

Mystery shopping



in APR stores, Budapest
July, 2009

Made by: Human Value International

Methodology

■ Performance measurement

The mystery shopper acted as a real customer, used note taking as a regular customer.

■ The issue

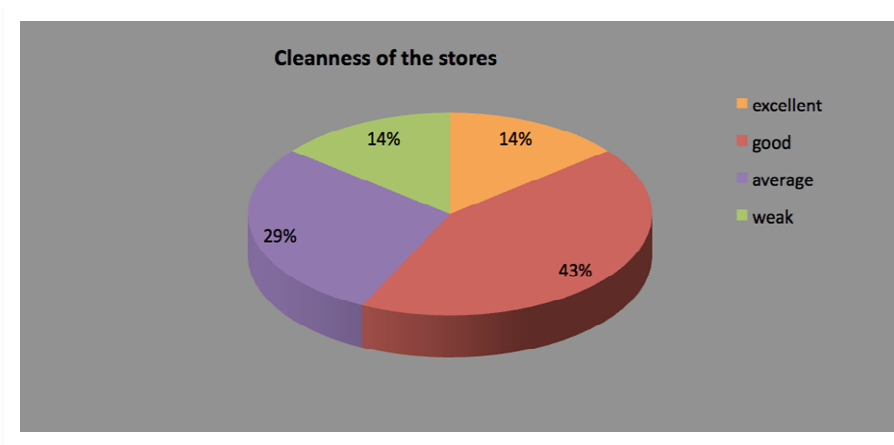
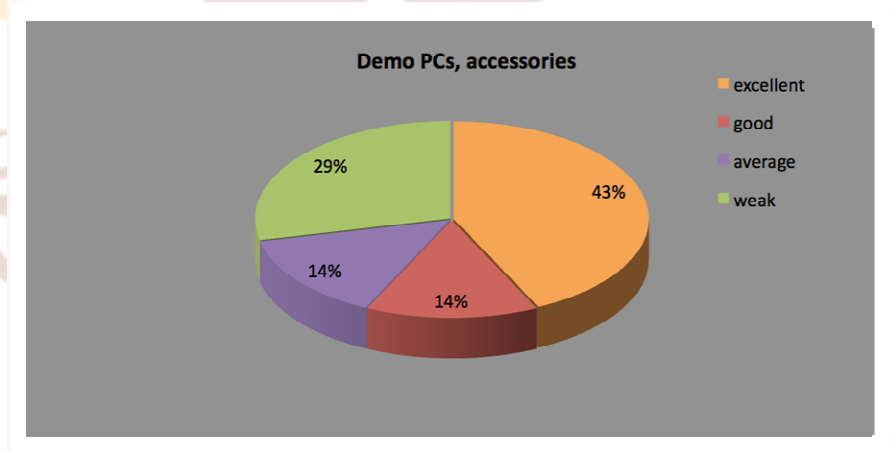
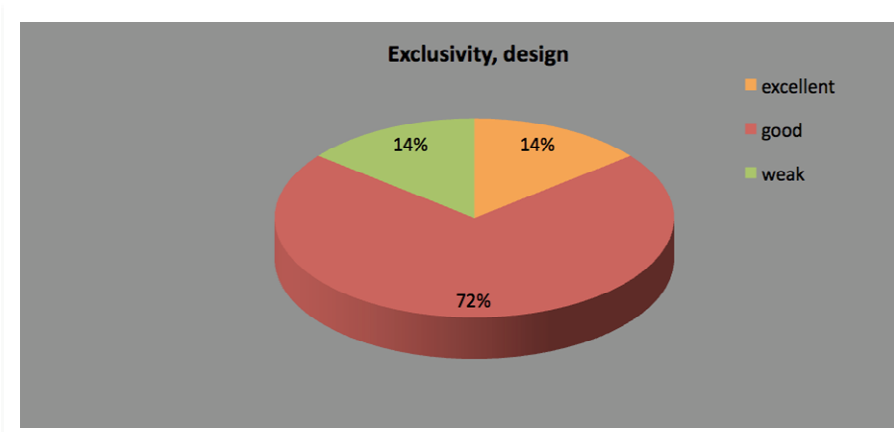
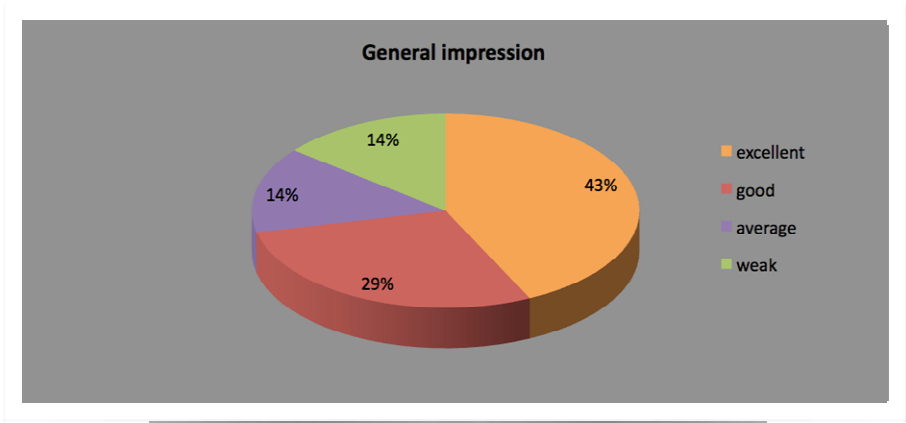
„Our English-Hungarian company deals with export-import and is based in Budapest. We have Windows environment and we use client PCs. However, in England they have Macs. In a couple of days we'll have two guests who are in high positions, thus we'd like to buy a desktop and a laptop. Before I do that, I need to know if the users will be able to use the PCs in the Windows environment, ie how compatible we will be and if they will be able to use our logistics programs on their Mac PCs?”

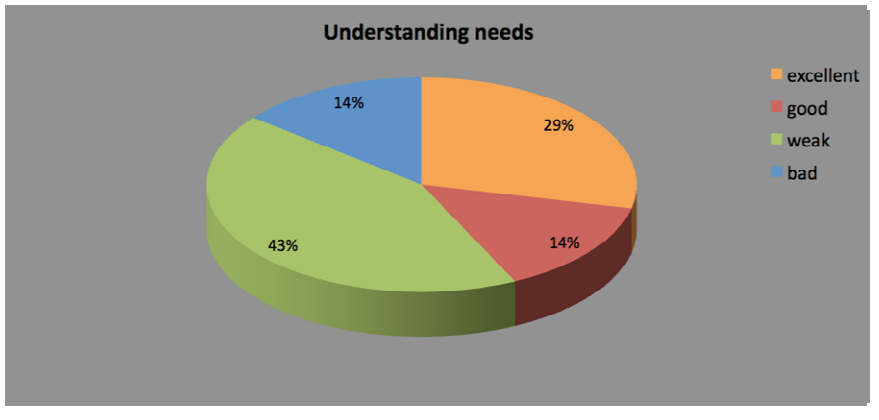
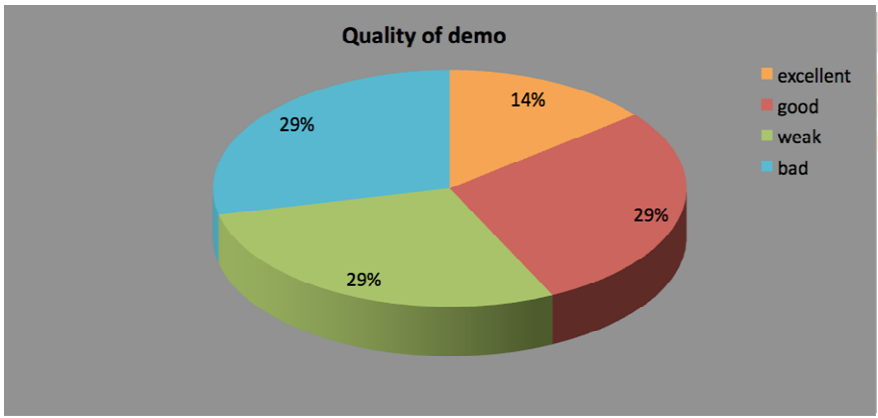
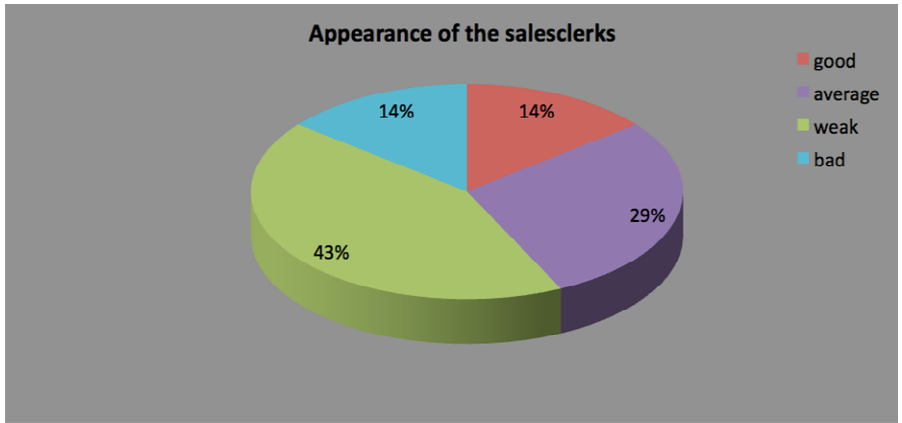
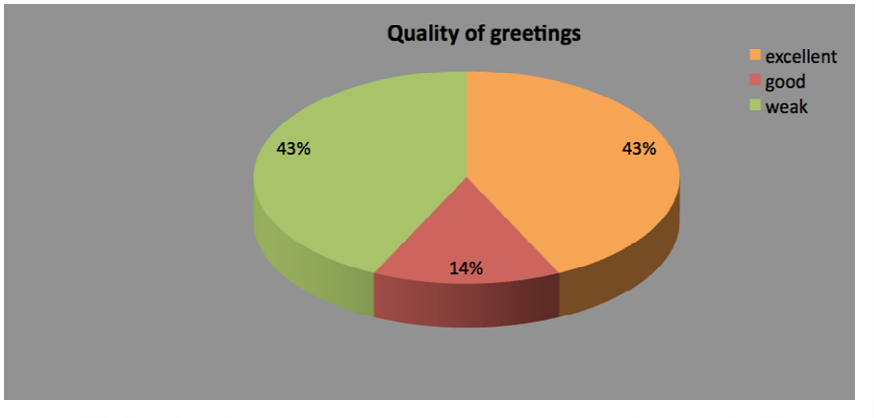
■ Main considerations of the mystery shopping

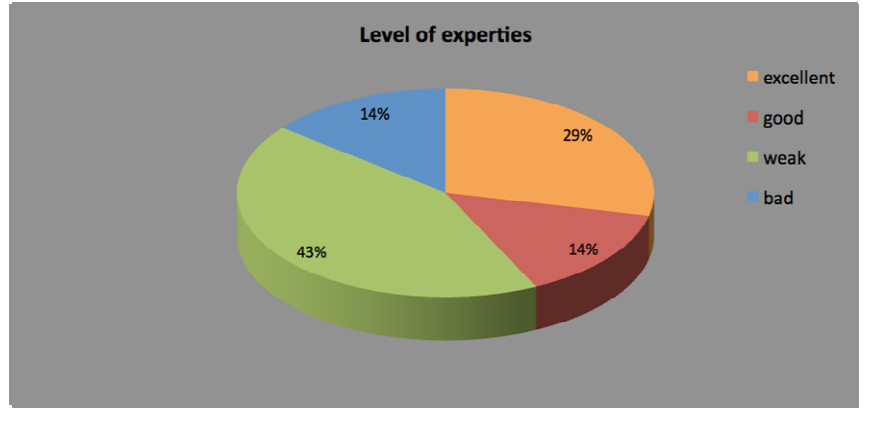
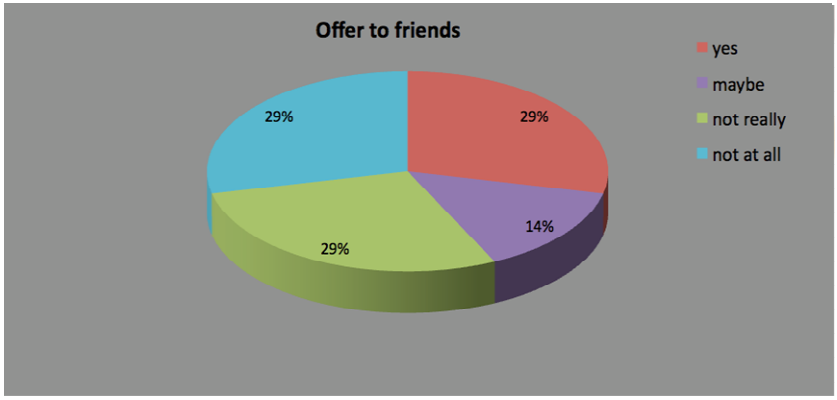
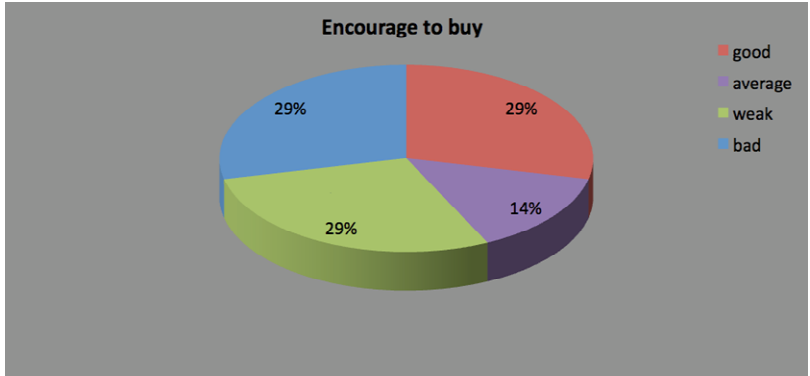
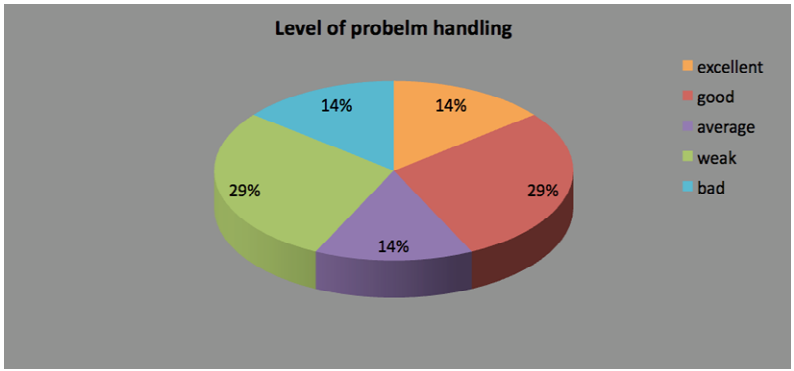
Score Group	Measures
Store Environment	Standard of store presentation
Greeting	Style of greeting, reaction time
Staff	Appearance, Style, Communication, Proactivity
Establishing needs	Understanding/identification of special customer needs
Presentation	Standard of demo demonstration
Product knowledge	Up-to-date knowledge of product portfolio
Overcoming objections	Staff responses to concerns about compatibility
Recommending accessories	Introduction of accessories
Product availability	Selection, availability
Follow up	Initiation of business relations with the potential customer

Summary









Details of the mystery shopping



Store #1

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #1 gives the downtown impression, matches the environment both from outside and inside. Looking in from outside through four big shop windows, the Apple design and structure is noticeable. The floor in the entire store is shiny and clean giving exclusive impression. Service center is also taking place inside of the store – that's the place for repair and worldwide customer service of Apple PCs and iPods. The showroom can also be found here, which is used also for training. The show-cases storing iPod accessories are in the back of the room.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

The store has presented a good number of demo computers in its showroom: 5 desktops and 5 Mac Books. Besides these, they had a big selection of iPods and the iPod touch could also be put to the test. According to the salesclerk, the customers could have had a closer look at the iPhone as well in the past, but it was removed 2 weeks ago from the shop because its alarm kept going on. There was a huge selection of accessories, cases and bags in the store.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

At the time of the visit, two sales were on duty. Only one or two visitors came by, so one of the sales could deal exclusively with me. Although she really tried to understand my needs, she had difficulties because of the lack of routine and could not meet my expectations. She introduced the equipment briefly, but did not go into details. She also didn't ask her colleague when she obviously could have used some support.

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

She was wearing jeans and a Tshirt with company logo. She had hair on her face, arms and leg as well, and she had neither make up nor jewellery. She also smelled bad.

■ Problem handling

When I asked her „how can I run Windows parallel on Macintosh?“ she was embarrassed and later offered Windows Teacher & Student pack (for 40K HUF), adding that she would not be able to include the VAT into the bill. She also mentioned to me that the price of the original Windows pack was 163K HUF, but they hadn't sold any.

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ great appearance of the store, ■ uniquely featured, busy location ■ wide range of demo Apple PCs 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ appearance and the professionalism of the salesclerk ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the show room gives great opportunity to handle professional presentations, which could attract more visitors, ■ to use the unique features of the location more, ■ direct contact to the tourists. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the store can miss the potential of the tourists, ■ without well done personal conviction and value added service, internet could support the potential customers.

Store #2

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #2 is in a less busy part of a shopping centre in Budapest placed near the washrooms. The entrance opens towards the store and since it is huge, it encourages to enter. Apple design can be recognized, the store is clean and gave exclusive impression.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

Demo equipments are by the wall: 4 desktops and 3 MacBook (2 MacBook Pro, 1 Mac Air). The lockable showcases could be found behind the counter. There where iPods (shuffle, nano, classic, touch), and iPhone accessories mainly in the middle price range. There where offered MacBook bags and cases in a limited number.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

On entering the store, the greeting happened right away and eye contact was established immediately. Right after my question I was invited to the demo equipment, the multi touch system was introduced, with the advantages of this. I was told which machines are compatible with the 2-finger version and which where compatible with the 3-finger one. The salesclerk printed an updated price list without a special request. He also explained in detail how the Windows and Macintosh systems could work together. He presented how to handle multiple documents at the same time, and how these differ from the Windows operating system. He highlighted to me the basic Mac accessories (built in camera, microphone, programs, etc.) and explained why the Office package can not be part of the softwares. The explanation was logical, ordered, and easily understandable. At the time of the visit two other sales were in the store standing by the counter. No other customers entered.

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

The salesclerk was an average looking, neat man in his early 20s, wearing a Tshirt with the Apple logo on it.

■ Problem handling

The sales was a kind and convincing young man. His expertise and commitment was obvious. He was happy to talk to the customer beyond the purchase as well, for example he said that if someone could break into the Macintosh system, that person would immediately be offered a dream job with an incredible compensation package.

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ exclusive store, ■ good looking and experienced sales. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the store is taking place at a less busy place of the shopping center therefore it is more work to convince the chilling out visitors, ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the show room gives great opportunity to handle professional presentations, which could attract more visitors, 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are alternative shops to by PCs and accessories.

Store #3

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #3 can be found near the entrance of a shopping Center in Budapest, but behind the escalator. Although it is easy to find the store, the customer has the impression that (s)he's in a separated, hidden area. The inviting entrance is flooring with parquet and triangle shaped, the left side of which is a clean glass surface. The store represents the exclusive Apple design.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

There were 3 MacBook demo machines (2 MacBook pro, 1 MacBook Air) placed on a clean, white counter on the right hand side of the store, right next to the entrance. The MacBook White was not there, though. On the left, there were 2 demo iMac PCs as well. On all the machines wonderful graphics and colored pictures of Apple were nicely presented. There were black, locked showcases and lockable showcases in the back, on the right hand side, where the iPod and iPhone accessories could be found. There were several kinds of cases and bags placed next to the desk top in the middle of the store. There were also two iPods with earpieces to try in the right hand side of the store. Next to these, there were also a wide range of audio solutions, mainly speakers displayed.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

On entering the store, the greeting happened right away and eye contact was established soon after. An extremely introvert young man greeted me with not much openness, and a weak sales attitude. He understood my question and took it seriously. However he had a positive approach, it was obvious that he was a beginner and lacked the deep professional knowledge and experience. The other sales did not come to help, although he would have had the chance and the time to do it. At the time of the visit there was one other sales in the store by the counter. During the time one or two other customers came by.

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

The sales was a not really a neat man in his middle 20s, wearing a black Tshirt with the Apple logo on it.

■ Problem handling

When asked about the MacBook White, the shop assistant told me that unfortunately they did not have a test one and he blamed the Apple wholesale representative, who wouldn't send one to them. However he finally pulled out a MacBook White under the counter, this was extremely dirty, used, uncared-for. When I asked how it could be cleaned, he answered with a straight face: „it didn't need any special attention or care.”

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the store is placed in the only one shopping center nearby. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ low level of the appearance and the experience of the salesclerk, ■ a few and dirty demo Apple PCs, ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to connect to the chilling out visitors, ■ to attract specially the local patriot characters of the town over there. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are alternative shops to by PCs and accessories. ■ without well done personal conviction and value added service, internet could support the potential customers.

Store #4

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #4 can be found in the main corridor of a shopping centre in Budapest. Because of the location the store has shop windows on two sides. The overall impression was a clean, structured store.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

All together 4 MacBooks and 4 desktops were displayed in different sizes. There was a big selection of bags and cases as well. In the show cases there were iPhone accessories, cases in the middle and lower price range.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

When I arrived there was one salesclerk in the store. Eye contact was not established even after the greeting. When asked, he answered briefly, didn't go into details, didn't present anything. Basically, his attitude was the following: „the test machine is over there, you can check out everything there”. The next questions were answered in the following way: „If you have something in particular in mind, come back.” On questioned about compatibility, he told me with a condescending tone that price was not everything and that I would have to buy the Office package as well for 150K HUF.

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

The sales was a short, approximately 25-28 years old man. He was wearing jeans and a black Tshirt with the Apple logo on it. He was not neat at all.

■ Problem handling

The young man didn't make a good impression and didn't look like an Apple fan either. He didn't appraise the product and he wasn't enthusiastic. He gave me the impression, that he didn't like his job, he wasn't motivated rather a survivor, who wanted to get rid of the customers as soon as possible. On leaving, I really felt like I wouldn't want to come back to this store again.

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the store is at a busy location, ■ wide range of accessories. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ incompetence and lack of hospitality of the sales, ■ according to the potential of the localization the store should be a bit bigger, ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to contact with the corporates around the area. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are alternative shops to by PCs and accessories, ■ without well done personal conviction and value added service, internet could support the potential customers.

Store #5

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #5 is in a busy part of a shopping center in Budapest. Since there are no shop windows, and the demo PCs and show cases are in a huge open area, at the first glance, this store looks rather like a show room. The flooring is parquet, which creates a clear distinction from the main floor of the shopping center building. The Apple design is immediately obvious: white counters, block shaped storages, black show cases.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

On both sides of the entrance there are demo PCs facing each other, at the back there are black show cases, in the middle of the store there are two white block shaped storages with the accessories in them. On the left, next to wall, there were, 4 MacBooks, on the right, next to the wall, there were 4 desktops. Compared to the other stores, there were less accessories presented: 5-6 different MacBook bags and some MacBook cases. Further more two grey iPods were displayed with earpieces next to an iPod touch. Colored iPods were displayed in the showcases as well.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

On entering, a polite, kind young man came to greet me right away. He did understand the customer need. During the entire conversation he looked me in the eye, he was able to keep the contact and did communicate. His expertise was obvious from the first sentences. He talked long about the compatibility of the Windows and the Macintosh. He clearly explained the advantages of the Macintosh PCs, but didn't want to convince me by all means. He informed me of the accessories as well. He called my attention to the connections between the prices and the options of MacBooks and of desktops. We agreed that one more visit would be necessary before making a purchase – I could then ask further direct questions and he would answer thoroughly. When asked about Windows, he suggested that instead of the 160K HUF Windows Office package I buy the Teacher&Student package, and he said he could give me a bill including VAT. However, he did warn me that in case we insist on the Windows technology, it might not be a good idea to buy a Macintosh. As an individual customer, I checked out the iPod touch too. In connection with this, the sales told me about the main features, explained how it works. At the time I was there, one more sales was present, behind the counter. 1-1 customers came by but after a few minutes, they left.

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

The sales was an average looking man wearing a Tshirt with the Apple logo on it.

■ Problem handling

The sales was able to concentrate on one customer during the entire time.

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Strong competence of the salesclerk, ■ ample store. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ only a few accessories, ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ since the store gives the impression of a showroom there would be opportunity to give professional presentations, and through this, to attract more visitors. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are alternative shops to by PCs and accessories.

Store #6

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #6 is in a popular area of a shopping center in Budapest, near the escalator. The store is separated from the main floor by a shop window – from the outside, the entire store is visible. The counter was pretty dirty and gave an untidy impression. This feeling was further emphasized by the shop assistant behind the counter by pulling out machines from boxes and unwrapping them.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

Compared to other stores, this one had the most demo PCs running mainly iMove and iPhoto softwares on huge monitors. There were wide range of accessories displayed on the back of the store at the counter.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

On the entering the store, the shop assistant greeted me immediately, and he made eye contact. He did understand my needs and his expertise was obvious. He did not want to convince me to make a purchase, but explained in detail all I had to know in connection with compatibility. He also mentioned that when using complex Excel macros, there might be issues with compatibility. He called my attention to the fact that if the user wants individually developed Microsoft systems, Macintosh might not be the best option. He also informed me that there are several free Windows applications that can be downloaded and it would be worth for our systems owner to keep those in mind. At the end of the conversation he was very enthusiastic to show me the advantages of Apple products. We walked to the demo PCs and there he showed me how to copy pictures and texts with one mouse movement. His love for the product and his commitment was obvious. He did not give me a price list, as he said he protected the rain forests and 9 out of 10 printed price list will end up in the waste bin in from of the cinema anyway. He also didn't offer to email it to me.

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

He was an average looking, brown haired young man fashionable unshaven.

■ Problem handling

The sales' high level of expertise was obvious, however he gave the impression of being tired. He did try to hide this and every time he was asked, he pulled himself together and gave an indeed detailed answer. Despite all these, I had the longest conversation with him.

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ expertise and commitment of the sales. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the impression of untidiness, dirty counter, ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ exploit more the expertise through training services and presentations. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are alternative shops to by PCs and accessories.

Store #7

■ Main characteristics of the store

Store #7 is in the popular, but very noisy area of a shopping center in Budapest. The store has no shop window, but a huge entrance, at the top, with a white label on black background. The emphasized separator between the store and the shopping center is the parquet. The counter is opposite to the entrance, the store has additional space at the back on the right. The black showcases are at the back, in the middle one can find the white block with the show products. All in all, the store doesn't give a pleasant feeling, rather an untidy one, although it follows the Apple design. This is emphasized by the dominant pattern on the floor.

■ Demo equipments, accessories

The store displays a very limited number of test items: 2 Mac Books; the 2 with the lowest performance. There was only one demo PCs but at that time it was out of order. There were a few audio accessories in the middle of the store on a white stand. At the back of the store and in the showcases there were a few bags and iPod, iPhone leather accessories displayed.

■ Communication and expertise of the salesclerk

I met the weakest, most negative, most disinterested worker here. I asked for a price list and he told me „the printer was out of order and anyhow, each item cost the same in all stores. Anyhow, the prices can be found on apple.hu so I should check that.”

■ The appearance of the salesclerk

The sales was an older man wearing a white Tshirt with an Apple logo on it. The other sales was an older, big, unkempt man.

■ Problem handling

During the entire time of the conversation it was obvious that he'd prefer ending the conversation and step away. Only one customer came by while I was there. The other sales came back to the store 20 minutes after my arrival, and then, while I was still there looking around, they had a loud conversation on how someone had just hit a dog and how the dog was suffering. Two visitors arrived in the meantime – neither of them was greeted.

■ Follow up

Didn't happen. She neither asked for nor gave me an e-mail address or phone number.

■ SWOT analysis of the store

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ easy to find store in a very busy shopping center. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ the attitude and behavior of the salesclerk, ■ there is no follow up.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ direct contact to the higher standard of living visitors with wider service portfolio and value added services. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ there are alternative shops to by PCs and accessories, ■ without well done personal conviction and value added service, internet could support the potential customers.