is growing and the potential to survive on the market is growing. As mentioned before the service sector has to be regarded carefully, the same counts for the trends and changes on the market, this includes the customer's behaviour as well. Furthermore, when introducing a new concept on

the market, successful examples of other countries can be taken into consideration, but the cultural differences have to be regarded. Here, the Hofstede's dimensions can give an overall overview about the differences. However, just viewing on the model of Hofstede is not enough as the customer behaviour is an important issue when it comes up to the concept of conciergerie.

To conclude we can say that the need for a conciergerie is not totally proved as the market is not mature enough.

6.2 And is the Swedish Market Ready?

We had expected to be able to collect a lot more answers but as said before, only one company agreed for an interview. The French market showed that to reach to the level of readiness, a lot of information is needed. It can be by television, radio, Internet, newspaper. The concept of conciergerie is not like any other product, it is a special service. In France, people hear about it. The managers of the Belgian company said that Belgium is not mature enough because there is no fuss around the concept. Harald Castler told us that 10 years ago, the concept would have been unheard. For Nestor et Nestor, the difficulty is to get a client signing a contract. It can take up to one year of long negotiations before a client gives its signature. e-Conciergerie said that the clients need to test the conciergerie before realizing its advantages. The consumers in Sweden do not know about the concept as it is in France. We deeply think that this form is the best alternative and is worth it because it works. There is a need in Sweden. The labour market suffers or will suffer from the same changes as other markets in Europe. The conciergerie is not seen as an answer yet. Harald Castler could not deny the advantages; he does not feel their importance.

The average age at the birth of the first child or even at the date of the wedding, is getting higher and higher. People in France and not only in France are getting married later for the simple reason that the main goal in life not the same anymore. 15 years ago, people were getting married early and had kids early because this is what was expected from them and happiness meant having a family. Today, the average person is getting married later and has kids later, because people like to take care of themselves and of course they like others to take care of them. Other goals are emerging; having a career (both parties in the couple), we live in a society ruled by the concept of well-having instead of well-being, and happiness is gained in a different way [26]. The service concepts emerging and growing today are successful because they fit in a changing society, they respond to the news needs. As the goals are changing, the amount of single people is increasing. 10 years ago, if somebody talked about e-dating or speed-dating, found his/her love through the Internet, people were laughing because they did not feel any need for it. Today, websites like Meetic.com, or Neu.de, are not subjects to jokes any more and the number of people using them is still growing. Meetic is leader in Europe with more than 22 million registered profiles in 2008 [27]. Why? Simply, because it responds to a need in the society.

The need is there, but the market is not mature enough. French companies had the same issues, but today, about 7 years after the opening of the first conciergerie, nobody in France doubts of its potential and success (Pathy Maxant, 2008). Today, Sweden has great concept to discover. Although people have some doubts like the French people had in the beginning, if the conciergerie is launched in a suitable way, found in the recommendations and if the advertisement follows, it will work.

6.3 Final Conclusion

Factors like stress and absenteeism can costs the company a lot. The reasons can be found either in the professional or in the private life. A further point for being attractive for a company to the employees is to offer programs which ease to find a balance between these two lives [22]. In the past companies started to introduce work-life-balance programs. However the concept of conciergeries showed a potential to strengthen the balance and to force the relationship between the employer and the employee. As the Swedish market can be seen to have a low power distance this could help to support the professional life and in a consequence the daily one (a satisfied employee has more power to work). We see a potential on the Swedish market for conciergeries for several reasons:

- Either the Swedish market is similar to the US or to the French one.
- The service sector has been increasing over the last years.
- Sweden has the same structure in the labour market as other European countries.
- Unemployment rate is very low and therefore the companies have to have some additional benefits to offer attractive extra-offers to catch attention.
- The concept of conciergeries was and is still working on other markets.

On the other side we also find some reasons why the concept will not work on the Swedish market yet:

- The concept of conciergeries is known on the Swedish market, but, as the example of Harald Castler showed, completely misunderstood.
- The market is not ready yet for such a concept, regarding potential customers.
- Swedes are more future oriented and take more possible solutions in concern, before making a final decision.

Concluding we can say that during the writing process we realised that conciergeries can be hard to be defined but also to prove its benefits for the employees and the employers. As a service of conciergeries is intangible, perishable, and heterogenic the reputation of the company has to be build up more on word-of-mouth and trying direct by the customer. This means a challenge for a company, especially when the concept is unknown. The potential customer has to be informed more carefully and he/she should get the chance to prove the provided concept.

We see a potential and need on the Swedish market, but without the right communication to the potential customer the concept is not going to work here. In the next part we want to give some recommendations to the reader to help introducing the concept of conciergeries in Sweden. Before doing this, the used theory should be regarded in a critical way.

6.4 Theoretical Implications

The theory was chosen following our model. We thought about all the influences of the concept of conciergeries. Out of them, we developed a formally unknown model, out of personal research. We needed one capable model of giving a clear overview of the concept's influences. The nature of conciergeries itself had to be defined, as well. In doing this we used different theories, the explanation why we used them can be found in headline 1.2 "Developed Model" of this paper. We used material, found in secondary and primary data, to define the model as the conciergeries are something new.

When going for a research on something new, using the right theory is a hard task. For every influence found in our model, we chose the best suited theory for us. Some of them were

more useful than others. The pioneer market (US) gave us a first input about the idea of the concept conciergerie. The given market provided helped us to get more into the subject and to find out more details how the concept is working and which influences are important to look at before entering a new market.

As we said in the recommendations, segmentation is essential when starting a new business. The customer behaviour was important to discover the influences in the process when the customer gets an idea of the service offered. In addition it is important to study the crucial attributes of the customers, compare to other countries. However, a more in depth theory, which could predict the behaviour in a better way, should be used for further research. We can say this, as the discovered attributes are not enough to describe a whole population in its behaviour.

The SLEPT model is perfect for studying the environment of a company going international. Unfortunately we could not concentrate on other aspect such as legal or political factors. Those are essential to study when setting up a business. However, as this model is related to the WLB-concept it was essential for this paper to concentrate more on the social/cultural influences. The work-life-balance concept was helpful in the way that the advantages we discovered are pretty the same as the ones of the conciergeries. We have to mention that the service provided by a conciergerie can cover the work-life-balance concepts, but in our opinion the service offer of a conciergerie is broader than the one of the WLB-concepts. This can be seen when taking a deeper look on the differences: the WLB-concepts provide services which should help to find a better balance between professional and private life, but this concepts can only be found within the company and are not offered for the private life in a direct way (company provides a day care for children). Conciergeries are also providing services which can be used outside of the company (for example: baby-sitter). Therefore we can say that the work-life-balance-concepts gave us a good foundation about the idea of equalising the professional and private life and that the trend is going to this phenomenon. This can be seen as a good sign for introducing the concept of conciergeries. On the other hand it has to be mentioned that the WLB-concepts are not really necessary for answering our research question, but they gave us a better understanding what is essential to know concerning employees' welfare.

The ideas of the Hofstede's model provided us a basic understanding of how we can compare different cultures. This is essential as soon as it comes up to introducing a new concept on a foreign market. The dimensions were useful by themselves and in general we can say that some were more useful than others. Concluding the Hofstede's model is useful for gaining a general overview about some differences of the cultures and the five dimensions are a good start to compare them. However, the model was built up for another purpose and therefore the background idea is not fitting to draw a final statement on the aspects of the differences concerning conciergeries. Other models, as the high-low context model, introduced by Hall, can be a good way of regarding the different cultures, especially when it comes to communication to the customer. As this was not the aim of this paper, to have a look on the communication, the Hofstede's model provided us a basic help of understanding the differences, but there are more "features" which can be looked at, for example the customer behaviour. As stated before to have a deeper look on this is essential and this should be considered in further researches.

In the end of the theory we decided to create a new model presenting the positive attributes of the conciergeries for the French companies. This model was necessary to compare the attributes following the theory of the customer behaviour and to find out if there is a need and

if the Swedish market is ready for the services provided by conciergeries. In defining our model we were using primary data gathered from the interviews in France and Belgium. To ask them particular questions, the provided theory was crucial to gain a basic knowledge about the background of conciergeries and by which influences they can be affected.

6.5 Recommendations

The conciergeries took some years to take off in France. One of the first conciergeries, "to-do-today" was set up in 2001, by Stéphanie Cardot who had experience in the US. She said: *"People laughed when I presented my project, nobody took my concept seriously. Today, my company has 100 employees and is 3,000,000 € worth."* [21].

The main idea behind the concept is that a conciergerie must provide the services to the person anywhere, at home or at work. The Swedish managers see the concept as a simple butler services where the costs of it are ignored and seen as a disadvantage for the employees. The conciergerie does not change anything on the salary of the employees; they pay the same price for the services as if they found it by themselves. The company pays the conciergerie to find it and thus provides benefits to its employees. The main idea has to be cleared in the mind of the Swedish potential consumers. If a company wants to start on the Swedish market, the first step to take is an overview of where would the needs be. Harald Castler's and the French experience showed that the need is more likely to appear in big cities and big companies where the relation between time and money is essential. However, after studying the concept and the experiences of emerging companies, we learned that of course, it should start where the concentration of people is big, but it should first aim smaller structure and even private individuals to gain trust and reputation. The second step is a learning-searching process where the conciergerie looks for reliable services providers and open-minded clients (pioneers). After a few months, the conciergerie can really start working. The last role, and one of the most important, is to control the services providers they use and always improve their offer.

To be clear, an entrepreneur willing to set up a conciergerie in Sweden must:
- Find where the needs are the biggest.
- Find out what is important for a Swede and what services he/she needs.
- Present the concierge services as it should be (like in France).
- Use Swedes specialised and experienced in finding the right services providers.
- Start small to gain trust and reputation.
- Use a good communication strategy based on "close-to-consumer" and word-of-mouth.
- Control and get as much feedback as possible from the clients.

6.6 Further Research

For further research it can be said that in a next step the attitudes of the potential customers has to be surveyed in deeper detail. This should be done through a quantitative research as this covers a broader population of potential customers. By doing this the needs shall be discovered and described in a proper way. The laws and business practices in Sweden should be more integrated in the concept of conciergerie. They played an important role in France, for instance on the tax treatment.

The cost aspect should also be studied. A study concerning the best psychological price for the subscription and the demanded services is necessary; an estimation of it in Sweden would help the motivated entrepreneur to start. According to Harald Castler the Swedes can be seen

as really price-sensitive and they are reacting quite negative on unnecessary costs (as it could be seen in the example with the canteen).

Furthermore a research can be done on the service providers to find the perfect bundle of services demanded by the Swedes. This can help the conciergerie to start with a perfect "menu" provided to the customers. In doing this also the best providers for several services has to be found.

As Harald Castler said the concept should start in bigger cities. This argument lead us to the thought that the concept of conciergerie should be tested in big cities and in doing this the philosophy of the concept can be shown to other prospect customers.

Also this study is missing to make a distinction between the several industries. However, this seems to be necessary as it could be that some industries are more ready to accept the use of the concept of conciergerie than others.

All in all, a deeper understanding of the Swedish market is necessary as we could not study all its aspects. Our paper focused on learning from past experience, it was the most suitable approach for a first study.

This research brought a lot of surprises to us and we are sure, when further researches will come, we might be even more surprised.

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8 Appendix

8.1 Data of the US Market

All these data are provided by the Census Bureau, which are completed by several sources, such as National Restaurant Association, the American Hotel & Lodging Association and Universal McCann [6]. Therefore the sources will not be mentioned after every figure.

8.1.1 Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services – Estimated Revenue: 2000 to 2005

[In millions of dollars (803,527 represents $803,527,000,000). For taxable employer firms. Estimates have been adjusted to the results of the 2002 Economic Census. Based on the Service Annual Survey; see Appendix III]

Kind of business	2002 NAICS code [1]	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Professional, scientific, and technical services (except notaries)	**54**	**803,527**	**838,374**	**846,056**	**879,725**	**966,645**	**1,058,632**
Legal services (except notaries)	5411	160,619	171,597	180,042	199,915	209,475	221,646
Offices of lawyers	54111	152,834	162,958	170,808	187,819	197,385	208,038
Other legal services	54119	7,785	8,639	9,234	12,096	12,090	13,608
Accounting, tax preparation, bookkeeping and payroll services	5412	79,361	82,845	84,073	87,791	92,884	102,316
Offices of certified public accountants	541211	45,773	49,635	48,498	47,835	50,679	54,339
Tax preparation services	541213	3,347	3,765	4,129	4,468	4,944	5,516
Payroll services	541214	21,394	20,149	21,418	24,366	25,359	29,499
Other accounting services	541219	8,847	9,296	10,028	11,122	11,902	12,962
Architectural, engineering, & related services	5413	150,269	157,488	158,266	160,917	184,292	209,976
Architectural services	54131	25,021	26,719	25,240	26,851	28,609	31,939
Landscape architectural services	54132	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	4,218	4,575
Engineering services	54133	111,929	115,837	116,887	117,509	132,814	152,788
Testing laboratories	54138	7,128	7,865	8,771	8,849	9,908	10,532
Other related services	54134,5,6,7	6,191	7,067	7,368	7,708	8,742	10,142
Specialized design services	5414	17,889	17,776	17,076	18,090	19,617	21,315
Interior design services	54141	6,798	6,897	7,018	7,497	8,061	8,807
Graphic design services	54143	8,962	8,796	8,096	8,269	8,528	9,132
All other design services	54142,9	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	3,028	3,377
Computer systems design and services	5415	186,402	183,878	173,414	171,393	173,525	189,042
Custom computer programming services	541511	70,004	65,578	60,126	58,140	58,303	64,228
Computer systems design services	541512	82,763	80,787	78,335	76,992	77,042	84,560
Computer facilities management services	541513	21,816	25,435	22,279	22,518	23,422	23,807
Other computer-related services	541519	11,819	12,078	12,674	13,743	14,758	16,447
Management, scientific, and technical consulting services	5416	90,129	99,511	105,452	108,783	121,709	137,931
Management consulting services	54161	78,250	86,024	90,914	92,129	102,452	115,756
Environmental consulting services	54162	5,578	6,213	6,933	7,902	8,748	9,087
Other scientific and technical consulting services	54169	6,301	7,274	7,605	8,752	10,509	13,088
Scientific research and development services	5417	35,587	41,568	45,983	48,142	54,272	59,130
Research and development in physical, engineering, and life sciences	54171	34,029	39,870	44,089	46,104	51,994	56,655
Research and development in social sciences and humanities	54172	1,558	1,698	1,894	2,038	2,278	2,475
Advertising and related services	5418	59,680	58,634	56,681	58,629	63,585	66,865
Advertising agencies	54181	21,584	21,268	21,104	22,396	24,551	25,141
Public relations agencies	54182	6,501	6,156	6,205	6,305	6,954	7,573
Media buying agencies	54183	1,036	1,025	1,150	1,063	(S)	(S)
Media representatives	54184	3,247	3,118	2,729	2,712	(S)	(S)
Display advertising	54185	4,752	4,509	4,617	4,925	5,440	6,152
Direct mail advertising	54186	10,351	10,739	10,544	10,648	11,570	12,174
All other advertising	54187,9	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	11,568	12,095
Other professional, scientific, and technical services	5419	23,591	25,077	25,069	26,065	47,289	50,411
Marketing research and public opinion polling	54191	11,683	11,412	10,890	11,118	11,851	12,298
Photographic services	54192	6,613	6,760	6,538	6,758	6,984	7,257
Photography studios, portrait	541921	4,642	4,773	4,752	4,879	5,031	5,259
Commercial photography	541922	1,971	1,987	1,786	1,879	1,953	1,998
Translation and interpretation services	54193	810	850	876	968	1,093	1,121
Veterinary services	54194	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	19,353	20,796
All other professional, scientific, and technical service	54199	4,485	6,055	6,765	7,221	8,008	8,938

S Estimate does not meet publication standards. X Not applicable. [1] Based on the North American Industry Classification System, 2002; see Section 15.

8.1.2 Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services – Estimated Revenue: 2000 – 2005

[In millions of dollars (396,499 represents $396,499,000,000). For taxable and tax-exempt employer firms. Estimates have been adjusted to results of the 2002 Economic Census. Based on the Service Annual Survey; see Appendix III]

Kind of business	2002 NAICS code [1]	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Administrative & support waste and management and remediation services	56	396,499	390,683	397,408	414,988	484,242	530,083
Administrative and support services	561	345,302	339,028	346,099	360,434	425,600	466,215
Office administrative services	5611	26,288	29,523	32,081	34,556	38,014	43,059
Facilities support services	5612	13,211	12,878	12,957	12,158	12,520	14,005
Employment services	5613	144,242	129,471	128,662	133,833	145,717	160,318
Employment placement agencies	56131	4,985	5,355	5,940	5,874	6,513	6,855
Temporary help services	56132	79,622	68,658	68,190	69,910	77,660	84,838
Professional employer organizations	56133	59,635	55,458	54,532	58,049	61,544	68,625
Business support services	5614	41,203	43,983	43,981	46,111	48,166	50,760
Document preparation services	56141	1,920	2,121	2,419	2,500	2,483	2,642
Telephone call centers	56142	14,805	15,116	13,394	13,273	13,843	14,528
Telephone answering services	561421	2,135	2,323	2,109	1,897	1,783	1,804
Telemarketing bureaus	561422	12,670	12,793	11,285	11,376	12,060	12,724
Business service centers	56143	8,257	8,342	8,234	8,335	8,469	8,425
Private mail centers	561431	1,692	1,830	1,957	2,187	2,274	2,279
Other business service centers (including copy shops)	561439	6,565	6,512	6,277	6,148	6,195	6,146
Collection agencies	56144	7,300	8,092	8,852	9,830	10,860	11,416
Credit bureaus	56145	3,741	4,243	4,591	5,230	5,516	6,332
Other business support services	56149	5,180	6,069	6,491	6,943	6,995	7,417
Repossession services	561491	418	467	552	549	534	(S)
Court reporting and stenotype services	561492	1,250	1,407	1,638	1,715	1,792	1,847
All other business support services	561499	3,512	4,195	4,301	4,679	4,669	5,027
Travel arrangement and reservation services	5615	26,119	25,622	25,535	26,594	28,200	30,334
Travel agencies	56151	11,639	10,220	9,387	9,759	10,101	10,944
Tour operators	56152	3,564	3,266	3,190	3,212	3,515	3,685
Other travel arrangement and reservation services	56159	10,916	12,136	12,958	13,623	14,584	15,705
Convention and visitors bureaus	561591	1,020	1,124	1,128	1,227	1,256	1,314
All other travel arrangement and reservation services	561599	9,896	11,012	11,830	12,396	13,328	14,391
Investigation and security services	5616	27,594	28,549	31,375	32,325	33,723	37,118
Investigation, guard, and armored car services	56161	17,581	17,471	19,468	20,920	21,754	24,456
Investigation services	561611	2,350	2,413	2,586	3,090	3,345	3,593
Security guards and patrol services	561612	13,393	13,037	14,763	15,551	16,321	18,487
Armored car services	561613	1,838	2,021	2,119	2,279	2,088	2,376
Security systems services	56162	10,013	11,078	11,907	11,405	11,969	12,662
Security systems services (except locksmiths)	561621	8,683	9,765	10,592	9,987	10,488	11,083
Locksmiths	561622	1,330	1,313	1,315	1,418	1,481	1,579
Services to buildings and dwellings	5617	35,790	38,168	40,144	43,697	85,946	93,680
Exterminating and pest control services	56171	5,723	6,067	6,597	7,206	7,673	8,118
Janitorial services	56172	24,593	26,220	27,009	29,303	30,288	32,059
Landscaping services	56173	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)	40,317	44,651
Carpet and upholstery cleaning services	56174	2,463	2,541	2,719	2,808	2,964	3,427
Other services to buildings and dwellings	56179	3,011	3,340	3,819	4,380	4,703	5,424
Other support services	5619	30,855	30,834	31,364	31,160	33,315	36,940
Packaging and labeling services	56191	4,432	4,804	4,916	5,021	(S)	(S)
Convention and trade show organizers	56192	8,410	8,362	8,562	9,083	9,517	10,641
All other support services	56199	18,013	17,668	17,886	17,056	18,207	19,813
Waste management and remediation services	562	51,197	51,655	51,309	54,554	58,643	63,868
Waste collection	5621	28,820	28,649	28,206	30,272	32,430	34,350
Solid waste collection	562111	27,032	26,827	26,416	28,363	30,436	32,146
Hazardous waste collection	562112	1,249	1,308	1,325	1,445	1,565	1,720
Other waste collection	562119	539	514	465	464	429	484
Waste treatment and disposal	5622	11,025	11,290	10,834	11,173	11,398	13,092
Hazardous waste treatment and disposal	562211	3,155	3,270	3,642	3,351	3,264	3,894
Solid waste landfill	562212	5,965	5,841	5,272	5,802	6,168	6,658
Solid waste combustors and incinerators	562213	1,261	1,532	1,365	1,442	1,303	1,760
Other nonhazardous waste treatment and disposal	562219	644	647	555	578	663	780
Remediation and other waste management services	5629	11,352	11,716	12,269	13,109	14,815	16,426
Remediation services	56291	6,750	7,246	7,640	7,745	8,834	9,938
Materials recovery facility	56292	1,593	1,546	1,800	2,222	2,633	2,749
All other waste management services	56299	3,009	2,924	2,829	3,142	3,348	3,739
Septic tank and related services	562991	2,197	2,055	1,973	2,049	2,132	2,374
All other miscellaneous waste management services	562998	812	869	856	1,093	1,216	1,365

S Data do not meet publication standards. X Not applicable. [1] North American Industry Classification System, 2002; see text, Section 15.

8.1.3 Estimated Accommodation and Food Services Sales by Kinds of Business: 1995 to 2005

[In millions of dollars (322,818 represents 322,818,000,000). Estimates are based on data from the Annual Retail Trade Survey and administrative records and have been adjusted to the results of the 2002 Economic Census]

Kind of business	2000 NAICS code [1]	1995	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Accommodation and food services, total	72	322,818	443,642	451,300	463,678	484,174	516,580	547,799
Accommodation	721	89,193	138,181	133,448	131,864	134,481	144,604	153,198
Traveler accommodation	7211	85,526	133,582	128,591	127,050	129,610	139,731	148,155
RV parks and recreational camps	7212	2,749	3,608	3,838	3,799	3,884	3,863	3,978
Rooming and boarding houses	7213	918	991	1,019	1,015	987	1,010	1,065
Food services and drinking places [2]	722	233,625	305,461	317,852	331,814	349,693	371,976	394,601
Full service restaurants	7221	99,430	134,204	140,682	148,211	155,085	163,834	172,241
Limited service eating places	7222	103,143	127,879	132,924	138,302	147,087	158,699	169,684
Drinking places	7224	12,515	15,415	15,769	16,417	17,580	18,168	19,033

[1] North American Industry Classification System, 2002; see text, Section 15. [2] Includes other kinds of business not shown separately.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, "Annual Accommodation and Food Services-2005" See Internet site <http://www.census.gov/svsd/www/artstbl.html> (accessed 25 April 2007).

Table 1254. **Lodging Industry Summary: 1990 to 2005**

Year	Average occupancy rate (percent)	Average room rate (dol.)	Room size of property	2005 Establishments	2005 Rooms (mil.)	Item	2005 Business traveler	2005 Leisure traveler
1990	63.3	57.96	Total	47,590	4.4	Typical night:		
1995	65.5	66.65				Made reservations (percent)	85	85
2000	63.7	85.89	Percent:			Amount paid (dol)	99.00	94.00
2001	60.3	88.27	Under 75 rooms	57.6	26.4	Length of stay (percent):		
2002	59.1	83.54	75–149 rooms	30.3	34.8	One night	40	45
2003	61.6	82.52	150–299 rooms	8.8	19.0	Two nights	25	28
2004	61.3	86.24	300–500 rooms	2.2	9.0	Three or more	35	27
2005	63.1	90.88	Over 500 rooms	1.0	10.8			

8.1.4 Other services – Estimated revenue for Employer Firms: 2000 to 2005

[In millions of dollars (302,783 represents $302,783,000,000). For employer firms. Estimates have been adjusted to the results of the 2002 Economic Census. Based on the Service Annual Survey; see Appendix III]

Kind of business	2002 NAICS code [1]	2000	2003	2004	2005
Other services	81	302,783	317,363	338,022	359,798
Repair and maintenance [2]	811	112,719	123,164	127,939	136,011
Automotive repair and maintenance	8111	73,219	78,565	81,116	85,462
Automotive mechanical and electrical repair and maintenance	81111	37,879	40,445	42,154	44,011
General automotive repair	811111	30,988	33,778	35,547	37,233
Automotive body, paint, interior, and glass repair	81112	25,766	27,178	27,693	29,152
Automotive body, paint, and interior repair and maintenance	811121	22,018	23,531	24,283	25,477
Other automotive repair and maintenance	81119	9,574	10,942	11,269	12,299
Electronic and precision equipment repair and maintenance	8112	14,419	15,103	16,514	17,599
Commercial and industrial machinery and equipment (except automotive and electronic) repair and maintenance	8113	16,687	20,735	21,231	23,389
Personal and household goods repair and maintenance	8114	8,394	8,761	9,078	9,561
Home and garden equipment and appliance repair and maintenance	81141	3,866	4,209	4,285	4,625
Personal and laundry services [2]	812	67,140	72,053	76,169	80,559
Personal care services	8121	18,264	21,093	23,178	25,013
Hair, nail, and skin care services	81211	15,553	17,081	18,932	20,301
Barber shops	812111	479	499	522	521
Beauty salons	812112	14,445	15,448	17,191	18,210
Nail salons	812113	629	1,134	1,219	1,570
Other personal care services	81219	2,711	4,012	4,246	4,712
Death care services	8122	13,707	15,334	15,080	15,667
Funeral homes and funeral services	81221	10,279	12,016	11,705	12,142
Cemeteries and crematories	81222	3,428	3,318	3,375	3,525
Drycleaning and laundry services	8123	19,950	19,545	20,040	20,995
Coin-operated laundries and drycleaners	81231	3,359	3,238	3,235	3,241
Drycleaning and laundry services (except coin-operated)	81232	7,846	7,282	7,581	7,904
Linen and uniform supply	81233	8,745	9,025	9,224	9,850
Other personal services	8129	15,219	16,081	17,873	18,885
Pet care (except veterinary) services	81291	(X)	(X)	1,689	1,947
Photofinishing	81292	3,809	3,678	3,173	2,609
Parking lots and garages	81293	6,389	7,041	7,121	7,673
All other personal services	81299	5,021	5,362	5,890	6,656
Religious, grantmaking, civic, professional, and similar organizations (except religious, labor, and political organizations) [3]	813	122,924	122,146	133,913	143,228
Grantmaking and giving services	8132	57,465	47,131	56,408	61,726
Social advocacy organizations	8133	10,852	13,358	13,424	13,960
Civic and social organizations	8134	13,703	15,951	16,694	17,104
Business, professional, and other organizations (except labor and political organizations)	8139	40,904	45,706	47,387	50,438

X Not applicable. [1] Based on the North American Industry Classification System, 2002; see Section 15. [2] For taxable firms only. [3] For tax-exempt firms only.

8.2 Interview Guideline

1. Do you think that the private life of your employees and all its challenges is sometimes invading their professional life? If yes, in which sense?
2. Do you provide some work life balance programs for your employees? If yes, which one and why? How do your employees react on it?
3. Explain our concept of conciergerie.
   "A conciergerie can be seen as a middleman, who is between several service providers and end customers. Conciergerie lists a menu of the services provided by the service companies and communicates them to the end customer. Normally the monthly fee (subscription) is paid by the company and the employee must pay in addition for the claimed service (the performance). The employees are given access to conciergeries after auditing the need of their company and the payment of the monthly fee by it. The conciergerie gets the solicitation from the employees. The conciergerie gives it to the services providers who will perform the demanded service to the employee."
4. Do you think that the concept of conciergerie can improve the productivity of your employees?
5. What are the services often used by your employees? Do you also use some in your daily life? If yes, which ones?

Employer	Employees
•	•

   - ❖ The daily services
     - ➢ Household
     - ➢ Ironing
     - ➢ Clothes retouch
     - ➢ Shopping
     - ➢ Baby-sitting
     - ➢ Private classes
     - ➢ Gardening
     - ➢ Wellness services
     - ➢ Car cleaning
   - ❖ The less ordinary services
     - ➢ Catering
     - ➢ Events organisation
     - ➢ Birthday parties
     - ➢ Company gifts
     - ➢ Seminars
     - ➢ (Business) Trips
     - ➢ Gifts

   Do you see any services missing on the list?

6. In your opinion, what are the positive and negative sides using the service of a conciergerie?
7. Do you think that the cost of it is relevant in terms of return on investment?
8. Would you feel ok by helping your employees in their daily life?
9. Would the business services also be a plus for your company?
10. Here are the usual positive attributes for an employer of a concept of conciergeries? Please, rate them from 1 to 5 (1 = not relevant, 5 = important).
    - Better Productivity 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
    - Attractiveness 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
    - Loyalty 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
    - Partner 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
    - Tax Treatment 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5
11. Would you give it a try? Why?