Effectively persuading prospects to adopt a high value product that originates from Poland

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Effectively persuading prospects to adopt a high value product that originates from Poland.

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Abstract

Background: based on the high product failure rates, selling a product in general is found to be a difficult job. Taken into account that sales in general is difficult for every product, how should salesman be able to sell a product when the firm has no reputation, is selling a high value product that is new and that is associated with a negative image. All these aspect negatively influence the chance of successfully selling a product. So there is a clear need for these salesman to gain the knowledge of how they should persuade their prospects.

Research objective and questions: the objective of this study was to see how prospects in the different adoption stages could be best persuaded in order to find maximum adoption, embodied by the primary research question: “What is the most appropriate persuasion strategy for a reputation-less company, depending on the stage of the adoption process that a customer is in, in order to find adoption for high value machinery that originates from Poland”. A secondary research question was established that was interested in the effect of the additional aspects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image on the buying intention of prospects with regard to high value products. Hence, the following secondary research question emerged: “How important are the aspects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image on the prospects buying intention, with regard to high value machinery that originates from Poland and is sold by a reputation-less company”.

Method: the research strategy was an experimental research design which included three types of persuasion strategies and a control group. The results of the experiments are obtained with the use of semi-structured interviews as part of a qualitative research design.

Results: in every adoption stage, social proof is found to be by far the most appropriate and effective persuasion strategy since it diminishes the uncertainty and risk that seem to accompany the fact that it is about a high value product with a negative image that is sold by a reputation less firm. Besides social proof, also reciprocity is found to be a standard in the environment of high value products and it is found to be an affective form of persuasion. Overall, the persuasion strategies showed small signs of positive influence on the buying behaviour of prospects in the awareness stage, based on the fact that this segment is not intended to adopt such a product in the near future. Scarcity is found to be irrelevant in all of the adoption stages, since the products in this environment are simply not obtained as scarce or exclusive. The results of the secondary research revealed that firm reputation and after-sales service indeed are very important aspects for prospects in the consideration and adoption decision stage. After-sales service is not an important determinant in the awareness stage but becomes the most important evaluation aspect in the consideration and adoption decision stage. Product image is found to be somewhat important in the awareness stage, but becomes less important in the consideration and adoption decision stage.
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Jimmy van Herwijnen
Eindhoven, September 2016
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Introduction

Due to the fast evolving technologies accompanied with a large amount of new product introductions nowadays, it becomes more and more difficult for start-up firms to maintain existence in the market place. Depending on the industry a company is operating in, the innovation failure rate ranges between the 35% and 45 %, (Cooper & Kleinschmidt, 1986; Castellion & Markham, 2013; Nijssen, 2014). Which means that on average 40 % of the newly introduced products or services are not going to survive and eventually will disappear from the market place. Campbell (1999) mentioned that a new product could be highly innovative, incorporating advanced technologies that render them superior to competitive products, but still fail due to a poor marketing strategy. This rather great amount of failures explains the great attention for the topic of persuasion and adoption of new products both from entrepreneurs and academics.

The process of selling new products is rather complicated, but is all starts with a proper marketing plan (Nijssen, 2014). Society often uses the terms marketing and sales interchangeable, while literature is consistent that both terms concern different phenomena (Kotler, Rackham, & Krishnaswamy, 2006; Nijssen, 2014; Gustafsson, Johnson, & Roos, 2005). Hence, marketing is a rather broad subject containing the advertisement of the product offering, how it should be communicated, but it also covers strategical aspects as segmentation, pricing, place, promotion, product and so on (Moorman & Rust, 1999; Nijssen, 2014). Opposed to marketing, the main purpose of sales concerns the purchase as well as maintaining long lasting customer relationships (Kotler, Rackham, & Krishnaswamy, 2006). Simply stated, a sales man job is to communicate the product offering to the customer, in order to persuade that particular customer to adopt the product.

Product adoption is a customer’s decision to make full use of a product or service (Arts, Frambach, & Bijmolt, 2011; Rogers E. , 2003). In addition, adoption is found to consist of a sequential process of awareness, consideration, and adoption decision (Rogers E. , 2003). First of all, customer have to get aware of a products availability by advertisements. In the consideration phase customer seek for additional information and will make trade-offs and assess alternatives (Rogers E. , 2003). Prior research reveals five main characteristics on which customer mostly base their decision to adopt. Hence, these characteristics consist of the relative advantage, how compatible the product is with the customers standards, the complexity of usage and, trialability, observability of the product, as well as the perceived uncertainty (Nooteboom, 1989; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002; Hart & Tzokas, 2000; Rogers E. , 1995)

Before arriving at the point of adoption, the customer first has to be approached and persuaded by the salesman. In a typical persuasion situation, an individual or a group of prospects receives a message from another individual (salesman), which usually
presents arguments or reasons in favour of the recipient, which on its turn relates to some of the variance of attitude change (Petty, Cacioppo, & Kasmer, 2015). Persuading people to say yes to certain things is found to be a difficult job. However, reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and social proof are five persuasion strategies as proposed by Cialdini (2007), which act as so called shortcuts for customers to make decisions more easily. Elaborating on these shortcuts may enable salesman to successfully persuade their customers. Furthermore, since customers are assessing information differently throughout the adoption stages, in every adoption stage another persuasion strategy may be most suitable (Rogers E., 2003).

Prior research provided insights of how customers can be persuaded to buy a product in very common situations. However, this research context is more interested in a specific situation that is not readily available in literature. Hence, it is not clear how reputation less firms, that sell high value products which have a negative image should persuade their customer in order to gain maximum adoption. With high value products we relate to machinery that originates from Poland. It is known that high value products are associated with more comprehensive decision making (Rackham, 1998), what makes the risk associated, and the quality of the product two rather important evaluation aspects in regard to high value products. Besides the high value, products that originate from a less developed country are found to be perceived as riskier and with lower quality among customers (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005) what may affirm the difficulties accompanied with finding adoption for such products. Next, taken into account that it is sold by a start-up company, who are found to have little reputation, may clarify the great need for a proper persuasion strategy in order to maximize customer adoption. Especially because firm reputation acts as evidence of firms previous work and acts as a signal of observable quality (Chandler, Haunschild, Rhee, & Beckman, 2013). This resulted in the following research question which will guides this research:

“What is the most appropriate persuasion strategy for a reputation-less company, depending on the stage of the adoption process that a customer is in, in order to find adoption for high value machinery that originates from Poland”

This research is conducted as part of the master thesis project that will be conducted at Herwijnen Machinery B.V. Herwijnen Machinery is an reputation-less company that sells high value machinery (€100.000–€250.000) that originates from Poland and is seeking for a proper persuasion strategy to enhance product adoption.
1.1 Company description
Herwijnen Machinery B.V. (HM) is a young, one-man company that mainly trades used, heavy machinery such as Excavators, Wheel loaders, Bulldozer, which we describe as high valued products (above €100,000,-) in this report. In June 2015, Herwijnen Machinery was requested by a Polish company named Pronar to become exclusive dealer for their recycling machinery in the Netherlands. At that moment in time, Herwijnen Machinery was rather familiar with recycling machinery, but unfamiliar with selling those machines. After Herwijnen (2016) conducted some research about the Dutch market and the company Pronar, it seemed to be a great opportunity (Herwijnen, 2016). According to Herwijnen (2016), who is familiar with already existing similar products, the recycling machines from Pronar were built very decently. So at first, the recycling machines seemed to have the potential to become successful in the Netherlands. Due to the market research conducted by Pronar, they developed a very good and user friendly product which is recognized as a “Trommelscreener”. Due to the user friendly design of the machines and the use of premium parts, makes this machine viable to compete against the top brands in the recycling market. Taken into account that this machine would sell for at least 10% less than the nearest competitor, makes it even more promising (Herwijnen, 2016).

1.1.1 Pronar Sp. Z.o.o.
Pronar is a machinery manufacturing company, located in the east part of Poland. Pronar was established in 1988 (Pronar Sp. Z o.o., 2015). Nowadays Pronar is the undisputed leader in the production and sales of machinery and equipment for agriculture, municipal services and transportation industry with nearly 40% market share in the Polish market (Pronar Sp. Z o.o., 2015). Besides, Pronar employs 2300 people spread over 6 modern factories covering an area of 62 football fields. In addition, the agricultural machinery manufactured by Pronar consists of Tractors, Trailers, Green forage machinery and front loaders and accessories for tractors (Pronar Sp. z.o.o, 2015). The machinery as built by Pronar that belongs to municipal machinery consists of spreaders, sweepers, snow plows, multifunction hydraulic arms, mulchers, snow blowers, slurry tanks, and so on. Also the recycling machinery belongs to the municipal machinery division.

HM is only exclusive dealer for the recycling department of Pronar. At this moment in time, Pronar has 4 types of Trommelscreeners available, but is planning to fill the complete product range of recycling machinery by adding more recycling machines such as slow speed Shredders, fast speed Shredder, Stock Pilers, and concrete crushers (Kundzicz, 2016). Pronar recently manufactured a prototype of one of the versions of the slow speed Shredder and is planning to launch it in June 2016 (Kundzicz, 2016; Herwijnen, 2016). Until the launch of the Shredder, the prototype is being tested and adjusted until all obtained mechanical shortcomings and issues are recovered and it is ready to be introduced.
1.1.2 Pronar Trommelscreeners

At this moment, 4 types of trommelscreeners are available on the market, ranging from different sizes based on capacity. The smallest version has a drum inside with a length of 4.4 meters and a diameter of 1.4 meters, opposed to the biggest screener, which has a drum of 7.2 meters long and 2 meters diameter. Figure 1 shows an example of the Pronar MPB 20.72, which is the biggest version of the trommelscreeners manufactured by Pronar.

The purpose of a Trommelscreener is to separate building materials from other building materials, mostly sand or ground (soil) with stones or bricks mixed in it (Herwijnen, 2016). Trommelscreeners in fact, can be used to separate any kind of material that fits through the meshes inside the drum. Hence, the measurements of the holes in the drum determine the size of product that is falling through (Pronar Sp. z.o.o., 2015). The material that is falling through the drum is being transported separately outside the machine form the materials that are too big to fall through the drum. Hence, a worm inside the drum transports the oversize materials to the end, where after a separate conveyer belt is transporting it outside the screener, as can be seen in Figure 1.

Unseparated materials are often seen as waste and do not serve a purpose. By separating those waste materials, products can be recovered an become useful for different applications. In other words, products one has to pay for to discard, also known as waste, can be transformed into products that become useful for some situation and become economically valuable (Herwijnen, 2016). Selling prices are
dependent on the type of screener as well as the options, but range between €110.000,- and €220.000,- (Herwijnen, 2016), which explains the high value of these products.

1.1.3 Recycling Market in the Netherlands

Recycling and reusing materials is a booming topic in the Netherlands. Hence, the Netherlands even belong to the top of recycling countries, where they recycle more than halve of the waste that is being produced (Nu.nl, 2014). On average 80 percent of the waste is being recycled, and used for other purposes (Vries, 2013). The ministry of Infrastructure and environment (Rijkswaterstaat, 2013) investigated the amount of waste produced and processed over the years between 1992 and 2012, as illustrated in Figure 2. Until 2011 the amount of waste varied between 9.9 and 11.4 megaton. Hence, in 2012 this amount was 12.2 megaton. From that 12.2 megaton, almost 3.3 megaton was processed by landfills, against the biggest amount of almost 7.5 megaton that was incinerated. A last 1.3 megaton was used for composting (Rijkswaterstaat, 2013).

Waste materials can consist of concrete, wood, stones, glass, paper, plastics and so on. In order to process all of the waste, different machinery is used for different purposes. Screeners are used to separate material from each other, where crushers are used to diminish products like concrete, wood, plastic, and so on. Other recycling machinery is specially developed for chipping wooden trees, like (Morbark).
According to Herwijnen (2016), potential customers for recycling machinery consist of Recycling companies, who collect and process waste (i.e. Beelen). According to (Recyclemaar), there are 1,310 recycling companies located in the Netherlands. Furthermore, potential customers can consist of renting companies, like (G.M. Damsteegt), construction companies (i.e. Sinkegroep), and even bigger farmers that collect ground materials. According to Herwijnen (2016) the segment that could be interested in recycling machinery is very small (estimated around 3000 companies).
2 Literature background

This chapter discusses the current body of scientific knowledge on the subjects of adoption and persuasion. Besides these main subjects, also the three additional subjects of firm reputation, product image and, after-sales service are discussed. The method used was the systematic literature review, based on the guideline for the conduct of narrative synthesis in systematic reviews (Popay, et al., 2006).

2.1 The process of adoption

Organizational innovation adoption has received increasing attention in the marketing and management literature over the past two decades (Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002). Understanding the process of adoption and diffusion of innovations is key in the environment of marketing new products since the success or failure is dependent on the response of potential customers in the marketplace (Nijssen, 2014). In addition, Lodish et al. (2015) state that understanding the adoption concept is the most effective way to develop a comprehensive marketing plan.

Innovation adoption is defined by Rogers (2003) as the consumer’s decision to make full use of an innovation, as confirmed by Arts et al. (2011). According to Rogers (2003), adoption is a sequential process of awareness, consideration, and adoption decision, committed by Kalish (1985), who claims that the adoption process of a customer is characterized by awareness and adoption. Montaguti et al. (2002) found that customer adoption decisions are determined by: (1) Awareness, (2) willingness to pay, and (3) product availability.

First of all, information regarding the product or service needs to be spread (communicated) by advertisements and word of mouth, which creates awareness. Awareness is required, since it’s a fact that a customer cannot buy something they do not know (Rogers E., 2003). In the consideration stage, a customer will make trade-offs and assess alternatives. Hence, customer will use information sources in order to gather valuable information about the innovation. Horsky and Simon (1983) identified two groups of new product buyers: those who adopt the product independently from others –the innovators- and those who are influenced by others –the imitators. According to Nijssen (2014) later adopters mainly rely on word of mouth, against innovators/lead customers who adopt products based on their own personal innovation. Sources of information used, found in literature consists of: (1) Reference customers, (2) leading experts, and (3) the characteristics of the company itself (Nijssen, 2014; Popovic & Fahrni, 2004). Reference customers mostly consist of lead customers or early buyers. By using this source of information, uncertainty about the innovation may be decrease, and it may become clear to the customer that the innovation is operational. Hence, it will increase other adopters confidence and excitement about the innovation and make them enthusiastic about it (Nijssen, 2014).
Leading experts are individuals or organizations that possess in depth knowledge about specific areas of technology. This source of information helps to both conceptualise and increase awareness. Hence, innovators generally follow leading experts closely as a source of information (Nijssen, 2014). Robert and Brooks (1957) explain the importance of leading experts, or how they call it: “opinion leaders”. These leaders are sought by others for information and advice in the field in which he or she is a leader. The last source consists of information about the company itself, meaning that early adopter assess the state of the company. Because of the major innovation failure rate, potential customers assess the company based on their viability (Nijssen, 2014).

Rogers (1995) identified five characteristics (Figure 3) of a new product that influence adoption decision, confirmed by Nijssen (2014), Frambach and Schillewaert (2002) and Hart and Tzokas (2000). Hence, these characteristics consist of the relative advantage of the product compared to competition, how compatible the product is with the customers standards, the complexity of usage and, the trialability, the observability of the product, as well as the perceived uncertainty (Nooteboom, 1989; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002)

![Exhibit 1. Characteristics of a New Product that Influence Adoption](image)

*Figure 3: characteristics of a new product that influence adoption (Rogers, 1995)*
Once the perceived risk adjusted value exceeds the selling price, adoption will occur (Kalish, 1985). Figure 4 presents the adoption process provided by Nijssen (2014), who adapted it from Wouters and Nijssen (2012). The framework explains the path that prospects take before ending at the decision to adopt a particular product or not. Prospects start with seeking information from different sources (reference, experts, the company itself). After a proper amount of information is gathered and assessed, the prospects are aware of the product deliverables and start considering adoption. In between the process of gathering information and the consideration stage, customers are also assessing the reliability if the information they gained, as well as what they have to afford in order to adopt the product or service. In the consideration stage, several product characteristics are assessed which will lead to the decision whether or not to adopt a particular product or service.

![Adoption process diagram](image)

**Figure 4: Adoption process (Nijssen 2014)**

### 2.1.1 Technology adoption life cycle

In 1957, Beal, Everett, Rogers and Bohlen developed the technology life cycle model based on the different adoption propensities of customers in the marketplace, displayed in Figure 5.

![Technology adoption life cycle diagram](image)

**Figure 5: Technology adoption life cycle (Beal et al. 1957)**
Considering the technology adoption life cycle is useful to help market and sell a new product, and to develop and grow a successful business. Hence, it explains the adoption of an innovation in a market, but also why sales may not happen (Nijssen, 2014). Throughout the innovation life cycle stages, potential customers differ in their evaluation criteria related to adoption based on their level of risk aversion and openness to change (Nijssen, 2014). A small percentage consist of risk-immune innovators, also recognizable as lead customers. Innovators are technology enthusiasts who are committed to new technological trends and are willing to take a risk. Innovators are important based on the fact that they can provide valuable feedback. Besides, they are also seen as reference point for other potential customers and therefore can act as powerful promoters (Nijssen, 2014).

The next group of customers is called “early adopters”, who will adopt very early in the life cycle, but instead of innovators, they do not have the need to be the first but are more visionary. Keeping a close watch to innovators, this group waits until the risks associated are reduced towards an acceptable level and they are able to maximise its benefits and create serious competitive advantage. Based on the 13.5% that this group consists of, it is the first that can increase the companies turnover and stabilize the business parameters (Nijssen, 2014). The first two groups are identified by Blank (2006) as the “early market”, whereas the next two groups are the “mainstream market”.

A next 34% belongs to the late majority group, who are conservative and pessimistic and will be hard to please. Hence, they have a risk-averse attitude, are sensitive towards pricing and do not directly see the need for adoption. However, this group may not be ignored, since they represent a great percentage of the market. The last group is called “Laggards”, who represent the last 16 percent of the market. This group has a negative attitude to new technology in general, and will only adopt once they need to. A reason for adoption can be that their old product broke down and a similar new one is not available anymore. This group is sceptic of the worst kind (Nijssen, 2014).

Despite the smooth bell-shaped line represented by the technology adoption life cycle, the process of adoption along the groups cannot be seen as smooth at all, meaning that it is not common that the early majority starts adopting once they have noticed that the early adopters adopted the product successfully. Hence, the transition between two groups of adopters is difficult, because of the psychological differences between the groups. According to Blank (2006) these chasms are caused by the different product needs and buying habits of each group. Hence, these groups apply different criteria related to decision whether or not to adopt. These chasms need to be avoided, because they will slow down sales and market growth (Nijssen, 2014). In addition, to overwin...
these chasms, it can be necessary that for every group a different marketing and sales strategy has to be developed, or at least adjusted. Besides that, often entrepreneurs need to modify their product offering or the price in order to reach the next customer group (Nijssen, 2014). The biggest chasm exist between the “early market” and the “mainstream market”, since the mainstream market mostly assesses the early market as an inappropriate reference (Blank, 2006).

Nijssen (2014) further elaborates on the concept of penetration and diffusion in the market place. Market penetration relates to the degree of market adoption at a given point in time, whereas diffusion relates to the spreading of a new technology in the market. Distinctions can be made between rapid, slow and delayed diffusion. With rapid diffusion, the innovation is well accepted in the marketplace, and one can suggest that the market is rather homogeneous, resulting in small chasms. Montaguti et al. (2002) suggests that when a firm’s objective is to achieve rapid diffusion, they should focus on early adopters by developing awareness, increasing utilities, reducing uncertainty and extending availability. In addition, slow diffusion reveals the opposite, in which customers are not homogeneous and larger chasms are present. Another diffusion pattern is delayed diffusion, meaning that growth only starts to take place after a certain period (Nijssen, 2014). Reasons for this pattern can be found in the fact that some products require big investments which result in slow adoption patterns, or the potential customers do not recognize a clear need for it yet.

2.1.2 Customer reasoning in the adoption process

When a firm is approaching potential customers it is important to understand their thoughts and what may keep them from adopting a particular product or service. Nowadays, we live in a world where potential customers can make instantaneous comparisons between similar products, which explains the importance of understanding what drives customers in their decision making processes (Lesser, Mundel, & Wiecha, 2000). Possessing customer knowledge can help companies develop effective strategies, react faster to marketplace trends, increase brand loyalty, and companies can truly understand their most valued resources (Lesser, Mundel, & Wiecha, 2000).

Before deciding to adopt a new technology, potential customers evaluate new products relative to a reference point, usually the product they already own (Gourville, 2006). In his research, Gourville (2006) found that people view product improvements as a gain relative to their reference point, but see any shortcomings as losses, which means that they assess product advantages differently from disadvantages. Arts et al. (2011) found a difference in consumer adoption intention and their behaviour. Hence, they found that customers show higher levels of adoption intention for more complex innovations, that better match their needs, and involve lower uncertainty. However, consumers are
found to actually adopt innovations with less complexity and higher relative advantage.

Gourville (2006) argues that people irrationally overvalue the benefits of the product they currently possess related to those they do not possess. Opposed to the customers, also entrepreneurs seem to overvalue their innovations, resulting in a bias, which Gourville (2006) calls the “9 x effect”, as visualized in Figure 6. Customers will always be sceptical about the new technologies performance, which make them unable to see the need for it. Hence, they know what they possess and how it performance, what makes them to overvalue the possessed products. However, innovators are mostly attracted by their own innovation, and are convinced that it solves a need, which lead them to also overvalue their product offerings. This bias can have disastrous consequences since consumers will reject to adopt the new product, while entrepreneurs are at a loss to anticipate failure. According to Gourville (2006) this double-edged bias is called the curse of innovation, and explains that it is not enough for a new product to be simply better.

It may be undeniable that in most cases, new product innovations require behavioural change (Gourville, 2006; Guiltinan, 1999; Rackham, 1998; Nijssen, 2014; Burns, 2014). Despite the behavioural change required, customer are reluctant to change in any content (Gourville, 2006; Talke & Hultink, 2010). In addition, resistance to change leads even the most promising products, with evidence of market need and strong marketing support, to fail. Gourville (2006) conducted a framework as illustrated in Figure 7, which shows how value is captured from innovations, related to the degree of product change and the degree of behavioural change associated.
Gourville (2006) explains that value can be created from high product changes, but that the behavioural change associated needs to be low in order to capture the most value from it, recognized as “smash hit”. These products stand the best chance of both short-term and long-term success (Gourville, 2006). When both the degree of behavioural change required and the degree of product change is low, consumer acceptance may be high but the benefits for both parties are limited, resulting in “easy sales”. In addition, innovations that require high behavioural change but provide low product change, will capture no value due to the fact that there are no benefits for the customer, leading to “sure failures”. A last type of innovation is called “Long hauls” in which the product change is high, but also the behavioural change necessary is high. Due to the high behavioural change which makes customers resistance to adopt and the high product change, these innovations will encounter slow adoption.

Ram and Sheth (1989) defined innovation resistance as ‘the resistance offered by consumers to an innovation, either because it poses potential changes from a satisfactory status quo or because it conflicts with their belief structure’. Kleijnen et al. (2009) identified three types of resistance: rejection, postponement, and opposition. According to Kleijnen et al. (2009), resistance may be viewed as a hierarchical continuum, ranging from resistance, to postponement, to rejection, to opposition. The type of resistance depends both on the amount and type of change and risk present (Nijssen, 2014).

With postponement the consumer is willing to adopt the product, but at that point in time, the circumstances are not suitable for going over into adoption. According to Nijssen (2014), in case of postponement, consumers are facing economic risks as well as changing usage patterns. Rejection is associated with an negative evaluation by the consumer which results in reluctance to adopt, often induced by a suspicion of new
and unproven innovations (Kleijnen, Lee, & Wetzels, 2009). According Nijssen (2014), added aspects towards rejection are functional risk, social risk and a poor image. By comparing postponement with rejection, the emphasis moves from more basic, practical concerns in the case of postponement, towards more societal concerns such as tradition and norms in the case of rejection. With opposition, the consumer is convinced that the innovation is inappropriate, and in fact, will have a negative word of mouth against the launch. The consumer will try to prevent the innovations success (Kleijnen, Lee, & Wetzels, 2009). Hence, opposition is about conflict with norms and traditions, and with risk of physical harm (Nijssen, 2014).

Kleijnen et al. (2009) claims that there are two main factors that drive customer resistance. First, changes in consumers established behavioural patterns, norms, habits and traditions. Second, psychologic conflicts or problems for the consumers will also resist them from adopting, being confirmed by Sheth (1981). He adds another aspect as the risk associated with the innovation as a driver of resistance. Besides these findings, consumers may also resist adoption because they are satisfied with their current situation, which gives them no reason to change (Kleijnen, Lee, & Wetzels, 2009).

It is important to lower or eliminate resistance to adoption, since it will highly influence market success (Talke & Hultink, 2010; Langerak, Hultink, & Robben, 2004; Hultink, Hart, Robben, & Griffin, 2000; Hart & Tzokas, 2000). In order to overcome resistance, start-ups have to brace for slow adoption and focus on pragmatic customers (Gourville, 2006; Nijssen, 2014). Rapping up the sales force or investing heavily in advertising will not be the medication towards resistance. Another approach could be for a company to overweight the potential losses by increasing the relative benefits of a product or service (Nijssen, 2014), or as Gourville (2006) states, strive for 10 times improvement. Gourville (2006) expressively suggests to accept resistance and be patient by bracing for slow adoption. Hence, when companies believe that the adoption process of new innovations needs to be fast, a reasonable risk exist of depleting resources to quickly. Other remedies for customer resistance can be the introduction of compatible products that require the same behavioural change, the search for believer who act as reference point towards other customers. Not often, but there are situations where companies can eliminate old products from incumbents in the market place and become the new market standard.
2.2 The process of persuasion

The psychology of persuasion is as old as the term “marketing” is, since successful marketing is highly dependent upon proper persuasion strategies. In a typical persuasion situation, an individual or a group of prospects receives a message from another individual, which usually presents arguments or reasons in favour of the recipient, which on its turn relates to some of the variance of attitude change (Petty, Cacioppo, & Kasmer, 2015). For providing the message to the target market, several communication tools can be used, like mailings, telephone calls, social media, TV advertisements, blogging, and even trade-fairs (Burns, 2014; Hart & Tzokas, 2000; Nijsen, 2014). The main purpose of persuading is to direct people to make them do or believe what you want or believe. According to Petty and her colleagues (2014) persuading is the process of changing someone’s attitude, which relates to a general and enduring favourable or unfavourable feeling about an object or issue. Bhattacherjee and Sanford (2006) suggest that external information is the primary driver of attitude change and consequent behaviour change, which causes people to re-examine their prior beliefs and attitudes. Petty et al. (2015) describes people’s attitude as the general evaluations that people hold of various objects, issues, or other people. Hence, these evaluations can be based on a person’s assessment of feelings, beliefs, behaviours, or a combination of these elements.

Previous research has sought for answers about how prospects can be best persuaded. Nijsen (2014) for example, came up with a communication model recognized as the “AIDA” model, which is designed to persuade prospects. AIDA is a model designed by advertisers which stands for: awareness, interest, desire and action. Awareness relates to the process of approaching potential customers and make them aware of the product. Hence, awareness will create brand associations and attitudes, which refers to evaluations of certain cognitions or beliefs about a brand (Nijsen, 2014). After attention is created, demonstrating the product advantages should lead to interest. The third step is to convince the customer that this product satisfies their needs. Action refers to the process of persuading lead customers to try and buy the product.

![Figure 8: AIDA persuasion model](image-url)
Furthermore, Cacioppo and Petty (1984) developed the “Elaboration Likelihood Model” (ELM) of persuasion. The term elaboration likelihood is being defined by Cacioppo and Petty (1984) as the likelihood one engages in issue-relevant thinking with the aim of determining the merits of the arguments for a position rather than the total amount of thinking per se in which a person engages. It suggests that important variations in the nature of persuasion are a function of the likelihood that receivers will engage in elaboration of relevant information to the issue. Hence, according the ELM, information recipients can vary widely in their ability and motivation to elaborate on an argument’s central merits. Cacioppo and Petty (1984) distinguish two different persuasion processes, depending on the degree of elaboration. Hence, the one route is recognized as the central route, which represents the persuasion process involved when elaboration is relatively high, opposed to the peripheral route, which represents the persuasion process involved when elaboration is relatively low. The elaboration likelihood is high when conditions foster prospects motivation and ability to engage in issue-relevant thinking. When prospects make use of so called simple decision rules (heuristic principles) also known as peripheral cues, the prospects might be guided by cues like whether they find the communicator credible. Peripheral persuasion processes will be activated in case when the topic is not relevant for the receiver, he or she does not enjoy thinking hard, and has little information about the topic. In contrast, when the topic is relevant to the receiver and the receiver has relevant background knowledge, elaboration will probably be high (O’Keefe, 2008). Cacioppo and Petty (1984) claim that, when elaboration likelihood is low the acceptance or rejection of the message is not based on the careful assessment of issue-relevant information, but rather on the issue or object being associated with positive or negative cues.

Bhattacherjee and Sanford (2006) used the ELM to investigate which influence processes shape user acceptance on new information technology (IT) and how. Their empirical findings suggest that both the central and peripheral routes are viable ways of influencing users to accept a new IT. However, the central route results in a more stable attitude, and is likely to have a longer-term impact on user acceptance decisions than the peripheral route (Bhattacherjee & Sanford, 2006).

O’Keefe (2008) investigated the possible outcomes that are associated with the persuasion processes of both the relatively high elaboration (central-route) and the relatively low elaboration (peripheral-route). Under conditions of relatively high elaboration, persuasive effects are found to be dependent upon the positive or negative predominant overall evaluative direction, or predominant valence. The predominant valence on its turn is influenced by two primary factors, on which one is whether the message’s position is pro-attitudinal or counter-attitudinal for the receiver. Hence,
pro-attitudinal messages evoke predominantly favourable thoughts against counter-attitudinal messages which evoke predominantly unfavourable thoughts. The second factor is strength or the quality of the message's arguments. Especially with high relative elaboration, prospects are able to engage in extensive issue-relevant thinking which makes them also able to assess the sellers arguments in detail, which means that if the arguments used reveal to be weak evidence, negative reactions can be expected from the receiver. So in case of high relative elaboration the message's arguments will affect persuasive success (O'Keefe, 2008). In addition, when taken a closer look to the situation in which there is a relative low elaboration, receivers use heuristic principles, which require them little information processing. Several of these heuristics are identified by O'Keefe (2008). One is the credibility heuristic, in which the receiver sees the communicator as an expert and judges him or her messages as credibly. Cialdini (2007) agrees on this matter by suggesting that people make decisions more easily and faster when they are in front of somebody who appears to be a credible knowledge expert. In addition, a second heuristic found by O'Keefe (2008) is 'liking', which is also recognized as a persuasion principle by Cialdini (2007). Hence, liked communicators will simply be more persuasive than disliked communicators. A third heuristic is recognized as the consensus heuristic, in which the receiver's view is influenced by the reactions of others to the message. In this case approving reactions of others will have positive influence on the message's persuasiveness (Cialdini, 2007; O'Keefe, 2008). It is important to note that if the receiver is moving more from low elaboration to high elaboration, the peripheral cues as liking, credibility and consensus will diminish and play smaller roles on persuasive outcomes.

Petty and Cacioppo (1981) investigated the effect of a prospect's personal involvement with the issue. Hence, they suggest that there is a motivational factor involved which describes that once an issue has many personal consequences, prospects will be more motivated to scrutinize the arguments presented, what makes them assess the message more carefully. Sparks and Areni (2002) investigated how the quality of a salesperson's presentation style influences persuasion. In addition, they found that in the initial contact moment, the prospect has little to base his or her expectations on, so in absence of concrete information, the quality of the salesperson's presentation is found to play a crucial role in determining whether the relationship with the prospect will continue beyond the initial contact. Sparks and Areni (2002) identify the sales presentation quality as the skill with which a salesperson actually delivers a verbal sales message.

Cialdini (2007) wrote a book about influencing strategies for persuading customers to say yes to products and services. In other words, it's about how to persuade people to your point of view. Due to maximum overload of information that customers receive every day, what they need, according to Cialdini (2007), is shortcuts which guide them
in their decision behaviour. Hence, in his book, Cialdini (2007) came up with 6 of these so called shortcuts, also known as the six key principles of persuasion, consisting of: reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and social proof.

With reciprocity people feel obligated to future repayment of received favours, gifts, invitations, and so on. Hence, reciprocal people have a feeling that they want to give something in return for what they have received, as agreed by Hogan (2007) who sates that a person immediately responds with the desire to give something back once they perceived something of value. There is a decent amount of evidence in literature that reciprocity is a powerful determinant of human behaviour (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006; Cialdini, 2007). This approach is often used as a marketing technique in which “free samples” are given away to people. With free samples, just a small amount of the product is provided to potential customers. These free samples have shown to result in higher sales figures, since it will simply result in engaged reciprocity. Cialdini (2007) further claimed that it is not what one is giving away, but it is rather how it is given away. In addition, it should be personalized as well as unexpected in order to get maximum output. And of course, the provider should be the first to give in order to receive something. However, depending on the underlying intention, people perceive and reciprocate once action differently (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006). When a salesman is presenting a gift to its customer, the goal is simply to persuade this customer towards adoption. So a salesman has a clear purpose with his approach what makes people value the gift less than when a gift is given away spontaneous, and not as a form of manipulating (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006).

A second principle of persuasion used as a strategy by marketers is scarcity, which has found to have power in directing human action (Cialdini, 2007; Wu, Lu, Wu, & Fu, 2012). In addition, it is found that scarce resources let people to want them more. According to Cialdini (2007), scarcity is often used as a weapon of influence, which can be explained by two reasons. On the one hand, people just know that the things that are difficult to possess are typically better than those that are easy to possess. Hence, an items availability is often used to quickly assess its quality (Cialdini, Influence; The psychology of pursuasion, 2007). On the other hand, freedom is getting lost as opportunities become less available, and losing freedom is exactly what we hate to lose. Wu et al. (2012) investigated the effect of perceived scarcity on the purchase intention of customers. Hence, they found that perceived scarcity leads to a higher perceived uniqueness among customer, as agreed by Tian et al. (2001), who suggests that by possessing scarce commodities, people can satisfy their pursuit of distinctiveness because scarce commodities are perceived to be unique. Furthermore, perceived scarcity is also positively related to assumed expensiveness, meaning that people assume scarce products to be more expensive than the same products that are not scarce. In its turn, assumed expensiveness is positively related to perceived quality
and to perceived sacrifice, so more expensive products make customers believe that the quality is higher and that also makes them to pay more for it (Wu, Lu, Wu, & Fu, 2012). Nijssen (2014) claims similar findings, who state that price reflects the quality of a product. Wu et al. (2012) further found that perceived quality and perceived sacrifice is positively related to perceived value, which on its turn leads to higher levels of purchase intention. Psychologist Jack Brehm, whose a professor at the Kansas University, studying how emotion relates to motivation. In addition, he explains that whenever free choice is limited or threatened, the need to retain our freedoms makes us desire them significantly more than previously. So customers can be persuaded to buy an item by increasing the scarcity of that item.

Authority is the third persuasion principle which determines how people act in certain situations. It is clear that people make decisions more easily and faster when they are in front of somebody who appears to be a credible knowledge expert (Cialdini, 2007). Moreover, with authority it’s important to signal to others what makes you a credible knowledgeable authority. Revealing authority therefore is a good way of persuading customers to make decisions (Cialdini, 2007).

A fourth principle of persuasion which directs human action is called consistency. Cialdini (2007) states that people are consistent with the decisions or action they already have done in the past. Hence, once past decisions are taken, the need for consistency pressured these people to bring what they felt and believed into line with what they had already done. In that way, people simply convince themselves that they had made the right choice, and also felt better about it all (Cialdini, 2007). Consistency can be seen as a weapon of social influence, since people are simply driven to be and to look consistent with what they have done already.

The fifth principle of persuasion is liking. It may be undoubtable to believe that people most prefer to say yes to the requests of someone they know and like, or as Hogan (2007) describes it, people will do almost anything that is asked of them by a friend. The same happens often when somebody needs something from you, because then this person will act real nice and complementing towards you to increase his or her change of receiving what they want. With liking, three important factors can be distinguished (Cialdini, 2007). First of all, we like people who are similar to us. Second, we like people who pay us compliments, and thirdly, we like people who cooperate with us. So in terms of directing human action, directing customers to like you will definitely increase their intention to say yes, or in case of sales, to make the decision to adopt.

The last principle of persuasion is social proof, which relates to the tendency of people to see their actions as more viable once others are also doing it, especially similar others (Cialdini, 2007; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999;
Miller, 1984; Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 2014; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002). Gourville (2006) is rather consistent with this finding, who states that before deciding to adopt a new technology, potential customers evaluate new products relative to a reference point. The theory of consensus describes that people will look to the actions of others to determine their own. The thought behind it, is that we will make fewer mistakes by acting in accord with social evidence (Cialdini, 2007). A humans reasoning is normally that when a lot of people are doing something, it has to be the right thing to do. Venkatech et al. (2003) demonstrates that external sources, such as mass media, friends, family, and peers, can shape user perception regarding new technologies and thereby indirectly influence acceptance behaviour, as agreed by Bhattacherjee and Sanford (2006). In addition, Wood (2000) describes that people can be influenced in two ways. Via informational influence, which involves accepting the information as obtained from others and use it as evidence, and normative influence, which relates to conformity with the positive expectations of “another”. Hence, informational and normative motives both generate attitude change.

Kaptain et al. (2009) applied research on the six principles of Cialdini (2007) because they believed that people differ in their susceptibility to persuasion. Hence, they assumed that for persuasive technologies to be effective, adaptivity to individual users is of great importance. And indeed, they found prove for it. Their research showed that participant’s susceptibility to persuasive cues can be measured and relates to their compliance. So to enhance persuasive effectiveness, salesman should incorporate user profiles and adapt towards it.

2.3 Product image

Researchers and academics worldwide committed that a products country of origin influences a consumers evaluation of that particular product (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Lee & Ganesh, 1999), which has become a major concern for many multinational companies who originate from less assessed countries (Ettensohn & Gaeth, 1991). Hence, also Insch and McBride (2004) highlight the importance of country-of-origin issues, since it appears to be growing as the amount of international trade grows and consumers have a wider variety of international products from which to choose.

Han (1990) defines country image as consumers general perceptions about the quality of products made in a given country. Past research has demonstrated that consumers positively or negatively assess products that are made in a given country. Laroche et al. (2005) recognizes this as the origin bias, and it seems to exist for products in general. Also Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) state that the country of origin has a significant effect on consumers’ evaluations of products and that consumers tend to use it as an extrinsic cue to make judgement about the quality of products.
Laroche et al. (2005) claims that products that originate from less developed countries are perceived as riskier and with lower quality. They further found that country image and product beliefs affected product evaluations simultaneously regardless of consumers level of familiarity with a country’s products, as agreed by Knight and Calantone (2000). Also Johansson and his colleagues (1994) agreed on the familiarity aspect. They investigated the effect of the Russian brand ‘Bularus’, which is a tractor maker that originates from Russia which is associated with a negative country image. They found that familiarity with the product or company is effective, especially for risk-averse people. In other words, a machine needs to be known to all potential clients, not only to the risk-averse ones. Furthermore, they also found that in case as for the Bularus tractors, there is significant tendency for the farmers to go with the true-and-tried make rather than an unfamiliar one. So in such case, customer doubt about the functionality and quality of the product and therefore prefer to buy a product that is already proven to function properly.

Liefeld (1993) found that country image influences consumer evaluation of product quality, risk, likelihood of purchase, and other mediating variables, where Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran (2000) showed in their research that the customers motivation, their processing goals as well as the type of information available interact to affect the country of origins’ evaluations. People collect information relevant to country image from numerous sources like education, the media, travel, brand names, advertising and packaging, and other parts of the marketing mix (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005). Other sources as discussed by Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) are personal experiences, information acquiring or due to stereotypical beliefs about countries. Hong and Wyer (1989) found that the country of origin itself does influence product evaluations regardless of whether it was learned before or after the attribute information and regardless of once information processing objectives.

Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) both provide some interesting findings, since they investigated the effects of the country of origin on the consumers’ decision making process such as perception, attitude and behavioural intention. They found that the country of origin is likely to have a significant impact on products evaluation, but in terms of real purchasing, consumers are likely to have additional information and access to other cues as the actual physical product, brand name, price, warranty, etc. This finding suggests that in such situation, the impact of any single cue such as country of origin may diminish significantly. Moreover, Peterson and Jolibert (1995) found a significant decrease in the effect of country of origin on both quality perception and purchase intention when multiple cues are considered compared to country of origin, as agreed by Agrawal and Kamakura (1999). Besides, Laroche et al. (2005) claims that marketers can benefit from emphasizing and
promoting product country image (PCI), especially when the country of origin suffers negative biases. Marketers should try to offset the negative image by promoting other attributes such as quality and price. Another interesting finding in this case is that although country of origin plays an important role in product evaluation, the effect becomes weaker as the customers move from perception of product quality to attitude formation and to buying behaviour intention, as founded by Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999).

Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) elaborated further on the effect of the country of origin on consumers behaviour. Consistent with the findings of Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999), Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) also found that the country of origin is one of the cues considered by customers, which competes against many other sources of information. They further argue that in competitive markets, consumers are willing to pay only prices that reflect their perception of quality for the available product. So if the consumers perceptions are consistent with the actual quality, manufacturers need to charge only prices that are justified by that quality. In addition, consumers appear to have developed knowledge regarding the quality of products made in different countries based on personal experience or information from other sources, and might use the country of origin as a summary construct rather than as an inferential cue to make judgements about the quality of a product.

2.4 Firm reputation

It is common that start-up firms have little reputation. Hence, firm reputation is the perceptual presentation of a firm’s overall appeal compared to other leading rivals (Fombrun & Shanley, 1996). Firm reputation acts as evidence of firms previous work and acts as a signal of observable quality (Chandler, Haunschild, Rhee, & Beckman, 2013). A positive reputation is valuable since it provides information to a firm’s constituents such as customers, investors, and potential applicants (Turban & Cable, 2003). In addition, firm reputation also contributes to customer loyalty by increasing customer satisfaction through trust (Jin, Park, & Kim, 2008). Since the required commitment and trust between salesman and customer will be high with regard to high value product, firm reputation will probably act as an important aspect of evaluation.

2.5 After sales service

Another important aspect with regard to high value products, is after sales service. Especially heavy machinery often have to require services to ensure a continuous an trouble-free use of the product over its life span. Hence, a yearly warranty is common and therefore aftersales is required. After sales refers to the services in business-to-business manufacturing industries as a “set of activities taking place after the purchase of the product devoted to supporting customers in the usage and disposal of goods” (Saccani, Lewis, & Thornill, 2007). Hence, after sales is often referred to as an
intangible product component (Asugman, Johnson, & McCullough, 1997), and it is even claimed that manufacturing industries turned into service focused industries (Bryson & Daniels, 2007). Especially for industrial goods, in this case heavy machinery, after-sales service includes both tangibles such as spare parts as well as consumables related with customer care and assistance (Johansson, 2006). Other activities that relate to after-sales service are: customer support, product support, technical support and service (Goffin & New, 2001). Several researchers found a positive relation between good after-sales service and customer satisfaction (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Bitner, 1990; Gupta & Dhillon, 2015; Ladokun, Adeyemo, & Ogunleye, 2013). Thus, service quality plays an integral role in enhancing a sustainable competitive advantage for a company (Rigopoulou, Chaniotakis, Lymeropoulos, & Siomkos, 2008). In terms of a start-up with little reputation that is selling high value products with a negative image, the quality of after-sales might become a strong aspect on which the customers assesses the product.

2.6 Conclusion literature review and Conceptual framework

Adoption is found to consist of a sequential process of awareness, consideration, and adoption decision (Rogers, 2003). However before arriving at the point of adoption, the customer first has to be approached and persuaded by the company. In a typical persuasion situation, an individual or a group of prospects receives a message from another individual, mostly salesman, which usually present arguments or reasons in favour of the recipient, which on its turn relates to some of the variance of attitude change (Petty, Cacioppo, & Kasmer, 2015). Persuading people to say yes to certain things is found to be a difficult job. However, reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and social proof are five persuasion strategies as proposed by Cialdini (2007), which act as so called shortcuts for customers to make decisions more easily. Elaborating on these shortcuts may enable salesman to successfully persuade their customers. Furthermore, Since customers are assessing information differently throughout the adoption stages, in every adoption stage another persuasion strategy may be most suitable (Rogers, 2003).

Prior research provided insights of how customers can be persuaded in the adoption process in very common situations. However, this research context is more interested in a specific situation that is not readily available throughout literature. Hence, it is not clear how start-up firms, that sell high value products that have a negative image should persuade their customer in order to gain maximum adoption. With high value products this document relates to heavy machinery that originates from Poland. It is known that high value products are associated with more comprehensive decision making (Rackham, 1998), what makes the risk associated, and the quality of the product two rather important evaluation aspects in regard to high value products. Besides the high value, products that originate from a less developed country are found to be perceived as riskier and with lower quality among customers (Laroche,
Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005) what may affirm the difficulties accompanied with finding adoption for such products. Next, taken into account that it is sold by a start-up company, who are found to have little reputation, may clarify the great need for a proper persuasion strategy in order to maximize customer adoption. Especially because firm reputation acts as evidence of firms previous work and acts as a signal of observable quality (Chandler, Haunschild, Rhee, & Beckman, 2013).

Figure 9 reveals the conceptual framework that directs this research as derived from previous empirical and theoretical work (Forman & Damschroder, 2007). Reciprocity, scarcity and social proof are three of the five persuasion strategies (Cialdini, 2007), which are the only three strategies suitable for this specific research context. Besides, a secondary conceptual framework is included which is interested in the effect of firm reputation, negative image and after-sales service on the adoption intention of prospects with regard to high value products (Figure 10).
3 Research method
Derived from theory and the practical background, a clear problem statement can be constructed. The problem will drive the master thesis project and will consist of a research question that the thesis will aim to answer.

3.1 Problem statement
Prior research provided a lot of insights about the process of persuading customers to adopt a product or service. However, this research attempts to find more comprehensive answers for a specific case that is not readily available throughout literature. Hence, what about start-up firms with little reputation, that sell high value products that are associated with a negative image? More specifically, for this research we focus on heavy machinery that originates from Poland. How should such firms persuade their customers in order to gain maximum adoption? Taken into account that start-up companies have little reputation, are selling high value products, and is selling products with a negative image reveals the great need for a proper persuasion strategy. Therefore the following problem statement is constructed:

“Herwijnen Machinery B.V. is lacking knowledge about how they should persuade their customers in the different adoption stages in order to find maximum adoption for their high value products with a negative image”.

3.2 Research question
Derived from the practical and theoretical background the following research question is defined:

RQ: What is the most appropriate persuasion strategy for a reputation-less company, depending on the stage of the adoption process that a customer is in, in order to find adoption for high value machinery that originates from Poland.

Every customer can be allocated to a different stage with regard to the adoption process. According to Rogers (2003), Kalish (1985) and Montaguti et al. (2002), Adoption is a sequential process of awareness, consideration, and adoption decision. In the awareness stage, a customer is not intended to buy a product but he will get aware if a products existence. If a customer is found to be in the consideration stage, he or she is most likely to adopt a product now or in the near future and that’s why information regarding the product is collected and assessed. In the adoption decision stage all information is already collected and trade-offs are made about what product suits the customer best. This stage ends with the final adoption decision. In every stage, a different persuasion strategy may be most suitable in order to maximize product interest and adoption intention. In addition, this research design is seeking to find out what persuasion strategy is most suitable in every of the adoption stage.
Besides the most proper persuasion strategies, this research is also interested in three additional aspects which are found in literature to be relevant in case of high value machinery as sold by HM. Hence, the three aspects are firm reputation, since HM is a start-up company that has little reputation. The next aspect is after-sales service, which is found to be very important with regard to high value products that have a warranty period of 1 or 2 years. Lastly, product image is an aspect which seems relevant in this context, since the machinery originates from Poland. Taken this together, led to the following secondary research question:

Q2: How important are the aspects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image on the prospects buying intention, with regard to high value machinery that originates from Poland and is sold by a reputation-less company.

Now that it is clear which research questions we attempt to answer in the master thesis, an appropriate research strategy and research design has to be selected. The research design explains the master thesis approach to answer the research questions.

### 3.3 Research strategy

A research strategy describes how to collect and analyse empirical evidence (Yin, 2002). For selecting the most appropriate research strategy, we have to take into account what kind of information we are seeking for as well as the characteristics of the research area. HM is operating in a niche market, and according to Herwijnen (2016), potential customers for their recycling machinery are the once which provide the most valuable and valid information. Since HM is active in a niche market, the amount of respondents is limited and therefore only a qualitative research design seems appropriate to be applied (Yin, 2002). Besides, qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations (CCS).

### 3.4 Experimental research strategy

The research method chosen to be the most appropriate is the experimental research design. Because of the search for customer experience and preferences, which are related to social constructs, this research will be conducted from an interpretivist philosophy. According to the website of Research Methodology (2016), interpretivist involves researchers to interpret elements of the study, relating to the integration of human interests. In addition, experiments are the most popular primary data collection methods in interpretivist studies, where secondary date collection is also popular (Research Methodology, 2016).

According to Yin (2002) experiments are most suitable for answering research questions that are seeking for the ‘how’ and ‘why’ answers. Experimental research differs from other research methods, where the distinction between the other methods
and experimentation is that the researcher has to accept the situation as it is found, whereas an experiment allows the researcher to alter systematically the variables of interest and observe what changes follow (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). Experimenting is mostly suitable for research on causal relationships, and with experimenting at least one independent (experimental) variable is manipulated, where other relevant variables are controlled and there effect on one or more dependent (outcome) variables is observed (Fraenkel & Wallen; Cooper & Schindler, 2012).

Within the subject of experimental research, different types of experiments can be applied. Ross and Morrison (1996) distinguishes 3 main types of experimenting: True experiments, Repeated measures, and the Quasi-experimental designs. In addition, with a true experiment, the subjects are randomly assigned, which receive different treatments, where after they are observed. So the two (or more) groups of subjects are subjected to identical environmental conditions, while being exposed to different treatments. In addition, true experimenting is the ideal design for maximizing internal validity. When repeated measurement experimenting is being used, all groups of subjects are administered to all treatments and observed afterwards. So compared to true experiment, repeated measures approach allows the researcher to easily double the group of subjects, since it uses only one group. Opposed to this advantage, a disadvantage lies in the fact that the observations are not independent what may distort the results. Quasi-experiments differ from true experiments in their use of pretesting or analysis of prior achievement to establish group equivalence. In other words, the quasi-experiment differs from the true experiment in the omission of the randomization component. Besides, systematic bias can easily be introduced in comparison to true experimenting. Since true experiments are associated with the highest rate of internal validity, and because this type of experiment suits best in our research context, true experimenting will be used as the research approach.

Cooper and Schindler (2012) developed a list of seven tasks that researchers need to accomplish to conduct successful experiments, which will act as the guideline in this research: 1. Select relevant variables; 2. Specify the treatment levels; 3. Control the experimental environment; 4. Choose the experimental design; 5. Select and assign the subjects; 6. Pilot test, revise, and test; 7. Analyse the data. Besides these seven tasks, Maurya (2010) came up with valuable habits for running highly effective lean start-up experiments which will also be taken into account. First of all, when running experiments the expected outcomes should be declared upfront. Hence, if one is simply planning to see what comes out the experiment he or she will always succeed at seeing what happens because something is guaranteed to happen. In addition, when declaring the outcomes, investigators should, according to Maurya (2010), emphasize on estimation rather than on precision, since it is just not possible to determine precise outcomes upfront.
In addition, the declared outcomes should be falsifiable or capable of being proven wrong. In other words, the assumptions should be turned into falsifiable hypotheses. Besides the hypothesis, researcher should time-box their experiment, since time is the scarcest resource we have in experimenting (Maurya, 2010). Time should be managed properly. A last habit for running experiments successfully is the use of a control group. Hence, Maurya (2010) states that in order to tell whether or not an experiment is working, the researcher needs to be able to benchmark it against a previous state. In other words, there should be a standard with which the result are compared.

3.5 Research design

Several communicating tools can be distinguished like social media, newspapers, radio advertisements, direct email, telephone, posters, flyers, texting, and so on (Burns, 2014). For this research the direct email approach will be used, which, according to (Heynickx, 2016; Herwijnen, 2016; Vermeer, 2016), is commonly used for selling high value machinery. Verhoef (2003) found that direct mailings, and loyalty programs are positively related to customer retention and customer share development. Besides, another additional advantage is that customers are not forced to react directly, what provides them time to assess the way of persuading what should increase the validity of the test. This form of communicating is less forcing and it allows the customer to assess the product in detail without being observed.

A lot of salesman are struggling about how to persuade their customers. Sending an email is not a difficult job, but what to include in that mail so that the customer will get interested and will get intended to adopt a product. To answer that question we relate to the science of persuasion. Cialdini (2007) came up with 6 so called shortcuts, also known as the six key principles of persuasion, which guide people in their decision behaviour consisting of: reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and social proof. In this research we are going to experiment with three of these five principles of persuasion, simply because the other two left are not appropriate to experiment with.

3.5.1 Treatment design

The independent (manipulated/experimental) variables used for this experiment are persuading principles which will be experimented by the use of direct mailing as the communication tool. Hence, the treatment used for this research consists of:

- Direct mail with testimonial of customer who already adopted a machine (social proof)
- Direct mail which highlights the scarcity of the machines (scarcity)
- Direct mail which includes a gift or present (reciprocity)
- Direct mail which includes regular product information and specifications (control group)
The design of the direct mails can be found in appendix 8.4. Additionally, the dependent variable will be “the adoption intention for high value products”. Hence, this results in the following research model as shown in Figure 11:

3.5.2 Research Propositions
As Cooper and Schindler (2012) suggest, the levels assigned to an independent variable should be based on simplicity and common sense. The first independent variable will consist of the direct mail which includes a testimonial of the customers who already adopted a recycling machine from HM. Cialdini (2007) found that people see their actions as more viable once others are also doing it. The thought behind it, is that we will make fewer mistakes by acting in accord with social evidence (Cialdini, 2007). Taken this into account leads us to the use of testimonials, which is a proper tool for the emphasis of social proof. The feedback as given by the users who already adopt the machine, should be a valuable source of social proof to others who are also interested in the products of HM. The testimonial will also be part of this research and will be conducted by interviewing two customers who adopted a machine from HM in the past. The interviews will obtain the clients experience based on important aspects for such machines like the user-friendliness, the fuel consumption rate, the capacity, and the service level (Heynickx, 2016; Herwijnen, 2016; Vermeer, 2016). For the use of social proof, we assume that it will have positive influence on every stage of the
adoption process that a customer is in. However, we assume it will have the most positive influence in the consideration stage, since in this stage the customer is seeking for product information as well as assessing different product offerings, which relates the following hypotheses:

**H1**: Social proof will have positive influence on potential customers intention to adopt in all stages of the adoption process, but mostly for the customers in the consideration stage, and will have less positive influence on the potential customer that are in the awareness and adoption decision stage of the adoption process.

The second independent variable will consist of an email that tries to encourage the customer to buy a machine in the very near future, since it will be scarce. To test the persuasion principle of scarcity, an email will be send to potential customers with the message that only one machine is in stock right now, and once that one product is sold, customers have to wait at least 8 weeks before another machine will become available. This approach will highlight a machines scarcity what should, according to Cialdini (2007), lead customers to decide to adopt the machine more easily. We assume that the principle of scarcity will have the most positive influence on customers that are in the consideration stage or the adoption decision stage, since they are actually planning to adopt such a product in the near future. For customers that are in the awareness stage, they first will assess the product in detail and they will perhaps not react directly on this approach, therefore the following hypotheses is drawn:

**H2**: Scarcity will have positive influence on potential customers intention to adopt in the consideration and the adoption decision stage, and will have no influence on the potential customer that are in the awareness stage of the adoption process.

A third independent variable will test the persuasion principle of reciprocity. A direct mail will be send to potential customers which includes a gift. Customers can receive a free demonstration on their yard for one day. According to Cialdini (2007), providing such gifts should encourage the customer to give something in return, resulting in increased intention to adopt. Also for reciprocity, we assume it has a positive influence on the intention to adopt in every stage of the adoption process a customer can be in. However, as the other two persuasion approaches are assumed to be more valuable further in the adoption process, this approach is assumed to have the most positive effect on the customers that are in the awareness stage, since they will be surprised by this approach. In addition, we assume that in the consideration stage as well as in the adoption decision stage, the customer is already quite far in their process of deciding so that providing them gifts will have less influence. Hence, these customers will also
be positively influenced by this persuasion approach, but not as much as the customers that are in the awareness stage, leading to the next hypotheses:

**H3: Reciprocity will have positive influence on potential customers intention to adopt in all stages off the adoption process, but mostly for the customers in the awareness stage, and will have less positive influence on the potential customer that are in the consideration and adoption decisions stage of the adoption process.**

A fourth independent variable is added in which customers are persuaded by the use of an approach which is commonly used with regard to selling high value product. Hence, this variable will consist of the regular email with product information without the use of any persuasion approach as discussed by Cialdini (2007). It tries to inform the customer about the products specifications and advantages. This approach will act as the control group, with which the other variables will be compared. Only by the use of a control group, we are able to draw valid conclusions (Maurya, 2010).

**Firm reputation**
Since firm reputation will probably act as an important aspect of evaluation for high value products, and taken into account that trust is also an important factor for products with a negative image, the assumption is that little firm reputation will have a negative influence on potential customers intention to adopt in all stages off the adoption process. However, we assume the effect of firm reputation diminishes as customers move further through the adoption process, since sales man should be able to diminish the effect by providing the customer a good impression about the company. This left us with the following hypothesis:

**H4: a positive firm reputation will have a positive influence on potential customers intention to adopt in all stages off the adoption process, but mostly for the customers in the awareness stage, and will have less negative influence on the potential customer that are in the consideration and adoption decisions stage of the adoption process.**

**Negative image**
Laroche et al. (2005) claims that products that originate from less developed countries are perceived as riskier and with lower quality. Since high value products are associated with more comprehensive decision making (Rackham, 1998), the risk associated, and the quality of the product are two very important evaluation aspects in regard to high value products. Taken into account that a start-up firm also has little reputation, let us assume that a negative image will have negative influence on all stages of the adoption process for high value products with a negative image. However, it is found that the effect of negative image decreases as the customers moves from
perception of product quality to attitude formation and to buying behaviour intention (Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999), what makes us to assume that:

\[ H_5: \text{A negative product image will have negative influence on potential customers intention to adopt in all stages of the adoption process, but mostly for the customers in the awareness stage, and will have less negative influence on the potential customer that are in the consideration and adoption decisions stage of the adoption process.} \]

**After sales service**

Another important aspect with regard to high value products, is found to be the after-sales service. Especially heavy machinery often have to require services to ensure a continuous an trouble-free use of the product over its life span (Herwijnen, 2016; Heynickx, 2016). Hence, a yearly warranty is common and therefore aftersales is required. In terms of a start-up with little reputation that is selling high value products with a negative image, the quality of aftersales might become a strong aspect on which the customers assesses the product. So the assumption is that:

\[ H_6: \text{A proper after-sales service will have a positive influence on the intention to adopt in all stages of the adoption process, but mostly for the customers in the consideration and adoption decision stage, and will have less positive influence on the potential customer that are in the awareness stage of the adoption process.} \]

### 3.5.3 Experimental environment

To increase the internal validity of the research, the experimental environment needs to be controlled (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). To ensure this validity, some aspects will be controlled. Hence, first of all, the total time of the experiment has to be as small as possible, neglecting possible environmental changes which could influence the results. Therefore the mailings will be send to all respondents in maximum two days. Second, the subjects will all consist of corporate buyers, or purchasing managers that are active in the recycling market, be it recycling companies, renting companies or construction companies. A third environmental aspect that will be controlled is the observation part of the experiment. Hence, all subjects need to be observed the same way in order to ensure the internal validity.

### 3.5.4 Participant treatment

The participants approached for the experiment should be representative of the population to which the researcher wishes to generalize the study’s results (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). To ensure this, only corporate buyers or purchase managers who are active in the recycling business will be used as respondents. For every independent variable experimented, 15 potential corporate buyers or purchase managers will be approached with the use of different treatments. So in total 60 subjects will be randomly approached by the use of a mail with a different content. The content is
designed to be able to measure the effect of the persuasion strategies of reciprocity, scarcity, and social proof on the respondents adoption intention. The design of every mail can be found in appendix 8.4. One email is sent which will act as the control group. Hence this will contain a mail which has not included one of the persuading strategies. This mail only includes some standard product information.

3.5.5 Data collection
After a fixed time limit of one week the respondents are contacted and interviewed about the effect of the treatment they received. The interviewing technique used will be semi-structured, which is part of a qualitative research method (Yin, 2002). The questions as used for the interview of the experiment can be found in Appendix 8.1. In addition, the interviews consist of question that can be answered with the use of a likert scale. Hence, a likert scale is chosen to be the most appropriate for getting data from experimenting since it allows to precisely compare the results in order to increase the validity of the results (Yin, 2002).

The first question is to find out if the customer is intended to buy a recycling machine in the upcoming 12 months, which allows us to see whether or not we are dealing with a real potential customer. The next question wants to find out to which adoption stage the respondent can be allocated, in order to distinguish between the different adoption stages. The third question relates to the effect of the treatment that the respondent received. Hence, it asks the amount of effect that the message had on their intention to buy a Pronar recycling machine. For this question a lickert scale of 10 is used, which is constructed as follows:

- Number 1 to 3 means that the message had no influence in the respondents intention to adopt the product.
- Number 3 to 6 means that the message had small positive influence on the respondents intention to adopt the product.
- Number 6 to 8 means that the message had positive influence on the respondents intention to adopt the product.
- Number 8 until 10 means that the message had strong positive influence on the respondents intention to adopt the product.

With regard to question three, an additional why question is asked in order to get the reason behind their decision. This is the only open question throughout the interview that allows the respondents to explain their preferences and experiences. The semi-structured interviews will provide insights of the effect of the persuasion strategy as used in the experiment on the customer adoption intention for high value products in the different adoption stages. This approach can be seen as the primary data collection.
Besides, additional questions are added, which will provide secondary data about the moderating effects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image, on the customers intention to adopt a high value product among the different adoption stages. The respondent is asked to mark the importance of these aspects in their decision to buy a high value product, like machinery. Again a lickert scale of 10 is used, with zero, meaning “totally not important” to ten, which is “very important”. In order to find an answer for the secondary research question, a second research model is added as visualized in Figure 12.

![Figure 12: Research model 2: Additional relevant aspects](image)

### 3.5.6  Data analysis

After the data is collected, it will be analysed and assessed how well the data meet the predictions of the model (hypotheses) where after conclusions are drawn.

Analysing the information obtained from the interviews is found to be the most difficult aspect of doing case studies (Yin, 2002). It is important to have a general analytic strategy. Two types of strategies are identified by Yin (2002), 1) Relying on theoretical propositions, in which theoretical orientation is guiding the analysis, also known as deductive research, or 2) developing a case description, which relates to a descriptive framework for organizing the case study, also known as inductive research. The analytical techniques that will be used consist of:

1) Pattern matching (explanatory / descriptive)
   a. *Expected outcomes as a pattern*: comparing if the initially predicted results have been found and alternative patterns are absent
   b. *Rival explanations as patterns*: searching if some of the theoretically salient explaining conditions might be articulated in empirical findings; then the presence of certain explanation should exclude the presence of others
c. Simpler patterns: pattern matching is possible also with only few variables, if the derived

2) Explanation-building (explanatory)

Pattern matching is about comparing empirically based patterns with predicted one(s), where explanation-building is more about analysing the case study data by building an explanation about the case and by identifying a set of causal links. Moreover, it is a result of a series of iterations: Initial theoretical statement -> Comparing findings of an initial case -> revising statement -> Comparing details of the case -> Revising -> Comparing to other additional cases (Yin, 2002).

3.5.7 Pilot test
Before starting the experiment a pilot test will take place to spot potential errors in the design and possible improper control of extraneous or environmental conditions. The pretesting is the only opportunity for the researcher to revise scripts, look for control problems, and scan the environment for factors that might confound the results (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). The test pilot will be conducted at HM, where an test experiment will be performed internally. After possible alterations, the experiment is ready to be conducted.

3.6 Validity tests
When working with experimental research designs, internal validity describes the accuracy and quality of the study applied. The goal with internal validity is to provide every subject with the same treatment, without any contingent factors influencing the outcomes. According to Ross and Morrison (1996), researchers need to be aware of these contingent factors, also recognized as potential internal validity threats. When events happen other than the treatment during the experimental period, this is called the ‘history’ validity threat (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). When physical changes take place during the experimental period, this is being recognized as ‘maturation’. Another threat is recognized as ‘testing’ which relates the process of taking a test can affect the scores of another test. ‘Instrumentation’ threats exists as for example different questions are used for every observation, or that different observers are used to do the experiment. ‘Selection’ refers to the threat of differential selection of subject. Hence, subjects have to be equivalent in every respect (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). In addition, a last threat exist if the composition of the study groups changes during the test. In other words, if a subject withdraws from the experiment. Withdrawing from the group could distort the comparison with the control group that has continued working under the established system, perhaps without knowing a test is under way (Cooper & Schindler, 2012). Now that we are aware of common pitfalls that are related to experimental research designs, we will ensure the research validity by managing the threats as discussed above.
3.7 Research design summary
The summary of the key choices for the research design are shown in Table 1

Table 1: Summary of the research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research element</th>
<th>Choice for this study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Experiment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Direct Mail with different contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data collection</td>
<td>Interviewing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experimenting time</td>
<td>Maximum 3 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type of respondents</td>
<td>Corporate buyers or purchasing managers, active in the recycling market</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of respondents</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>1 week after treatment was send</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Results

Out of the 82 initially approached participants, 32 took part in the study leading to a response rate of 39%. All of the respondents (100%) were male and authorized to buy a machine for the company they represented. From the 32 respondents, 13 were allocated to the awareness stage, another 13 to the consideration stage, and a last 6 respondents were allocated to the adoption decision stage. In this chapter, the empirical results from the experiment are presented. The chapter will discuss the effect of the topics of social proof, scarcity and reciprocity on the respondents’ intention to adopt a high value product, like machinery. Besides, the persuading strategies will be compared with each other as well as with the control group in order to portray valid recommendations between the several persuasion strategies. A visualization of the research results can be found in appendix 8.2. The last part will pay attention to the three additional aspects, affecting the customers’ intention to adopt a high value product, for which the visualized results can be found in appendix 8.3. But first, this chapter will start with highlighting the shortcomings and pitfalls I obtained during the experimental part of the research study so that the reader of this report can take it in mind before reading the results.

4.1 Research limitations

As in every research, many subjects together determine the success of the research project. However, when applying the research methodology, a lot of these subjects may behave different than expected what also may jeopardize the results. Also in this research, some subjects did not go according plan and required another approach, required adjustments or can be taken as a learning point for future research. Normally, research limitations are discussed after the results are described. However, in this report I have chosen to first describe the research limitations, so that you as a reader can take it in mind when reading the results.

First, it was already known that HM is active in a niche market what made the amount of respondents slim. Initially, it was planned to get 60 respondents to cooperate in this research, which would be enough to ensure validity. However, new prospects had to be searched on the internet to eventually get a sample size of 32 respondents. Based on the many research uncertainties, 32 respondents was enough to draw proper conclusion, but some research questions are based on the answers of only one or two respondents, what questions the validity of the research, at least on some points.

Furthermore, in the first six phone calls, the respondents were informed that the call was intended as an interview for a research project. By explaining this and asking whether or not they wanted to cooperate, only 2 of the six approached respondents approved to continue the conversation. Since the amount of respondents was already
scarce, this approach required some alterations based on the fact that more respondents were required. Besides the participation aspect, the interview itself was rather long, and the questions used in the interviews were also often found to be confusing among the respondents. The questions, which seemed to be clear up front, where not always understood by the respondents. Hence, some respondents obtained the questions as unclear or redundant, what even leaded some of them to skip the rest of the interview and end the phone call. This finding was not expected based on the fact that a pilot test was conducted internally. The pilot test already leaded to some adjustments on the questionnaire. However, despite these adjustments prior to the research, the questionnaire was still sometimes obtained as being vague, which led me to approach the respondents differently. From that moment on, all next interviews were conducted without notifying the respondent that this call was intended as a interview for a research project. Besides, the questions were not asked sequentially, but rather integrated in continues conversation. This approach definitely improved the participation rate as well as the validity of the input.

Next, initially is was planned to assign the respondents randomly to the treatments. However, since prospects in different adoption stages were needed, the risk of getting no results on some of the adoption processes was reasonable. This made me assign at least 20 percent of the respondents to one of the treatments, to ensure some equal division. Another manual assignment is made on the treatment of reciprocity. Throughout the experimenting, I thought it would be valuable to also approach prospects who really have had a free demonstration, relating to reciprocity. With the experiment, only a message was send which announced that prospects could receive a free gift, but they did not receive it yet. This made me think that results could differ with those prospects who really have had a demonstration for free. So to find answers for this question, I also assigned two respondents to the treatment of reciprocity, who had a free demonstration prior to the message. And indeed results revealed a difference. The consequences are that the respondents were not assigned randomly but manually. However, based on the similarity of the respondents, assigned them manually does not affect the results.

Throughout the research process, the validity of two of the three treatments became uncertain. In case of reciprocity, an email is send which included a message that the respondent can receive a free gift. However, this was only a message and the respondent did not receive a free gift yet. After assigning some respondents manually who have had a free gift, a difference was measured in the positive effect of reciprocity on the respondents buying intention for those who had also received the free gift, compared to those who only received the email. Due to the research boundaries, it was not possible for this research to first provide the free gifts and measure them
afterwards. However, I believe another approach of measuring reciprocity would ensure more valid outcomes than with the use of only a message.

Besides reciprocity, also scarcity could perhaps be measured more properly. Based on the research boundaries, the message included a 8-week delivery against direct delivery in order to highlight the scarcity of the product. However, among most respondents, the content as used for scarcity was found to be questionable. Hence, 8-weeks of delivery time was not always obtained as being scarce. As with reciprocity, the research boundaries did not allow to measure scarcity different, but if it would be possible, the results may be different and more valid.

4.2 Social proof

With regard to Social proof it was believed that it has a positive influence on the potential customers intention to adopt in all stages off the adoption process, but mostly for the customers in the consideration stage, and will have less positive influence on the potential customer that are in the awareness and adoption decision stage of the adoption process. H1 is strongly confirmed, since the potential customers where certainly positively affected regarding their intention to adopt a Pronar with the use of the persuading strategy of social proof. All stages of the adoption cycle revealed to be positively influenced by the use of social proof, but the highest numbers were assigned in the consideration and adoption decision stage. The results are visualized in Figure 13.
From out the literature I assumed social proof would have less positive effect for the adoption decision stage. However, this was not the case, since potential customer in the adoption decision stage are as even positively influenced as the potential customers in the consideration stage. The thought behind it was that in the adoption decision stage, customers have already processed the information and have made their decision so that new information would not affect them anymore. This assumption is rejected in case of social proof, since the message seems so powerful that potential customers restart their process of assessing information. One customer noted: “Dit zet me toch weer aan het denken”, with which he claimed that the message drove him to look over the demand of products again that is being offered in the marked.

Based on the results, social proof is found to be a very suitable persuading strategy in regard to high value products, like machinery. One potential customer claimed that he was certainly positively influenced, since he was interested in the Brand Pronar prior to the message, but he first wanted to know how the machine behaved after some time before showing his interest. Hence, hearing that these existing customers were very positive about their machine, made him very attracted to buy the machine as well. This finding can be strongly related to the tendency of people to see their actions as more viable once others are also doing it (Cialdini, 2007; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999; Miller, 1984; Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 2014; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002). Literature describes that social proof is a valuable persuading strategy for every product. However, I believe it has an even more positive effect with high value products, since high value products are related to more comprehensive decision making (Rackham, 1998), and are associated with high stakes. In addition, with high value machinery, the machine needs to be reliable since customers need to use it at least 5 years in order to be profitable. So there is a big risk associated with adopting a high value machine, and therefore customers simply seek for reference points as was mentioned before by Gourville (2006) and Nijssen (2014).

The upmost often mentioned reason that is given among the respondents why social proof is so useful for high value products, is that it diminishes uncertainty. Uncertainty and risk are found to be the most important aspects with the adoption of a Pronar machine. In addition, this uncertainty is caused by the fact that Pronar is a new established brand which has no reputation in manufacturing recycling machines. On the other hand, HM who is selling the machines, has also little reputation. One respondent reacted: “het is voor mij nog gewoon te onzeker of het product wel goed blijft over langere tijd, aangezien het een nieuw merk is”. Another respondent reported: “Ik ken jullie niet, ik ken Pronar niet, waarom zou ik dan het risico lopen dat het product niet betrouwbaar is”. However, after receiving the message depicting social proof, this uncertainty was diminished significantly by the users explanation of the high quality and the proper service of the product. Besides, it is also found that the word of a user is
much more reliable than that of a salesman. One respondent mentioned “Een klant heeft geen reden om te liegen, een verkoper wel”. A salesman’s word is not always trusted in comparison to that of a client, whose word is trusted. Another respondent reported “Het woord van een verkoper is mij niet veel waar”, confirming that he does not believe a salesman’s smooth talking about how good and proper his product is. Besides a salesman’s word, it is found that we will make fewer mistakes by acting in accord with social evidence (Cialdini, 2007). Besides, in another review, Cialdini (2001) claimed that testimonials from satisfied customers work best when the satisfied customer and the prospective customer share similar circumstances. This was exactly the case in this research, since all the prospective customers shared very similar circumstances.

After comparing the results among the different adoption stages, it is clear that the potential customers that are in the consideration stage as well as the once that are in the adoption decision stage, both are highly positively influenced by the message they received. Lower numbers are registered for the potential customers that found themselves in the awareness stage. However, even potential customers that found themselves in the awareness stage were still positively influenced by the use of social proof. An explanation for this finding can be given, based on the fact that in the awareness stage, customers are simply not seeking for information yet, opposed to the customers in the consideration stage. One respondent reported: “Het bericht heeft op mij nu nog maar weinig betrekking, maar al wel goed om te lezen dat de klanten er zo over te spreken zijn”. Our results are consistent with the findings of Venkatech et al. (2003) and Bhattacherjee and Sanford (2006) who demonstrated that external sources, such as mass media, friends, family, and peers, can shape user perception regarding new technologies and thereby indirectly influence acceptance behaviour.

4.3 Scarcity
H2 is rejected. The results are visualized in Figure 14. It was assumed that the potential customers that were allocated to the awareness stage, would not be positively affected by the message with the use of scarcity as the persuasion approach. Hence, this assumption was valid, since these customer are found to be not influenced by the message, since they are not directly searching for a machine yet. One respondent stated: “waarom zou dit bericht mijn interesse moeten opwekken als ik nog niet eens weet wanneer ik een machine ga kopen”.

So the results confirm that potential customers in the awareness stage are not influenced by the use of scarcity, in case of high value products. Despite these results, it was assumed that scarcity would have a positive influence in the consideration stage as well as the adoption decision stage. However, the results show some improvements of adoption intention, since one respondent in the consideration stage was positively influenced. However, the reason behind his interest was not valid to state that scarcity will have a positive influence on the customers intention to adopt in the consideration stage. The respondent reported: “ik heb toevallig voor volgende week een zeefmachine nodig” This potential customer was positively influenced by the message to adopt the machine. However this amount of positive influence is only measured in the specific case where somebody needed the product as soon as possible.

So the results reveal that scarcity does not has a positive influence on the potential customer’s intention to adopt a high value product in any of the stages. The respondents that found themselves in the consideration stage and the adoption stage were not attracted by the fact that the Pronar machine is scarce. Hence, one reacted: “8 weken wachten is wel te doen, anders huur ik er wel een tot die tijd”. Based on the input, two main reasons were identified why scarcity is not an appropriate persuasion strategy with high value products like machinery. For heavy machinery, 8 weeks of delivery time is found to be not enough to state that the machine is scarce or exclusive, meaning that customer can easily overwin this time (i.e. by renting). Secondly, customers are aware of the delivery time, what often makes them to buy the machine way before they have to use it. Only some positive influence was found among a customer who had received an order shortly before our message and he could use one next week already.
However, one part of the hypothesis can be confirmed, which stated that scarcity will have no influence on the customers intention to adopt when they are in the awareness stage, simply because they are not seeking for a machine to have it right away.

The results confirm that scarcity as a form of persuasion strategy does not seem to work with high value recycling machinery. One respondent mentioned: “het is geen exclusieve sportauto, als ik wil heb ik binnen 1 dag een machine op de dam staan”. In the world of recycling machines, there is enough demand, which means that scarcity does not seem to be an appropriate persuasion strategy. Besides the great demand, once a machine is needed quickly, several options are available to overcome the waiting time. For example, potential customers can always rent a machine in mean time the delivery period. Furthermore, the results even reveal some negative signs on the adoption intention with regard to scarcity. As stated by Wu et al. (2012) and Tian et al. (2001), scarcity leads to a high perceived uniqueness, is positively related to assumed expensiveness and is also positively related to perceived quality. So scarce products are related to higher quality and more expensive, which the results confirm. Hence, by applying this persuasion approach it was found that some respondents started doubting the quality. Providing a machine that is on stock was more conceived by the respondents as having problems selling them. One respondent mentioned: "hoezo, kom je er niet vanaf". In the environment of heavy machinery, every machine is unique and normally every machine is ordered separately at the factory, which requires some delivery time. Having a machine on stock does not depict product uniqueness what means that the effect of scarcity will diminish, what confirms the findings of Wu et al. (2012) and Tian et al. (2001).

The results suggest that scarcity only works as a product is unique and exclusive. Heavy machinery is simply not exclusive, what makes scarcity an inappropriate persuasion strategy, and it even may result in negative adoption intention among some prospects.

4.4 Reciprocity

H3 is partially approved. The results reveal that reciprocity has a positive influence on the customers intention to adopt in all stages of the adoption process. However, it was assumed that reciprocity would have the highest positive influence on the customers adoption intention in the awareness stage. However, the results show the opposite, since the customers that were assigned to the consideration stage and the adoption decision stage were more positively influenced by the persuading strategy of reciprocity. Potential customers in the awareness stage showed minor improvements in their adoption intention for high value products. Even in the adoption decision
stage, customers are positively influenced by getting something for free, as confirmed by a respondents that stated: “Ja waarom ook niet, wie weet valt de machine me mee”.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Adoption processes</th>
<th>Awareness stage</th>
<th>Consideration stage</th>
<th>Adoption decision stage</th>
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<tr>
<td>Adoption intention</td>
<td>0 = not influenced</td>
<td>10 = Highly positively influenced</td>
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Moreover, potential customers that allocated themselves to the awareness stage and that are perhaps intended to buy a recycling machine in the upcoming 12 months, revealed to be positively influenced by reciprocity, but the positive effect is thin. One respondent mentioned: “goed dat ik het weet, wie weet bel ik binnekort voor de actie”, where one other reported: “wij gaan op korte termijn op zoek naar een machine, zodra dat is maken we graag gebruik van je aanbod”. These findings reveal a small positive influence of reciprocity on potential customers that are in the awareness stage. It is clear that potential customers in the awareness stage are not seeking for information yet, which also means that free demonstrations are less attractive.

In addition, a more stronger positive influence was found for potential customers who are in the consideration stage. These customers are seeking for information and are testing several products. So reciprocity should be a valuable persuasion tool for this segment, which it is. The one respondent who claimed to be strongly positively influenced, already had received a demonstration in real live. It was not only the quality of the machine that attracted him, but also the aspect of reciprocity that attracted this company to perhaps adopt a Pronar machine. The customer stated: “Leuk dat we hem gratis mochten proberen, toch wat anders dan die verkopers die alleen flinke winsten willen opstrijken zonder er iets voor te doen”. This finding is very much in line with Hogan (2007) who sated that a person immediately responds with the desire to give something back once they perceived something of value. However, the effect of giving something back in return is big in this case, since giving something back means
buying the machine which on its turn is a big investment, and therefore not so straightforward.

Despite the fact that reciprocity is found to be a positive persuading technique, some respondents showed signs of rejection. Hence, reciprocity sometimes seems less relevant with high value products, because potential customers seem to see free demonstrations as a standard with regard to high value products. One respondent actually said: “je mag blij zijn dat je überhaupt mag komen demonstreren voor niks, anders verkoopt je nooit zo een machine, tenminste niet aan mij”. Based upon the reaction, free demonstrations seem to be a standard, as well as given things away. According to other machinery salesman (Heynickx, 2016; Vermeer, 2016), selling high value products is all associated with given the customers what they like, and if necessary for free. At the end when you catch your customer, you take it all back by claiming a good price. So based on the reactions of other experienced salesman, we assume that reciprocity is certainly a good persuasion strategy since is found to be a standard in the market. Heynickx (2016), Herwijnen (2016) and Vermeer (2016) are very positive about the use of reciprocity as a strategy to persuade customer. They claim to use this strategy regularly. Besides the free demonstrations, salesman that are selling high value machinery often take their clients with them on a trip to the factory, also for free. Heynickx (2016) and Vermeer (2016) both found positive effects with regard to sales figures by persuading the customer with the use of reciprocity.

However, despite the results reveal positive effects on the prospect adoption intention, the overall positive effect is moderate. Based on the findings, I confirm with by Falk and Fischbacher (2006), who suggests that a salesman whose presenting a gift to its customer, the goal is simply to persuade this customer towards adoption. So a salesman has a clear purpose with his approach of reciprocity what makes people value the gift less than when a gift is given away spontaneous, and not as a form of manipulating (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006). These findings are consistent with the findings of this research. As mentioned above, giving things away by salesman seems to be a standard in the environment of high value products, what makes customer value it less. One respondent said: “dit krijg ik bij iedereen, dus het is nou niet echt heel speciaal”. Since it is less valued by the customer, I agree with Cialdini (2007), who claimed that it is not what one is giving away, but it is rather how it is given away. In addition, it should be personalized as well as unexpected in order to get maximum output.

4.5 **Comparison between Persuading strategies**

Now that I discussed the three persuasion approaches, this chapter will compare them in order to see which strategy is most suitable for high value products, especially like heavy machinery. In order to be able to ensure validity, a control group was added in
order to compare the findings with. As mentioned above, the control group consisted of an email which had not included any type of persuading strategy, but consisted of the standard product information with the intention to make the potential customers aware of what HM can deliver the market. The message as send with the control group was positively perceived among the respondents in all adoption stages. Although the positive effect was thin, no positive effect was found for the potential customer that were in the adoption decision stage, because they already assessed the information. The comparison of the persuading strategies is visualized in Figure 16.

The results clearly reveal that social proof is the upmost valuable persuading strategy with regard to high value products like machinery. Social proof scored way better than the control group and as the other persuasion strategies by the fact that social proof diminishes uncertainty and the risk associated with adopting a high value machine. Another persuasion strategy that is found to have a positive influence on the prospects buying intention, is reciprocity. Reciprocity is not as valuable as social proof but the results definitely show that reciprocity is a proper persuasion strategy. In fact, this persuasion strategy is found to be a standard in the environment of high value products, especially machinery. Customers are taken for a free lunch, are taken for a trip to the factory, free demonstrations, which are all common things that salesman do when selling high value products (Heynickx, 2016; Vermeer, 2016). The results of this research confirm that reciprocity is a valuable persuasion strategy for high value products.

However, despite the positive findings of two persuasion strategies, scarcity is found to have no positive influence on the consumers intention to adopt. Scarcity even received
lower scores than the control group, which had no persuasion strategy included. Machinery is simply not obtained as scarce or exclusive among the potential customers, since enough additional options exist. So by comparing the persuading strategies, the results confirm that potential customers for high value machinery can be persuaded to adopt the product more easily by the use of social proof and reciprocity.

4.6 Comparison between the adoption stages
This chapter will distinguish between the different adoption stages. The results show that the effectiveness of the persuading strategy can differ throughout the different adoption stages. Although social proof is found to be the most proper persuading strategy in all adoption stages, some changes among the other persuading strategies can be spotted. Figure 17 visualizes the effect of the different persuading strategies on the customers adoption intention in the awareness stage. These findings should provide salesman the knowledge of how they can best persuade their customers based on the adoption stage that they are in. On average, the lowest positive effect on the prospects adoption intention is found in the awareness stage, compared to prospects in the consideration and adoption decisions stage. Reported numbers in the awareness stage are simply lower, because most prospects did not and are also not intended to buy a machine very soon. This made the message accompanied with the persuasion strategy often less relevant for this segment.

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<th>Comparison empirical findings awareness stage</th>
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<td>Adoption intention</td>
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<td>0 = not influenced</td>
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<td>10 = highly positively influenced</td>
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<tr>
<td>Controll group</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social proof</td>
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<td>Scarcity</td>
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<td>Reciprocity</td>
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First of all, customers who are in the awareness stage will not gain positive effects by the use of scarcity. These customers simply are not intended to own a machine in the
near future, what makes scarcity totally useless for prospects in the awareness stage, which seems logically. Nevertheless, social proof is found to be the most valuable persuading strategy followed by reciprocity, which is also found to be a valuable persuading strategy for prospects in the awareness stage. These findings on itself were unexpected. Potential customers in the awareness stage were known to be not directly seeking for a machine, and that made me believe that reciprocity would have a more positive influence on these prospects buying intention than social proof. However, the opposite is found. An explanation can be found in the fact that customers that are buying high value product are less attracted by free gifts, because they are aware that it is given with a reason, which makes it less valuable (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006). The control group showed small signs of positivity in the awareness stage. Just providing prospects with product information seem to have a small positive effect on their buying intention.

![Comparison emperical findings Consideration stage](image)

Figure 18: Graph of emperical findings of the Consideration stage

When approaching prospects that are in the consideration stage, salesman can use three types of persuading strategies which are found to result in a positive buying intention (Figure 18). Social proof again will lead to the highest positive influence, followed by reciprocity and scarcity. Figure 18 may embody that scarcity has a positive influence on the prospects buying intention. However, as discussed above, scarcity is found to only work in a situation where the prospect recognizes exclusivity. The results for scarcity as shown in Figure 18 are not valid to conclude that scarcity has a real positive influence on prospects buying intention in the consideration stage. In the consideration stage social proof will definitely help salesman to persuade their
customers. This findings seems logic, because in this stage, prospects are seeking for information about the demand. So the message as brought with social proof seems very relevant for those prospects that found themselves in the consideration stage. Again reciprocity is also a valuable persuading strategy for this adoption stage, as it is found to be a standard in the environment of high value products. Sales man regularly take their customers for a lunch, provide them free advertisement tools, and so on (Heynickx, 2016; Vermeer, 2016). And from out the findings, it seems that it is accepted among the respondents. Hence, it more or less gives the prospects a special feeling, because they receive that treatment and others maybe not. It is certain that reciprocity will increase sales numbers.

![Graph of emperical findings of the adoption decision stage](image)

**Figure 19: Graph of emperical findings of the adoption decision stage**

In the adoption decision stage, more divergent results are measured among the different persuasion strategies. In this stage, customers generally completed assessing the information and made trade-offs. So as assumed, the control group will have no influence on this adoption stage. Nevertheless, it was assumed that scarcity would have a positive influence on the customer buying intention in the adoption decision stage. However, no positive results were measured with scarcity. Again only in certain situation, scarcity is found to have a positive effect, in all other situations scarcity does not seem to be relevant. On the other hand, social proof and reciprocity both show very high numbers of positivity with regard to buying intention. Social proof adds the most value to prospects buying intention. Since HM is a young, reputation less firm, which sells new, unknown products which are expensive, uncertainty and risk are found to play a major role in the customers adoption decision. Social proof acts as evidence towards the prospects, what is found to significantly diminish uncertainty.
Furthermore, as with prospects in the consideration stage, reciprocity could also play a valuable role in the adoption decision stage. Despite the fact that most customers in the adoption decision stage already made their final decision, the message as send which included social proof as a persuading strategy opened the process of reviewing the demand again, at least for some of the respondents this was found. So salesman who approach their customers which are in the adoption decision stage, should make use of social proof or reciprocity as the persuasion strategies.

4.7 Positive Firm reputation

H4 is partially approved, where a positive firm reputation definitely acts as an important evaluation aspect at the moment of buying a high value product in all stages of the adoption process. High numbers of importance were reported among the respondents in all stages of the adoption process. The results are visualized in Table 6 which can be found in appendix 8.3. However, it was assumed that firm reputation would become less important as customers move further through the adoption stages. This assumption can be rejected based on the findings which reveal that it becomes even more important as customer become closer to the adoption decision moment. Moreover, prospects in the awareness stage showed some sign of importance with regard to firm reputation. An interesting result evolved here, since this finding explains that prospects need at least some prove of reputation from a selling firm to even start considering buying the brand. One respondent mentioned: “als ik het bedrijf achter het merk al niet ken en er geen vertrouwen in heb, dan neem ik het merk niet eens mee in mijn beslissing”. Prospects in the consideration stage as well as in the adoption decision stage revealed equal figures between the moment of buying and at the moment of speaking, which also is logically, since these prospects almost arrived at the point of buying.

The results confirms the assumption that firm reputation is an important determinant for the adoption decision of high value products. A respondent mentioned: “reputatie is voor mij zeker belangrijk, aangezien dat onze relatie niet ophoudt na de aankoop van een machine”. When customers buy a machine, they know that they will start a long lasting relationship with the selling firm. First of all, the selling firm has to offer after sales service because of the warranty period, which is normally 1 or 2 years. If something breaks down within that period of time, the selling firm has to solve the problem and apply proper service. Here a risk exist with the customer, who doubt our existence of the selling firm within a couple of years, since HM does has a minor reputation. A respondent said: “Waar moet ik heen als jij over een tijdje niet meer bestaat”.

Chandler et al. (2013) claim that firm reputation acts as evidence of firms previous work and acts as a signal of observable quality. Since selling high value machinery is
related with long lasting relationships, quality becomes a very important aspect on which customers seem to assess the selling firm. No firm reputation means no sight on the level of quality, which creates a feeling of risk and uncertainty. And because the stakes are high with regard to high value products, almost everybody will try to avoid the risk, what again explains the importance of firm reputation.

So the results are consistent with Turban and Cable (2003), who claim that a positive reputation is a valuable aspect since it provides information to a firm’s constituents. In addition, firm reputation is also found to contribute to customer loyalty by increasing customer satisfaction through trust (Jin, Park, & Kim, 2008). Since the required commitment and trust between salesman and customer will be high with regard to high value product, firm reputation is found to act as an important determinant for prospects adoption intention.

### 4.8 Product image

H5 is partially confirmed. Product image was assumed to be an important aspect on which prospect assess high value products that originate from less developed countries. However, the results reveal that a product’s image with regard to high value products is less important than expected (Table 8, Appendix 8.3). On average, low figures are reported with regard to the importance of product image among all adoption stages, especially compared with firm reputation and after-sales service. However, despite the low figures, the results reveal some signs of importance, what confirms that a product’s country of origin does influence a consumer’s evaluation of that particular product, as was suggested by (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Lee & Ganesh, 1999).

Respondents in the awareness stage showed signs of importance, but the effect was thin. Further through the adoption process, the importance was found to decrease, which was also expected. One respondent said: “je neemt het wel mee, maar als de rest om de machine gewoon goed is, waarom niet”. So as this respondent confirms, product image is taken into account, but after assessing the product on more aspects, product image becomes less important. Another respondent mentioned: “Tegenwoordig maken ze overal wel goede machines, als de componenten goed zijn en de service ook, dan geloof ik er wel in”. The results clearly reveal that most customers not only assess the products based on its image, but seek for prove. Yet another respondent mentioned: “Voordat ik überhaupt een merk koop, wil ik hem toch eerst zelf uitgebreid proberen”. Most prospects first want to test the machine before going into adoption, which makes them assess the machine on all points that they think are important. And if the machine scores well on these points, product image does not matter anymore. These results are consistent with that of Peterson and Jolibert (1995), and Verlegh and
Steenkamp (1999) who both found that the effect of negative image decreases as the customers moves from perception of product quality to attitude formation and to buying behaviour intention. Hence, in terms of real purchasing, consumers are likely to have additional information and access to other cues as the actual physical product, brand name, price, warranty, as agreed by Laroche et al. (2005) and agreed by this research.

Furthermore, respondents in the awareness stage revealed minor differences in the level of importance between the moment of buying the product and the moment of questioning. This finding can be explained by the reaction of a respondent who said: “Misschien niet goed, maar als ik vooraf weet dat een machine uit Polen komt dan is de kans aanwezig dat ik hem niet direct meeneem als een potentiële kanshebber”. Since prospects in the awareness stage are not directly seeking to buy a machine, their first intention about a machines from Poland seems negatively. As with firm reputation, a negative image is also found to create risk and uncertainty about the products quality, and why should somebody would take that risk, especially with high value products. Nevertheless, is also seems that if a respondent moves to the consideration stage, he or she starts seeking additional information what decreases the importance of the country of origin. Again, our results confirm the findings of Jolibert (1995), and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999). Hence, initially product image will act as an evaluation aspect, but after prospects start seeking information, the aspect of product image will lose its importance.

4.9 After-sales service

H6 is partially confirmed, where very high figures of importance were measured among the respondents in the consideration and adoption decision stages. These two stages reported after-sales as an very important aspect with regard to high value products, and especially when it is about a new product that is sold by a reputation-less firm. The results clearly reveal that in this case, firm reputation and after-sales service become very important subjects and are closely linked together. Customers who doubt the firm’s reputation, were found to also doubt its after-sales service, and vice versa. Questions that arise are: “if i call him will he come and solve the problem, or will he even come at all”. If a firm has a positive reputation, the uncertainty is definitely taken away and prospect trust the selling company to solve the problems if they arise. Besides the fact that HM is a start-up company, the product is also new in the market what makes the after-sales service even more important. One respondent mentioned: “weet jij al hoe het product zich over 3 jaar houd”, which explains this respondents uncertainty with the products durability over time. This uncertainty can partly be diminished by knowing that the selling company applies a proper after-sales service. Another respondent stated: “als ik weet dat jullie service goed is, dan zou ik gerust een
samenwerking aangaan”. So the results definitely explains the importance of a proper after-sales service.

All the results are visualized in Table 7 in Appendix 8.3. A finding which was not expected, was the unimportance of after-sales service in the awareness stage. Since these prospects are not seeking to buy a machine, the aspect of after-sales service is found to be irrelevant in that stage. So prior to the consideration stage, after sales service is not taken as an evaluation aspect. So in other words, prospects do not immediately reject brands on which they do not know if they apply a proper after sales service.

Based on the results, I can hardly agree that often manufacturing companies become service focused, as found by (Bryson & Daniels, 2007) because of its importance. With regard to after-sales service, the highest levels of importance were reported among the three aspects, what confirms it’s great importance. Furthermore, this also confirms the work of several researchers who found a positive relation between good after-sales service and customer satisfaction (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Bitner, 1990; Gupta & Dhillon, 2015; Ladokun, Adeyemo, & Ogunleye, 2013).

5 Conclusion
The objective of this study was to find out how reputation-less firms that sell high value machinery with a negative image, should persuade their prospects throughout the different adoption stages, in order to find maximum adoption. This resulted in the following primary research question: “What is the most appropriate persuasion strategy for a reputation-less company, depending on the stage of the adoption process that a customer is in, in order to find adoption for high value machinery that originates from Poland”. Besides the primary research question, a secondary question was established which was interested in the impact of three aspects on the prospects buying intention, which resulted in the following secondary research question: “How important are the aspects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image on the prospects buying intention, with regard to high value machinery that originates from Poland and is sold by a reputation-less company”.

In relation to the primary research question, the findings indicate two persuasion strategies as appropriate to use throughout all adoption stages in order to increase the buying intention. The strongest positive effects were measured with the use of social proof. In all adoption stages, social proof is found to be an appropriate persuasion strategy. Besides social proof, also reciprocity can be used as a persuading strategy throughout all adoption stages. Scarcity on the other hand, is found to be irrelevant in the world of recycling machinery. So in case of high value machinery, scarcity did not revealed any positive effect on one of the adoption stages.
Overall, the positive effect of the persuasion strategies is the lowest in the awareness stage. In the awareness stage, most prospects are not ready to be persuaded yet. Persuasion in this stage may only help them to get aware of your product offerings, and perhaps it may increase their interest. However, in the consideration stage, prospects revealed to be positively influenced by the use of social proof and reciprocity. The same positive influence was found in the adoption decision stage. Again scarcity will not have a positive effect in one of the adoption stages.

Furthermore, in relation to the second research question, the findings strongly confirm the importance of at least two of the aspects. Hence, in the awareness stage, firm reputation and product image are somewhat important for prospects to assess the product upon. Moreover, in the awareness stage after-sales service does not count as a evaluation aspect yet. However, it differs with firm reputation and product image, since these two aspects are already considered in the awareness stage, meaning that some prospects not even consider buying a product with a negative image or from a firm with no reputation. So a positive firm reputation and a product with a positive image will have a positive effect on the prospects buying behaviour in the awareness stage. The importance becomes way stronger for prospects in the consideration and adoption decision stage with regard to firm reputation. A positive firm reputation will definitely improve the buying intention for prospects in the consideration and adoption decision stage. In addition, no importance was measured in the awareness stage for after-sales service, but in the consideration and adoption decision stage, after-sales is found to be the most important aspect. So a proper after-sales service is a very valuable aspect for prospects in the consideration and adoption decision stages.

So after-sales service and firm reputation becomes more important as prospects move further through the adoption stages, but the opposite is found with product image. In the consideration and the adoption decision stage, the importance of product image decreases instead of that it increased. This finding can be explained based on the fact that prospects will seek for additional information in the consideration stage, what will diminish the effect of product image.

Overall, the findings of this study has enriched the knowledge on the adoption intention of high value products by looking at which persuading strategies can be used in which adoption process to enhance sales figures. Besides the persuasion strategies, it also contributes to the knowledge of the effect of the aspects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image on prospects buying intention for high value machinery with a negative image.
6 Discussion
After explaining the results and the conclusion of the research, the next step is to interpret these results against prior research (Evans, Gruba, & Zobel, 2011). This research studied what type of persuasion strategy is most suitable for young, reputation-less firms that sell high value machinery which is associated with a negative image. Besides, it distinguished between the different adoption stages of awareness, consideration, and adoption decision (Rogers E., 2003). Nevertheless, before adoption takes place with regard to high value products, the customer needs to be approached by a salesman. Hence, the main purpose of sales concerns the purchase as well as maintaining long lasting customer relationships (Kotler, Rackham, & Krishnaswamy, 2006). Simply stated, a sales man job is to communicate the product offering to the customer, in order to persuade that particular customer to adopt the product (Petty, Cacioppo, & Kasmer, 2015). Persuading people to buy a product is found to be a difficult job. However, reciprocity, scarcity, authority, consistency, liking, and social proof are five persuasion strategies as proposed by Cialdini (2007), which act as so called shortcuts for customers to make decisions more easily. Furthermore, since customers are assessing information differently throughout the adoption stages, in every adoption stage another persuasion strategy may be most suitable (Rogers E., 2003).

Yet, while cialdini (2007) proposed 5 persuading strategies in general, no literature was present that revealed the effect of the persuading strategies on the prospects buying intention for high value products that are associated with a negative image and that are being sold by reputation-less firm. Firm reputation is known to act as evidence of firms previous work and acts as a signal of observable quality (Chandler, Haunschild, Rhee, & Beckman, 2013). A positive firm reputation is valuable since it provides information to a firm’s constituents (Turban & Cable, 2003), especially with high value products. Besides firm reputation, researchers and academics worldwide committed that a products country of origin influences a consumers evaluation of that particular product (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005; Verlegh & Steenkamp, 1999; Peterson & Jolibert, 1995; Hong & Wyer, 1989; Lee & Ganesh, 1999). It is hardly suggested that products that originate from less developed countries are perceived as riskier and with lower quality (Laroche, Papadopoulos, Heslop, & Mourali, 2005; Agrawal & Kamakura, 1999; Han, 1990). It is also known that high value products are associated with more comprehensive decision making (Rackham, 1998) what makes it more difficult for these products to find adoption. Hence, the combination of a reputation-less firm and a high value product with a negative image revealed the great need for proper persuading strategies in order to sell such products, what led to the primary research question: “What is the most appropriate persuasion strategy for a reputation-less company, depending on the stage of the adoption process that a
The discussion is structured as follows. The first part of the discussion presents the theoretical contributions and implications of the findings. The second part looks at the managerial recommendations on the basis of the findings. Finally, the third section will discuss future research opportunities.

6.1 Theoretical contributions and implications
The theoretical contributions and implications will be discussed on the basis of the primary and secondary research questions. The research results make theoretical contributions to the literature of persuasion strategies. However, literature so far did not distinguish between the three adoption stages with regard to the persuading strategies. Besides, the findings also make contributions based on the fact that it found answers for a very specific case, in which a high value product with a negative image is sold by a reputation-less firm. No literature is found so far that investigated this specific situation.

6.1.1 Persuading prospects in the Awareness stage
In the awareness stage of the adoption process, potential customers are known to be not directly seeking to buy a product, but they get aware of the product via message, social media, email, or another communication tool used by salesman (Kalish, 1985; Rogers E., 2003; Nijssen, 2014). Since prospects in the awareness stage are not directly seeking to buy a product, the message as send by a salesman may be informative, may be experienced as annoying and ignored, or may just not be relevant. When the results of the persuading strategies are compared with that of the other adoption stages, it is clear that the persuading strategies are less effective in the awareness stage. The overall positive effect of the persuading strategies is too low to state that prospects in the awareness stage can be persuaded. The question that arises is should one try to persuade prospects that are in the awareness stage. Based on the findings, I would suggest to make prospects in the awareness stage knowledgeable about the product offerings, but do not directly try to persuade these prospects yet, since it will require a lot of effort. Besides, approaching a prospect that is not seeking to buy a product yet will probably be experienced as annoying what eventually even may harm sales figure. So the results of this research would suggest to inform the prospects in the awareness stage of the products you as a company offer, but wait with persuading them until they reach the consideration stage. Although the results reveal low value for persuasion strategies in the awareness stage, a positive effect was measured for social proof and reciprocity.
Moreover, scarcity is a persuading strategy that has no function for prospects in the awareness stage. Scarcity is found to be a powerful persuading strategy, since people simply think scarce resources are better and made of high quality (Cialdini, 2007; Wu, Lu, Wu, & Fu, 2012). However, in the awareness stage, prospects are simply not seeking to buy a product yet, what makes scarcity irrelevant in this stadium. Social proof is the most valuable persuading strategy for prospects in the awareness stage, since it relates to the tendency of people to see their actions as more viable once others are also doing it, especially similar others (Cialdini, 2007; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999; Miller, 1984; Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 2014; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002). Based on the fact that this HM is dealing with a new, unfamiliar product which is associated with a negative image, prospects may be inclined to exclude the particular product from their list of potential products. Initially, nobody wants to take that risk of buying a unproven high value products with a negative image, but with social proof that risk will get significantly diminished. So for high value products that are associated with a negative image, prospects in the awareness stage can be best persuaded by the use of social proof as the persuading strategy.

Besides social proof, reciprocity can also be used as a persuasion strategy in the awareness stage. However, the positive effect is small, what questions the value of this persuasion approach. Hence, reciprocity does not take away the uncertainty, but it gives the prospect a special feeling what eventually will enhance sales figures. The results mark the clear difference that is found between high and low value products. In the environment of high value machinery, presenting customers free gifts is a standard. It’s part of the deal, simply said. Hence, free gifts can also be given because margins are way higher than with low value products. The results reveal that the theory of Hogan (2007) and Cialdini (2007) who state that people feel obligated to give something in return, is not valid in terms of high value products. With regard to high value products, the effect of reciprocity evaporates or is way less than with low value products.

On the other hand, the results confirm the findings of Falk and Fischbacher (2006), who claim that people perceive once actions differently, based on the intention behind it. Hence, in the environment of high value machinery, it is a standard, and customer are aware that the only reason why they receive a gift, is to sell a machine, what makes the concept of reciprocity less valuable. Once reciprocity is received spontaneous and without any intention, it will be most effective (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006). So to conclude, reciprocity is found to have a positive effect for customers in the awareness stage, but the positive effect is thin. However, since it is a standard, other companies are also doing it, so salesman should always add reciprocity as a persuasion strategy.
Furthermore, based on the results I suggest that it is important for salesman to make sure that once a customer reaches the consideration stage, that they see a firm's product as a potential. The selling company cannot take away the fact that a product has a negative image when it originates from a less developed country. Besides, it can also not take away the fact that it is a reputation-less company when they are a start-up, but what a salesman can do is to make sure that a prospect knows the company as well as the organization behind it. Additionally, it will help to focus on describing the product in terms of the problems it solves for the customer, as suggested by Rackham (1998).

6.1.2 Additional aspects effect on prospects in the awareness stage
Firm reputation, after-sales service and product image were found in literature to affect the adoption intention of customers with regard to high value products. The results confirm the great importance of the three aspects. However, the importance is way less than expected for prospects in the awareness stage. Firm reputation acts as evidence of firms previous work and acts as a signal of observable quality (Chandler, Haunschild, Rhee, & Beckman, 2013). Our findings highly agree with Chandler et al. (2013), but prospects in the awareness stage are not seeking for information because they are not intended to buy a product in the very near future. This is what makes these aspects almost not relevant in the awareness stage. However, an interesting contribution can be made to literature, since the results suggests two of the three aspects as somewhat important in the awareness stage. Small signs of importance were measured in the awareness stage for firm reputation and product image. It is found that some prove of firm reputation will have a positive effect upon prospects buying intention. Some prospects need to have some prove of firm reputation to even start considering a products that is sold by a reputation-less firm. The same is found with product image. Once a prospect does not know the product itself, but only knows that a product has a negative image, there is a change that this prospect will ignore the product initially. Nevertheless, with regard to prospects in the awareness stage, a negative image as well as a reputation less firm will have low impact on the prospects buying behaviour. Furthermore, the third aspect of after-sales service is found not relevant for the prospects in the awareness stage, so after-sales service is not an evaluation aspect for prospects in the awareness stage.

6.1.3 Persuading prospects in the consideration stage
The main difference between the awareness stage and the consideration stage, is that prospects in the consideration stage are intended to buy a machine in the near future what also makes them to seek for information and assess the demand (Rogers E., 2003; Montaguti, Kuester, & Robertson, 2002). This leads to a differences in the effects of persuading strategies. On average, high numbers were assigned for all persuading strategies effect on buying intention. As in the awareness stage, social proof again is found to be the most valuable persuasion strategy for high value products with a
negative image. Taken into account that the product has a negative image, and is sold by a reputation-less firm creates a feeling of risk and uncertainty. The main advantage as found with social proof in case of high value products, is that it diminishes that uncertainty. This finding is consistent with (Cialdini, 2007; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999; Miller, 1984; Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 2014; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002), because prospect simply know that the product is good when other users confirm the quality of it.

In the consideration stage, also reciprocity is found to be a valuable persuasion strategy, which confirms the findings of Cialdini (2007). Compared to the awareness stage, prospects in the consideration stage are more sensitive for reciprocity. Again, presenting free gifts, gives the prospects a feeling of special treatment, which only they receive. It is a standard in the market and it is found to be effective, so prospects definitely react positive upon a salesman’s use of reciprocity in the consideration stage. Besides the positive influence of reciprocity and social proof, again for scarcity, no positive influence was measured. On average, high value machinery is simply not exclusive enough to make it a scarce resource. So the results clearly suggest that salesman that sell high value machinery, should not spend time persuading the prospect with the use of scarcity, which is against the findings of Cialdini (2007). However, the results revealed some positive effect with the use of reciprocity. The reason why it was found was because the prospect in question was in a specific situation, in which he needed a machine next week. Because he was not able to rent one, the machine became scarce to him what made him consider to buy the machine. So in a very specific situation the product could become exclusive, what means that scarcity may work with high value machinery.

6.1.4 Additional aspects effect on prospects in the consideration stage
With regard to the three additional aspects of firm reputation, product image and, after-sales service, some rather differences were measured according its importance in the consideration stage. First of all, where after-sales service was not an important aspect in the awareness-stage, prospects in the consideration stage find a proper after-sales service the most important from the three aspects. So the results confirm the work of several researchers that claim a positive relation between good after-sales service and customer satisfaction (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Bitner, 1990; Gupta & Dhillon, 2015; Ladokun, Adeyemo, & Ogunleye, 2013). Thus, service quality plays an integral role in enhancing a sustainable competitive advantage for a company (Rigopoulou, Chaniotakis, Lymeropoulos, & Siomkos, 2008). Also strong levels of importance where measured with firm reputation. In the consideration stage, firm reputation is found to be an important aspects, since it reveals the firms prior work (Chandler, Haunschild, Rhee, & Beckman, 2013). In the consideration stage, customers have to make trade-offs in which they assess the products, using several
aspects which are important for that particular prospect. However, less reputation clearly leads to uncertainty and risk, what will hold the customer from adopting it. Since firms cannot buy reputation or establish reputation within a day, they have to establish what takes time. Therefore it is important that firms and especially salesman strive for a decent reputation. Despite the great importance of after-sales service and firm reputation, product image becomes less important in the consideration stage. It is a fact that prospects seek for additional information what will diminish the effect of product image. If the product scores well on other important aspects the effect of product image simply decreases. With high value product, prospects assess the demand carefully, and product image is as the words say, only an image. In other words, it’s only a suspicion about the quality. So salesman should elaborate on this fact by paying attention to other possible important aspects like service, quality, parts, delivery time, and strive for quality. So in case of high value product, our findings strongly confirm the research of Peterson and Jolibert (1995) and Verlegh and Steenkamp (1999) who both found that the country of origin is likely to have a significant impact on products evaluation, but in terms of real purchasing, consumers are likely to have additional information and access to other cues as the actual physical product, brand name, price, warranty, etc. Besides, also Agrawal and Kamakura (1999) suggest that the effect of country of origin on both quality perception and purchase intention decreases when multiple cues are considered compared to country of origin, as agreed by Peterson and Jolibert (1995).

6.1.5 Persuading prospects in the adoption decision stage

The results reveal very small differences of the effect of the persuasion strategies on the buying intention between the consideration stage and the adoption decision stage. Social proof was already suggested to be valuable in the consideration stage, but in the adoption decision stage even higher numbers were assigned. When prospect reach the decision stage they reach the point of deciding which brand to adopt. However, since it is about high value product, at the moment of deciding, prospects simply go over all the advantages and disadvantages and become somewhat insecure of whether they make the right decision. At that moment, receiving prove by the use of social proof is certainly found to work as a persuasion strategy, which again confirms the work of (Cialdini, 2007; Cialdini, Wosinska, Barrett, Butner, & Gornik-Durose, 1999; Miller, 1984; Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 2014; Frambach & Schillewaert, 2002). The insecure feeling will be taken away with social proof. Social proof in general is found to be a proper persuasion strategy in every adoption stage, but mostly in the adoption decision stage. Hence, salesman should hardly strive to receive social proof for their high value machinery in order to persuade customers in the adoption decision stage.

Again, scarcity is found to serve no purpose in the adoption decision stage. The same explanation can be given as in the consideration stage, since the product is also not
exclusive for prospects in the adoption decision stage. Salesman that approach prospects in the adoption decision stage should not use scarcity as a persuasion strategy, which is against what is proposed by Cialdini (2007). Opposed to scarcity, Reciprocity will help salesman to persuade prospects in the adoption decision stage. The positive effect of reciprocity is higher in the consideration stage, but in the adoption decision stage, reciprocity is still very valuable in relation to high value machinery. So prospects in the adoption decision stage are found to be best persuaded with the use of social proof and reciprocity.

### 6.1.6 Additional aspects effect on prospects in the adoption decision stage

As with the persuasion strategies, also small differences were measured between the consideration stage and the adoption decision stage with regard to the three additional aspects of firm reputation, after-sales service and product image. A proper after-sales service is also very important in the adoption decision stage, and is even found to be more important as in the consideration stage. Hence, at this stage, the service becomes a very important aspect with regard to high value product. And especially with the knowledge that HM has little reputation. So as with the reputation, the selling firm should also strive for perfection with regard to the after-sales service. So in case of the high value products in combination with prospects in the adoption decision stage, the results confirm the work of several researchers that claim a positive relation between good after-sales service and customer satisfaction (Boulding, Kalra, Staelin, & Zeithaml, 1993; Bitner, 1990; Gupta & Dhillon, 2015; Ladokun, Adeyemo, & Ogunleye, 2013).

### 6.2 Managerial recommendations

Successfully persuading prospects with the intention to sell a product is found to be difficult in common situations, but it becomes even way more difficult if the selling firm has little reputation, and is selling a high value product that is also associated with a negative image. These additional aspects create a feeling of risk and uncertainty, which has to be diminished by salesman in order to find adoption. The research distinguished between the different adoption decision what would be of great help for salesman to approach their prospects throughout the different adoption stages. Based on the findings from this study, the managerial recommendations are provided in the form of a roadmap, as shown in Figure 20.

The first step in the roadmap is to identify to which adoption stage the prospect can be allocated. For prospects in the awareness stage, the next question is whether or not the salesman is able to persuade the prospect to move from the awareness stage to the consideration stage. If the answer is yes, it will mean that the salesman is dealing with
a potential client who will probably be intended to buy a machine in the near future. The solution is to persuade these prospects with the use of social and reciprocity. If the prospect in the awareness stage cannot be persuaded to move to the consideration stage, he or she will not be intended to buy a product very soon. This also means that the persuasion strategies will not be relevant for this segment, and there is reasonable change that the persuasion strategy is more being received as annoying than as informative. In that case, salesman should make the prospect aware of the products the firm offers, but not try to persuade them. Nevertheless, salesman have to take in mind that even if a prospect in the awareness stage can be persuaded to the consideration stage, he or she is not seeking and assessing information yet. So trying to persuade them is fine, but based on the results, I would recommend to put not too much effort with these prospects, since the message again may be obtained as annoying instead of informative. Eventually this may harm the sales figures.

Figure 20: roadmap to assist salesman to persuade prospects in different adoption stage with regard to high value machinery

In the consideration stage, salesman have to measure the exclusivity the product. in other words, the prospects have to see the product as exclusive in order to make scarcity a valuable persuasion strategy. Only in that particular case, scarcity may work,
else salesman should persuade these prospects with the use of social proof and reciprocity. The same counts for prospects in the adoption decision stage. Social proof and reciprocity are both the two most proper persuasion strategies which salesman should use when persuading prospects in the adoption decision stage.

With regard to the additional aspects of firm reputation, reputational firms should strive to build up a proper reputation as soon as possible. In case of high value machinery this means, applying proper service, seek for solutions that are requested by customers, and so on. In addition, because it’s a rather niche market, bad advertisements will be spread quickly, what will harm the business (Nijssen, 2014). The same is the case with after-sales service. Firms should allocate enough resources to be able to react fast upon customer requests, and apply proper after-sales service. With regard to product image, salesman cannot change the fact that a product originates from a less developed country. However, salesman can diminish this negative effect by applying more attention to other important aspects as quality, delivery time, service, warranty, and so on. Salesman should make sure that they score well on the other important aspects and announce it towards their audience.

### 6.3 Future research

There is not much literature that investigated the effect of the persuasion strategies in combination with high value products, what leaves plenty of opportunities for future research. First of all, this research investigated only 3 of the 5 persuasion strategies as proposed by Cialdini (2007), since the research area did not allow me to investigate the aspects of liking and authority. Future research can find the effect of these two persuasion strategies in combination with high value products. Besides the other persuasion strategies, this research investigated a very specific case with extreme variables, like a product with a negative image, and a reputation-less firm that sells the product. As described in the research limitations, because this research was interested in a very specific situation, the amount of proper respondents was slim, what may have harmed the validity of this research. Future research could be interesting in finding the effect of the persuasion strategies with other high value products that allow a bigger sample size in order to ensure the validity.

Next, for this research the treatments as used for the experiments consisted of direct mailings with different contents that related to the persuasion strategy. However, the effect of some persuasion strategies could be measured more appropriate with the use of a different treatment, which was not possible in this research based on the research boundaries. First of all, if reciprocity is measured it would be better to first provide the customer a gift and after that measure it. It was not possible for this research to first provide the free gifts and measure them afterwards. However, I believe that would ensure more valid outcomes than with the use of only a message. This leaves space for
future research, in order to ensure validity. Besides, reciprocity, future research could also measure scarcity different. As discussed in the research limitations, respondents did not always obtain the treatment as scarce, what harmed the validity of the results. Future research could measure scarcity differently. In this research it was measured with a 8-week delivery time what was not always obtained as scarce. However, perhaps it would be better to increase the exclusivity by constructing a special machine from which only one is made for example. Hence, this highlights exclusivity, what probably will be a better way to measure scarcity.

Another interesting research opportunity that is still open is to investigate the effect of more persuasion strategies together on the buying intention of the prospects in different stages. In this research, the effect of only one persuasion strategy at a time is measured on the buying intention of prospects. However, it would be interesting to combine some persuasion strategies and measure their effect on the buying intention of prospects. This will extend the knowledge of persuasion strategies with regard to high value products. It is very likely that combinations of persuasion strategies may increase the positive influence on the buying behaviour even more.

In this research the distinction was made between the different adoption stages that prospects could be in. there is no prior research that investigated the effect of the persuasion strategies on the different adoption stages. This research did investigate that effect with regard to high value product, what leaves research opportunities for low value products. Hence, future research may aim to find the most proper persuasion strategy in every adoption stage for low value products, or for products in general. There is a reasonable change that there is a difference in the most valuable persuasion strategies between low and high value products.

Next, the results reveal reciprocity to be a valuable persuasion strategy throughout all stages in the adoption process for high value products. However, reciprocity can be executed in many ways, like by free advertisements goods, free diners, free trips, free demonstrations, and so on. Actually everything that has some value for the customer and is given for free, will act as a positive determinant for the effect of reciprocity. Future research could be interesting in this case to find out which form of reciprocity will have to most influence with regard to high value products. This knowledge would be of great help for salesman to know what they should provide their prospects in order to maximize the positive effect of reciprocity.
7 Bibliography


Vermeer, B. (2016, 5 25). Interview about how to sell machinery. (J. Herwijnen, Interviewer)


8 Appendices

8.1 Appendix 1, interview questions

1. Bent u van plan om in de komende 12 maanden een recycling machine te kopen?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nee</th>
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2. Bij Wellicht/Ja, hoe ver bent u in het adoptie process op dit moment?

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<th>Nog geen actie ondernomen (awareness phase)</th>
<th>Informatie inwinnen en vergelijken van merken (Consideration phase)</th>
<th>Beslissingsfase (adoption decision phase)</th>
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2. In welke mate heeft de inhoud van de mail uw intentie om het product te kopen verhoogd en waarom (schaal 1 to 10):

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<th>De inhoud heeft zeer positief bijgedragen aan mijn intentie om het product te kopen</th>
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3. Hoe waarschijnlijk was de aankoop van Pronar machine voordat u dit bericht kreeg?

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4. Hoe waarschijnlijk is de aankoop van Pronar machine na dat u het bericht heeft gekregen?

| 0-100% |
5a. Hoe belangrijk zou u het op het moment van aankoop vinden, in uw overweging om eventueel een Pronar machine te kopen, dat het bedrijf die de machine aanbiedt, een ‘positieve reputatie’ heeft:

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5b. Hoe belangrijk vindt u het op dit moment, in uw overweging om eventueel een Pronar machine te kopen, dat het bedrijf die de machine aanbiedt, een ‘positieve reputatie’ en waarom:

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6a. Hoe belangrijk zou u het op het moment van aankoop vinden, in uw overweging om eventueel een Pronar machine te kopen, dat het bedrijf die de machine aanbiedt, een goede ‘after-sales service’ heeft:

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6b. Hoe belangrijk vindt u het op dit moment, in uw proces om wellicht een Pronar machine te kopen, dat het bedrijf die de machine aanbiedt, een goede ‘after-sales service’ heeft:

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7a. Hoe belangrijk zou u het ‘land van herkomst’ vinden op het moment van aankoop in uw overweging om eventueel een Pronar machine te kopen:

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</table>
8.2 Appendix 2: Visualisation results of adoption intention

The tables below show the results of the effect of the different persuasion strategies on the respondents adoption intention. The R in the table stands for the particular respondent. The number between the brackets announces the improvements of the respondents buying intention in percentages. If there is a “n” after the number between the brackets, it reveals that the respondent is not intended to buy a machine in the upcoming 12 months.

Table 2: visualisation of the results of the control group on the respondents adoption intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence on Adoption intention</th>
<th>Awareness stage</th>
<th>Consideration stage</th>
<th>Adoption decision stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>R8 (2n)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R1 (5)</td>
<td>R2 (5)/R7 (0)</td>
<td>R3 (0)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R6 (5)</td>
<td>R5 (2)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>R4 (10)</td>
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<td>10</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: visualisation of the results of social proof on the respondents adoption intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence on Adoption intention</th>
<th>Awareness stage</th>
<th>Consideration stage</th>
<th>Adoption decision stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>R16 (5n)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>R15 (5)</td>
<td>R14 (10)</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>R13 15</td>
<td>R12 (25)</td>
<td>R9 (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>R11 (20)</td>
<td>R10 (20)</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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### Table 4: visualisation of the results of scarcity on the respondents adoption intention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scarcity</th>
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<th>Adoption decision stage</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R22 (5)/ R23 (10)</td>
<td>R24 (0)</td>
<td>R18 (0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R17 (0n)</td>
<td>R20 (7)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>R19 (25)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
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### Table 5: visualisation of the results of reciprocity on the respondents adoption intention

<table>
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<th>Reciprocity</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>R26 (On)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>R28 (On)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>R29 (2) / R30 (5)</td>
<td>R27 (20)</td>
<td>R25 (10)</td>
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<td>R31 (5)</td>
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</table>
### 8.3 Appendix 3: Visualisation results of additional aspects

Table 6: visualisation of the results of positive firm reputation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance with regard to adoption decision</th>
<th>Awareness stage</th>
<th>Consideration stage</th>
<th>Adoption decision stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance with regard to adoption decision</td>
<td>At the moment of buying</td>
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<td>At the moment of buying</td>
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<td>0= totally not important / 10= very important</td>
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Table 7: visualisation of the results of proper after sales service

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Importance with regard to adoption decision</th>
<th>Awareness stage</th>
<th>Consideration stage</th>
<th>Adoption decision stage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance with regard to adoption decision</td>
<td>At the moment of buying</td>
<td>At the moment of questioning</td>
<td>At the moment of buying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0= totally not important / 10= very important</td>
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Table 8: visualisation of the results of product image

<table>
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<th>Importance with regard to adoption decision</th>
<th>At the moment of buying</th>
<th>At the moment of questioning</th>
<th>At the moment of buying</th>
<th>At the moment of questioning</th>
<th>At the moment of buying</th>
<th>At the moment of questioning</th>
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<tr>
<td>0 = totally not important / 10 = very important</td>
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</table>
8.4 Appendix 4: experimental designs
This appendix contains the designed mailings that are used for the experiment.
Wist u al dat Herwijnen Machinery B.V. importeur is van Pronar recycling machines.

Pronar biedt u 4 type trommelzeven, waarvan de kleinste een trommellengte heeft van 4.4 m en de grootste een trommellengte heeft van 7.2 m. Ook is de trommelzeef te krijgen op rupsonderstel voor moeilijk toegangbare terreinen.

Alle machines van Pronar worden uitgevoerd met de beste componenten. Zo is al het hydraulic afkomstig van Danfoss, het lagerwerk komt van "SKF", kan als motor gekozen worden uit een CAT of Deutz, is er cleanfix aanwezig en tevens het automatisch smeersysteem van "Groeneveld".
Naast de trommelzeven, kunt u bij ons sinds kort ook terrecht voor Slow-Speed Shredders. Pronar heeft twee type beschikbaar, de MRW 2.85 en de MRW 2.10.10.

Wilt u meer informatie, bezoek dan onze website: http://www.pronar-recycling.nl

Of mail ons: info@herwijnenmachinery.nl
Van de Zandschulp Grond- en Sloopwerken (Rent4All Machineverhuur)

Pronar beste Prijs/Kwaliteit verhouding!

Gert van de Zandschulp, eigenaar van de Zandschulp Grond- en Sloopwerken uit Ede is sinds begin dit jaar in het bezit van een Pronar MPB 20.55. Van de Zandschulp is al heel wat jaren actief in het verhuren van allerlei bouwgerelateerde machines. Daarnaast is het bedrijf ook actief in het grond- en sloopwerk en de aannemerij.

Het concept van de Pronar trommelzeef past het best bij ons!

Van de Zandschulp was zich al enige tijd aan het oriënteren op een trommelzeef, waar het bedrijf
er steeds vaker een inhuurde voor het zeven van ingenomen grondstoffen. Daarnaast was er een redelijke drang aanwezig om de verhuurmarkt te betreden met een trommelzeef. Na het passeren van vele merken, paste het concept van de Pronar het beste, aldus Gert van Zandschulp. Zo is het wisselen van de trommel echt een fluitje van een cent, is het brandstofverbruik erg gunstig en is de machine uitermate makkelijk te bedienen. Daarnaast is er goed nagedacht over de kleine dingen, zo kan bij deze zeefmachine de achterbumper gewoon blijven zitten tijdens het zeven, is de bandsnelheid heel makkelijk in te stellen bij iedere band en kan de borstel op de trommel makkelijk ingesteld worden. Al deze kleine toevoegingen maken de machine erg goed!

Oplossingsgericht meedenken!

Buiten de Pronar machine is Van de Zandschulp ook erg te spreken over de service die Herwijnen Machinery Levert. Zo voelt de omgang met Herwijnen Machinery erg vertrouwd, wordt snel gehandeld bij vraagstukken en denkt Herwijnen Machinery vaak mee in oplossingen. Daarnaast zorgt Herwijnen Machinery met enige regelmaat voor zeefwerk, wat ook een leuke bijkomstigheid is, aldus Gert van de Zandschulp.

In de toekomst wil van de Zandschulp graag zijn verhuurvloot uitbreiden met meerdere zeefmachines. Hiernaast ziet de cijfers die van de Zandschulp ons en de machine toekende.

van de Zandschulp
TEL: 0318-484855
EMAIL: info@vandezandschulp.nl
Het totaalplaatje klopt gewoon!

Piet Hak, eigenaar van Hak B.V. uit Alblasserdam is eveneens eigenaar van een Pronar MPB 20.55. Piet kon op de recycling beurs in Gorinchem vorig jaar de zeefmachine niet aan zich voorbij laten gaan voor het aanbod dat Herwijnen Machinery hem deed. Het totaalplaatje klopte gewoon, aldus Piet Hak.

Ook Hak B.V. vond in Pronar de beste Prijs/Kwaliteit verhouding!

Hak B.V. uit Alblasserdam is een veelzijdig bedrijf, waar zei naar eigen zegge, geen nee verkopen op het gebied van grond, weg- en waterbouw. De klant volledig ontzorgen is wat belangrijk is voor Hak B.V. en dat doen zei dan ook. Daarnaast is Hak erg actief in het gebied van specialistisch grondwerk met aspecten als diep ontgraven en onderwaterbeton. Waar Hak B.V. zelf regelmatig zeefwerk had, waren zei niet echt op zoek naar een zeefmachine. Maar zoals Piet Hak het zegt "alles aan de machine klopte en voor de aanbieding die ik kreeg, kon ik hem niet laten staan". Ook Hak B.V. vond in de Pronar de beste Prijs/Kwaliteit verhouding.

Op de vraag waarom Piet Hak nou juist onze trommelzeef heeft gekocht antwoordde hij: "Het was het totaalplaatje dat klopte, de eerlijke uitleg, de solide bouw van de zeefmachine, de A-componenten die op de machine zijn bevestigd, het gunstige brandstofverbruik, de kennis die aanwezig was over de machine en de prijs natuurlijk."
Geen grote verhalen die niet nagekomen kunnen worden!

Nu terug kijkend, is Plet Hak erg te spreken over zijn Pronar zeefmachine en ook over de aanpak van Herwijnen Machinery. Hij benadrukt dat Herwijnen Machinery goed meedenkt bij vraagstukken snelle en goede service verleend, geen grote verhalen ophangt die niet nagekomen worden en dat de zeefmachine meer dan prima functioneert. De capaciteit is hoog, brandstofverbruik erg laag en daarnaast is de zeefmachine uitermate gemakkelijk te bedienen.

In de toekomst wil ook Hak B.V. graag zijn verhuurvloot uitbreiden met meerdere zeefmachines. Hiernaast ziet de cijfers die Hak B.V. ons en de machine toekende.

Hak B.V.
TEL: 078-6912351
EMAIL: info@hakbv.nl

Meer informatie: http://www.herwijnenmachinery.nl/pronar-trommelzeven/

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Graag delen wij onze voortgang met u

Our mailing address is:
Herwijnen Machinery B.V.
Wiekerseweg 6
Kekrdriel, Gelderland 5331 PR
Netherlands

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list
J. van Herwijnen - Herwijnen Machinery B.V.

Van: Herwijnen Machinery <info=herwijnenmachinery.nl@mail144.suw12.mcsv.net>
namens Herwijnen Machinery <info@herwijnenmachinery.nl>
Verzonden: woensdag 3 augustus 2016 16:09
Aan: j.vanherwijnen@herwijnenmachinery.nl
Onderwerp: [Test] Herwijnen Machinery: Nu 1 dag gratis een Pronar trommelzeef testen op uw werf!

Herwijnen Machinery B.V. biedt u gratis één dag demonstreren aan op uw werf!

Herwijnen Machinery B.V. biedt u geheel vrijblijvend de mogelijkheid deze Pronar MPB 20.55 te proberen voor 1 hele dag voor € 0,-
Pronar MPB 20.55 trommelzeef
- Trommellengte 5500 mm
- Trommeldiameter 2000 mm
- Capaciteit tot 200 m³/ uur

Keus uit trommel 15mm / 20mm / 40mm

Herwijnen Machinery B.V. verzorgt het transport en de uitleg van de machine!

Meer informatie over de zeefmachine: http://www.pronar-recycling.nl

Zeef uitproberen of vragen?
Bel: +31 654320147
of Mail: info@herwijnenmachinery.nl

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Graag delen wij onze voortgang met u

Our mailing address is:
Herwijnen Machinery B.V.
Wiekerseweg 6
Kekrdriel, Gelderland 5331 PR
Netherlands

Add us to your address book

Want to change how you receive these emails?
You can update your preferences or unsubscribe from this list
Wordt vandaag nog de eigenaar van deze Pronar MPB 20.55 trommelzeef!

Nu per direct leverbaar. Standaard zit op al onze machines minimaal 8 weken levertijd. Maar wilt u het liefst dat u morgen deze zeef al kunt gebruiken, dan is
dit uw kans. Onze "demo" zeef is namelijk per direct beschikbaar.

Vandaag kopen = morgen draaien!

Pronar MPB 20.55 trommelzeef (+/- 600 draaiuren)
- Puinrek boven bunker
- Cleanfix automatisch reinigingssysteem
- Groeneveld automatisch smeersysteem
  - Mageneetrol in overkorrelband
  - Hydraulische stempels rondom
- Afstandsbediening

Kortom, een zeer complete zeefmachine!

Wilt u geen 8 weken moeten wachten maar per direct aan de slag dan is dit uw kans!

Bel voor meer informatie: +31654320147
Of mail naar: info@herwijnenmachinery.nl