A Model for Comparative Analysis of Business Community Expectations of Printing Companies and Printer Perceptions of Those Expectations

Kevin Lloyd Hudson

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A MODEL FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS OF PRINTING COMPANIES AND PRINTER PERCEPTIONS OF THOSE EXPECTATIONS

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submitted by

Kevin Lloyd Hudson

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1992
A MODEL FOR COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF
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ABSTRACT

The problem of this study was to compare the Statesboro, Georgia business community's expectations of printing companies to the expectations printers perceive the businesses have. All of the local printers, and a sample of the local Chamber of Commerce corporate members (non-printers) were given identical survey forms which measured their expectations and perceptions. The forms were hand-delivered, picked-up the next day and tabulated to put the data in graphical form. A comparison of the two groups revealed some agreement and some disagreement in expectations and perceptions. After completing the study, it was determined that the research method is valid and produces information that can be used by the printing industry. Implementation of similar studies in other industries should be a valid method for analysis of business expectations as compared with how those expectations are perceived by the industry.
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Businesses in Bulloch County, Georgia have several options as to where to go to satisfy their printing needs. There are several companies in Bulloch County which do various types of printing. There are also companies in Savannah, Macon, Augusta and other cities which could draw business away from local printers.

Printing is needed by almost every business, and many businesses are in towns that have printers in the immediate area. That is the case in Statesboro and Bulloch County. To keep more local business in the area, the expectations local businesses have of the local printers should be known by the printers.

There may be benefits both in using local printers and in using out-of-town printers. This study sought to determine what local businesses expect of printers and what local printers think the businesses expect. A comparison of those expectations can help the local printers know how to satisfy the local businesses.
Statement of Need

It is possible that printing required by local companies, which could be done locally, is being sent to out-of-town printers. If true, this may be causing lost revenues for local printers, as well as other problems such as slower local industrial growth.

The information gathered by this study will create a tool to aid local printers in determining how to direct their self-promotion and growth for the mutual benefit of themselves and other local businesses.

The Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce has expressed an interest in the information gathered through the survey and may include a synopsis of the study in their newsletter.

Problem of the Study

The problem of the study is to compare the business community's expectations of printing companies to the expectations printers perceive the businesses have.

Sub-problems
Two sub-problems have been identified for the study. The main problem can only be solved upon solving the sub-problems, then comparing the two.

1. Determine the service expectations of printers as seen by local businesses.
2. Determine the perceptions of local printers in regard to what they believe local businesses expect of them.

**Strategy**

The study will be completed by giving the same questionnaire to both the printers and the other businesses. The survey form will be designed so that both groups can answer all of the questions, allowing for a comparison between printer service and product expectations. In this case, The corporate members of the Statesboro-Bulloch County Chamber of Commerce are the subject of the business side of the research.

A sample of the chamber members will be selected and surveyed. The results of that survey are to be compared to the answers given by the printers to determine if there is a difference in the perceptions of printers by the two groups.
Limitations and Controls

For the purpose of this investigation, the limits and controls at the time of development of the study are as follows:

1. The businesses and "local" printers are all located in Bulloch County, Georgia and within five miles of the city of Statesboro, which is the county seat of Bulloch County.

2. The data would be collected during August 1992.

Basic Assumptions

The basic assumptions of the study are as follows:

1. The study can be used as a model for future studies of a similar nature.

2. The study will be of value to printers in Bulloch County and elsewhere.

3. The data gathering processes proposed will be valid and appropriate.

4. The sample size selected will be representative of the population.

Definition of Terms
The terms and definitions listed below reflect the interpretation of the investigator for use in the study:

Printer - Any business which makes the majority of its revenue through printing on paper by the offset lithography method.

Commercial Printer - A printer which specializes in long-run, complex printing jobs which involve multiple processes.

Quick Copy Printer - A printer which specializes in short-run, simple jobs which can be done in a small amount of time.

Local Printer - Any printer in the city of Statesboro or within five miles of the city limits of Statesboro.

Out-of-Town Printer - Any printer not classified as a local printer.

Print Broker - An individual or agency which deals with printers on behalf of the clients of the agency.

Printed Materials - Mass-produced duplications of an image on paper through the offset printing method.

Local Businesses - Businesses which operate within five miles of the city of Statesboro which were active members of the Statesboro/Bulloch County Chamber of
Commerce as of June 1, 1992. (Unless otherwise indicated)

Questionnaire - The printed survey form used to gather data from the subjects of the study.

Perception - The way a person or group of people thinks another person or group acts or thinks.

Expectation - An action or object which a person or group believes can be achieved by or received from another person or group.

Nonsampling Error - An error in survey data not related to the method of sample size or subject selection, but caused by a lack of control beyond the realm of the sample selection.

Bias - The result of opinions expressed by an individual which are not the actual opinions, often due to non-interest or personal embarrassment.

Respondent - Anyone who receives and completes a questionnaire which is used for the purpose of a study.

Finishing - The processes done by printing companies after the image is put on the substrate including folding, trimming, cutting, binding, packaging, padding, perforating, die cutting, numbering and gluing.
Print Quality (Image) Levels - The following terms were used to describe various levels of print quality:

Fair - Capability to reproduce quality spot-color work and halftones.

Good - Capability of basic 4-color printing of color photographs.

Excellent - Capable of producing "pleasing color" quality color photographs with acceptable color matching.

Showcase - Capable of near-perfect color matching and registration of detailed color photographs with very fine-lined separations.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a difference in the expectations of local printers by local business customers and what the printers perceive the local businesses expect. A difference in the perceptions may be a reason some printing jobs are being sent out of town.

The method of determining why printing work is being contracted to out-of-town printers was to compare...
the local businesses' expectations of the local printers to the printers' perceptions of those expectations.

The information was gathered through a single survey questionnaire. The survey form was sent both to the local printers and the local non-printing businesses.

The results of the study may help printers change their quality, services, prices or promotions to keep the local business in the county.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF EXISTING INFORMATION

While reviewing the previously reported information on this subject, the researcher determined that analysis of similar studies in unrelated fields could lead to the development of a plan of action that could achieve the objective of this study.

J.R. Jones and E.J. Randall (1982) performed a similar study which dealt with a comparison of the expectations purchasers of transportation services had of salespersons and those expectations as seen by the salespersons.

The primary source of information about Bulloch County printers and their use was personal discussions with management at those printers. A wide variety of services are available, and virtually any type of offset printing job can be done at one or more of the printing companies.

The review of existing information which follows covers the following topics: general information,
verification of need, the design stage, implementation, sample selection, data collection and data analysis.

General Information

Rothstein (1991a) explains that in order for a printer to be able to deal with the public, the strengths of the printing company and the needs of the prospective customers must be matched. A printer "must know the predominant needs of [the] categorized prospect groups, and anticipate those needs in [a] marketing program," (1991, p. 96) said Rothstein.

He also notes that printers can receive new clients through referrals from satisfied customers (Rothstein, 1991b). That fact brings up the question of whether a printer's service is worthy of the clients' giving referrals to other businesses, according to Rothstein. Understanding and satisfying the needs of the business community around a printer is a necessary part of obtaining, and keeping, clients, he said.

Verification of Need for the Study

James L. Knight, Jr. (1992, July) said he tries to always use local printers for items his company,
Precision Marketing, needs printed. The company deals with designing and printing materials for both local and out-of-town companies. "The one thing we tend to have printed out of town is items that need to be printed on a web press. There is one web press in this area [The Statesboro Herald], but their quality is inconsistent. We usually deal with Chalker in Waynesboro [, Georgia]." (Knight, 1992, July)

Knight also indicated that most of the company's printing is done at Lewis Color Lithographers since Lewis does almost everything they need. "We do some of the jobs that require lower quality levels at various other local printers to cut costs. Lewis does such high quality work that they are sometimes too expensive when we are willing to sacrifice some quality for price on less-important jobs."

Lewis Color Lithographers does strive for "excellent" quality according to Tommy Lewis, general manager. (1992, June). "We do everything from simple photocopies to art prints, but we specialize in the higher quality work," said Lewis.

Lewis demonstrated that they can do a wide variety of tasks related to lithography. The only commonly used
major tasks not performed by the company (related to lithography) are color photo separation and web printing, but both processes were expected to be installed at the company by September of 1992, according to Lewis.

Another local businessperson (anonymous) said she sends most of the printing she requires to printers in Augusta or Savannah (Streeter and Kennickell, respectively).

According to the business owner, these two printers send sales representatives to visit her on a regular basis. She also said those two printers were recommended to her by associates. She indicated that she has used some local printers for small jobs, but did not feel they were of the quality she desired and could receive from out-of-town companies.

She said she was not aware of the services and quality available at Lewis Color Lithographers until recently when an employee decided to send a small job to Lewis (image setter output of a graphics file). The quality was satisfactory, but several problems were encountered in the process. DeLoach said she will
probably continue to use out of town printers, but will likely try Lewis again at another time.

**Design Stage**

Interviews with eight people involved in the printing industry in Statesboro and four major Georgia cities indicated they were not aware of any previous studies or models of this nature. A search of the holdings of most other Georgia college and university libraries, as well as periodical searches, indicated a lack of previous studies of printer/customer expectations.

In addition, only one other local study which had a similar objective was found. John D. Versaggi (1975) performed a similar study of consumer preferences as his thesis for the Georgia Southern College Department of Technology. His study dealt with Bryan County consumers' attitudes toward automobile safety devices. Again, the use of a survey questionnaire was analyzed to determine the attitudes of the subjects of the study.

Although there are distinct differences in the objects studied in Versaggi's study and this one (Automobile safety devices and printed materials,
 respectively), the general information gathering and analysis are similar. The automobile study was used as a partial model for the data analysis.

**Questionnaire Design**

In his book *The Design of Sample Surveys*, Des Raj (1972) stated that the design of the survey form is one of the most critical aspects of a study when the respondent will fill-out the form. "If it is a questionnaire to be answered by the respondent unaided," said Raj, "the form should be attractive looking. The questions should be simple and clear. The number of questions should be reduced to the barest minimum."

(1972, p. 120)

Questions should be arranged in an order which presents logic to the respondent. According to Raj, each question should be related somewhat to the previous question whenever possible. Convenience to the interviewer should also be considered, according to Raj, but not to the point of confusing the respondent.

Questions, whether factual or attitude-related, should be kept interesting and should only be included if necessary, said Raj. Making sure the respondent can
and will answer the questions should also be considered as a part of the survey form's design.

Wording should be carefully chosen, according to Raj. Terms used should be kept simple, well-defined and unbiased.

The two types of questions most often used are "open-ended" and "closed" (fixed response). For simplicity, both for the researcher and the respondent, closed questions which offer answer choices should be used whenever possible. Open ended questions should be used for responses which will vary greatly from one individual to the next, said Raj. (1972)

The statements expressed by Raj (1972) were reinforced by R. P. Vichas in The Complete Handbook of Profitable Marketing Research Techniques (1989). Vichas said the survey form must be free of "resistance, inertia, and obscurity" (1989) in order to obtain valid results.

He also stresses the importance of a cover letter explaining the reason for the research. The importance of the survey should also be stated, said Vichas.

He also discussed how response rate can be affected by the appearance, organization and length of the form.
The most important ingredient to a high number of returns is interest. A close relationship between the sample survey and the purpose of the survey must prevail (Vichas, 1989, p. 106).

Jones and Randall (1982) used five question variations on the questionnaire which they presented both to those who purchase and those who sell transportation services.

A "select all that apply" question was used to determine information about the respondent, as did a basic open-ended question. The general information questions included ranking characteristics and list requests.

The vast majority of the questions were "scale statements" where the respondent selected from "Strongly Agree", and "Strongly Disagree" on a five-point scale, with "No Opinion" as choice three. (Jones & Randall, 1982)

"Designing the survey represents one of the most critical stages in the survey development process" (Ferber, R., Sheatsley, P., Turner, A., & Waksberg, J., 1980, 9). According to a publication by the American Statistical Association (Ferber, et al., 1980), clearly
phrased questions without bias are needed; along with consideration of length, sequencing and types of questions; to produce accurate results.

Robert Ferber also mentions several possible causes of nonsampling errors, the bias inherent in responses to questions due to phrasing of a question, the lack of knowledge of the respondent and researcher errors. Techniques to avoid these errors were described; and it was noted that known biases found after the survey is administered should be mentioned in the presentation. (Ferber, et al., 1980)

Sample Determination

According to Chase and Barasch (1977, pp. 18-19), "Since it is impossible and unnecessary to interview all potential customers, selecting a representative sample to contact is sufficient. If the sample is properly selected, what is discovered about the sample will usually be true of the entire market ..." (1977, pp. 18-19)

E. Vockell (1983) referred to the sample’s response as simply an estimate of how the population would
respond if testing the population was feasible. A confidence interval is the degree to which a sample estimate should fall within a certain confidence of the opinions of the population.

According to tables published in Vockell's *Educational Research* (1983, pp. 113, 114) a sample size of 40 gives a confidence interval of ±16% with a 95% level of confidence. When the confidence interval is multiplied by the prescribed correction factor of 0.95 (1983, p. 114), A final confidence level of ±15.2 is given. It can be stated that a sample size of 40 will give the researcher 95% confidence that the sample responses accurately reflect the opinions of the population within ±15.2% (1983).

There are many methods of sample selection, one of which is a systematic probability sample. In this type of selection, each in the population has an equal possibility of being selected. A random point at the beginning of an organized set or list (such as an alphabetical membership directory) is selected and every nth item is selected down the list or other system (where n = the total population divided by the sample size selected). (1977).
An example is given by Chase and Barasch in their publication: If the value of \( n \) is 10, the selection would begin between the first and tenth possibilities. "For every 10th name, you would select the 10th, 20th, 30th, etc., until your sample was filled. This procedure can be used only if the population is organized in an orderly way..." (1977, pp. 18-19).

**Data Collection**

The most frequently used method of gathering information through a form filled-out by the respondent is the mail survey. (Lovelock, C.H., Stiff, R., Culwick, D., Kaufman, I.M., 1978) Another way of distributing these self-completed forms is through delivery and pick-up at the respondent's location, said Lovelock, et al.

The article discussed research conducted by Ira M. Kaufman and Ronald Stiff to test the benefits and detriments of using drop-off questionnaires. A 13-page survey form was delivered in three ways to randomly selected respondents.

1. One questionnaire was mailed to some of the respondents, and was later followed-up by mail and phone reminders.
2. Two surveys were mailed with instructions for each to be completed by a separate adult.

3. Two questionnaires were hand delivered to other residents, and the survey takers arranged a time to pick-up the form two days later. If the survey was not done by then, the survey taker returned again in four days. If the forms were still not ready, a stamped envelope, pre-addressed, was left with the respondent.

"The two mailing approaches resulted in similar response rates, with 34% of single questionnaire households responding and 38% of twin questionnaire households doing so," said Lovelock, et al. (1978, p 523) However, 74% of the households to which the forms were hand delivered completed the forms.

Besides the approximately doubled response rate from the drop-off survey forms, the cost per completed drop-off questionnaire was 18% lower than the cost of the double mail questionnaire and 37% lower than the cost of the single mail questionnaire

Lovelock, et al. discussed the possibility that the personal contact could bias the survey results. They took steps to verify non-interference by the survey-takers including personal visits and phone calls
to inquire of the questionnaire recipients whether the survey taker had led them to answer any questions differently than they would have.

They also discovered that nonresponse due to not-at-homes, refusals and nonreturn of questionnaires were identifiable, due to the personal contact. The result was a more valid survey with a lower per-response cost and greater response. (1978)

Donald Johnson (1987) also discussed four concepts which must be communicated to the respondents at the time they are contacted. His essential requirements were:

1. Why the person receiving the survey should respond.
2. The fact that the person is part of a sample, and represents a group of people.
3. The person's anonymity will be maintained.
4. The deadline for a response to be returned to be included in the study.

In the Jones and Randall Study, a mail questionnaire was used. An 88% response rate was achieved from the purchaser surveys and a 92% response rate was the result of the salesperson surveys. The
respondents were screened by telephone calls before the forms were sent, allowing verification of eligibility to participate in the study.

**Data Analysis**

The study of perceptions and expectations entails using the survey results to determine exactly what the public perception of a service is. (Moore, D. E., Christenson, J. A., & Ishler, A. S., 1987) It is not enough to simply gather information, but the data must be put into readable form so that decisions can be made based on the information. (1987)

Johnson, et al. (1987) said visual, graphical data presentation is needed in order for those who did not prepare the study report to quickly comprehend the information gathered. Bar charts were recommended for means, and pie and bar charts were recommended for different types of percentage data.

The pie chart was particularly useful for use in observing total characteristics, such as budgets or time spent on various processes, of a population. Bar charts for percentages were recommended for use with the comparison of multiple groups (1987).
Summary

Interviews with various persons allow the inference that there is a sufficient amount of printing capabilities and price ranges to satisfy the needs of the non-printing business community, but that idea cannot be confirmed without additional study.

A similar study was conducted by Jones and Randall (1982) dealing with the variances in the perceptions of expectations. Lovelock, et al. (1978) demonstrated that, at least in some cases, hand-delivered questionnaires can be more beneficial than mailed survey forms.

There are several types of questions which can be included in a questionnaire; all of which must be carefully worded to avoid bias. Also, a population survey can be opted in some situations as opposed to selecting a sample to survey.
CHAPTER 3

THE INVESTIGATION

The primary purpose of the study was to compare the business community's expectations of printing companies to the expectations printers perceive the businesses have. The method of investigation included two parts: (a) A questionnaire was delivered to the local printers to assess what they believe the local businesses expect of them, and (b) The same survey form was delivered to the local business to determine their actual expectations.

The Populations

The population of the printer survey was all businesses in Bulloch County whose primary function was to make duplications of materials on paper through the use of lithographic methods. The local printers were: A-Line Printing, Eagle Print Shop, Frank's Printing, Kenans Printing and Office Supplies, Lewis Color
Lithographers, Press Express, and The Statesboro Herald Publishing Company

The population of the second survey was all printing companies in Bulloch County that were listed as corporate members of the Statesboro-Bulloch County Chamber of Commerce as of June 1, 1992. These businesses constitute about 400 of the approximately 1300 licensed businesses in the Statesboro area. (Drinkard, 1992)

The Questionnaire

The data for the survey was gathered by a questionnaire (Appendix A) hand-delivered to each of the printers and local businesses by the researcher.

Due to the variability of the printing industry and the fact that most jobs are custom-designed, it is difficult to compare what printers charge and what customers expect to pay. In addition, print quality is dependent on what the printer wants to achieve (not all printers want to print showcase quality printing), as well as what the customer wants and is willing to pay for.
Instead of concentrating only on quality and prices, this study will look at what customers expect from printers overall. According to interviews conducted with the local printers, another factor affecting this decision is that there is such a wide variety of printers (with varying price and quality levels) located here in Statesboro, any business has a choice of which printer to take their printing to.

The questionnaire used in the Jones and Randall transportation sales study (1982) was used as a model for the general survey form for this study. The original form was tested and shown to be valid in the previous study. The original form consisted of 26 questions. The form for this study consisted of 25 questions.

On the questionnaire designed for use by this study, the first two questions asked for the company's primary function and length of time in operation. Questions 3 and 4 ask the respondent to rank, in order of importance, several pre-listed characteristics of printers.
Two questions asked the respondents to list the three things they (a) liked most and (b) liked least about dealing with printing companies.

The remaining 19 questions were in the 5-point Likert scale framework. A Likert scale question gives the respondent five or seven answer choices of related intensity (increasing or decreasing strength of opinion). This allows for useful tabulation, giving means which can be compared from one group to another. (Hill, 1988)

Subjects were given statements about dealing with printers and asked to select from a 1-5 scale on which 1 = "Strongly Agree", 3 = "No Opinion" and 5 = "Strongly Disagree."

The scale statements included the following topics:
1. Attitude and appearance of the printer.
2. Knowledge and professionalism of the printer.
3. Actions taken by the printer.
4. Perception made about printers.
5. Location of the printer.

The questionnaire would be sent with a cover letter (Appendix B) explaining the purpose and operation of the research.
Besides modeling the questionnaire after a previously conducted study (Jones, 1982), the survey form was submitted to the researcher's faculty advisement board for guidance and approval as a feasible and effective information-gathering instrument. Changes were made in the initial survey form according to the recommendations of the committee.

**Determination of Sample**

According to James Drinkard (1992), membership director of the Chamber of Commerce, there are 411 corporate members (business operators) in the chamber listings.

A sample size of 10% of the local businesses (40) was selected for the general business part of the survey according to the methodology prescribed by Vockell (1983) and outlined in Chapter 2 of this study. In addition, all of the local printers were included in the survey due to the small number of printers in the area.

A list of members of the Chamber of Commerce was obtained on June 1, 1992. This list included all 411 active corporate members of the chamber as of May 31, 1992. (Drinkard, 1992). The population was divided by
the sample size, 40. The resulting rounded figure, 10, was used as the spacing factor for the systematic probability sampling from the list.

A coin was tossed against a wall and fell at random on one of the business names on the list. After that business was marked, every 10th name was marked. The marked names became the sample selection for the survey. The resulting list (Appendix C) of names was used for distribution of the questionnaires.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The Researcher delivered the questionnaires to the businesses according to the sample selected from the corporate membership list provided by the Chamber of Commerce. According to James Drinkard of the chamber (1992), those persons were almost always the owner or manager of the company.

The surveys were delivered to the selected businesses with a cover letter (Appendix B) explaining the purpose of the study. A blank envelope was provided for the recipient to enclose the completed form for pick-up. This would allow the researcher to obtain the form without seeing the responses until all envelopes
were received. The recipients were promised that no envelopes would me marked or opened in any way that would allow the researcher to know any one business' response.

The forms were distributed in the afternoon on Monday, August 3, 1992. The respondents were told that the researcher would return to collect the completed form the following afternoon. The researcher then would attempt to contact each business by phone before noon the following day to remind them that the responses would be picked-up that afternoon. Questionnaires which were still not ready by the second visit (between 5:00 and 6:00 p.m.) were counted as nonrespondents.

Agencies which serve as print brokers for their clients were considered customers of printers for the purpose of this survey since they usually decide where to send the materials to be printed.

**Analysis of Data**

The answered questionnaires received within the prescribed time-frame were tabulated for comparison. The results are presented in Chapter 4 of this study.
The following formula was used for percentage calculations:

\[ P = \frac{N}{R} \times 100\% \]

- \( P \) = Percentages of replies
- \( N \) = Number of replies
- \( R \) = Total number of replies
- 100\% = Total percentage

The following formula was used for mean calculations:

\[ M = \frac{\sum N}{N} \]

- \( M \) = Average (Mean) response
- \( N \) = Number of responses
- \( \sum N \) = Sum of all responses

**Summary**

The population considered for the printer surveys was all printers in Bulloch County. The population for the general business survey was all businesses in the area listed by the Chamber of Commerce. The survey forms were identical to allow for valid comparison.
The questionnaire was intended to determine the expectations of the businesses in the community, as compared to how those expectations are perceived by the printers.

The questionnaires were hand-delivered and picked-up by the researcher. They were then totaled and analyzed by the researcher. The results are displayed in Chapter 4 of this report.
CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The problem of the study was to compare the business community's expectations of printing companies to the expectations printers perceive the businesses have.

The data compiled through the administration of the questionnaire was tabulated using the formulas given in Chapter 3 and converted to graphical illustrations. Tables with exact means and percentages are included in the appendices.

Following are the results of the surveys in written and graphical forms. Exact percentages are listed in the appendices and the conclusions made as a result of the data gathered are presented in Chapter 5 of this study.

Response Rates

Forms were delivered to 39 of the 40 general businesses selected for the survey. One of the selected
businesses, FCC Recycling, was out of business. Forms were also delivered to the seven local printers.

When revisiting the printers and other businesses where questionnaires were dropped off, 82% of the forms had been completed. Of the 37 forms received, 6 were from printers and 32 were from other businesses.

One additional form was received, but the respondent had failed to complete the side of the form which identified the business type and age. That survey form, along with another which was only filled-out on the front side, was set aside as invalid. This gave a valid response rate of 86% for the printers and 80% for the general businesses.

With the exception of the sample subject that was out of business, all those companies which did not respond (9 others) said they didn’t have time.

Full percentages and distributions are displayed in Appendix D. This table in the appendix is also broken down into the types of businesses which responded and is subdivided by the age of the business.

**Types of Businesses**

The questionnaires completed indicated that they were from six categories of businesses:
printing/publishing (the comparison group [6]), retail/sales (8), tourism/hospitality (1), manufacturing (2), restaurant/food services (3) and professional services (17). The retail/sales category was then widened to include the tourism/hospitality form, since the services are similar and only one form was received for the tourism/hospitality category. This brought the count of retail/sales business replies to nine.

Ages of the Businesses

Only three of the businesses surveyed had been in business less than two years. Five of the businesses had been in operation from 2 to 5 years. Two indicated 5 to 10 years in business, and 21 said they had operated for over 10 years.

A detailed listing of these numbers, cross-tabulated with the types of businesses, is displayed in Appendix D.

Data Presentation

The charts which follow indicate the responses to the questionnaire. A comparison of the responses by the printers to those by the other businesses can be made on
each chart. Each of the charts compares the average (mean) response by printers to that of all other businesses combined.

Most of the charts also break the results down by the type and age of the business respondents. This breakdown was used on the Likert-scale questions to determine whether the age of a business (and possibly the experience of the business operator) has an effect on the attitudes of the business operator.

**Initial Analysis**

Some basic observations can be made from a glance at the data gathered from the printers and other businesses. Agreement is seen on some factors, while the two groups seem to be thinking very differently on others.

The service offered by the printer, the professional knowledge of the printer and the importance of low prices were three particular points on which the businesses' expectations did not match the printers' perceptions of those expectations.

The two groups generally agreed on the importance of quality and the impact that location can have on a
printer's business. Comparisons of questions about how the two groups felt the printer should present himself or herself varied according to the questions. The exact mean values used for production of the charts can be found in Appendix E.

The Data Charts

The results of the questionnaire are shown in figures 1 through 23.

Figure 1 illustrates the rankings given by the respondents to five attributes of printers. The printer's professional knowledge (b) was considered most important by many of the groups. The least important attribute was "Gifts and other extras given to customers."

Printers and other businesses appear to closely agree on the importance each of the attributes.
Question 3: Using 1 as most important, 2 as second most important, etc., through 5, rank the following attributes of printers as you feel the customer perceives their order of importance. Please rank all attributes.

a. Appearance of facilities and personnel.
b. Printer's professional knowledge.
c. A positive and pleasant personality.
d. A willingness to work closely with customers.
e. Gifts and other extras given to customers.
Figure 2 illustrates the rankings given by the respondents to three factors concerning printing. All groups responded that quality is the most important factor of a printing job.

Printers indicated their belief was that customers considered price as the second most important factor, while the businesses indicated that speed was more important overall.
Question 4: Using 1 as most important, 2 as second most important, etc., through 3, rank the following attributes of printers as you feel the customer perceives their order of importance. Please rank all attributes.

a. Quality of Product
b. Speed of Service
c. Price of Product
Figures 3 and 4 illustrate the responses received on the open-ended questions. Respondents were asked to list, in order of importance, three factors they liked most or liked least about dealing with printers. Answers given as the first choice were weighted as such by applying three “points” to that response in the printer or general business category. The responses listed as second and third were given two points and one point, respectively. Points were totaled, and the responses with the most points are displayed in figures 3 and 4.

In figure 3, the question asked what customers liked most about dealing with printers. Printers rated personal service and printer knowledge as what they perceived business customers considered most important, while the other businesses again indicated the importance of product quality and the speed of service as most important to them.
Question 5: Please list, in order of importance, three things you think customers like most about dealing with printers.

- Personal Service
- Product Quality
- Printer Knowledge
- Speed of Service
- Friendly Personality
- Creative Advice*
- Good Prices
- Delivery Service
- Good Communication

* No printers indicated "Creative Advice" on the questionnaire.
In figure 4, the question asked what customers liked least about dealing with printers. Printers rated waiting/late work, high prices and impatience as what they perceived business customers considered most important, while the other businesses agreed that high prices and waiting/late work were most important to them.
Question 6: Please list, in order of importance, three things you think customers like least about dealing with printers.

- Waiting/Late Work
- High Prices
- Impatience*
- Mistakes*
- Unprofessional Attitude
- No Delivery
- Lack of Product Info.*
- Pushy Selling*
- Poor Quality*

* Only one group, either printers or others, indicated each of these answers.
Figure 5 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether the appearance of a printer's facility and personnel affected the amount of business received by the printer. Printers and other business agreed with the statement. Restaurants especially agreed with the statement, but retail businesses only mildly agreed.

Figure 6 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether a representative of the printer should visit the customer's business occasionally. Printers agreed somewhat more so than did the general businesses. Professional services and manufacturing companies were less agreeable to the idea than were other groups.

Figure 7 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether a well-organized printing facility gives the impression of quality work. All groups, especially restaurants, agreed with the statement. Printers agreed slightly more than other businesses, in general.

Figure 8 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether a printer always needs to know the competitors' capabilities. General businesses indicated the printer should know about the competitors, but the printers did not feel so strongly about the need to know about the competitors.
Figure 5

Statement 7: In general, a printing company which presents a good appearance in its facilities and personnel will get more business than those who do not.
Figure 6

Statement 8: A representative of the printer should personally visit the customer's business occasionally.
Statement 9: A printer with a well-organized facility gives the impression that the printer does quality work.
Statement 10: A printer’s knowledge of all the competitors’ capabilities is not always necessary.
Printer Expectations

Figure 9 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether printers should have a clear policy on handling billing and payments. Printers did not agree as uniformly as the other businesses. Professional services which had been open for over five years, however, tended to agree with the printers—that the clear billing/payment policy was not always needed.

Figure 10 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether the printer should provide information to the customer about their printing services. In general, all group totals fell somewhere between agree and strongly agree, with 2 to 5 year-old businesses averaging about neutral on the statement.

Figure 11 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether a printer should show samples of their capabilities. Printers did not agree as strongly as did the other businesses, but most all businesses agreed with the statement.

Figure 12 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether a printer should have a preset price schedule. Printers indicated they didn't necessarily agree or disagree overall, but most of the other businesses agreed that a price list should be available.
Statement 11: A printer should have a clear policy on handling customer billing and payment procedures.
Statement 12: The printer should provide information to the customer about their printing services.
Statement 13: A printer should show the customer representative samples of their capabilities.
Statement 14: A printer should have a preset price schedule which is available to customers.
Figure 13 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether a printer should take as much time as necessary to understand the quality expected by the customer. Again, printers agreed, but not as strongly as did the other businesses.

Figure 14 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether agreements made with the printer should be confirmed in writing. In this case, the printers agreed more strongly than the other businesses, especially the restaurants.

Figure 15 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether it is appropriate for a printer to criticize his competitor if the claim can be substantiated. With the exception of the manufacturing companies, businesses and printers felt this should not be done.

Figure 16 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether competent printers are positive, self-assured and feel they are the best at what they do. Printers agreed more so than other businesses, particularly retail/sales companies.
Figure 13

Statement 15: A printer should take as much time as necessary to understand the quality expected by the customer.
Figure 14

Statement 16: Agreements made with the printer should be confirmed in writing.
Statement 17: It is appropriate for a printer to criticize his competitors as long as he or she substantiate the claim.
Statement 18: The competent printers are positive, self-assured and feel they are the best at what they do.
Figure 17 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether personal visits from a printer are likely to increase a company’s use of that printer. Printers agreed slightly more than other businesses. Manufacturing firms, however, did not agree.

Figure 18 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether high quality printers are easy to get in touch with during the day. Most businesses agreed about the same. Restaurants were not agreeable, though.

Figure 19 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether high quality printers had higher prices than the competition. No opinion was indicated by most of the businesses. Printers, however, somewhat disagreed.

Figure 20 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether customers prefer to deal with printers located nearby. Printers and other businesses agreed about the same, but manufacturers and restaurants were less agreeable.
Figure 18

Statement 20: High quality printers are easy to get in touch with during the day.
Statement 19: Personal visits from a printer are likely to increase a company's use of that printer.
Statement 21: High quality printers have higher prices than their competition does.
Statement 22: In general, customers prefer to deal with printers located nearby.
Figure 21 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether customers usually use the same printer when they need something printed. Printers agreed somewhat more than other businesses, but manufacturers disagreed.

Figure 22 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether using printers located in other cities implies consistent quality of the printed materials. Neither printers nor other businesses expressed agreement or disagreement in general.

Figure 23 illustrates the opinions of the groups on whether using a local printer is more convenient than sending print jobs out of town. Printers and other businesses agreed about the same, and manufacturers and restaurants strongly agreed.
Statement 23: Customers usually use the same printer each time they need something printed.
Figure 22

Statement 24: Using printers located in other cities implies consistent quality of the printed materials.
Statement 25: Using a local printer is more convenient than sending a printing job out of town.
CHAPTER 5

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The problem of this study was to compare the business community's expectations of printing companies to the expectations printers perceive the businesses have of them.

This study was meant to serve as a model for comparison research into the expectations business customers have of printing companies. The study could be replicated in a number of ways, or could be used as a model for similar studies in other industries.

The data obtained through this and similar studies can also be used in various ways. The printers, in this case, could compare their individual feelings to those of the community they serve to see how they could change their marketing techniques or attitudes toward dealing with customers. The data can also be obtained through repetitive surveys to assist in predicting changes in the market.
Recommendations for Replication

This study was performed with a small sample of a small population (10% of the 411 active corporate members of the Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce - 40 business surveys). Future studies could include a sample of the entire business or consumer population of a geographic or demographic population.

Variation of Research Topic

The survey form and objective of this study were derived from a study performed ten years ago by Jones and Randall (1982). Similar variations could be made for almost any service industry, whether the "customer" has geographic proximity to the industry sites or not.

Careful planning is needed to conform the survey instrument to other industries. Many of the questions on the form used for this study were simply rephrased, while others were replaced by questions which dealt more directly with the desires of the researcher.
Questionnaire Improvement

Although the survey form used gave many pieces of valuable information, two of the questions were not properly answered by many of the respondents.

The ranking questions (numbers 3 and 4 in Appendix A) were intended to be answered by ranking the listed attributes in order of importance. Many respondents used the same number on different attributes, rather than using each number only once.

It is recommended that the question instructions be rephrased to include the following statement: "Please use each number only once." This should eliminate some of the confusion about the questions.

Also, the subjects could be asked approximately how much they spend on local printing annually. This information would be useful in determining the validity of the responses. Businesses which are branches or franchises, or have a "home office" elsewhere, may not deal with local printers enough to have expectations valid to the survey.
Questionnaire Administration

Another minor problem encountered in the administration of the survey was the lack of responses to the two open-ended questions. Since these questions are likely to take longer to consider and answer, the short amount of time allotted for completion of the form may have led many to skip the section altogether.

About 24 hours was given for the subjects to complete the form. Some were working on the form when the researcher arrived to pick them up. A longer time span should be given to the respondents.

The personal delivery and pick-up of the questionnaire appears to be effective, despite the possibility of altered answers due to the respondents' possible lack of confidence in the anonymity if the survey. The form used for this study did not ask for specific, confidential information, so the possibility of bias should be lower than on personal surveys.

The approximately 80% response rate is well-above the needed level of feedback. Also, the delivery and pick-up cost the researcher approximately seven dollars of gas and about ten hours of time where mailing the forms along with pre-stamped envelopes could cost about
$29 in postage and still take about 2 to 3 hours to prepare for mailing. The response time was cut from approximately 1 to 3 weeks to 24 hours.

The survey methodology appears sound and is recommended for possible replication in similarly small geographic areas.

Use of the Data Obtained

The data obtained through this study, as well as that found through similar research, can be used by industry to observe the market to determine what steps to take in the present and future to satisfy customers.

Knowing the attitudes and expectations of the market is an integral part of any marketing plan. Comparison of the expectations of the market to what industry thinks the customers want can lead industry in the direction needed for customer satisfaction.

Repetitive applications of studies of this type can help industry track changes in consumer expectation and perception trends. Annual (or other time measurements) replications of a study such as this one can also help industry keep track of their own service and quality as seen by their customers.
Recommendations for Further Research

The following research studies could be performed to continue study into the relationship between expectations and how those expectations are perceived:

• Perform a similar study dealing with non-business consumers' expectations of the Statesboro area and compare the results to the businesses' expectations as indicated in this study.

• Perform a similar study using the entire business population of Statesboro (or another area) instead of only Chamber of Commerce members.

Summary

After completing the study, it was determined that the research method is valid and produces information that can be used by the printing industry. Implementation of similar studies in other industries should be a valid method for analysis of business expectations as compared with how those expectations are perceived by the industry.
Printer Expectations

Appendix A

Questionnaire
A SURVEY OF ATTRIBUTES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF PRINTING COMPANIES

Remember, your anonymity is assured, and your responses will only be used for tabulated information.

1. Which of the following is your company's primary service? (Please check only one.)
   - Printing/Publishing
   - Professional Services
   - Restaurant/Food Services
   - Manufacturing
   - Maintenance
   - Construction
   - Tourism/Hospitality
   - Entertainment
   - Art/Design
   - Agricultural/Farming
   - Retail/Sales
   - Other: __________________________

2. How many years has the business been in operation?
   - 0-2
   - 2-5
   - 5-10
   - Over 10

3. Using 1 as most important, 2 as second most important, etc., through 5, rank the following attributes of printers as you feel the customer perceives their order of importance. Please rank all attributes.
   
   a. Appearance of facilities and personnel. _____
   b. Printer's professional knowledge. _____
   c. A positive and pleasant personality. _____
   d. A willingness to work closely with customers. _____
   e. Gifts and other extras given to customers. _____

4. Using 1 as most important, 2 as second most important, etc., through 3, rank the following attributes of printers as you feel the customer perceives their order of importance. Please rank all attributes.
   
   a. Quality of product. _____
   b. Speed of service. _____
   c. Price of product. _____

5. Please list, in order of importance, three things you think customers like most about dealing with printers.
   1. ________________________________
   2. ________________________________
   3. ________________________________

6. Please list, in order of importance, three things you think customers like least about dealing with printers.
   1. ________________________________
   2. ________________________________
   3. ________________________________

Please continue on the back of this sheet.
Please circle the response that is closest to your own feelings:
(The term "Printer" refers to any printing company's representative)

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7. In general, a printing company which presents a good appearance in its facilities and personnel will get more business than those who do not.

8. A representative of the printer should personally visit the customer's business occasionally.

9. A printer with a well-organized facility gives the impression that the printer does quality work.

10. A printer's knowledge of all the competitors' capabilities is not always necessary.

11. A printer should have a clear policy on handling customer billing and payment procedures.

12. The printer should provide information to the customer about their printing services.

13. A printer should show the customer representative samples of their capabilities.

14. A printer should have a preset price schedule which is available to customers.

15. A printer should take as much time as necessary to understand the quality expected by the customer.

16. Agreements made with the printer should be confirmed in writing.

17. It is appropriate for a printer to criticize his competitors as long as he or she can substantiate the claim.

18. The competent printers are positive, self-assured and feel they are the best at what they do.

19. Personal visits from a printer are likely to increase a company's use of that printer.

20. High quality printers are easy to get in touch with during the day.

21. High quality printers have higher prices than their competition does.

22. In general, customers prefer to deal with printers that are located nearby.

23. Customers usually use the same printer each time they need something printed.

24. Using printers located in other cities implies consistent quality of the printed materials.
Appendix B

Cover Letter
August 3, 1992

Corporate Members
Statesboro-Bulloch Chamber of Commerce

Dear Chamber Member:

I am a GSU graduate student planning to graduate in August. As a part of my graduate studies, I am writing a thesis in which I will compare business expectations of printers to how printers perceive those expectations.

In order to gather this information, I have developed the enclosed two-page, 25-question survey form. I would greatly appreciate it if you could take about five minutes to answer the form for me. Your honesty is appreciated and your anonymity is assured. It is not the desire of the researcher to know who filled-out any particular form. When you have completed the form, please place it in the enclosed envelope. I will not mark any envelopes and no envelopes will be opened until all have been collected.

I will drop back by Tuesday afternoon (tomorrow) to pick-up the envelope. I realize this does not allow much time, so I have created the questionnaire in such a way that should not take long to complete. Feel free to let me know if any questions on the form are unclear.

If you have any questions, you may call me at 681-0566 or 489-3358 or the head of my thesis committee, Dr. Keith Hickman, at 681-5761.

Thank you,

Kevin L. Hudson

enc: questionnaire, blank envelope
Appendix C

List of Companies Asked
to Participate in the Survey
A-Line Printing
American Fast Photo
Andrews Klean Corner
Bermuda Run
Bernard's Jewlers
Brown's Nursing Home
College Book Store
Dairy Queen
Dingus Magees
Dr. A. Deo Kline
Dr. Carl Grimes
Dr. Doug Cope
Dr. Harvey Elerson
Dr. Hudson J Powell
Dr. R. Whitman Lord
Dr. Sherri Becker
Dr. Thurman Clemmons
Eagle Health Club
Eagle Print Shop
Farmers & Merchants Bank
First Wachovia Bank
Frank's Printing
Friedmans
Hendley Properties
Henry's Haircuts
Herald Publishing
Howard Lumber
Kenan's Printing & Office Supplies
Kennedy Concrete
Lewis Printing
Medical Center Pharm
Orthopedic Clinic
Southeastern Mortgage Corp.
Statesboro Imaging
Pine Trace Inn
Press Express
Robbin's Packing Co
Statesboro Plumbing & Electrical
T. E. Rushing Peanut Co
T. J. Morris
Taco Bell
The Crate
The Statesboro Georgian
Thigpen, Hagen & Lanier, CPA's
Winnellson
Appendix D

Total Survey Response Percentages
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**N** = Number of respondents in each category  
**PN** = Percentage of total respondents  
**TN** = Percentage of group respondents
Appendix E

Total Survey Response Means
## Printer Expectations

| GROUP       | AGE | 3a | 3b | 3c | 3d | 3e | 4a | 4b | 4c | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
|-------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| Printers    | Mean| 3.7| 3.2| 2.2| 2.7| 1.3| 2.0| 2.7| 1.8| 1.3| 1.3| 2.3| 2.2| 1.7| 1.8| 3.2| 2.0| 1.3| 4.0| 1.5| 1.8| 2.2| 3.7| 1.8| 2.2| 2.8| 1.5|
| Others      | Mean| 3.3| 2.5| 2.2| 2.4| 1.1| 2.3| 2.0| 1.8| 1.9| 1.6| 3.5| 1.5| 1.4| 1.4| 1.0| 1.6| 1.6| 1.8| 3.8| 2.0| 2.2| 2.0| 2.9| 1.8| 1.8| 2.7| 1.6|
| Retail      | Mean| 2>5| 3.5| 2.5| 2.0| 5.0| 1.0| 2.5| 1.5| 2.0| 2.0| 1.0| 4.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 5.0| 3.5| 3.0| 4.0| 2.0| 2.5| 3.0| 2.0|
| Retail      | 5+10| 4.0| 3.0| 2.0| 1.0| 5.0| 1.0| 2.0| 3.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0|
| Retail      | Mean| 10>15| 3.0| 1.2| 2.0| 1.8| 3.3| 1.3| 2.3| 2.2| 2.5| 1.5| 2.0| 4.0| 1.5| 1.3| 1.3| 1.7| 1.3| 1.8| 3.8| 2.3| 2.2| 2.3| 3.5| 1.8| 2.0| 2.5| 1.8|
| Retail      | Mean| 10>15| 3.3| 1.4| 2.2| 1.8| 3.9| 1.2| 2.4| 3.3| 2.2| 1.7| 1.7| 3.7| 1.5| 1.3| 1.2| 1.4| 1.3| 1.7| 3.8| 2.6| 2.3| 2.3| 3.4| 1.8| 1.9| 2.7| 1.8|
| Manufact.   | Mean| 10>15| 3.5| 1.5| 3.5| 1.5| 5.0| 1.0| 2.5| 5.0| 1.5| 2.0| 1.5| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0|
| Manufact.   | Mean| 10>15| 3.5| 1.5| 3.5| 1.5| 5.0| 1.0| 2.5| 5.0| 1.5| 2.0| 1.5| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0|
| Restaurant  | Mean| 2>5| 5.0| 3.0| 4.0| 5.0| 3.0| 1.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0|
| Restaurant  | Mean| 10>15| 2.5| 1.0| 1.5| 2.0| 5.0| 1.5| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 5.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.0|
| Restaurant  | Mean| 10>15| 3.3| 1.7| 2.2| 3.0| 4.3| 1.3| 1.7| 2.3| 1.0| 1.0| 1.0| 4.0| 1.0| 1.7| 1.0| 2.3| 1.0| 2.7| 3.3| 1.0| 1.3| 2.7| 3.0| 1.7| 1.3| 2.7| 1.0|
| Professional| Mean| 0>1| 4.3| 1.7| 3.0| 1.3| 4.7| 1.0| 2.7| 2.3| 2.3| 2.3| 3.0| 1.3| 1.0| 3.7| 1.7| 1.7| 1.7| 3.7| 2.0| 2.3| 2.0| 2.7| 1.3| 1.3| 3.3| 1.3|
| Professional| Mean| 2>5| 2.5| 1.0| 2.5| 2.0| 5.0| 1.0| 2.0| 2.0| 1.0| 3.0| 1.5| 3.5| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 1.0| 2.0| 4.5| 3.5| 2.0| 1.0| 1.0| 1.5| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0| 2.0| 1.0|
| Professional| Mean| 5>10| 3.0| 1.0| 2.0| 2.0| 5.0| 1.0| 2.0| 3.0| 3.0| 2.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0| 4.0| 2.0|
| Professional| Mean| 10>15| 3.1| 1.2| 2.6| 2.5| 4.5| 1.1| 2.3| 2.2| 1.6| 2.1| 1.5| 3.3| 1.8| 1.5| 1.6| 1.7| 1.5| 1.7| 3.7| 1.6| 2.0| 1.6| 2.7| 1.8| 1.6| 2.4| 1.9|
| Professional| Mean| 10>15| 3.2| 1.2| 2.6| 2.3| 4.6| 1.1| 2.3| 2.2| 1.8| 2.2| 1.6| 3.5| 1.6| 1.4| 1.5| 1.6| 1.5| 1.8| 3.9| 1.9| 2.2| 1.6| 2.6| 1.7| 1.5| 2.6| 1.7|
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