

## **Marketing of Nice Run**

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<p>Idea for doing this thesis came when Forssan Salama ry started arranging its annual event, called Nice Run. Nice Run is sports event for women held in nine different cities around Finland, these cities were; Pietarsaari, Vaasa, Seinäjoki, Forssa, Jyväskylä, Mikkeli, Lahti, Hämeenlinna and Espoo. Nice Run consists of parts where women run, walk, or jog through marked 5 kilometre route, have a picnic at the area and may participate to other activities arranged.</p> <p>Hanna-Maija Haikka, project manager in Nice Run suggested to do a research about marketing in Nice Run, since there has been no previous researches made about the subject and it would provide beneficial information for main organizer Forssan Salama ry.</p> <p>Objectives of this thesis were to investigate how Nice Run was marketed and see which channels of marketing worked and which might need improvement. Also provide suggestions for Forssan Salama ry how to improve marketing in future. Suggestions were gotten from women who participated in Nice Run and answered to the questionnaire which was given to them during the event. Participants also had a chance to answer the questionnaire in the Internet.</p> <p>Women were asked two questions concerning marketing (see appendix 1.); where did you hear about Nice Run and where could Nice Run be visible and reach women? In first question women had eight sources of which they could choose; e-mail, workplace, media, local organizers, friend, previous Nice Run event, advertisement was sent to me and other. Results were divided into five groups according to age; this was done in order to see whether there are differences between age groups. Sixth figure is showing the averages of all sources in all age groups. Second question was open question, where women could freely give suggestions for improving marketing. In the end of this thesis suggestions are put together and they provide ideas for Forssan Salama ry how to improve marketing for upcoming events.</p> <p>Most common answer in designated question was that women had heard about the event at their workplace. In open question most common suggestion for marketing in future was through local magazines.</p> <p>Women were eager to help and gave a lot of good advices concerning future. Forssan Salama ry may use information gotten from these results and try to do improvements for years to come.</p>	
<p><b>Key words</b> Marketing, marketing research, questionnaire, future development in marketing</p>	

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# 1 Introduction

This thesis discusses about marketing in Nice Run and investigates the sources of where participants of the event had heard about Nice Run. Forssan Salama ry arranges annually sports event for women, called Nice Run. Idea of this thesis was to find out where women had heard about Nice Run and collect suggestions from women, where could Nice Run be more visible and reach more participants. Event was held in nine different cities in Finland; Pietarsaari, Vaasa, Seinäjoki, Forssa, Jyväskylä, Mikkeli, Lahti, Hämeenlinna and Espoo. Participants were supposed to run, jog or walk through marked route of 5 kilometres, after running/ walking part was done women had a picnic at the event area.

Thesis will explain more precisely what is marketing and what does it consist of. Thesis will discuss about marketing research that was done for Forssan Salama ry, what results were gotten, average results from designated question and provide suggestions for marketing in future. Results will reveal sources where women had heard about the event and what did women suggest for the future. Also provide an overview of average in each source of marketing. Research is done about Forssan Salama ry's event Nice Run, but results can be adjusted to different events as well. Since results were gotten from many participants and they varied a lot, they can be used as guiding and helping source when marketing other events as well. In order for the event to attract great amount of participants, marketers need to know how to attract customers.

## 1.1 Aim and purpose of this thesis

The idea for doing this thesis came from project manager of Nice Run, Hanna-Maija Haikka. Both project manager and main organizer Forssan Salama ry, wished to have research done about marketing of Nice Run. Research will help Forssan Salama ry to get the information where its customers had heard about the event and use suggestions that participants gave. There hasn't been any researches done before concerning Nice Run, therefore this information gotten will be beneficial for Forssan Salama ry and help the organization to develop its marketing strategies.

Main point for doing this research was to gain knowledge about the sources where women had heard about the event and put all suggestions together. Results will reveal sources of in-

formation and show which channels in marketing need still improvement and which channels worked effectively.

## **2 Company introduction**

### **2.1 Nice Run**

Nice Run is sports event for women, but the main goal of the event is not to compete. It is a social happening, and offers possibility to spend time among friends, family members or co-workers. Nice Run was held in 9 different cities around Finland in year 2010. The cities where the event was held were; Pietarsaari, Vaasa, Seinäjoki, Forssa, Jyväskylä, Mikkeli, Lahti, Hämeenlinna and Espoo. This year first city had its event already in the end of May and events were held until the beginning of June. (Forssan Salama ry, 2010.)

It has been organized in different cities in Finland since 2005, this year there were 10 116 participants. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

### **2.2 Purpose of the event**

Purpose of the event was to offer social experience to women. Participants were signing up in groups of six, but women had a chance to sign up as single participants as well. As mentioned, it wasn't competitive event, women had a chance to walk, Nordic walk or run through the entire route of 5 kilometres. This information was given by the local event manager of Lahti, Elisa Salimäki. (20.10.2010.)

### **2.3 Picnic and activities on the event area**

Women were supposed to sign up as group of six people; there was possibility for single participants to join as well. There was picnic held after women had crossed finish line. It was also very important part of the event since many of the participants wanted to enjoy time together and run itself wasn't playing such big role for them. Sponsors of Nice Run provided a bag full of different products which were served in picnic. There were couple differences in bag depending if local sponsors wanted to add something, otherwise products were the same. Since there were sponsors working through the whole event and there were local sponsors who then provided own products to picnic bag. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

Before women started going through marked route, there were many activities held on event area. Some of sponsors joined the event and were serving or selling their own products.

Women also had a chance to apply to different lotteries and try different products. For example Nescafe was serving coffee at the event area. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

## **2.4 Host**

Before the run/walk started there was warm up program for all the participants and also a host telling what was going to happen. Host for this year was Nicke Lingell. Host was on stage and he introduced people who held the warm up. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

## **2.5 Time**

Event was held on weekdays, it is social event with goal to refresh and offer different type of spending time with friends or co-workers. There were no alcoholic beverages served on the area, and it was designed to suit women who came there after workday. It wasn't held on weekend, because organizers thought that it might limit women from participating, as people might travel to summer cottages or just want to relax and spend time with family. (Salimäki E, 20.10.2010.)

## **2.6 Route and finishing**

Program went on as Nicke Lingell gave instructions. Women had their time to spend on the area and about quarter to 6 p.m. women started their warm up and at 6 p.m. they were sent to the 5 kilometre route. As it wasn't a competitive event, no one was checking their time at the finish line. Women had a chance to see their time by themselves from big clock at the finish area. Each woman who had passed the finish line got a medal. After that they were handed picnic bags full of food provided by sponsors. After the picnic was held, women had instructed cool down. Event lasted until 9 p.m. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

## **2.7 Event fee and signing up**

Women, who decided to participate, signed their groups in Nice Run website. They had to inform names of all 6 participants. Entrance fee for one group was 114 Euros; this was the price if women signed up before 15<sup>th</sup> of March. If signing up happened after mentioned date, price was 150 Euros per group. Signing up was possible online until 14<sup>th</sup> of May. After that date groups had to sign up straight to local organizers. Price went up so that single participant would pay 33 Euros, and cost for the entire group would be 174 Euros.



When women had signed up for the event, they received an info package from local organizers. Package consisted of participant's number, coupon for picnic bag etc. There was given place where women could pick their package from, and if package wasn't picked up until certain date it was mailed to person who had signed up the entire group. (Salimäki E, 20.10.2010.)

## **2.8 Goal in the future**

In Finland event has been organized since 2005. Number of participants has been growing each year. Forssan Salama which is the main organizing company wishes that amount of participants would grow still. This is one of the main goals for this thesis, to search ways of marketing the event and reach as many women as possible.

## **2.9 Forssan Salama and local organizers**

Forssan Salama ry is the main organizer, as the tour went on in different cities, local organizers together with Forssan Salama ry decided about marketing, arranging and deciding where the event would be held in that particular city. Hanna-Maija Haikka, the project manager and one other person assisting her went on with the tour in all 9 cities. They made sure that the concept of the event remained the same. Host was travelling with the tour all the time as well. There were national sponsors that were advertised throughout the event, but also as mentioned there were local sponsors which then changed as the cities did. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

## **3 Marketing**

### **3.1 Background of marketing**

As this thesis discusses about marketing in Nice Run, it is important to understand what marketing means and what makes marketing successful. Marketing will be defined in next chapter of thesis. Key points which effect on successful marketing will be introduced. Understanding the customer and knowing what to offer for them are vital for successful marketing and maintaining long-term customer relationships. Thesis will in the end suggest how to maintain long-term customer relationships.

### **3.2 Defining marketing**

Marketing is often mistakenly thought only as selling and advertising products. Many don't see behind all that. Marketing is actually knowing and understanding what products or services to offer to consumers in order to fulfil their needs and wants. It is all about understanding and satisfying customers. If there is no demand from the customers for the product, there is no sense in working hard trying to sell it. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 5.)

In good marketing consumers' needs and wants are met, and marketers try to satisfy them as well as possible. Something valuable needs to be created for customers and try to get value in return from customers. (Schwarz, Hunter, 2008, 14.)

Marketing more than any other field involves working with customers. The main purposes are to attract new customers and provide superior value for them. Company needs to keep their current customers, keep them satisfied and try to increase the amount of current customers. By making sure that current customers are happy and getting what they need from company, they can assure that products will be sold more easily. Thus customers won't feel the need to change to other products. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 3, 5.)

The goal of Nice Run is to keep women who participated in the event as customers and also recruit even more customers in the future. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010.)

### **3.3 3Cs**

Before marketing anything to anyone market needs to be analysed. Marketing analysis consists of so called 3C`s; the consumer, the company and the competition. The consumer is the one who purchases goods or services. What marketers need to know is how to reach this consumer. Marketers go through different processes in order to be able to design a suitable marketing mix and get their product sold to consumers. These processes are segmentation, targeting and positioning. (Schwarz, Hunter, 2008, 14.) More information of these three processes will be discussed further in this thesis.

By satisfying and getting their products delivered to customers, companies achieve their goals and objectives. This cannot be accomplished without understanding the competition. By understanding what does the competition offer, will help marketers to understand what is required from them in order to satisfy customers better compared to competition. (Jobber, 2001, 3.) Organizers in Nice Run need to understand competition. If they get their products delivered better to the customers than the competition does, they will reach own goals, which were to attract as many customers as possible to join Nice Run.

### **3.4 Company's goals; profits, sales and long-term customer relationships**

According to Jobber (Jobber, 2001, 3.), the company must start working in different steps to be able to reach its goals, profits, sales, and long-term customer relationships. Companies should avoid short-term relationships. Marketing-oriented companies see nowadays the importance of providing satisfaction and creating added value for customers. If customers attending in Nice Run were satisfied and felt that this event fulfilled their needs they will most likely join again. This helps company to maintain long-term customer relationships. Establishing, developing and commercializing long-term relationships are vital. This thesis's aim is to highlight the importance of long-term customer relationships and suggest ways for maintaining them. In order that their own strategy would work, the company needs to monitor competitors, as they might be developing faster and offering better services. Knowledge of competition enables to create and improve own products and not fall behind. (Jobber, 2001, 3.)

There are many similar events for women on the market, as Nice Run. Organizers must evaluate the competition all the time and try to develop the event and its ways of marketing. Otherwise it won't be as attractive compared to competition.

Understanding the consumer is paramount. No service or product will be useful if nobody needs it. This works like a cycle, both need to give something in order to receive something back. They both will achieve personal goals. If customers and company are satisfied, the exchange will happen again. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 6.)

### **3.5 Needs, wants and demands**

Basic human needs include physical needs such as food, clothing, safety and warmth. Then there are social needs which are belonging and affection, also individual needs such as self-expression and knowledge. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 6.)

Wants are something that is shaped depending of the culture and personality. People feel hungry and need food, but what they will eat is their choice. Wants become demands when people are given the opportunity to choose from variety of products the one that suits them best. This is what marketers need to know, what customers really want. World is full of services of which existence we don't even know, because we haven't needed them and therefore haven't bothered to search for them. When company decides to enter market(s) they will need to study and analyse a lot of information in order to offer something that differs from others and would have buyers for that product or service. Only by staying close to customers they can really be understood. Asking from customers or investigating their behaviour will lead to understanding and most likely in matching right services to right people. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 6.)

For company to build successful experiences and through that long-term customer relationship, company needs to monitor how customers behave in service environment. That will enable company to see whether customer is satisfied, and do they feel that their expectations and needs are met. (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2007, 27)

Forssan Salama ry should understand that by really staying close and interacting with customers good results can be achieved more easily.

As in this thesis women are asked in questionnaires what was their source where they heard about the event and what are their suggestions for future. Organizers of the event are staying

close and trying to understand their customers by collecting information straight from women who participated.

### **3.6 Marketing myopia**

Marketers must be aware of marketing myopia. They might think that customers need their product, when actually what customer needs is the outcome of the product or service. As in Nice Run, customers would survive without the running event, but what they need is social experience, feeling of belonging and sharing something unique. Products and services should be seen as problem solvers, not as self-explanatory. Marketers must understand that and be aware of what others are providing. If marketers are too confident about their products and will expect customers to come over and over again and buy their products, they will probably sooner or later notice that same products are sold by different companies and they might be cheaper or better. Marketers who will see beyond own products and have better understanding than others, may be able to create something unique and meaningful, something that will attract more than other products. Some companies have already succeeded in this; they have created products which evoke feelings in customers that competition can't do. Experience is becoming more and more important and effects on customer's decisions. Customers might be loyal to some brands, this means that those products have been differentiated well from others and it is harder to attract customers to try other products if they already have such strong opinions about certain products. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 7.)

Organizers in Nice Run are trying to develop the event and its ways of marketing, therefore this thesis will investigate and try to find solutions for understanding the customer better.

### **3.7 Customer value and satisfaction**

Nowadays customers have a wide range of products that can satisfy their needs. As Nice Run is not the only sports event for women, organizers have to try to understand how to reach as many women as possible and do it better than the competition does.

Consumers choose those products of which they have some kind of perceptions, what value and satisfaction will particular product bring. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 9.)

Person, who has never participated in Nice Run will see the brochure or hear about Nice Run somewhere, will form some kind of perception about the event. What is important for marketers is to make this first impression good, so that customer would memorize it and have good perceptions about it.

Customer value shouldn't be confused with the value that product actually brings. Customers form their expectations on previous knowledge and may not be buying new similar products if they already are satisfied. That is why customer value and products real value are not to be mixed. There might be better products of which customers don't have a clue, because they have been satisfied with current product. To be able to survive from a mass of knowledge and choose products, customers use their previous knowledge to guide them in buying situation. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 9.) This is important for organizers of the event to remember, as customers will create value for the service from the way it is advertised to them.

This is one of Nice Run's obstacles, there are already many running events for women and it is hard to differ from them. Marketing needs to be studied so that Nice Run would have better chances in future to develop and stand out from the mass.

Kotler and Armstrong (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 9.) suggest that in order for customer to buy same product in future, it needs to satisfy customer's expectations. Satisfied customer will tell about good experience to others and buy again. There is a risk for marketers to set too high or too low expectations. Too high expectations will disappoint customers and too low won't attract enough customers. Key to success is to set right expectations, satisfy customers and maintain satisfaction. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004, 9.)

It is important that those customers who attended Nice Run this year were satisfied. There is a chance that they will tell their friends about it and want to join next year as well. This is one way of marketing the event as well, happy customers will tell forward to their family and friends.

## **4 Marketing strategy**

As marketing was defined in previous chapter, this chapter will define marketing strategy and discuss about its importance. Each company should have their own reliable marketing strategy in order to reach own goals and do it better than competitors do. Factors which make strategy effective will be discussed. This part also includes information about advertising and discusses ways of advertising, which were used in Nice Run.

### **4.1 Defining marketing strategy**

According to Kotler there is no easy way to successful marketing. Each company needs to find its own way of doing things. They cannot only rely on doing one or two things little better than competitors. Company should from the beginning be creating something that is unique and walk its own path, rather than concentrate on being better in some areas compared to the competition. Kotler writes that company can't say they have own marketing strategy if they are performing same activities than others in same market and have only few improved qualities. This might work for a while, but it won't carry company far. By having own clear strategy is safer and cleverer than trying to imitate, because competing companies will easily catch up with those minor things and even pass the other company's strategy. Strategy may be called strong and effective only when it is clearly different from others. (Kotler, 1999, 9.)

There are many examples nowadays of companies which have chosen to do something differently and succeeded well. They have been leading companies for a while, until imitators have come along. Good ideas get easily copied, but still it is not the same to be an inventor of the idea than being an imitator of the idea. Imitation of great strategies is difficult because they consist of unique structure of reinforcing activities. (Kotler, 1999, 9, 10.)

Nice Run is in the situation where many similar events are competing and they all need to find own strengths and ways to reach for potential customers. This thesis will go through meaning of segmenting, targeting and positioning in order for Nice Run to develop suitable marketing mix for its clientele and reach them more effectively.



## **4.2 Defining obstacles and overcoming obstacles**

Obstacles that companies quite often face are that customers are starting to be more and more sophisticated and price sensitive. Women who are interested in sports events have most likely heard somewhere else about their prices and have some kind of perceptions of what can be expected. Today's busy world forces customers to make decisions quickly but they still expect products and buying situations to be convenient. Loads of experiences in customer service situations have taught them what to expect and demands are higher. These obstacles are just a few to name. What marketers need to do is to define which things don't work in their company and try to find solutions by building strong strategies. (Kotler, 1999, 10, 11.)

## **4.3 Advertising**

Advertising is only a small part of marketing. It is an important element of promotional mix. Promotional mix consists of five major elements; advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, publicity and direct marketing. To make product even more visible marketers can use help of sponsorships or exhibitions. Vital thing to understand is that right mixture of all these needs to be found in order to communicate with target audience. (Jobber, 2001, 353.)

In Nice Run direct marketing was used as one of marketing ways. Also Internet was used to send an invitation for women who had been participating previous years in Nice Run and agreed to give their email addresses. Nice Run has own websites where information about the event is provided. Organizers participated in exhibitions to reach customers. Help of sponsorships was used as well in advertisements which were seen throughout the entire tour. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010)

## **4.4 Developing advertising strategy**

For advertising strategy to be effective marketing strategy needs to be crystal clear to marketers. Advertising should not be isolated from marketing, because it is just one part of marketing mix. In advertising it is important to define what the target market is and what products differential advantage means. Target market needs to be identified. Features and benefits of the product need to be highlighted to target audience. (Jobber, 2001, 358,359.)

Message that is sent to women should be clear and include enough information. They need to know what the event is like and what will happen in it. Advertisement has to be different from others so that women would notice it and join the event. (Haikka H, 25.10.2010)

Competition in market is very positive to customers. It means that companies need to try harder, understand and satisfy customers, provide better services than the others do and lower price in order to keep customers. (Jobber, 2001, 603.) These things will effect on women making decisions whether to join or not and company really needs to think about these factors before starting to advertise.

Help of sponsors should not be underestimated. Many companies would be eager to join and support the event, because they are in need of advertisement space and could reach great amount of potential customers. (Brooks, 1994, 95.) Marketers of Nice Run should keep that in mind when searching for potential sponsors to help attract new customers.

Competing by offering lower price was used as a way of marketing in Nice Run. Women who signed up for the event before 15<sup>th</sup> of March paid 114 Euros and the later they signed up the higher the price went. (Forssan Salama ry, 2010.)

This encouraged women to make decisions faster and assured that women wouldn't spend too much time thinking whether join or not.

## 5 Segmentation

This part of thesis will be discussing about segmentation. It is important thing to understand when talking about marketing, as segmentation helps marketers to perform better. Benefits and obstacles of segmentation will be gone through as well. Women are the target group in this thesis; marketers need to think about factors which will effect when marketing to this particular segment. Further segmentation can't be done since main point is to gather as many participants as possible to the event.

### 5.1 Defining segmentation

Before company will start marketing their products it should decide to whom it will market it and what kind of values it will create for these customers. Organizers need to think what does the brochure and places where event is marketed say to customers. What kind of expectations will they have? Clearly women are the target in this event. By advertising, the company is delivering value to women, what kind of value will it be and how to deliver it to women needs to be decided within a company. Company should identify their market segment; they can choose one or plenty of segments. Then they can start developing their products so that they would fit and satisfy each segments needs as well as possible. It can't be said that company could choose different segments in this thesis, because main point is to gather as many participants as possible. Marketers need to think whether they market the event to women at their different age in different ways. This might help marketers to understand better which channels should be used in order to reach particular age group. One product can't satisfy every customer's needs. Customers aren't all ready to pay as much for the service or they might have totally different needs. In order to satisfy as many customers as possible company should offer different products or services to different customer groups. (Jobber, 2001, 185; Beech, Chadwick, 2007, 35.)

Marketers took into consideration different customers with different needs by offering a choice for women by lowering the price of the event entry. If women signed up before 15<sup>th</sup> of March, the price was lower than if women signed up later. (Forssan Salama ry, 2010.) Nice Run as an event is the only service Forssan Salama ry will be offering, they used price as variable factor.

## 5.2 Dividing segments

Segmenting of market works in such a way that first market will be divided into smaller segments; these segments have same needs, behaviour or characteristics, something that unifies them. Segmentation variables are used as criteria so that marketers can divide a market into segments. A marketer must find difference in consumer's behaviour so that they can be logically divided. There is no right or wrong way of dividing consumers, as long as their needs are fulfilled. (Jobber, 2001, 186,187.)

Now that company has divided a mass into segments it can clarify even more to whom market these products. Company will evaluate each segment and see how many they choose to serve. Diverse market is divided into smaller submarkets. These groups are divided so that customers with similar requirements could be served as effectively as possible. As it usually is not possible to serve customers individually, by putting customers with similar needs into same group, they will more likely feel that their needs have been met. (Jobber, 2001, 185.)

Company can divide segments according to different factors such as demographic, psychographic and behavioural. When company has deeper knowledge about segments it can evaluate which segment it can best serve and offer products that are competitive on a market. The company must evaluate size and growth of segment, its structural attractiveness, and company's own resources. These three factors do dictate quite a lot which segment company should enter. Company should analyse data on sales, growth rates, and see how the future looks like in that particular segment. Then company will close more options away and pay more attention to segments which are right size and growth. Smaller companies may still not want to enter the fastest growing segments because they might not have resources enough to compete against bigger companies. Looking at the segments future is also important. Company may not want to enter segment if it already has strong competitors. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 165,167,169,170.)

Segmenting leads to better understanding of consumer, it also allows tuning more marketing programmes which will suit customers well. Consumer is in the middle of the decision making process and segmenting helps to logically develop marketing concept. Segmentation can be split into three-stage process. First stage is called termed segmentation. It means splitting potential customers or current customers into groups of buyers according to their characteristics or buying patterns. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 124.)

Women are the target of marketing in Nice Run, programme needs to be tuned in such a way that it will be seen that women are taken into consideration. Sponsors which Nice Run used were considered well and they were specially picked to delight women and serve their interests. (Forssan Salama ry, 2010.)

Second stage is targeting. Company must now evaluate segments attractiveness, it must decide on how many segments it wants to concentrate and evaluate profit potential of a segment. Third stage consists of developing competitive positioning. This stage will happen in already chosen segment. Appropriate marketing mix can be now developed to reach exactly right people. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 125.)

### **5.3 Benefits of segmentation**

Clear advantages of segmentation are to ensure that consumer's needs and company's offerings are close to each other. Other advantage is that new segment can be found within already chosen segment. These are very small but profitable segments, called niche markets. If marketers choose to serve these smaller segments, totally new products or services might occur when new segments needs are trying to be met. Segmenting and positioning helps to gain and reinforce competitive advantage of a company. Finally segmenting allows companies to use their own special knowledge or skills within segments. It helps to meet the needs of customers and excel in that particular group and prevent from only touching the surface when trying to please a mass. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 125, 126.)

### **5.4 Obstacles in segmentation**

Company might face problems in segmentation if market is not defined well enough or company is lacking of information. Also analysis of market needs to be reliable. If company has wrong or no analysis it will harm their segmentation. Problems may occur also if the whole company isn't aware of the plans, they need to be sufficiently integrated at a strategic level within the whole company. If strategies are not focusing enough on customers it will reflect in a negative way as well. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 138.)

## **6 Target market**

In order to create marketing strategy, markets need to be targeted. In upcoming chapter target marketing and different types of targeting will be explained. Things that effect on which market does a company choose and benefits of targeting will be discussed. In this thesis targeting is done in such a way that women who answered the questionnaire are divided by the age. This will provide information for further considerations how could marketing be done to different age groups.

### **6.1 Defining target marketing**

A target market consists of those segments which company has chosen, and thinks it can offer something valuable for them and compete with others who offer similar products. Each customer has individual needs. Company can now decide how individual service it wants to or can offer. Companies can choose whether they will target broadly or narrowly, or whether they choose target in between of those. If company chooses to target very broadly, it will use undifferentiated (mass) marketing. Something close to previous is differentiated (segmented) marketing which already has little narrower way of targeting. Closer to individual marketing is concentrated (niche) marketing, and last micromarketing which is individual marketing. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 165,178-181.)

Target marketing is vital in marketing strategy. Company has to have some kind of criteria according to what it will choose its targets. It can't be done randomly. It must evaluate segments and only then decide which one is potential. Two main issues help company to evaluate segments; market attractiveness and competing capabilities within segment. (Jobber, 2001, 201,202.)

### **6.2 Focused marketing**

When company has divided consumers into segments it needs to consider how many it chooses to serve. Choosing to serve just one segment would be perhaps most sensible route. Focused marketing means when a company has decided to serve only one target market. This usually happens within smaller companies, because of their limited capabilities. There is a danger of choosing only one particular segment, if a larger company becomes interested and de-

cides to enter the market it may be able to offer even more to its customers. (Jobber, 2001, 205.)

## **7 Positioning**

Meaning of positioning and connection with marketing mix are introduced in this chapter. Positioning means when marketers try to place their product in consumers mind, they try to stand out from the mass and place their product so that customers will notice it. Marketing mix enables this process to happen by creating ways of getting closer to customer.

### **7.1 Defining positioning**

As soon as company has chosen its segment(s) it needs to start positioning of the product in consumers' minds. Product or service needs to be differentiated from others in same segment. Positioning is highly recommended in industries which already have many similar products. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 125.)

### **7.2 Positioning and marketing mix**

Marketing mix is vital part of positioning which enables to reach customers and bring product as close to their minds as possible. In order that positioning would be effective and the message would go clearly to customers, marketers need to define themselves how do they wish to be positioned compared to the competition. Will customers acknowledge their specialities or not. Positioning statement is the decision which marketers have made about their positioning definition. Particular benefits or services can help to attract customers and help in differentiation. A message which is decided then needs to be delivered to consumers. It has to be done regularly and consistently so that it would be effective and produce effort. All of the marketing mix decisions need to be used in order to communicate message effectively forward. Pricing can already affect a lot what kind of image does product make, whether it is luxurious or regular. All factors in marketing mix do effect on image that people have about the product or service. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 133.)

Marketers will have to think from many aspects of their product and about place it will have in consumers' minds. Compare product to competition and similar products in a market. Companies which are competing in same segment should differentiate themselves by offering something unique and try to set themselves apart. There are three steps which will help a company to set itself apart from the others. Identifying possible competitive advantages is important. This means that in case company wants to do something better than competitors it



must understand customer needs better and try to satisfy them more effectively than others, and offer value to its customers.

(Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 185-186.)

Key tasks in positioning are to answer questions where in a market company wants to compete. When those questions are answered company is ready to implement its strategies. Main goals are to create and maintain a place in the market for own products. When company chooses its target market, part of positioning has already happened. By using marketing mix marketers can create something special for customers. Product differentiation gives customers benefits that competition cannot give. This can be achieved through added features in products. By good promotional work, product may be more unique. Images about product can be improved by advertising, and skilful sales people can provide superior service. Results can be improved by impacting the buy situation, by making it convenient for customers for example. Price differentiation is one way to effect on customer's decisions, by providing superior value for lower prices than competition does will have an impact. Marketers can think of positioning as a fight for the customers minds. Successful positioning consists of these four factors; clarity, consistency, credibility, and competitiveness.

(Jobber, 2001, 205, 206.)

## **8 Marketing mix**

This part of thesis will go through importance of marketing mix and describe what it consists of. Using marketing mix is important for marketers, because it enables communication with consumers through different ways, and helps reaching consumers.

### **8.1 Defining marketing mix**

Marketing mix is planned to suit customers' needs and it communicates to target customers by using different marketing channels. For customers product itself communicates; factors which consumers can usually clearly see e.g. price. Second thing to understand is that effective communication does not promise consumer flow. Communication is effective only if marketers understand needs and motivation of their customers. (Jobber, 2001, 353.)

Marketing strategy will outline the targeted customers company will serve and what kind of value it will create for them. Now company needs to deliver these values to customers by using marketing program. By implementing marketing strategy into action, marketing program builds and ensures customer relationships. The company uses marketing mix to implement its marketing strategy. Marketing mix is based upon the knowledge that company has of its customers. (Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 13; Jobber, 2001, 13.)

This is the first time thesis is made about Nice Run; information that will be gathered in thesis will be used to improve next year's marketing strategy.

### **8.2 4P's**

Marketing mix consists of so called four Ps; product, price, place and promotion. Company has to have something they can offer to their customers and it will satisfy their needs with (product). Decide how much can it charge from customers of this product (price). Decide how target consumers can get this product, where is it available (place). Assist consumers to make buying decision, company must communicate, offer and persuade customers to buy product (promotion).

(Armstrong & Kotler 2007, 13; Jobber, 2001, 13.)

Price is very important part of marketing mix, it represents immediately for customers what does a company receive from their product (Jobber, 2001, 15). Such as does the amount that women joining Nice Run will pay, tell them directly what company will get in exchange. Decision whether customer will buy product have to be made with respect to the promotional mix. It includes advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, direct marketing, public relations and Internet. Target audience is made aware of certain products existence and their benefits. When price has been set and when existence of a product is ensured by promoting it. Place is the last step, which answers question, where can customers get their products from. Place ensures that products are delivered and made available for customers to buy, with proper quality, at right time and place. (Jobber, 2001, 15.)

### **8.3 Customer choice criteria**

Customer choice criteria and marketing mix are linked. Realizing how customers evaluate products is important. Two main criteria's are economical and psychological criteria's. An economic criterion consists of productivity, availability, reliability and performance. (Jobber, 2001, 16.)

Psychological criteria consist of self-image, pleasure, convenience and risk reduction. Understanding and also exceeding these requirements better than competitors, allows the creation of a competitive advantage. (Jobber, 2001, 16.)

### **8.4 Marketing mix for services**

Traditional marketing mix is used when physical goods are marketed. It consists of 4Ps. Product, price, place and promotion. To help to market a service that is intangible, perishable and inseparable marketers have created 3 extra Ps which will help. These 3 Ps are people, process and physical evidence. People stand for employees and customers who produce and consume the service. Process stands for all the activities which need to be made when delivering a product to consumer. Physical evidence stands for tangible product, it is used for customers to reduce and prevent amount of risk while pre-purchase, consumption and finally during post-purchase. Intangible core service usually has many tangible factors affecting the service experience which customers will have. (Baron & Harris & Hilton, 2009, 9.) In marketing services or physical goods, marketing overlaps. As not only in marketing a service but also a physical goods more and more service elements are used. Elements such as maintenance, edu-

cation, warranties or help and training lines are used. Marketing mix can then be adjusted to sit in best way whether it is a service or a physical good. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 167,168.)

### **8.5 3Ps**

People are in a very important role especially when production and consumption can't be separated from each other's. People consist of many different factors, starting from staff members who produce the service to the customers who consume the product and even to other customers who influence the environment of consumption. Those people who are working for the product to help to produce it and support its production have difference. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 170.)

For example a hockey game is a product where two teams are producing while playing against each other's, but those who help to support the product are the ones which may be selling soft drinks and popcorn for the fans.

Pure service is intangible and it makes it difficult for purchasers to be sure of what they will get when they close the deal. This increases the risk that customers might not get what they want or service doesn't match their needs. There are numerous ways of promoting the service, by relating tangible factors which are connected to the product. Making customers feel that they got value in return from their money. By showing brochures of satisfied customers who are enjoying benefits of a service could be one way. As much information and images as possible of what's going to happen should be provided and enabling visits to the actual place, providing information that might concern customers. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 171.)

For future Nice Run organizers could think about promoting the event beforehand in the actual place where the event will be held.

Process is a way when product is delivered or only prepared for customers. Service delivery is a many step process which depending of a situation adds or takes away these steps. In those steps when customer wants to buy a service it is necessary to search for information of its availability and what it will cost. A person, who stands for people in 3Ps, comes into picture when employee who works for event will check information and be ready to sell if customer wants so. Customer will naturally pay for accepted deal when employee will process the payment and amount of tickets will reduce in database. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007,171, 172.)

## **9 Marketing planning**

Marketing planning will be discussed in this chapter, as it is important part of successful marketing. Marketing planning consists of answering questions concerning customers and their needs and making a plan for implementing company's goals.

### **9.1 Defining marketing planning**

Companies must answer many questions like which customers they will serve or how can they create value for them? Questions like that need an answer and also a plan how to achieve those goals. When company's objectives and mission are decided, a plan can be created in both strategic and specific levels (Mullin, Hardy, William, 2007, 41). Market is changing constantly and so is environment. Businesses must stay on time and understand what is going on. Simply put marketing planning ensures that marketing mix and customer needs match. (Jobber, 2001, 34.)

### **9.2 Planning process**

Whatever the case is the framework is always similar for planning process. It can be understood more easily by asking these questions: Where is the company now? How did the company get there? Where is the company aiming? Which are the goals? Where does the company want to be in future? What they have to do in order to get there? Are they on the right course getting closer to achieving goals? (Jobber, 2001, 34.)

Companies have to try to answer those questions and also see if their goals are realistic. If a company desires something and sees that it is very difficult if not even impossible to achieve, good question to be asked is, how do we get there? This helps to realize what can be done and what not. (Jobber, 2001, 35.)

### **9.3 Defining goals and assuring that they are reached**

When company has defined its goals and asked questions, can it really achieve them, good question to ask is, are we on course? If everything is going according to plans then company may continue doing same thing, but if not it may have to check again own resources and possibilities and maybe adjust plans so that they would get closer to their goal.(Jobber, 2001,35.)

## **10 Marketing control**

Last chapter of the theory part defines marketing control. Marketing control consists of different stages. As marketers have set their goals they need to assure that everything is going as planned and that they will reach their goals. Marketing control helps when company faces obstacles, it will provide alternative solutions and company can continue reaching its goals.

### **10.1 Defining marketing control**

After planning and implementing marketing objectives, how can marketers know that they have achieved their goals? Marketing control assures that everything went as planned and shows how well they reached their goals. Everything starts with deciding marketing objectives that lead to performance standards. (Jobber, 2001, 668, 669.)

Implementation and control of marketing plan are the most important part. It will tell exactly how to do everything and in case something goes wrong control will tell it and there is another plan which will be implemented. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 469.) This thesis will provide an option for Nice Run how to market event and also highlight the importance of marketing control as many things may go wrong before the actual event day.

### **10.2 Overcoming the obstacles**

Responsibility is important to be shared. If only one person is checking how everything goes it might be too difficult to handle. Performance will be evaluated, judgment will then take place. Did plans succeed or fail, and is there anything that could be done to save the situation. Even though team has failed, gathered information will help them in future to see their mistakes and try to avoid or learn from them. If objectives and performance standards are too high they can be lowered and set again to fit better required needs. (Jobber, 2001, 670.)

Also if goals are achieved early enough, new plans can be made to go further and succeed. On the other hand if goals aren't achieved and it can't lead to the next planned step, it would be wise to lower first goal, succeed in it and then move to the next one. (Jobber, 2001, 670, 671.)

### **10.3 The usage of different types of control**

Two ways of using control systems are operational control and strategic control. Strategic control focuses on things like is the company doing as planned. Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats are all considered in this system. Operational control is concentrating on everyday activities. Customer satisfaction measurement, cost, profitability, sales and market share analysis are all considered in this system. (Jobber, 2001, 671.)

Different types of control; feed forward control happens before any action will take place. It helps to prevent possible risks and factors which may damage organization. Current control as its name suggests takes place during action. It allows taking corrective action if it is noticed that current doesn't work as desired. Last one is feedback control, it will take place afterwards and all information gathered will be used for future improvements. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 476.)

### **10.4 Meeting the goal according to plan**

Meeting the goal and doing it according to plan, is difficult job and marketers may find few obstacles. This will cause redesigning of the plan in such a way that it will be suitable and work and take marketers to desired goal. Barriers need to be overcome, plans can't fail because of them. Barriers can start within own company already, if communication doesn't work, if employees aren't involved and their effort isn't good enough. Plan hasn't been thought through well enough and goals are short-term not long-term goals. Commitment of all people around the plan is important, people in organizations and human resources help plan to be achieved. Many good ideas may fail just because lack of commitment or problems weren't found early enough which refers to lack of control. Within whole organization employees need to adopt marketing orientation and marketing concept. Marketing orientation means when customers' needs and organizations objectives meet. (Beech & Chadwick, 2007, 470, 471.)

## **11 Handling and collection of the data**

### **11.1 Questionnaire**

The target groups which this thesis investigates are women who participated in Nice Run sports event. Questionnaire was handed out to participating women during the event (see appendix 1.); women also had a chance to answer to questions in Internet at Nice Run's own website ([www.nicerun.fi](http://www.nicerun.fi)). Questionnaire consists of two parts. First part which is about marketing is discussed in this thesis, second part is about customer satisfaction and those results will be discussed in other thesis made about Nice Run. Women had a chance to fill in part where they informed to which age group they belonged in and the city they are from. Age groups were; less than 25, 25-35, 35-45, 45-55 and over 55 years old. First question about marketing was designated question; where did you hear about Nice Run? Women had eight choices of which they could choose their source of information. Choices were: E-mail, at work, media, local organizers, friend, from previous Nice Run event, advertisement was sent to me or other. Last choice other had an empty space after it, so that women could more precisely explain where they heard about the event if they wanted. Second question was open question where women had a possibility to give suggestions for future improvements in marketing of Nice Run. All together 385 women had answered to questionnaire, it is ~4 % of all participants. Percentage of answerers was really small; this was the first time research is done about Nice Run's marketing.

### **11.2 Creation of the questionnaire**

This questionnaire which can be found in the attachment (see appendix 1.) was created from Forssan Salama ry's request. Forssan Salama ry is the main organizer of the event and suggested together with project manager Hanna-Maija Haikka that research about Nice Run's marketing would be done. Therefore questions for the questionnaire were shaped so that they would reveal the source where women had heard about the event and offered a chance for women to give their own suggestions for future improvements. It is beneficial for Forssan Salama ry to know what customers suggest, because by staying close to customers will improve Forssan Salama ry's chances to understand customers better. By knowing where women had heard about the event, marketers can see which channels were effective and which marketing channels need improvement. Answers in the first question are divided according to age; this will enable marketers to see whether there are differences between different age groups.



This will help in future marketing of Nice Run, since marketers will know what weak points in which age group were. Averages of all marketing sources in all age groups are shown in the last figure of results.

### **11.3 Handling of the results**

Questionnaires (see appendix 1.) were collected from women after the event, and from the Internet. Results were divided according to age groups for the first question and then tallied up. This would enable marketers to see whether there are differences between different age groups. Results weren't divided according to geographical factors, because the amount of women who had answered to the questionnaire wasn't equal in each city. In some cities there were only few people who had answered to the questionnaire, weather was the main reason for this. This thesis includes figures about results in different age groups. Figures will show what percentages different sources got in particular age groups. Results from second question were all put together and analyzed. All together 94 women had answered to open question part. This is ~ 1% of all participants. Percentage of answerers is very low. Open question part in this thesis will explain more precisely what kind of suggestions did women give. Based on these results future improvements are gathered for Nice Run's future marketing. Forssan Salama ry should use these suggestions if they wish to develop their marketing strategies. Answers varied a lot and had good new suggestions.

### **11.4 Aim and purpose of the questionnaire**

The aim of the questionnaire was to collect the information from participating women, where they heard about Nice Run. Results would help Forssan Salama ry to see which channels in marketing were used well, and which channels might need improvement. Also women were asked to give suggestions for future, where could Nice Run be visible and reach more women. Participants gave good suggestions and based on those ideas this thesis provides future improvements for Forssan Salama ry. Forssan Salama ry wanted to improve its marketing, and reach more participants for upcoming years. Therefore this questionnaire is designed to fulfill Forssan Salama ry's request.

### **11.5 Statistical methods**

Results from first question; where did you hear about Nice Run, were divided according to age groups, tallied together and formed into figures, where columns will show percentages of different sources. Columns were chosen because results are easily compared to each other and columns will show clearly percentages gotten from questionnaires. Second question; where could Nice Run be visible and reach more women, results were not put into figure. Results were put together and based on results there is future improvement suggestions made for Forssan Salama ry. Figures were not made of second questions results, because results aim was to give improvements and not be compared to each other. Open question part shows how many women suggested different ways of marketing, since there were similar answers. Answers are providing guidance for marketers of Nice Run.

## 12 Results

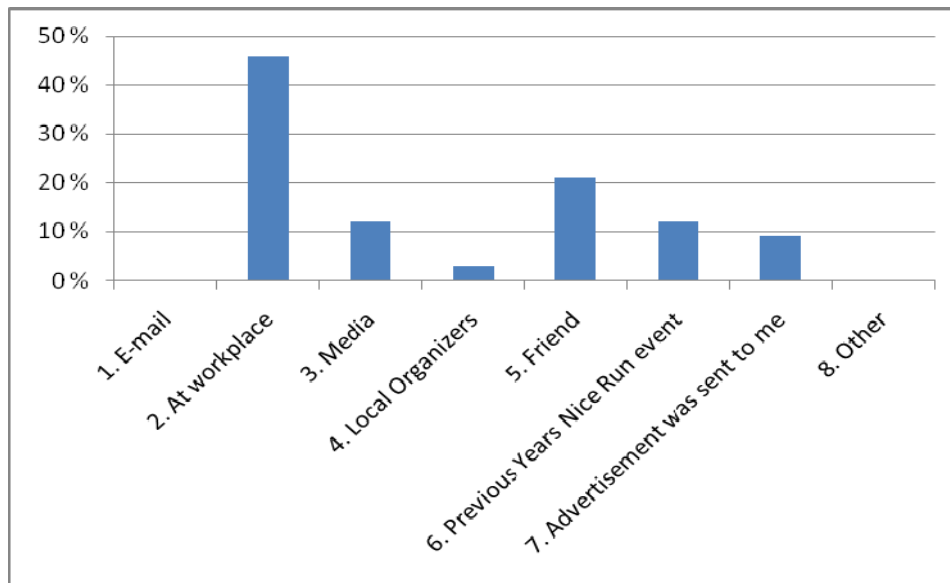
In part 11.1 will be 6 figures representing age and source where women had heard about the event. Last figure represents the average of each marketing sources in all age groups. Women had eight different options in the first question of which to choose and they were able to mark as many sources as they wanted. Some of customers did not answer questions and some informed that they had heard from many sources, therefore there is different amount of answers as there are answerers.

Questionnaire (see appendix 1.) included also an open question. Results from that question will be discussed in part 11.2. In open question women were able to suggest where else could Nice Run be visible and reach women. This part will go through all the results from open question and suggestions women gave to the event for further improvements.

Answers are collected from different cities in Finland, where Nice Run tour was held. Women had a choice of answering the questionnaire in Internet on Nice Runs own websites as well ([www.nicerun.fi](http://www.nicerun.fi)). Answers are not separated according to cities, but according to age groups. Concept of the event remained the same in each city; therefore location did not have any impact on answers. Results were divided according to age in this thesis, this is done because results will show whether women at different ages heard from different sources. Results also provide information about the average of each marketing channel in all age groups. This shows clearly to marketers of the event, which channels need improvement. Thinking about the future this might help Nice Run to develop its strategies of marketing the event to women, as they would know where different aged women could be reached and which channels are their weak points in marketing.

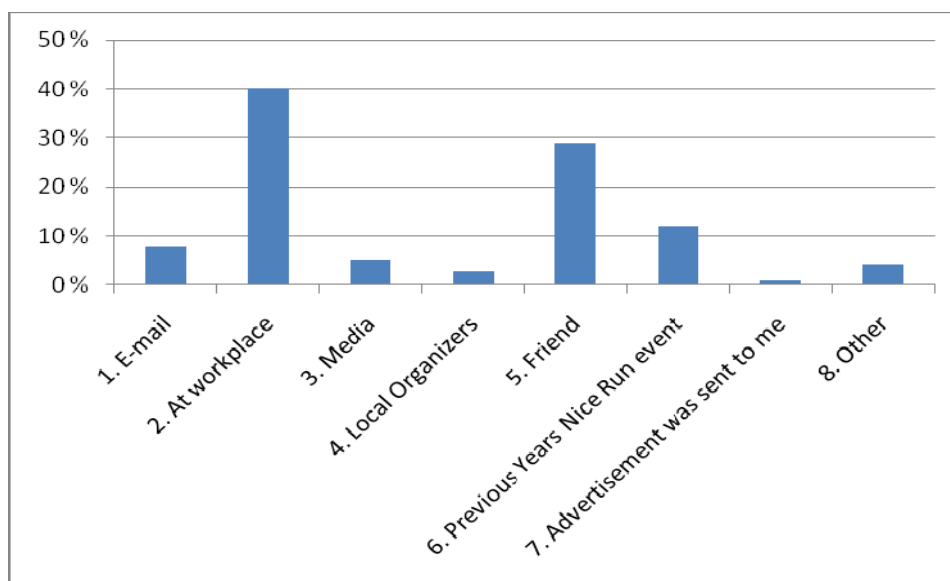
There were 10 116 participants all together in 9 different cities. Number of women who answered was 385. This is ~4% of all participants. Results are collected and based on their answers. Thesis will then provide further suggestions for marketing in future by going through these answers.

## 12.1 Results of marketing sources where women had heard about Nice Run



**Figure 1.** Marketing source results from Nice Run from age group less than 25 years

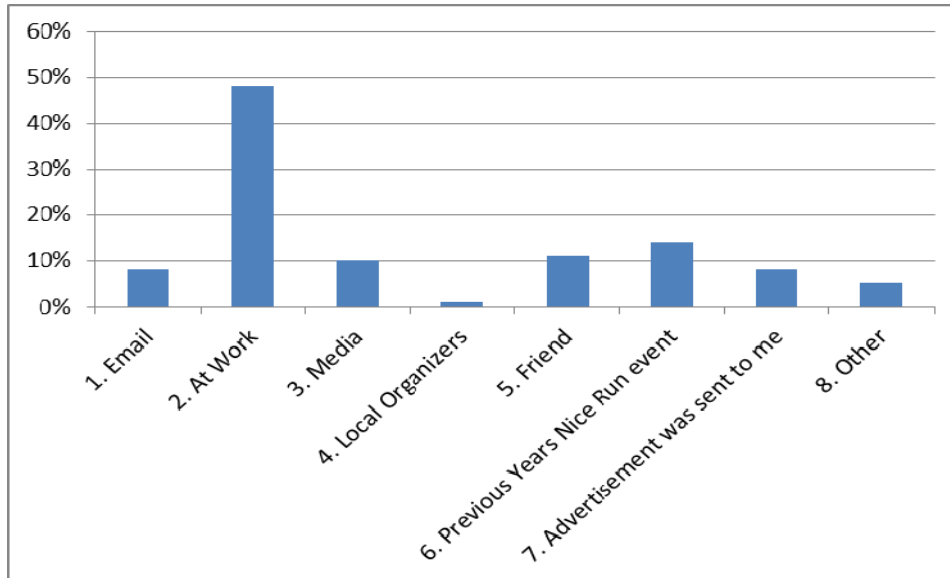
Figure 1 shows answers from group of women less than 25 years and sources where they had heard about the event. 32 women (~8%) out of 385 reported to be in this age group. Most of the women had heard about the event from their workplace (46%). Second highest percentage was from friend (21%). 3<sup>rd</sup> option, Media and 6<sup>th</sup> option, previous year's Nice Run event were sharing third place both with (12%). Third lowest was section, advertisement was sent to me with (9%). Second lowest source was 4<sup>th</sup> option local organizers (3%). Two sources got (0%), they were 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> options, email and other.



**Figure 2.** Marketing source results from Nice Run from age group of 25-35 years

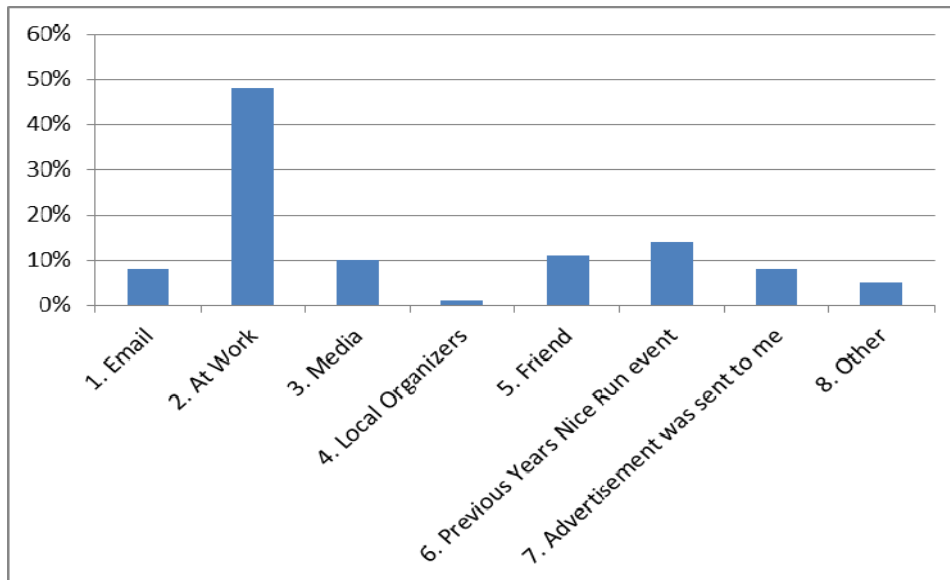
Figure 2 shows results from age group of 25-35 years old women.

Total of 105 (~27%) women reported that they belong to this group. Results show that most of women had heard about Nice Run at their work places (40%). Friend was the second common source (29%). Third place with (12%) was; women had heard about the event from previous year. Fourth was through email (8%). 7<sup>th</sup> option advertisement was sent to me had least percentages (1%), second least had part local organizers with (3%) and third least was part other (4%). In the middle was media (5%).



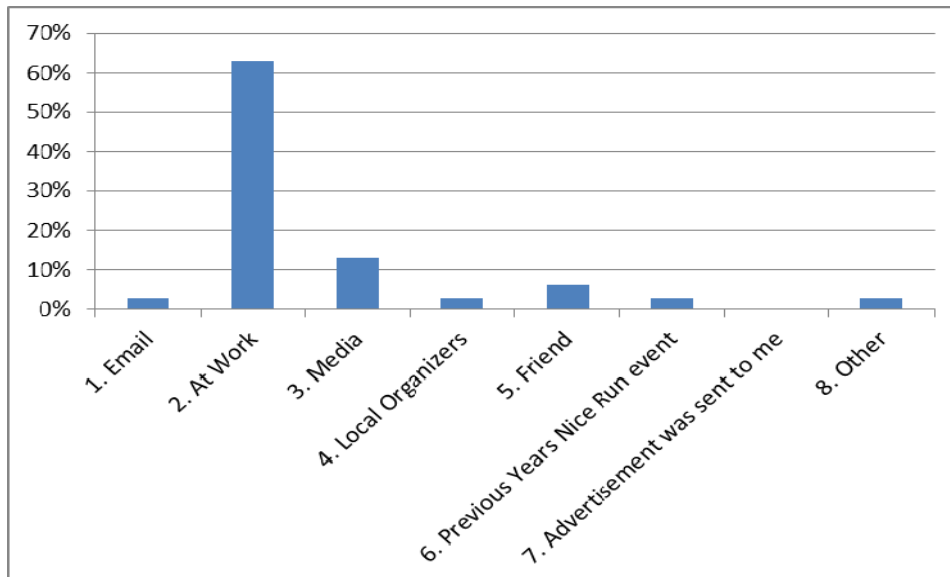
**Figure 3.** Marketing source results from Nice Run from age group 35-45 years.

Figure 3 consists of answers from 122 women, who belonged to age group of 35-45 years. It is (~32%) of all who had answered and therefore this was the biggest group. (47%) answered that they had heard about the event through their work place. Second common source was previous year's Nice Run event (13%). Friend was marked by (11%) of participants. Only (1%) change is seen with next source, media (10%). Email and advertisement was sent to me both got (8%) of all answers. Other, was marked to be source of information for (4%) of answerers. Local organizers were marked to be source for (1%).



**Figure 4.** Marketing source results from Nice Run from age group 45-55 years

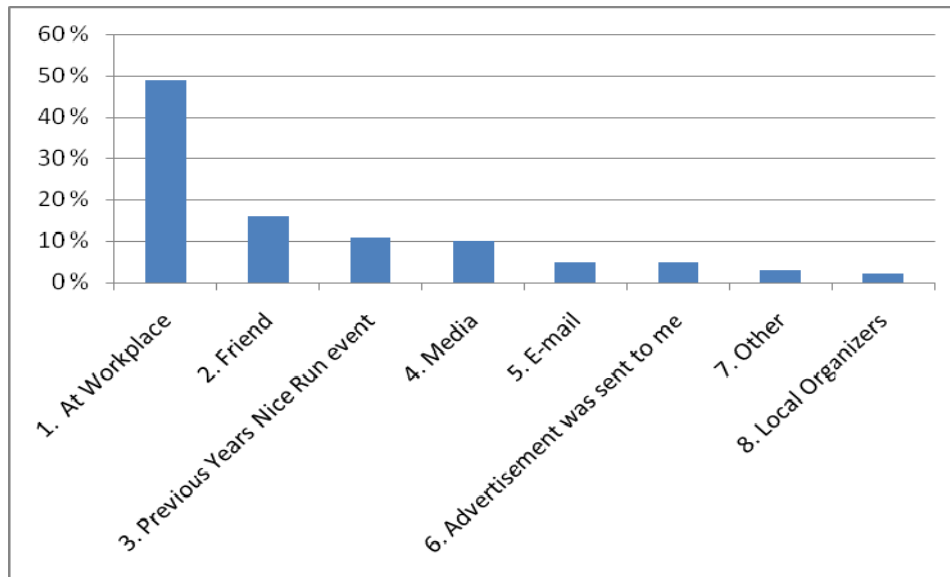
Figure 4 shows results from age group of 45-55 years old women. There were 96 women (~25%) out of 385 answerers, who reported to belong to this group. Highest percentage was marked to be workplace (48%). (13%) of women had heard about the event from previous year. Friend was second common source with (11%). Media was the source for (10%) of answerers. E-mail and advertisement was sent to me, were both sources to (8%) of women. 8<sup>th</sup> choice, other was source for (5 %) of women and lastly only (1 %) of women had heard from local organizers about the event.



**Figure 5.** Marketing source results from Nice Run from age group over 55 years

Figure 5 represents the results from age group of women over 55 years. This was the smallest group of women with 30 answerers (~8%), who filled in the questionnaire. (63%) of women had marked that workplace was their source of information, this was the highest percentage compared to other age groups. Media was marked to be the source for (13%) of women. Friend was the source for (6%) over 55 year's old women. 4 sources; email, local organizers, previous years Nice Run event and other, each were marked to be the source for (3%) of women. Lastly none (0%) of women had marked that advertisement was sent to me, was their source of information.





**Figure 6.** The average of each marketing source of Nice Run from all age groups

Figure 6 represents averages of each marketing channel from all age groups. The most common source of information in each age group was workplace (49%). Second common source of information was friend (16%). Third common source of information was that women had heard about the event from previous years Nice Run event (11%). Fourth common source of information was media with (10%). Both e-mail and advertisement was sent to me were fifth common sources by (5%). Other was the source for (3%) of all age groups. Lastly local organizers were source for (2%) in average of all participants.

## 12.2 Open question

Part 11.2 will be discussing the results gotten from the questionnaires open question; where else could Nice Run be visible and reach women? All together 94 women answered this question and gave many different answers. Results are gathered from Nice Runs website and questionnaires which were handed to women during the event. Women could give as many suggestions as they wanted. This is seen in results, when many of answerers gave numerous suggestions.

The most common suggestion was mentioned 20 times (~21%), that Nice Run could be advertised particularly in local magazines. Other magazines, such as free magazines, women magazines and national newspapers, were mentioned in 18 questionnaires (~19%). Women in bilingual regions highlighted the importance of advertising in both, Swedish and Finnish as they felt that only other language was used.

10 questionnaires (~11%) said that Nice Run was visible enough in their opinion. Women wrote that Nice Run was marketed well and it had reached them from many different sources.

More usage of media was suggested in 25 questionnaires (~27%). By media women meant, Internet (~11%), of which especially Facebook was suggested (~9%). Television (~7%), was second popular suggestion and radio with ~6% mentioning it.

Participants also had suggested public places in 33 questionnaires (~35%). By public places women meant, advertising the event on the streets and outside more (~7%). Advertising at different gyms and in cities sports facilities (~7%). Advertising in other sports events (~4%), such as local marathons and running events for women were suggested as well. Shops and grocery stores (~5%), putting advertisements on notice boards or provide flyers. Universities and schools were suggested as well (~3%). Then women had suggested certain places in their region (~3%). Exhibitions, beauty salons and hair dressers were thought to be good places to reach women too (~4%).

In first question where women were asked where they had heard about Nice Run, the most common answer was in every age group at their workplaces. The most common source it was in age group of over 55 years old women.

Yet advertising at workplaces more was suggested by (~4%) of answerers. Women wrote that especially in predominantly female fields, event should be marketed. Suggestions included cleaning- and social fields (~4%).

One questionnaire (~1%) had an answer which suggested, that Nice Run should have own advertisement car. And it could be driving around the region where Nice Run is held at the time.

## 13 Discussion

### 13.1 Summary of the results

The objectives for the research done, was to investigate where women heard about Nice Run, and gather suggestions which women made for future marketing. Results will be used, when planning different marketing ways and trying to reach as many women as possible for next events to come. Women marked the source where they heard about Nice Run, which reveals how well different channels of marketing worked and which need improvement. Women were divided according to their age into own groups. Idea was to see if there are differences in sources where women had heard about the event. This information will help reach different aged women better. Average of each marketing channel in all age groups provides information about which sources were used most effectively and which ineffectively most commonly according to answers.

385 women answered the question; where did you hear about the event. 94 women answered second question how Nice Run could be more visible and reach women. This shows that women were interested in helping and giving their own suggestions for future improvements. Some women gave many suggestions, which are seen as big variety of ideas in results. By understanding what does the customer want, marketers can get closer to consumers and develop own strategies to fit women's needs better. As customer and his/her needs should always be the main concern of the company, best way to understand customer is to ask directly from them. This will enable reaching target group and attracting new customers to the event, which is company's goal.

Results in all 6 figures show that no matter what age group women belonged to, most commonly they all had heard about the event at their workplaces. The highest percentage was in age group of over 55 years old women 63% and the lowest was in age group of 25-35 years old women 40%. This shows that marketers should keep on marketing event to companies and its employees, since this channel has reached over a half of women in one age group, and little less than a half in all other age groups.

Email was first possibility which women could have chosen as their source of information. Results show that not many participants had marked it. Since group of less than 25 years old no one informed email as their source. Groups 25-35, 35-45 and 45-55 had all the same re-

sults, 8% had heard about the event through email. Group of over 55 years old women, only 3% got their information via email. It is a shame that only so few participants had heard about Nice Run through email, since it is free, easy and quick way of marketing. Surprising was that no one of women had suggested marketing via email in open question.

Workplace was for every group the most common source of information. The highest percentage was in age group of over 55 years old by 63%. In all other groups nearly half of women had reported that they had heard about the event through their workplace. Group of 45-55 years old women 48% said that they heard from work place. Group of 35-45 women 47% and less than 25 years women 46% heard at workplace. 40% of women in age group of 25-35 women marked workplace as their source. Workplace was in every group the most significant source of the event. Women in open question part had suggested marketing in predominantly female fields. For marketers this is a good tip and should be used even more in future, as it reached so many participants.

Media didn't reach very high percentages in any age group. 13% of women in group of over 55 years had heard about the event from media. It was the highest percentage compared to all other groups. Lowest it was in group of 25-35 years old with only 5%. Other groups, less than 25 years 12% had heard from media, 35-45 10% and in group of 45-55 10% heard from media. Advertising more in media was suggested many times in open question. Women had good suggestions which will help marketing of the event to develop. Sources such as magazines, radio, television and Internet were mentioned. Local magazines were emphasized; since they would reach those particular women who live near the place where the event will be held at certain time. Facebook was also mentioned many times. This is very good suggestion, since it is free and can reach many women.

Local organizers unfortunately weren't a source of information for many women. Results show that in age groups less than 25, 25-35 and over 55 only 3% had heard about the event from local organizers. 1% of women in age group of 35-45, and 1% in 45-55 years old had gotten the information from organizers. Local organizers have a lot of useful information about the event, and it should be used. They would be able to answer to even difficult questions concerning Nice Run. In future local organizers should be thought how to inform people and emphasize the importance of their work for the company. If company wants to reach its goals, it should all start inside the company. In open question part no one had suggested that organizers should advertise the event more.

Friends found out to be effective marketers for the event. This might be, because event was advertised for groups of six. Therefore women had to ask their friends to join the event with them. This is very good and effective way of marketing, since there were very few participants who joined the event by themselves and not in a group. In less than 25 years old women group 21% had heard about the event from their friend. In group of 25-35 years old 29% and group of 35-45 years 11% got information from their friends. 11% of women aged between 45 and 55 heard from friend, and lastly in group of women over 55 only 6% heard through friend. In three groups friend was the second common source. Marketers of Nice Run can think about giving discount for participants when they bring their friends with them, or encourage people to tell to their friends by rewarding them with gifts from sponsors.

In women less than 25 years and 25-35 years 12% got the information from previous years. In age group of 35-45 and 45-55 years 13% of women knew already about Nice Run, while only 3% of women over 55 years knew. Percentages were quite good in all age groups except over 55 years old. This shows that women were pleased with the event and wanted to join this year as well. These women could be sent invitation to the event and encouraged to advertise the event to their friends as well. Marketers could offer special price to groups of six who sign up to the event early.

Advertisement was sent to me, was a source for those women who already had participated in the event in previous years. Percentages weren't high; there are different factors which effected on this. Only women who signed up the entire group were asked their e-mail addresses, other factor might be that not everyone wanted to give their addresses. In age group of less than 25 years, 9% of women had advertisement emailed to them. This was the highest percentage in all groups. Group of 25-35 years 2% got advertisement mailed to them. Groups 35-45 years 8% of women and 45-55 years 8% of women had advertisements sent to them. While in group of over 55 years 0% of women informed that they would have gotten the advertisement emailed to them. This is very effective way of marketing and reaching customers. Marketers should collect participants email addresses and start advertising more like this. In open question women suggested that event should be advertised in Internet, it would be easy, cheap and fast way of marketing,

Lastly women had a chance to write where else they had heard about the event if not from sources mentioned previously. Women were able to mark their own sources in part other. 0%

of women in group of less than 25 years reported to have other sources. Age groups 25-35 and 35-45 both had 4% of women who had heard from other places than mentioned before. Women in group of 45-55 had 5% of participants who had other sources, while women over 55 years only 3% said that they heard somewhere else about Nice Run. Some women explained more precisely where exactly did they hear about the event, but some left it without explanations. Sources that were explained were; masseur, grocery shops notice board and in churches notice board. This shows to marketers that participants for the event can be reached in variable places, not only sports halls or gyms.

### **13.2 Conclusion**

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the sources where women participating to the Nice Run had heard about it, and use suggestions given by women for developing the future marketing plan. Results gotten in this thesis are gathered from women participating in the event and will help in developing future marketing plan and reach even more participants for next years. Women's suggestions will be foundation for creating marketing ways, this will help event to grow and be even more visible to possible participants. The information women gave about the source where they had heard about the event, will help marketers to see what effective ways to market were and which ways need to be improved. Combination of two questions in questionnaire will help marketers to see weaknesses in marketing and take advantage of given suggestions.

In order for the event to be successful and for Forssan Salama ry to reach its goals, there needs to be enough participants attending the event. How to reach these participants, marketers can use the knowledge given in results. Certain things that marketers need to remember are, that each customer has individual needs and that customers are reached in different ways. For the event to grow its amount of participants, there needs to be found effective ways of communicating with the customers and making own service visible to them.

Results had many similar answers and suggestions for improving marketing. Of course those ideas are not a guarantee for successful marketing, but they will most certainly help in improving marketing for next year. As mentioned in theory part, customers are all different and they can be reached in diverse ways, therefore marketers should take under consideration those suggestions, as they offer other perspectives and new ways for marketing.

Forssan Salama ry will have a lot of help from results gotten from questionnaires when considering next year's marketing plan. This was the first time questionnaire was made about the event, information that Forssan Salama ry got is vital in improving and growing number of participants. For sure Nice Run will have many obstacles in future as well, but answers gotten from participants will help to start the event to develop itself and become more visible.



## 14 Suggestions for the future

This chapter is based on the suggestions which were given in “Discussion” part of the thesis. Many good suggestions were given by women, and they will be gathered as one part, so that marketers could easily use ideas and improve marketing in future. This part's purpose is simply to give suggestions for marketers of Nice Run, considering marketing in future.

This chapter of the thesis is based on the answers gotten from the questionnaires filled in by women participating in the Nice Run event. Answers are gathered from 9 cities, where Nice Run has been held, and answers are put together. It does not mean that marketing would be successful, but it does give new points of view and helps marketing of Nice Run to develop, and not only rely on same old marketing technique. Marketers in Forssan Salama ry can take ideas and try to improve own marketing in future by using ideas given by participating women.

In future Forssan Salama ry should continue investigating the sources of where women had heard about the event, it would enable marketers to check whether they have improved marketing through different channels. As mentioned in theory part it is crucial for the company to know whether it is going towards own goals, for Forssan Salama ry the main goal is to gather as many participants as possible. If marketers will investigate the sources through which women had heard about the event, they can monitor whether the percentages change. Also Forssan Salama ry sees if they have improved their marketing in specific areas, and will increase the possibility that more women will hear about the event.

Important issues that were mentioned by many participants were that marketing should be done in both languages, Swedish and Finnish. In some bilingual areas it seemed that either one of the languages was used more, which made minority feel outsiders; this does not improve the image of the event. For marketing to be successful, own product or service needs to be placed in consumers mind and do it better than the competition does. Therefore women need to be reached in the language which they will understand fully in order to make the best possible impression.

Marketing in local magazines was mentioned many times, women suggested that it would reach the habitants living at the area, and therefore it would be effective way to market the event beforehand it will be held at the certain city. Nice Run should monitor its competitors, if there are many similar events held in the same city, it is difficult to stand out from the crowd.

Event should be advertised and made visible to as many women as possible in the area where Nice Run will be held. Most likely the event which is placed better compared to competition in consumers mind, customers will choose to attend.

Usage of media was suggested by many women, Internet and especially Facebook, was popular idea. Nice Run had had national Facebook pages two years ago and previous year only two cities had own Facebook pages. Taking care and advertising the pages wasn't particularly anyone's job, this can be seen as not many participants were reached through them. As mentioned in theory part, objectives of the company need to be clear to everyone who is working to achieve mutual goals. Forssan Salama ry could improve this by delegating the job of taking care of Nice Run's Facebook pages to someone and advertise effectively through them.

Advertising more outside, on the streets, public places or malls was suggested. Marketers of Nice Run should try variable places, since results showed that participants had many different sources where they had heard about the event, such as masseur or church's notice board. Marketers should remember that all participants are unique and they are reached through different ways.

Marketing at workplaces was the most popular way of reaching women in every age group, according to results gotten from women. This is effective way to spread the word, as idea is to join in six persons groups, women can ask their colleagues to join the team. Women gave suggestions like, marketing the event at predominantly female fields. Marketers of Nice Run could think about going to companies and arrange events where they could share information about the Nice Run, hand out flyers or put posters on walls. Managers of the companies could be informed about the event and Nice Run could be marketed as refreshing event for employers.

Knowledge of local organizers should not be underestimated; they have a lot of good information and they would be right people to answer even difficult questions concerning the event. Results showed that very small percentage of women in every group had heard about the event from local organizers. Forssan salama ry could give clear instructions to organizers and advise them to share their knowledge, company should start working and strengthening its own staff. If employees don't have clear visions of what they are doing, company's goals won't most likely be reached as effectively.

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# Attachment

## Appendix 1.

NICE RUN 2010 PALAUTE		<i>Palaute netissä nicerun.fi</i>				
Paikkakunta: _____						
Ikä: <input type="radio"/> alle 25 <input type="radio"/> 25 – 35 <input type="radio"/> 35 – 45 <input type="radio"/> 45 – 55 <input type="radio"/> yli 55						
<b>Mistä kuulit Nice Runista?</b>						
<input type="radio"/> Sähköposti/Internet	<input type="radio"/> Paikallisilta järjestäjiltä	<input type="radio"/> Esite lähetettiin minulle				
<input type="radio"/> Työn kautta	<input type="radio"/> Ystävältä	postitse				
<input type="radio"/> Tiedotusvälineistä	<input type="radio"/> Edellisestä Nice Runista	<input type="radio"/> Muu _____				
<b>Missä muualla Nice Run voisi olla näkyvillä ja tavoittaa naisia?</b>						
<b>Arvostele asteikolla 1 -5 alla olevien asioiden laatua ja toimivuutta</b> (5 = erinomainen, 1 = heikko, 0 = en osaa sanoa)						
	1	2	3	4	5	0
- Ilmoittautuminen	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Nettisivut	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Ohjelma	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Juontaja	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Reitti	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Piknik	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Yleinen toimivuus tapahtumassa	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
- Yleinen arvosana Nice Runista	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
<b>Paras tuote piknikissä?</b> _____	<b>Toivoisin piknikiin:</b> _____					
<b>Osallistuisin Nice Runiin myös ensi kesänä</b>	Kyllä <input type="radio"/>				Ei <input type="radio"/>	
Vapaa sana (jatka tarvittaessa kääntöpuolelle):						
_____						
_____						
<b>Haluan osallistua kilpailuun ja mahdollisuuden voittaa Gymstick Cross-Trainer!</b>						
Nimi:	_____					
Osoite:	_____					
Puhelinnumero:	_____					
Sähköposti:	_____					
<input type="radio"/> Haluan, että minuun otetaan yhteyttä palautteeseeni liittyen.	Nice Run kiittää palautteesta! 😊					









