

Consumer's perceptions towards a  
change in shape of sausage

**TRE** Korv

“It’s time to make a **turnaround** to something more **3mendous**”



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

### **Abstract**

The standard shape of sausage has always been round and in a Swedish TV programme, a man named Martin Wande came up with the idea of a wedge shaped sausage called Trekorv. The product will soon be available in different stores in Sweden. The purpose of this study is to investigate consumer's perceptions towards a change in shape of sausage and find out how Trekorv influence these perceptions. In order to fulfil the purpose, the methods used were three different focus groups, six face-to-face interviews and an online questionnaire. The perceptions towards a new shape and Trekorv were in general positive and the advantages of a new shape compared to a round shape were the main factor why it was perceived as something positive.



## Table of content

<b>Table of content.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>1.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>4</b>
1.1 Background .....	4
1.2 Problem discussion.....	5
1.3 Purpose.....	5
1.4 Research questions.....	5
1.5 Target group .....	6
<b>2.0 Theory .....</b>	<b>6</b>
2.1 Perception .....	6
2.2 Perceptual process.....	6
2.3 Word of mouth.....	7
2.4 Brand equity.....	7
2.5 Heuristics.....	7
<b>3.0 Method.....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1 Focus groups.....	8
3.2 Interviews.....	9
3.3 Questionnaire.....	9
3.4 Operationalization.....	10
3.4.1 Focus groups.....	10
3.4.2 Interviews .....	11
3.4.3 Questionnaire.....	11
<b>4.0 Empirical investigation.....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1 Focus groups.....	13
4.2 Interviews.....	14
4.3 Questionnaire.....	14
<b>5.0 Analysis.....</b>	<b>19</b>
5.1 Focus Groups.....	19
5.2 Interviews.....	20
5.3 Questionnaire.....	21
<b>6.0 Conclusion.....</b>	<b>22</b>
6.1 Marketing recommendations.....	22
6.2 Reflection.....	22
<b>7.0 List of reference.....</b>	<b>23</b>



## **1.0 Introduction**

From the perspective of a company it is important to know how the consumers perceive a change of a products shape. This is of great concern when the company should affect the consumers to finally choose their products through marketing practices (Solomon et al, 2010).

### **1.1 Background**

Sausages are advised as one of the first convenience food ever used. A butcher came up with the idea of collecting all the rest over meat and mixed it with salt and spices. The butcher then filled the mass into guts for cooking, smoking and drying immediate (Foodreference, 2013).

People used to slaughter at home and every village had their special sausage types with different spices. Some types became popular outside the villages but any trademarks were out of question (Korvhuset, 2013).

The word “sausage” comes from the Latin word *salsicia*, which means something salted. Sausages can be made using pork, beef, chicken, veal, lamb or turkey (Foodreference, 2013). The sausage has round and hooked form due to the animal bowels natural shape. This could be the explanation why the sausage always had the same shape (Scan, 2013).

In the Swedish TV programme “Uppfinnarna” (The inventors), a man named Martin Wande came up with the idea of a wedge shaped sausage. The idea proved to be very appreciated by the programmes jury (TV4, 2013) and the sausage will soon be in selected stores in Sweden (Trekorv, 2013).



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

### 1.2 Problem discussion

In order to be able to predict consumer's behaviour in a market, the company has to know about their perceptions towards a specific product. This could be executed by studying how individuals perceive and interpret a stimulus that is gathering up in the five senses (Solomon et al, 2010).

The appearance, including size and shape, is the first of the four quality factors in food (Bourne, 2002). Studies shows that which shape the food on the plate has can affect the quantity of food eaten (Rolls et al, 1982). Moreover, investigation indicates that a product's shape and color affect how consumers perceive the product's smell and taste (Favalli et al, 2013).

As mentioned earlier, the standard shape of sausages has always been round. The problems with this shape is that it is hard for consumers to get an even cooked surface and also that the sausages easily can fall down from the grill during cooking due to the round shape (Mynewdesk, 2013).

The inventor Wande came up with the idea of a wedged shaped sausage that could eliminate the above-mentioned problems (TV4, 2013). Due to the freshness of the product and the fact that it has not been released in the market yet, it lacks in information of what perceptions consumers have towards the wedged shaped sausage.

### 1.3 Purpose

To investigate consumer's perceptions towards a change in shape of sausage and find out how Trekorv influence this perceptions.

### 1.4 Research questions

- *How are consumer's perceptions towards a change in shape of sausage?*



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception  
2013-05-29

- *Does the perception towards a change in shape of sausage vary depending on different age, gender and life situation?*

### 1.5 Target group

Sausage is a product that is consumed by individuals in all ages all over the world and there is no specific category of people that consume the product (Korvhuset, 2013). There are even sausages for vegans available (Pintomagasin, 2013). To cover up all ages in this study the target group will consist of individuals in the ages between 18-29, 30-49 and 50+.

## 2.0 Theory

### 2.1 Perception

Individuals are always surrounded by many impressions in form of different sounds, smells, pictures, touches and tastes. Receptors that connect these stimuli are called the five senses and these are vision, smell, touch, hearing and taste. These senses cooperate through developing the impressions so the individual gets a perception about the environment (Solomon et al, 2010). There is a lot of different ways to interpret stimuli and even if two individuals perceive a product in the same way it does not have to mean that both will purchase the product. It is depended on the heterogeneity for the individuals; meaning that they all have different taste preferences, which leads to the selection process looking different from individual to individual (McAlister et al, 1991).

The customer's perceptions are decided by which stimulus that is received, organised and interpreted, in combination with which base value the individual have. This is followed by needs and expectations that the customer had from the start (Kumra, 2007).

It is important to find the right store atmosphere to please as many customers as possible (Evans et al, 2008). The sense a marketer ought to focus on is the vision. It is namely possible

## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

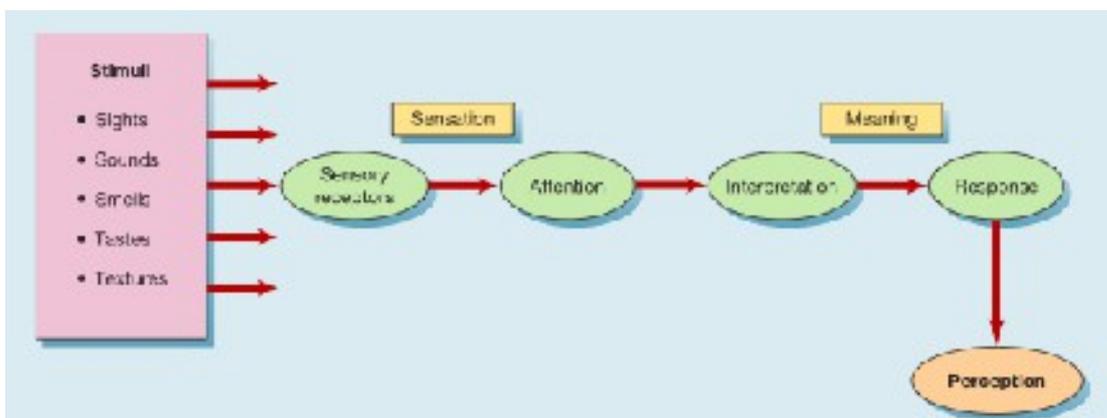
to send strong message to the consumers by means of outstanding colours and marked size differences in text and figures, also called the *von Restorff effect* (Solomon et al, 2010).

Touch, one of the senses, considers being more difficult to manage when it comes to advertisement. It is however important for the consumer that a product feels good in the using process. To get the best result when reaching out to the consumers with the products message, the marketer tends to give stimuli to as many senses as possible to the consumers. The brain will easier pick up the message in that case. If for example a soft product is marketed, soft forms and colours will be used, while it is the opposite for a hard product (Solomon et al, 2010).

In the similar way it is possible to use sound, taste and smell in marketing to fortify an emotion and affect the consumer to remember a certain message of a product. It is also important how a product sounds when the consumer is using the product and this has a huge impact on the consumer. Sound and smell can also have an effect on the consumer's mood when entering a store (Solomon et al, 2010).

### 2.2 Perceptual process

The process of when an individual acknowledge something is called the perceptual process. Individuals are exposed to a lot information but there is only some of it that people actually process. There are three stages of the perceptual process, starting with *sensation (or exposure)*; an individual is exposed to information, which is picked up by the person's stimuli. *Attention* is the next step in the process and it describes which part of the information that the person is focusing on. *Interpretation* is the last part and is where the person have a thought or opinion towards the information. Individuals get the same information but how it is interpreted differs because of different needs and experiences (Solomon et al, 2010).





### **2.3 Word of mouth**

Information received from friends and family tends to have a bigger impact than the information received from advertisements. Individuals can be sceptical because the information received from advertisements tends to be profit-orientated whereas information received from friends, family and other consumers is for the consumer's best interest. Information received from other consumers is called *word of mouth* and means that individuals share the positive or negative thoughts about products or services (Solomon et al, 2010). *Word of mouth* has increased significantly with the development of the Internet and different social medias (Brown et al, 2007). It is now easier for the consumers to interact with other consumers from all over the world and sharing experiences regarding different products or services as well as finding information written by other consumers. Therefore it is important for organizations to have a positive *word of mouth* from consumers instead of a negative (Brown et al, 2007).

### **2.4 Brand equity**

The brand is a very important aspect of a company; it represents how the consumer perceives the company's products or services. *Brand equity* is the positive differential effect that knowing the brand name has on customer's response to the company's products or services. Having powerful *brand equity* gives the company a large competitive advantage both towards competitors and selling to resellers. High *brand equity* also possesses a high level of brand awareness and loyalty from consumers (Armstrong et al, 2009). The consumers find it more reassuring to buy the well-known brand compared to less well known (Aaker, 1992).

### **2.5 Heuristics**



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

When consumers are making a purchase the collecting of information in the buying-process differs from product to product. If consumers were to collect information about every purchase it would be time-consuming and inefficient (Solomon et al, 2010). This is why consumers take mental shortcuts (*heuristics*) in the buying-process. Common shortcuts that consumers use is for example re-buying of a product, which means that they purchase the same product that they bought before or assuming that a product with a high price is a product with high quality. Another shortcut is that the consumers tend to purchase the same brand as their family or friends purchased (Cialdini, 2005).

### 3.0 Method

Many methods can be used in order to collect information about consumer's perceptions towards a certain product or service. Common used methods are questionnaires, interviews, observations and focus groups (Armstrong et al, 2009).

#### 3.1 Focus groups

The focus group method is indicating to open discussions in a group on a specific subject that consequently should lead to valuable information for the ones forming the focus group. The information received can later be put together to analysis (Kitzinger, 1995). The size of the focus group can be varying, but the most common size is 8-12 participants. The meeting usually lasts one to two hours and is commonly recorded on either audio- or videotape to store the individual's statements (Quible, 1998).

A benefit with focus groups is that they are a useful tool in the making of marketing research. The group is lead by a moderator with the purpose of asking both open and specific questions



## **1FE102 From the perspective of the customer**

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

to get impulsive answers about the groups perceptions, feelings and attitudes towards a product. This leads to more profound information about the group's attitudes and thoughts (Kitzinger, 1995).

More advantages with focus groups are for example that the environment in the group can encourage participation from those who are unwilling to be interviewed on their own.

Moreover, participants feeling that they have nothing to say can be stimulated to discuss by the other individuals. One additional advantage with focus groups is that the researcher can recognize shared and usual knowledge (Kitzinger, 1995).

The effect of using focus groups is not always advantageous. It is for example unclear if the behaviour occurred in a group would happen individually without the group's impact. Some individuals just go along with the other group member's thoughts and values only because they do not feel as personally responsible for the result of the group procedure as they would if getting interviewed personally (Threlfall, 1999). Another negative outcome of focus groups is that it often can lead to more angry comments than in individual interviews. This can be explained by a trigger-effect that keeps the rage going (Kitzinger, 1995).

In this study, the information from three different focus groups will be used in order to collect information about consumer's perceptions towards a certain product. One group are going to consist of younger individuals in the ages 18-29, the second focus group will consist of persons in the ages 30-49 and the last group will consist of individuals that are older than 50 years. The purpose with this age variation is to get a broader study and see if the result varies.

### **3.2 Interviews**

The purpose with an interview is to collect data from individuals and explore the experiences, motivations, views and beliefs on a specific topic. It is a qualitative method and is believed to provide a "deep" understanding of social phenomena (Gill et al, 2008).

When doing the analysis, the method used will be personal face-to-face interviews. The collecting of data will be with semi-structured interview. A semi-structured interview is a



Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

verbal exchange with an interviewer trying to evoke information from an individual by asking questions. It is held in an informal tone and allows the participant to give an open response rather than just give “yes or no” answers (Clifford et al, 2010). It consists of key questions that are related to the research, but it also allows the interviewer to deviate and ask follow-up questions to get a more detailed response or idea from the participants. This gives the participant an opportunity to add information and thoughts beyond the asked questions (Gill et al, 2008).

The interviews will consist of participants with variance age-difference, a so-called *representative sample*. A *representative sample* is a sample that reflects the population, in this case, based on age (Bryman et al, 2011). The use of participants with variance age-difference will give the opportunity to get a more general opinion regarding Trekorv.

The interviews will be executed with face-to-face interview. An advantage of using telephone-interviews instead of face-to-face interview is that it is more time and cost efficient. However the response rates in telephone interviews are not as high compared to face-to-face interviews (Holbrook et al, 2003). Since the total amount of interviews is six, the time and cost efficiency is not an issue in this study. Another issue when conducting a telephone interview is that is not possible to take note of the participant’s body language (Bryman et al, 2011).

### 3.3 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is a tool used to collect information and quantitative data to a research question. To make the questionnaire accurate the questions have to be relevant towards the research question that is chosen (Lietz, 2010).

In order to create a questionnaire with valuable data it is important to simplify the questionnaire for the participant. Due to that the element of interacting with the participants is not included when conducting a questionnaire compared to a face-to-face interview (Bryman et al, 2005).



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

The design of a questionnaire is also an important factor because it has to be attractive and easy to answer, making space between the questions and being consistent when changing the font and size of the text (Bryman et al, 2005).

An online- questionnaire will be used as a research method to this analysis. One of the advantages of an online survey is for example cost efficiency. With special online questionnaire development firms, the preparation-cost for the questionnaire is low. The data collected is shown in a quick and easy way, which also is cost-efficient. Another advantage is that data collected can be complete, the questionnaire cannot for example be sent in until all the questions are answered (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

There is however a few disadvantage such as a misinterpretation of the entire questionnaire. Since it is self-administrated, the instructions for the questionnaire has to be clear in order to not be misinterpret. Another disadvantage could be *low response rate*. The researcher has to reach out to a lot of participants in order to achieve a *high response rate*. Since the participants choose to complete the survey on there own and clicking on the survey, it could be a problem to reach a *high response rate* (Evans & Mathur, 2005).

The online- questionnaire for this study will consist of different questions that are presented in the operationalization. It will be spread by the authors via different social medias and sent to individuals within different age groups and life situations. This is an easy way to gather a large amount of data in fairly quick way (Evans & Mathur, 2005). The aim with the questionnaire is to have a minimum of 50 participants with various age-difference completing the questionnaire.

### 3.4 Operationalization

Operationalization can be described as making abstract concepts more quantifiable into practice. Meaning a theoretical definition leads to an operational definition. By making concepts more measurable the researcher can draw the fine variances between individual's answers (Bryman et al, 2011).



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

### 3.4.1 Focus groups

The questions that were developed based on the theories that will be applied to the focus groups and connected to the operationalization will be:

- *How does the shape of a sausage affect your buying decision? (Perceptual process)*
- *What is your perception about Trekorv? (Perception)*
- *What advantages do you perceive about Trekorv? (Perception)*
- *How would the placement of this product affect your buying decision? (Perceptual process)*
- *What difference would it make if Trekorv were launched with a new company compared to an established company, for example “Scan”? (Brand Equity)*
- *How would you be affected if family or friends gave good recommendations about Trekorv? (Word-of-mouth)*
- *Do you think it would be a good idea if the stores gave free away samples of Trekorv in the store? (Heuristics)*

### 3.4.2 Interviews

In the face-to-face interviews the same question that was used in the focus group will be applied to the interviews, but used in a different order:

- *How does the shape of a sausage affect your buying decision? (Perceptual process)*
- *How would the placement of this product affect your buying decision? (Perceptual process)*
- *What is your perception about Trekorv? (Perception)*



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

- *What advantages do you perceive about Trekorv? (Perception)*
- *What difference would it make if Trekorv were launched with a new company compared to an established company, for example “Scan”? (Brand Equity)*
- *How would you be affected if family or friends gave good recommendations about Trekorv? (Word-of-mouth)*
- *Do you think it would be a good idea if the stores gave free away samples of Trekorv in the store? (Heuristics)*

### 3.4.3 Questionnaire

The questions used for the questionnaire are connected to the different theories. However, they differ from the questions used in the focus groups and interviews. They are simplified to make it easier for the participants, because the element of interacting with the participants is not possible (Bryman et al, 2005). All of the questions except the last four are connected to the theories; they are demographic and used to see if there will be a difference in the answers depending on who is answering them. The questions in the questionnaire are as followed;

- **Have you heard of Trekorv before?** *(Perception)*

Yes, No, Maybe

- **The shape of a sausage affects your buying decision** *(Perceptual process)*

Do not agree at all 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree

- **The placement of a product in a store is important** *(Perceptual process)*

Do not agree at all 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree

- **It is easier to get a wedged shaped sausage more even cooked on each side compared to a round sausage** *(Perception)*

Do not agree at all 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree

## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

- **The meat company Scan have good quality products** (*Brand equity*)

Do not agree at all 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree

- **If my friends or family recommend Trekorv I would purchase it** (*Word of mouth*)

Do not agree at all 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree

- **If Trekorv were sold to the same price as a “normal” round sausage, would you purchase it?** (*Heuristics*)

Do not agree at all 1 2 3 4 5 Totally agree

- **What gender are you?**

Man, Woman

- **How old are you?**

18-29, 30-49, 50+

- **Do you have kids?**

Yes, No

- **What is your occupation?**

Student, working, unemployed

## 4.0 Empirical investigation

### 4.1 Focus groups

The first question regarding if the shape of the sausage has an affect in the participants buying decision, the overall response were that they did not really think about the shape when purchasing sausage. The things that affected their decisions were rather attributes such as flavour or size. One participant in one of the groups said; “what type of sausage you buy depends on what and how you are cooking”



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception  
2013-05-29

Their perception about Trekorv was in general positive. The participants were curious and could see themselves purchasing the sausage and also mentioned that children might like the new shape. There were two participants that stood out, one from the younger group and one from the older group. Both of them said that it did not feel like a natural product, instead it felt man-made and artificial.

The groups mentioned a few advantages with the new shape. In all three groups they mentioned that it would be easier to grill and resulting in an even and better surface when grilling or frying it. That it would fit better in bread was also mentioned by one of the participants.

Regarding its placement in a store there were mixed response between participants and groups. They all agreed that the placement of the product in a store is very important but there were a lot of suggestions of where it should be placed. A few mentioned that it should be next to the other sausages so it would be easier to compare. One participant said that it would be a good idea to place it next to something related to barbeques. Placing it on its own in a store was also a suggestion from one of the groups.

Launching the product with a well-known brand was one of the questions that all participants in all of the groups agreed upon. They felt that it would be a good idea to launch it with a well-known brand because it would make the product trustworthy. One of the participants mentioned that the individuals that might be sceptical towards the product would be more likely to purchase it if released with a well-known brand.

Recommendations from family and friends were another question that everyone agreed upon as something that has a big impact. The likelihood of them purchasing the product would increase significantly if they were given good recommendations.

Free samples of Trekorv were also something everyone agreed upon as a good idea. “The people whom might be sceptical towards the product and try it and it does taste like a normal sausage might change their opinion” was stated by one of the participants.



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

### 4.2 Interviews

The first question if the shape has an affect on their buying decision, the general response was that it did not have an impact when purchasing sausage. The participants mentioned that they did not really pay attention to the shape because the shape has always been the same, but one participant said: "There is only one type of shape of sausages at the moment, but it would be interesting with a new shape". Regarding how the placement of food products would affect their buying process all the respondents had the same thoughts. The participants agreed that the placement of the product was important. They said that it would be best if it were placed in a cooler by itself, but one individual mentioned that it would probably be best if it were placed amongst the other sausages in the store.

The question about how they perceive Trekorv was overall positive. Almost all the respondents thought it was an interesting new product and they saw the benefits and the functions with the new shape. Only one of the respondents had a negative perception about Trekorv and said that it was an unnecessary product. The most common advantages were that the sausage would not fall down from the grill and get a more even cooked surface. One of the participants in the interviews also mentioned that it would be easier to place ketchup and other toppings on the sausage because of its shape.

The respondents thought it would be a good idea to launch Trekorv with an already established company. The reason was that they thought it would make the consumers perceive the product as more trustworthy. Two participants mentioned that Trekorv sounded exciting and it did not matter if it were launched on its own or with an established company. Although, they said that most people would probably prefer it with an established company. If the participants were given good recommendations from friends and family the chance of purchasing a product would increase. That was important to everyone, especially regarding food products.

To give away free samples of Trekorv in the stores was a good idea according to the respondents. They thought it would increase the interest for the product. One of the respondents said; "People that maybe are sceptical towards the product might change their mind if it taste the same as a normal sausage"



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

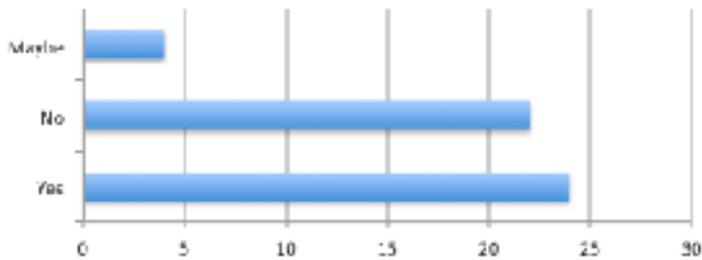
Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

### 4.3 Questionnaire

The result of the questionnaire is shown in horizontal bar graphs. The results are presented in percentage and average scores.

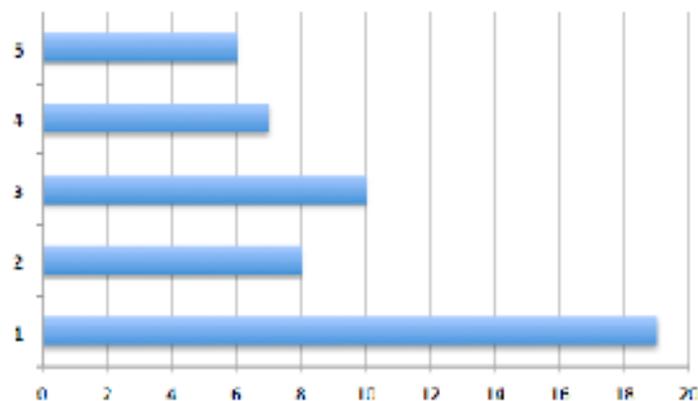
- **Have you heard of Trekorv before?**



No=48%, Yes=44%, Maybe=8%

In the following six questions we made statements and the participants could, on a level from 1-5, rank their answers on how much they agree or disagree. 1=Do not agree at all, 5=Totally agree. The results in the questions are shown with average scores.

- **The shape of a sausage affects your buying decision**



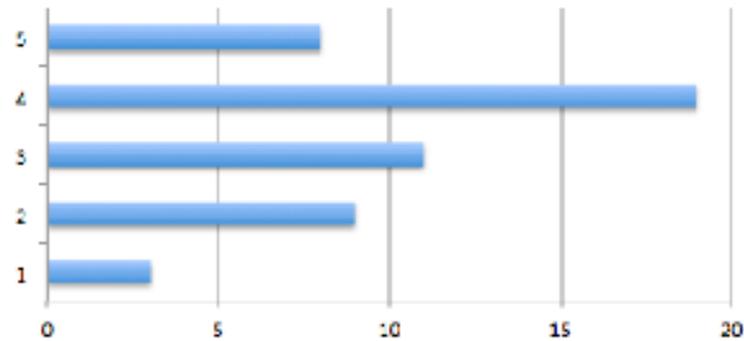
The average score was 2,46

## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



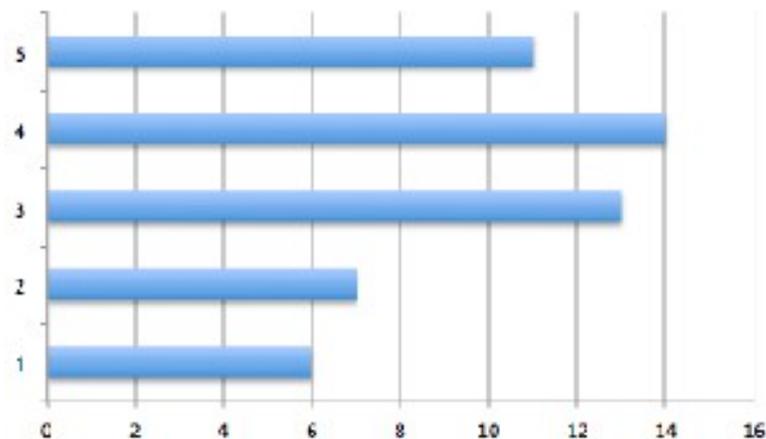
Sausage – Perception  
2013-05-29

- **The placement of a product in a store is important**



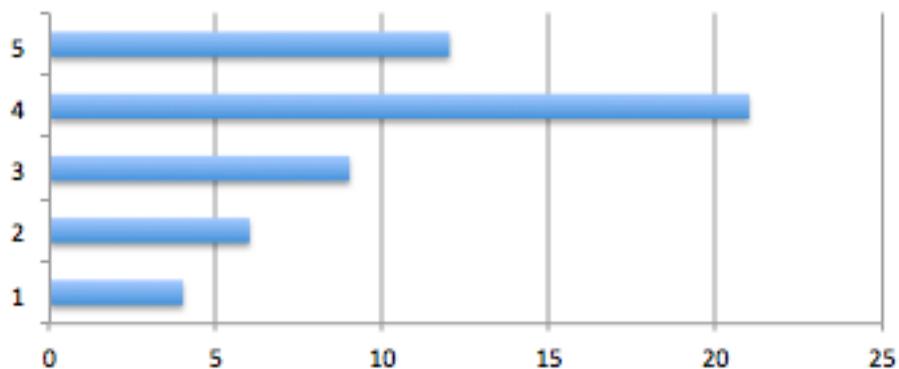
The average score was 3,4

- **It is easier to get a wedged shaped sausage more even cooked on each side compared to a round sausage**



The average score was 3,4

- **The meat company Scan have good quality products**



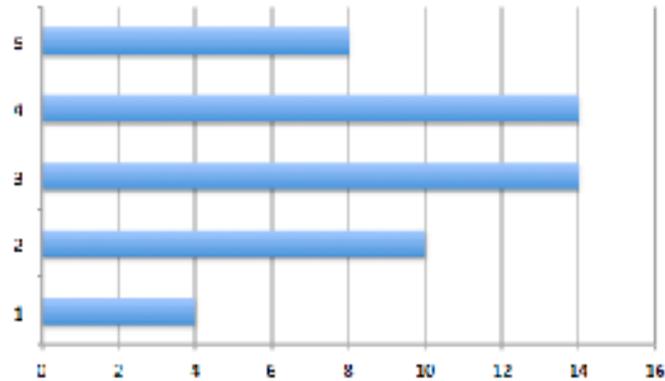
The average score was 3,74

## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



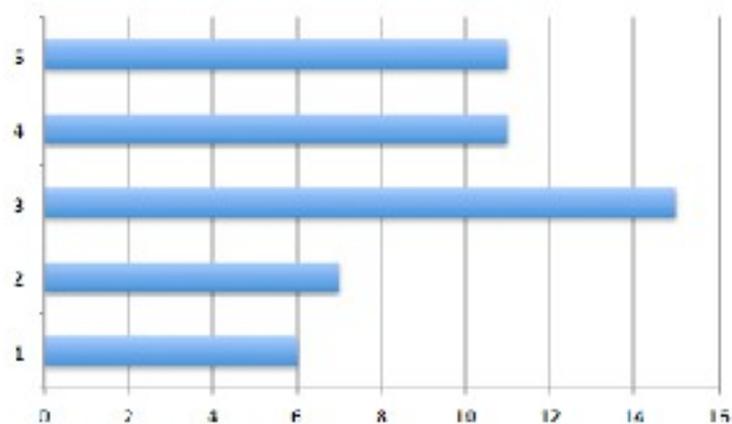
Sausage – Perception  
2013-05-29

- **If my friends or family recommend Trekorv I would purchase it**



The average score was 3,24

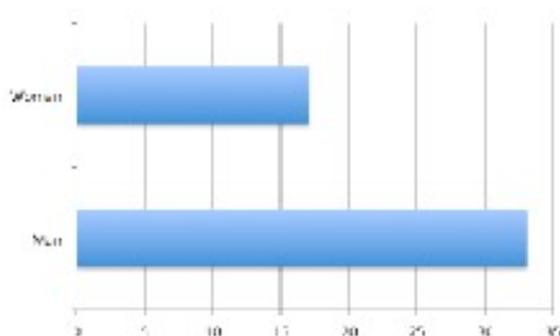
- **If Trekorv were sold to the same price as a “normal” round sausage, would you purchase it?**



The average score was 3,28

The four following questions are based on demographic and the results are shown in percentage

- **What gender are you?**



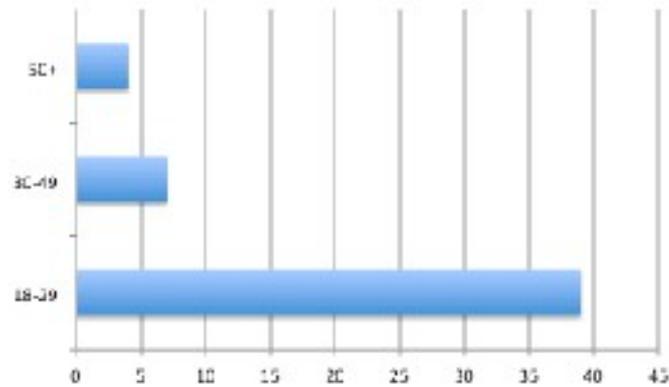
Man=66%, Woman=34%

# 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



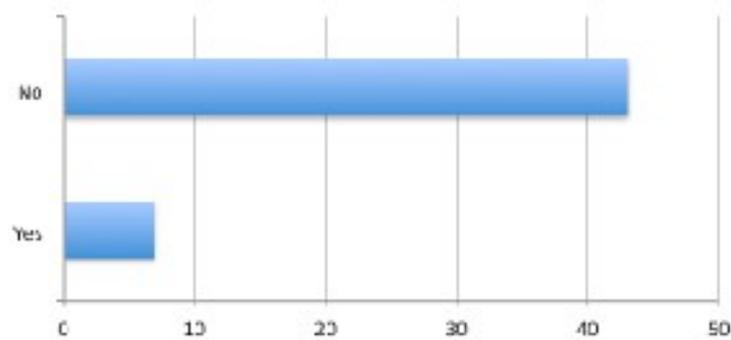
Sausage – Perception  
2013-05-29

- **How old are you?**



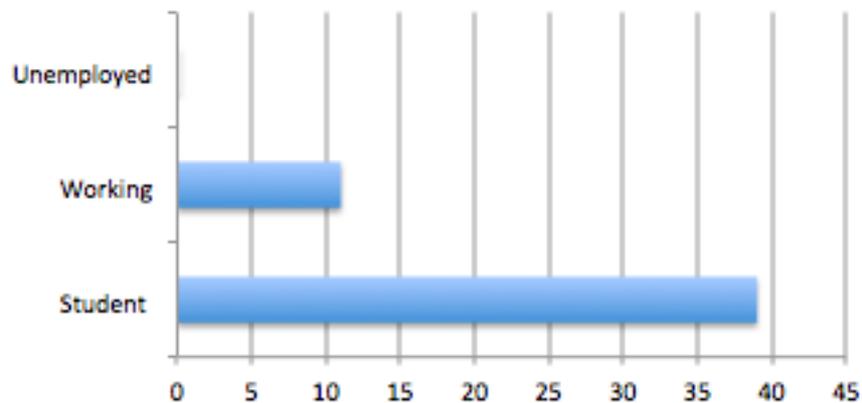
18-29=78%, 30-49=14%, 50+=8%

- **Do you have kids?**



Yes=14%, No=86%

- **What is your occupation?**



Student=78%, Working=22%, Unemployed=0%



### 5.0 Analysis

#### 5.1 Focus Groups

The participants did not pay attention to the shape when purchasing a sausage, which means that the shape is not something that is being noticed in the *perceptual process* (Solomon et al, 2010) regarding sausage.

The respondents were positive towards Trekorv. The fact that it was something new made the participants positive towards it. However, two individuals mentioned that they were a bit doubtful towards it because of the new shape. Unnatural, weird and man-made were words that were used. This shows that the majority of the participants in the focus groups *perception* and *interpretation* (Solomon et al, 2010) towards Trekorv were positive, but two participants perceived and interpreted it negatively. The fact that the participants saw many advantages with the new shape was a reason for the positive *perception* (Solomon et al, 2010) towards Trekorv. The advantages lead to long discussions in the focus groups and the participants mentioned almost every advantage that Wande spoke of when he introduced his product (TV4, 2013).

When asked about the products placement there were many different answers regarding where it should be placed. Putting it next to the other sausages could be an advantage because then it would be easier to compare. It was also mentioned that it would be more exclusive if it stood on its own, and that it would be an advantage if it were placed in more than one place in the store. This is connected to the *perceptual process* and shows that where the products are placed make a difference to the consumers (Solomon et al, 2010). Both in the focus groups and interviews the conclusion was that product placement was important. On the other hand they could not agree upon the best place to place the product in the stores.

The participants were of the opinion that it would be easier to enter the market if Trekorv were to be released with an already established brand. They mentioned that the established brands are trustworthy and this would have a big impact when releasing Trekorv in the stores. The fact that an established and trustworthy brand gets involved would make the product



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

itself trustworthy. The participants found it more reassuring to purchase a well-known brand, which is connected to *brand equity* (Aaker, 1992).

The individuals said that they trust family and friends when it comes to recommendations, and they would definitely purchase Trekorv if a family-member or friend suggested it. It was mentioned that especially when it comes to food, recommendations had a big impact. This shows the large effect that *word-of-mouth* can have (Solomon et al, 2010).

According to the participants free sample give-away was a good idea. One participant that was sceptical towards Trekorv in general mentioned that the perception towards it could be changed if given the opportunity to taste it before the purchase. Some of the participants said that it was essential to give away free samples when a new food-product enters the market. This is connected to *heuristics* and taking shortcuts in the buying process (Cialdini, 2005). Giving away free samples would according to the participants help the consumers in the buying process regarding Trekorv.

Overall, the groups gave similar answers and there was not any group that differed and gave unique answers. Their perception and thoughts regarding Trekorv were the same and was not affected by age, gender or life situation.

### 5.2 Interviews

The interviewed participants agreed that the shape on the sausage did not affect them in the buying process. When purchasing sausage, the shape of the sausage was not something that was picked up in *perceptual process* (Solomon, et al, 2010) during the purchase of sausage. When asking about the placement of sausage products in the store the respondents said that the placement of the product was important. The focus groups and interview participants were consensus regarding the importance of products placements in stores, but not consensus regarding where in the store it should be placed. This is again connected to the *perceptual process*. The shape was not something relevant in in their *perceptual process* but product placement was (Solomon, et al, 2010).

## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

The general opinion about how the respondents perceived Trekorv was that everyone of them except one was positive towards the product. They thought it was a good and interesting invention. So the *perception* and *Interpretation* (Solomon et al, 2010) of Trekorv were overall positive. They mentioned the advantages and that it was interesting with a new shape of the sausage. The same as in the focus groups the participants mentioned the advantages that Wande presented himself (TV4, 2013). They were aware about Trekorv's advantages and the problems the new shape would solve.

The respondents all agreed it would be best to launch Trekorv with an already well-known brand such as for example "Scan". Although, some of them mentioned that it would not make a difference to them personally but regarding the entire population, it would be best to launch it with a well-known brand. This states the theory in *brand equity* that powerful *brand equity* gives the company a large competitive advantage towards competitors (Armstrong et al, 2009). It could also be connected to *heuristics* in the case when the consumers have purchased a specific product from a company many times. The shortcuts consumers are taking when they do a re-buy of a product means that they purchase the same product they bought before (Cialdini, 2005).

The respondent's general opinion about good recommendations from family and friends were that it made a difference regarding their purchases. All the participants said it would increase the chance of them purchasing the product if their families and friends would recommend Trekorv. This supports the theory that a positive *word of mouth* is an important aspect for the company (Solomon et al, 2010).

In the last question regarding free give-away samples of Trekorv in the stores the answers in the interviews were similar. The respondents agreed that it was a good idea and it would increase the interest for the product. The shortcuts in their buying process (Cialdini, 2005) of Trekorv would help if the opportunity of taste the product before purchase were available.

The respondents were overall unanimous in the answers on all the questions and their overall perception about Trekorv was positive. The answers in the interviews, as in the focus groups, did not have a significant difference based on age, gender and life situations.



### 5.3 Questionnaire

The aim with the questionnaire was to get at least 50 participants, which was reached. It was constructed on an online questionnaire webpage and the maximum responses were 50, which is why the exact total amount was reached.

The *perception* (Solomon et al, 2010) towards Trekorv and knowledge about it was high. The fact that 44% had heard about it before has to be interpreted as a high number since the product has not been released yet. The fact that the Trekorvs marketing activities up to this point have been very limited (Trekorv, 2013), it has to be concluded that the fact that 44% have heard about it must be the impact it had because of the appearance on the TV-show “Uppfinnarna” (TV4, 2013).

Of the six statements that were made, the one with the lowest average score was “The shape of sausage effect your buying decision”. The shape did not have an a big effect on the participants in the focus groups, interviews or questionnaire which concludes that it is not something that is included in their *perceptual process* (Solomon et al, 2010) regarding the purchase of sausage.

Regarding if the products placements in a store has a big impact, the results shows that it was of some importance. Which includes the similarity between focus groups, interviews and questionnaire regarding product placement. As mentioned in the interviews and focus groups analysis, the shape is not something that is relevant to consumer’s *perceptual process* but product placement is (Solomon et al, 2010).

A more even cooked surface was something that the respondents in the questionnaire somewhat agreed upon with an average score of 3,4. This question might have been a bit misinterpreted because in the interviews and the focus groups it had to be explained more in



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

detail to the participants. But the answers show a general positive *perception* (Solomon et al, 2010) that it would be an advantage compared to a round sausage.

The question with the highest score was if Scan has high quality products. The question differed from the focus groups and interviews were it was asked if Trekorv should be launch with a more established brand. However, the high score indicates that Scan is a trustworthy company. Including the results from the focus groups and interviews the conclusion is that consumers would more likely purchase products from a brand that they perceive as trustworthy (Aaker, 1992).

The question regarding the purchase of the product if they received recommendations gave a relative high score. In the interviews and focus groups the response were that it was essential, but it was not of the same importance based on the result on the questionnaire.

The price of Trekorv made a difference to the participants, the average score of 3,28 shows that a lot of the participants would purchase Trekorv if the price were the same as a round sausage. This shows that when collecting information in the buying process regarding sausage, the price is not something that is excluded in the consumer's mental shortcuts, also called *heuristics* (Solomon et al, 2010).

Based on the last questions regarding demographics, the age group 18-29, students and men were overrepresented in the questionnaire. This makes it hard to draw conclusions with different individuals with different age and life situations. The respondents that were not students and in the others age groups were analysed individually, the answers between them did not follow any significant pattern and their answers follow the average of the other average scores.

## 6.0 Conclusion

When analysing the result from the three different methods used, the overall perception towards a new shape and Trekorv could be seen as positive. However, a few of the participants did not see the new shape as something positive, were there where participants from the interviews, focus groups and questionnaire that did not perceive it as a good and



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

innovative product. The majority were however positive towards both the new shape and Trekorv.

The advantages of the new shape compared to the round shape were a factor that made the participants perceive it as positive. In the interviews and focus groups this was the subject that led to the longest discussions and gave the most informative answers. They became curious regarding the new shape and after thinking they saw that a new shape had advantages compared to the round shape. The participants in the interviews and focus groups mentioned all the advantages regarding the shape that was brought up in the problem discussion. It was also shown in the questionnaire due to the fact that a majority of the respondents thought that a wedged shaped sausage would be more evenly cooked compared to a round sausage.

When interacting with the participants in the interviews and focus groups they seemed curious regarding Trekorv and a lot of questions were raised to the authors regarding Trekorv, such as when and where it is going to be released. Overall, they seemed interested and positive towards Trekorv based on the interviews and focus groups. The questionnaire had similar response as the interviews and focus groups but not with the same magnitude.

The few respondents that did not have a positive perception mentioned the unnatural feeling they had when hearing about the new shape. The fact that sausage always has been round (Scan, 2013) and it is a food product made them sceptical towards it. They perceived sausage as a natural product and when the shape changes it gave them the perception of a man-made and artificial product. Sausage is a man-made product where you mix meat and spices and fill the mass into guts (Foodreference, 2013), however their perception regarding sausage changed with the new shape and made it feel unnatural.

The age-difference that was taken into consideration when conducting the study did not give different answers between the groups. The data was analysed based on who gave the answers and there was not a significant difference. For example there were respondents from every age group that did not perceive the new shape as positive.

Overall, the perception towards it was positive and the factor was all the advantages that the



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

new shape brings. The participants received information regarding the new shape, which was organised, interpreted and perceived as positive.

### 6.1 Marketing recommendations

By observing three focus groups, conducting six face-to-face interviews and receiving 50 responses from an online questionnaire, a recommendation to how Trekorv could become an established product in the market has been presented in this study.

The importance of *word-of-mouth* was confirmed by the participants in the different methods, which could be helped with the use of social media (Brown et al, 2007). Given the fact that the inventor Wande is active on both Facebook (Facebook, 2013) and Twitter (Twitter, 2013) it should be taking advantage of when the actual launch of the product will take place. Maybe conduct some sort of competition as well as posting a short commercial on the Facebook page in order to increase *word-of-mouth* and spread awareness of the product.

An established company was perceived as more trustworthy amongst the participants and for Trekorv to establish cooperation with a well-known company is something that could increase sales, when launching the product.

Regarding the ones being sceptical towards the product, one solution could be the use of free sample give-away in the stores to show that the taste does not differ from a round shaped sausage.

### 6.2 Reflection

This study should be seen as an introduction to the usage of the combined methods; focus groups, interviews and questionnaire. The procedure could therefore been improved due to the fact that the authors are fairly new to this kind of working-process.

To receive a more accurate data there could have been more participants in the different methods. The total of participants were 80+ including the 50 respondents from the



## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer

Sausage – Perception

2013-05-29

questionnaire. This amount cannot be representative of the entire population and therefore there should not be drawn any major conclusions of the result from the different methods.

The different age groups were covered in the study, there were however restricted to a certain geographical area. The participants from the interviews and focus groups only covered the south of Sweden and could not therefore represent the entire country.

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## 1FE102 From the perspective of the customer



Sausage – Perception  
2013-05-29  
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