

THESIS

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MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN CASE: LAPIN RETRIITTISAFARIT



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Thesis

**MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS PLAN
CASE: LAPIN RETRIITTISAFARIT**

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The objective of this thesis was to find out the best marketing communications channels and tools for a new tourism company in Rovaniemi. The subject derived from the personal interest to marketing and its communications tools and channels. As the company is new, it did not have a functioning marketing plan yet. The outcome was to create a cost-effective marketing communications plan which the company was able to decide to what extent to implement it. The goal was to get visibility for the company and increase its sales and profit.

The company wanted to concentrate on international individual travellers so a quantitative research was made to foreign tourists in the Arctic Circle. The survey was planned together with the commissioner and implemented during three days in the spring 2012. The results were analysed and the suggestions for the marketing strategies were proposed based on the responds.

Three marketing books were mainly used as a basis for the theory part. Also scientific articles and Internet sources were used to find reliable information. The research revealed that Internet has a strong influence on people's buying behaviour. That is why it was suggested for the company to invest most on e-communications. As there are many different marketing communications tools and channels, it was suggested for the company to choose the most effective ones based on the survey and use them as an integrated way.

Key words Marketing Communications plan, Marketing Communication Channel, Marketing Tools, Integrated Marketing Communications.

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Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli selvittää tehokkaimmat markkinointiviestintäkanavat uudelle matkailualan yritykselle Rovaniemellä. Aihe muotoutui omasta kiinnostuksesta markkinointiin ja sen eri viestintäkeinoihin sekä yrityksen puutteelliseen markkinointistrategiaan. Yrityksellä ei ollut vielä käytössä markkinointisuunnitelmaa, joten päämääränä oli kehittää sellainen. Suunnitelman tuloksena yritys saisi näkyvyyttä markkinoilla ja kasvattaisi myyntiä sekä tuloja.

Yrityksen pääkohderyhmänä olivat ulkomaalaiset yksityiset matkailijat. Heille kohdistettu kvantitatiivinen kysely toteutettiin Napapiirillä keväällä 2012. Kysely oli suunniteltu yhdessä toimeksiantajan kanssa. Tulosten analysoinnin perusteella on yritykselle esitetty parannusehdotuksia sekä vinkkejä markkinointivälineisiin ja -kanaviin. Yritys sai itse päättää, missä määrin toteuttaa suosituksia.

Opinnäytetyössä on ensimmäiseksi teoriaosuus, jossa on pääasiassa käytetty tiedonlähteenä kolmea eri kirjaa markkinoinnin perusteista. Myös tieteellisiä artikkeleja sekä luotettavia Internet-lähteitä on käytetty tiedonlähteinä. Tutkimusosiossa kysely paljasti, että Internetillä on suuri vaikutus kuluttajakäyttäytymiseen. Tämän takia pääasiassa ehdotettiin kehittämään yrityksen kotisivuja englanninkielellä. Eri viestintävälineitä ja -kanavia kehoitettiin käyttämään integroidun markkinointiviestinnän keinoin.

Avainsanat: Markkinointiviestintäsuunnitelma, markkinointiviestintäkanava, markkinoinnin välineet, integroitu markkinointiviestintä.

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1 INTRODUCTION

For a company to succeed and grow its business, it is vital to concentrate on marketing issues. As people have different wants and needs, finding the right customers is not easy. When a new product is launched, a company must think which markets to focus on and which tools to use to find the right customers. Correct marketing tools used in a right market segments can increase the sales and profits and bring visibility for to a company. There are several variables to take into account when planning a marketing strategy. These variables are discussed in the thesis but limited to the ones essential for the subject.

In tourism there is a lot of competition, especially in Rovaniemi area in northern Finland. Many companies try to get attention from the same customers and use the same marketing tools for attracting the end-users. If a company wants to succeed in the markets, it is crucial to create something new and different compared to competitors. Also to know where the possible target markets are and how to reach them is very important.

Retreat Safaris in Lapland commissioned this thesis project. It is a new tourism company offering different kinds of products and services than its competitors do in Rovaniemi area. The objective of this thesis is to create a functioning marketing communications plan for the company. This is done by making a research to foreign tourists in Rovaniemi about which communication channels they use.

The thesis starts with a theory part where the traditional marketing is compared with modern marketing and markets are defined. This is followed by significantly important theory issues for this project: Marketing mix, marketing audit, situational analysis, market segmentation, market targeting and market positioning. Marketing communications channels are explained in the chapter three. The traditional communications tools are gone through and compared with the new way of marketing communications; integrated marketing communications. After that the company and its situational

analysis in marketing issues are introduced. The final part is the research where objectives for the research are stated and the quantitative survey is implemented. In the last chapters suitable marketing communications channels are proposed for Retreat Safaris in Lapland.

2 CONCEPT OF MARKETING

2.1 Traditional Marketing vs. Modern Marketing

The traditional idea of marketing is that companies achieve their profit and other objectives by satisfying their customers. This concept is necessary also nowadays but it is not sufficient to achieve the success. Companies have to do more than just satisfy their customers, they need to win the competition with against other companies. To achieve the corporate goals better than competitors, there are three conditions that should be met. First of all, the corporate activities should focus on providing customer satisfaction. Second, not just marketing department but all the staff in the business should put effort on creating customer satisfaction. Third is the goal achievement that management should believe in succeeding the corporate goals. This can happen through customer satisfaction. (Jobber 2004, 4 - 5.) In other words, challenge is how to make a product or service needed and purchased by a customer group so that they are satisfied.

Marketing includes several issues like planning and executing the business ideas. Also pricing, promotion and how to bring the ideas, products and services to public and at the same time satisfying individual and organizational objectives are important factors. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 2.) There are many definitions of marketing by different authors.

A company needs to define the marketing objectives and goals and the target segments and the market position has to be defended to be able to succeed. There are many tools for marketers to try to enter the markets; these are called the instruments of marketing mix. In the traditional way of thinking these instruments are divided into four categories. This is called 4 Ps of the marketing mix. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 2.) The marketing mix is explained later in chapter 2.4.

In modern marketing there is a need for more than just a product made available for consumers' in the market. A successfully marketing company nowadays needs communication with present and potential future customers as well as relation with distributors, suppliers, consumers and various publics. This is not easy as it needs to be thought what to say, to whom, where and when. (Koekemoer-Bird 2004, 31 - 32.)

2.3 Definition of Market

In marketing the concept of market means the group of consumers and organizations which are interested in the product and they have resources to purchase the product (Internet Center for Management and Business Administration, Inc 2002 - 2012). It is an actual or nominal place where the suppliers and buyers interact directly together or use intermediaries between them (Global Market Intelligence Survey 2011). There is a conceptual diagram (Figure 1) of the market definition by NetMBA.com. This diagram starts with the total population and progressively narrows towards penetrated market. (Global Market Intelligence Survey 2011.)

The diagram starts with the total population, which is the whole available market area. Potential markets are those who have interest in the product among the total population. The next phase is available markets, which are those who can actually afford buying the product. Inside the available markets those who are legally permitted to buy a product are called qualified available markets. Inside this there is target market which means the segment that a company has decided to serve. The last point inside the target market is penetrated markets, which are those who have purchased the product. (Internet Center for Management and Business Administration, Inc 2002-2012.)

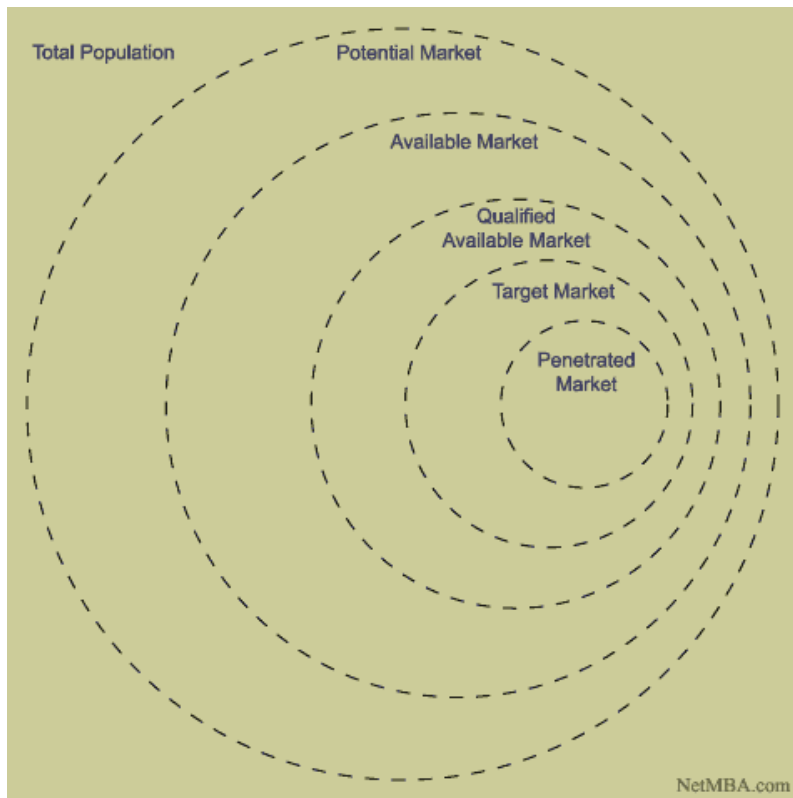


Figure 1. Market Definition Conceptual Diagram (Internet Center for Management and Business Administration, Inc 2002 - 2012)

2.4 Marketing Mix – 4 Ps – 7Ps

2.4.1 Definition of Marketing Mix

For a company to be able to satisfy its customers' needs and wants better than the competition, some special tools are needed. These instruments are called the marketing mix and they help marketers to implement the marketing strategies and to influence the demand for its products. These are tools that a company can actually control. In the product based idea there are four variables: product, price, place and promotion. (Jobber 2004, 16.)

When a marketing mix is related to services, there are three extra Ps: process, people and physical evidence.

2.4.2 Product Marketing Mix

A product is an actual goods or service which is offered to the target markets. It consists of three layers. The core product is marketed and normally is in the need of a customer and the reason for a purchase. In the middle there is the actual product: the brand and features of the product. This includes quality, packaging and design, which are important benefits and strengthen the desire to buy the product. The last one is the augmented product which provides the service layer on the tangible product. This refers to delivery, installation services and after-sales service. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 2.)

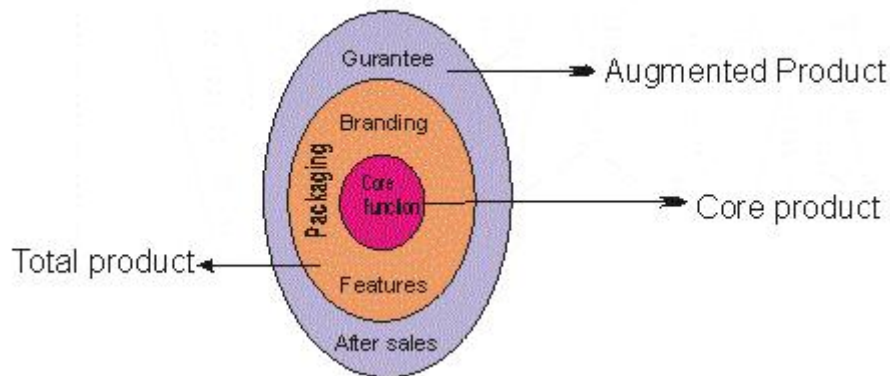


Figure 2. Product levels. (Department of Management Studies. 2012)

When creating a product, the first point to take into consideration is the core product; what is the need of a consumer. After that the actual product needs to be designed and the final point is to find the best way to satisfy a customer with the augmented benefits. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 502.)

Nowadays competition in the markets operates mostly in the augmented level and that is why the marketers must concentrate on this level.

Consumers need to be delighted by the benefits. It is costly and many times augmented benefits become expected benefits. This means that marketers should find new ways to differ from the competitors. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 502.)

As all the other aspects of the product represent costs to the company, price is the only variable bringing revenue. It needs to be thought clearly and wisely as it is probably the biggest effect on the buyer's decision. However, all kinds of discounts and incentives can make a product look more attractive in a consumer's mind. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 2-3.)

If a company sets too low price for the product, it may be thought that the product is not a good enough quality and it may not cover the costs for the company. And if the price is set too high, most probably a consumer will not purchase a product. The company has to take all the internal and external aspects into consideration when setting the price for the product. These factors include competitors' strategies, marketing strategies and the demand of the market. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 639.)

When a product is developed, it needs to be delivered to the right markets. It is important to use the right distribution channels and have a good relationship with the organizations as they may provide a cost-effective access to the marketplace. When deciding the market place there are other aspects to take into consideration as well such as transportation of the product, inventories, selecting the right wholesalers and retailers. (Jobber 2004, 19.)

How the target market is made aware of a product or a service is handled through the promotion or marketing communications. A company communicates with its target markets through the communications instruments. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 3). The marketing communications channels are explained more detailed in the chapter 3 Marketing Communication Channels.

2.3.3 Service Marketing Mix

Process of the service a company gives to the customer is one vital point in a marketing mix. The way customer sees he/she has been served effects on the perceptions of the company and satisfaction level of a consumer.

Helpfulness, waiting times and how the service is being carried out are the issues affecting to the consumers mind. If the processes are planned and implemented carefully it gives a big competitive advantage to a company in the markets. (The Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 6-7.)

In a marketing mix the sixth point is people. This influences to the importance of the persons working in the company. It is important that the workers are well trained and right kind of people to represent the company. It has a huge effect on customer satisfaction, both on positive and negative level. For some consumers the customer service level may be more important than a price. Therefore it is vital to choose carefully the employees who communicate with the customers. (The Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 6.)

Physical evidence refers to a fact that when a customer is purchasing a service, it is intangible and a bit of risky to know what is actually been bought. Normally a customer has some perceptions and feelings about the service and especially the customers who already have experienced the service can spread the word of their opinions. Many companies ask for the feedback from their customers to assure the new prospects of their services. (The Chartered Institute of Marketing 2009, 7.)

2.4 Marketing Audit

2.4.1 Marketing Audit in a company

The marketing audit, also called the strategic audit (Kotler – Armstrong – Wong – Saunders 2008, 134) gathers systematically all the concerns of a business's marketing environment, its objectives, strategies and activities. It identifies where the company stands, how it got there and where it is going. In other words, it recognizes the company's strategic issues, areas which are challenging and opportunities, and gives a future direction to the company. Marketing audit is divided into two parts: internal audit and external audit. (Jobber 2004, 41.)

2.4.2 Internal and External Audit

An internal audit covers areas inside the company. These are concerns that the management in a company can control. They include operating results like sales, market share, costs and profit margins. Also the strategic issue analysis; marketing objectives, segmentation, positioning and others are areas which the management has control over. Marketing mix effectiveness, marketing structures and systems are included in the internal audit as a company normally has its own department to work in these areas. The internal audit evaluates the company's value chain. (Jobber 2004, 41-42.)

The external audit concerns all the aspects that the company has no control. This means the macro environment which operates around the company. Economic issues, socio/cultural aspects, technological changes, political factors and ecological concerns are those which may give challenges to the company's daily operation. The market challenges itself as well. New trends and developments lead to an aspect that a company needs to be awake all the time and react to the changes. Competition is another concern which the management in a company has no control over. A company must know its major competitors and their strengths and weaknesses to be able to win the competitive edge and turn those concerns into a positive aspect. (Jobber 2004, 41-42.)

2.5 SWOT – Situational Analysis

Situational analysis is a commonly-used tool for an organization's decision-making. By identifying the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, it can build new strategies upon its strengths, try to eliminate its weaknesses, succeed in its opportunities or use them to counter the threats it is facing (Yuksel–Dag Deviren, 2007). A situational analysis of current and future market conditions is good to make as a first step when starting a strategic marketing planning process (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 119). The SWOT analysis is divided into two groups, internal (controllable) and external (uncontrollable) variables. This analysis provides a

simple method of the results of the marketing audit and is a useful technique to understand the company's strengths and weaknesses. (Jobber 2004, 44.)

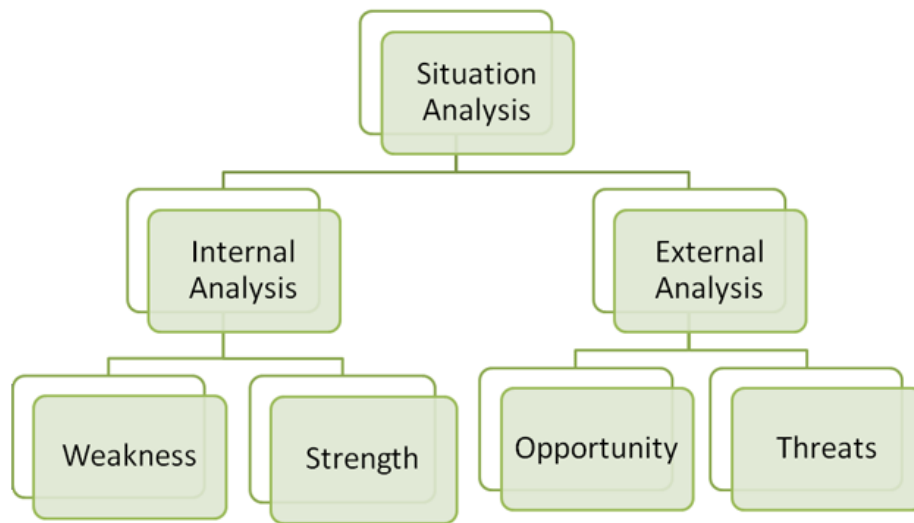


Figure 3. SWOT Analysis (Lucintel, 2012)

Strengths and weaknesses focus on matters that a business can do. They should include only those resources or capabilities that would be evaluated by the customers and which are relative to the competitors. Anything a customer desires or wants and a competitor cannot provide can be a possible strength for a company. These can be tangible or intangible positive attributes. The strengths offer a competitive advantage to the company. (Zahorsky 2012.)

Weaknesses are negative aspects that are under the control of a management but weaken the ability to maintain or increase the competitive edge. It is important to notice the problems and try to upgrade these areas to accomplish the marketing objectives. (Berry 2012.)

Opportunities are external factors giving the business reason for its existence. There is no control over the opportunities (Berry 2012). Especially a small business is influenced by the external environment such as legal, political, technological and cultural factors (Zahorsky 2012). Threats can also be called risks. They are unwished challenges which may lead to diminishing profits (Berry 2012). Opportunities and threats are events or trends outside

the business having an influence on the company's performance (Jobber 2004, 45.)

It is ideal to try to convert the weaknesses into strengths and threats into opportunities. This leads to an increase of competitive edge of the company and is called conversation strategies. (Jobber 2004, 45.)

2.6 Market Segmentation

A market is considered to be a heterogeneous group of people which have different kinds of needs and demands. They act differently in a buying situation. Market segmentation is a concept of dividing this heterogeneous market into smaller homogeneous groups whose preferences differ from each other. The groups react in the stimuli the same way and their reaction differs from the other members of the other segments. The goal is to find out the way to match the unique needs of the consumers (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 410). Normally the whole audience is too wide to concentrate on. It is ideal to find the potential customers in the whole market and concentrate on those (Hung–Tsai 2006.)

As there is no right way to segment the markets, this thesis concentrates on four different variables: geographical, demographical, psychographic and behavioral.

2.6.1 Types of Segmentation

When a company divides the customer into geographical units, target markets are divided by their nations, regions, countries, cities or neighborhoods. A company can localize its products and marketing strategies to fit the needs of a specific region. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 411.)

A demographic way of segmenting the market is the most popular variable. It divides the market into groups based on their age, family, gender, income,

education, religion etc. This way is easy to measure customer behavior. Especially it is very easy to segment the markets by the age as consumer needs and wants change with the age. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 413.)

Markets divided by their lifestyle, social class or personality characteristics is called psychographic segmentation. A person's buying behavior, which products they buy may reflect to their lifestyle. A want to show the social class reflects to the buying behavior, this means which products a consumer wants to buy. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 415.)

Behavioral segmentation divides consumers into groups based on their knowledge, attitudes, use or response towards a product. Some variables the consumers are seeking may be brand loyalty, usage rate or benefits sought. This part is believed to be the best starting point for building market segments. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 415.)

In today's world it is more and more difficult to divide target audience into different groups as people uses their motivational reasons for purchasing products or for example choosing a destination. Before psychological needs pushed people on buying what they needed, nowadays it is their motivation. Marketers need to know what are the desires and wants of the target markets. (Kuo–Akbaria–Subroto 2012.)

2.7 Market Targeting

When a company has decided its segment, there is a need for choosing which of those to enter. This is called market targeting. Target market is a special consumer population. (Buratto–Grosset–Viscolani 2005). A company must evaluate which one of the segments can bring the most advantage and which of them are the most profitable and valuable for the company. A small company with limited resources can decide to serve niche markets, those segments which big competitors normally ignore. Also a company may choose to serve many different segments but with the same basic product.

The most usual case for a new company is to enter a new market with a one single product and extend slowly to other segment areas. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 156-157.)

2.8 Market Positioning

After choosing the segments and where to target the marketing, there is a need to concentrate on positioning. It means how to differentiate the product from competitors in the consumer's mind. It is important to develop a unique market position for a product. If there is a product representing exactly the same idea as competitors', the consumer has no reason to purchase the product. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 157.)

To find a desirable place for a product in consumer's mind is not easy. There needs to be taken into account how to differentiate the product from competing brands. A good question is to think why a consumer would pay more for your brand. If a company succeeds in finding a way to win the consumer's purchase decision, it gives a big advantage in the competition. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 157.)

3 MARKETING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

3.1 Communications Mix

To develop a product for the markets is not enough for a company to succeed. Nowadays the target audience demands much more. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 691). After the product has been created and proposed to one or more of the segmented markets, the marketing tools for each segment need to be decided. Different segments may be reached through different communications channels. (Buratto–Grosset–Viscolani 2005.)

Communicating the customer value and building up customer relationships is a vital aspect of the business processes. Also having a reliable relationship with the intermediaries and various publics is a must for a success. A company has to manage many aspects at the same time as consumers' give feedback to each other and to the public through word-of-mouth. There is a large variety of communication instruments for a company to communicate with the stakeholders and target audience. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 691). These are explained in the following chapters.

Marketing communications can be done two ways: through personal communications or mass communications. When trying to convey a message to the consumers through personal communication, the message is directed to a specific audience. In mass communications the message is directed to a broad audience and it may reach all the publics and individuals. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 5-6.)

3.2 Advertising

Advertising is the most common and known form of non-personal communication where the ideas, goods and services are brought through mass media. This kind of media includes newspapers, television, radio, cinema and magazines. Advertising can be very costly and nowadays

especially business firms but also other organizations promote their ideas through advertising. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 737.)

There are four important aspects to take into account when planning advertising. First the marketing management needs to set the advertising objectives for the campaign. The objective of advertising can be to remind the customers of existing products or services. This is mostly maintaining the customer relationship. It can also be to inform the target audience of a new product or service, or persuasive advertising, to build a selective demand to persuade consumers of offering better quality than competitors. This can be accomplished directly or indirectly. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 737-738.)

The second phase is to set the advertising budget for each product. There should be taken into consideration the stage in the product life cycle, as normally new products need a bigger budget to increase the awareness among the audience. The market share has an influence in the amount of advertising needed. Also competition has an impact on how well the brand is noticed in the markets and leads to frequency of advertising which raises the costs as well. Also, differentiation of the products from competitors helps the advertising costs. When the products are similar, they may need heavier advertising systems. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 739-740.)

The third point is developing the advertising strategy. There are two main aspects: creating the advertising messages and selecting the media where to advertise. As in today's world there are numerous choices for advertising and it is very costly, it is important to create a good and creative message to place in the media. It should be meaningful, believable and distinctive. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 742-744.)

After selecting the message, the marketing management needs to select the media where to advertise. There are several points to take into consideration when choosing this. Reach, meaning how many people will be affected by the ad in the target market, and frequency how many times the person in the target market exposes to the ad are aspects to think. How each type of a

media has an impact to the audience also needs to be considered. For example for a product which needs to be demonstrated it is better to have a campaign on television than on the radio. The cost of different media types compared to the number of persons in the audience it reaches and timing, when to have a campaign (season or regular) are very important aspects to achieve the best results from advertising. (Kotler –Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 747-753.)

The fourth and final point is to evaluate the advertising campaign. Advertisers can have pre-evaluations to find out the feelings and perceptions of the ad from target audience. Post-evaluations are to find out if a product has increased its awareness and knowledge on the markets. These measurements are called the communication effect of the ad. Also evaluating the financial impacts of the ad is an important aspect but usually difficult for advertisers to evaluate as there are other aspects like price and availability affecting to this as well. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 753.)

3.3 Sales Promotions

Sales promotions are short-term techniques to encourage the audience to buy a product right at that moment. These promotions are normally limited to a specific time and place and try to provoke people to immediate purchase behavior. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 354.)

There are different kinds of promotions targeted to different audiences. Consumer promotions include for example coupons, money-off and premiums. These are targeted to consumers to provoke them to buy a product for a specific economical reason. Trade promotions are directed to retailers. They are offered with a special price discounts or gifts. Business promotions use the same techniques as consumer and trade promotions but are targeted at generate business leads, reward business customers and stimulate the purchase. In sales force companies use bonuses, commissions and competitions to motivate the sales people. (Kotler–Armstrong –Wong–Saunders 2008, 799-800.)

3.4 Sponsorship

Sponsorship intends to reach the marketing and corporate communications objectives. Normally it is a financial-based activity between a company and a sponsee. A company wants to gain publicity and awareness, and spread a positive message of itself or its product. The most famous way of sponsoring is through sports events. It is a cheaper form of advertising. Also a company wants to create entertainment opportunities for its customers through sponsoring and create positive associations for a brand and company. In a community a company can further its social responsibility through different kinds of sponsorships such as between a school and a firm. Also through different events a business can have a good opportunity to promote its brand. Printing out company's logo in bags or in shirts can increase awareness and a company can gain publicity. (Jobber 2004, 607-610.)

3.5 Public Relations

One of the mass-promotion techniques is to perform a public relations department in a company. It is a good communications tool for obtaining good publicity, building up a better corporate image and handling unfavorable rumors and stories existing in the public. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 760.)

The public relations department works for keeping a good relationship with all audiences, publics and stakeholders. It represents the whole company. PR tries to create a good corporate image for the company in a long-term and help to achieve the marketing objectives. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 291.)

The tools for the PR department are such as news to maintain the positive image of the company or speeches to increase the product or company publicity. Also creating events to catch the interest of the public is an effective tool. Written, audiovisual and corporate-identity materials are a good marketing tool for influencing target markets and finally creating public

service activities like raising funds is a show of goodwill from the company. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 764.)

The PR has various strengths such as representing a company as a “good citizen” which leads to a good reputation for the business. Also it advises a company on the trends and in case of a crisis it works for heading off the bad reputation. PR handles also the audiences which are more difficult to reach through other communication tools. These can be for example opinion leaders or investors. PR is also more cost effective and often more believable than other communication tools. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 292-294.)

PR also faces some weaknesses as it may have lack of control when it comes to news releases by the press. If a story from PR department does not have enough news value it may not be published. Journalists act as gatekeepers in this situation. The effectiveness of the PR is hard to measure as well especially compared to advertising or other communication tools. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 293-295.)

3.6 Trade Fairs and Exhibitions

Trade fairs or exhibitions are one of the oldest communication tools. They are arranged events or places where people working in the same sector gather together to talk about trade, introduce their products and services, exchange ideas and to buy and to sell products. It is the only activity bringing all the competitors, buyers and sellers into the same setting. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 440.)

Table 1. Exhibitions Objectives (Jobber 2004, 614)

Some of the objectives of trade fairs can be:

- Create awareness and publicity of the company and its products and services
- Develop relationship with already existing customers, new prospects, retailers etc.
- Improve company image among its target audience
- Find new dealers and distributors to work with
- Find out the customer's demand, their needs and wants
- Make extra sale and profit
- Gather competitive intelligence

The objective of attending the trade fair can be many of the choices above but in general they offer many great opportunities for growing the business, its sales and profits.

3.7 Direct Marketing

Direct marketing is one of the communication channels where a company reaches an individual customer directly and not through intermediary. The objective of direct marketing is to obtain an immediate response from a customer and at the same time build or maintain a customer relationship. It has undergone a huge growth during last decade. As before direct marketing included only mail and telephone marketing, in today's market it encompasses also online marketing; email, websites, interactive television and mobile communication. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 823-824.)

Direct marketing has a lot of benefits for both parties; buyers and sellers. For buyers it is very convenient, time saving and private. "The shop" is always open and they can make purchases from home or from offices. Often there is also a greater selection of products and services in direct marketing channels. Finally, for customers it is also interactive and immediate. They can call to the suppliers directly and interact with them via internet. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 825.)

For sellers it has a great advantage to use it as a database for customer relationship management and building new relationships. Reaching the markets through direct marketing tools costs less than for example advertising and is very efficient and speedy. It is also easy for marketers to make adjustments on prices and programs in direct marketing. Especially business' in tourism takes advantage of this. Reaching customers that would not be reached through other channels is also easier to do via direct marketing. In online communications it takes only one second to reach customers in other countries and this gives a big advantage for marketers to extend their business. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 825-826.)

3.8 Forms of Direct Marketing

There are several forms to use direct marketing. All of them reach a consumer directly but via different channels. Direct-mail sends an actual mail, catalogue, ad, samples, brochures or other item to the consumer's address. Nowadays it is more common to use email address as it is much faster and convenient. The other side is just they may be resented as junk mail or spam, unwanted mail. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 828-830.)

3.9 Catalogue Marketing

Catalogue marketing encompasses printed, video or electronic materials which are mailed to specific customers. The last choice, electronic catalogues have become more popular due to advances in technology. Also it is less costly and provides more space for marketing products or services. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 830-831.)

3.10 Telephone Marketing

Telephone marketing also called telemarketing uses telephone to sell products or services to the customers. Telemarketing does not happen only between business and a customer but nowadays also B2B (business to business) marketing happens via telephone. This is also convenient as

customers do not need to move to the shop to buy, they are reached where ever they are. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 831.)

3.11 Direct-response Television Marketing

Direct-response television marketing happens via television where products or services are marketed via commercials and programs. Usually it involves a free phone number where customers can call and get more information and purchase the product or service directly. This kind of TV marketing allows people to interact with TV programs using their remote controls. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 833-834.)

Online marketing is also considered as one of the direct marketing forms. This part is gone through in a chapter 3.1.8 E-communication.

3.12 Personal Selling

Personal selling is a two-way personal communication which normally involves face-to-face interaction between the sales person and a customer. When the actual selling process happens, the seller can identify the specific needs of the specific customer and tailor-made a service or product for these needs. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 464). Personal selling happens especially in B2B (business to business) situations (Smith–Gopalakrishna–Smith 2004). It is a great form of maintaining relationships between the parties. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 464.)

The goal of the personal selling is to find the people who are interested of the product and teach and demonstrate them about it. Also building up relationships, guiding in purchase process and provide after-sales service are forms of personal selling. In other words the main objective is not just to sell the product or service but to give a good customer service and gain customer satisfaction. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 465-466.)

When a sales person is doing personal selling it represents a company and its corporate image-building. This is essential especially in B2B situation. For that it is important to act in a professional way. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 466.)

Personal selling has a lot positive advantage compared to other forms of communications mix. Nowadays it is possible to try to ignore the marketing activities by refusing advertising letters and for example direct mail goes straight to junk mail. Personal selling has a big impact on its audience as it can give personal information to the buyer and it is remembered also afterwards. A salesperson may demonstrate a product and negotiate a price for the customer. Also the interactivity between buyer and seller is greater and it gives advantage of not misunderstanding a product and a company may get the feedback straight from the user. A relationship building is more efficient than in other communication forms as well. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 466-467.)

Some disadvantages of personal selling have been noticed as well. First it is quite expensive as it reaches only one customer at time and frequency to this is low. (Smith–Gopalakrishna–Smith 2004). Another point is that a company does not have a full control over the salespersons. Compared to advertising, the message and image are under company's full control. As every salesperson has its own way to work, it may create confusion of the company's image. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 467.)

3.13 E-Communications

E-communications also called online marketing had a big growth during the last ten years. E-commerce uses the Internet, electronic data interchange, e-mail and electronic payments to extend business activities (Jobber 2004, 580). As the Internet is the place for business nowadays, many companies market their products and services over the Internet. It is also a good place for building customer relationships. It is convenient and speedy for customers and companies and information is found easily. The online marketing

happens B2C (business to consumers), B2B (business to business), C2C (consumer to consumer) and C2B (consumer to business). (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 839.)

The most common form of online marketing is creating a website. It needs to be attractive for a customer and made the way that a customer stays around and visits it often. One type of a website is corporate website. This type of website offers information about a company and its products and services. They are made more for spreading goodwill than selling products. It is a good way to inform customers of the events or new products coming or to let the audience make questions and comments to the company. Another type is to create a marketing website. These are made to get the customer closer to a purchase process. They may include catalogue, shopping tips, and coupons which make a purchase more convenient and attractive. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 850.)

Other forms of online advertising are different kinds of commercial messages in Internet. The best known of these are banners. They are ads which appear in the website trying to attract a surfer to click the ad. It will take a person to the different website and that is when the ad has succeeded. Interstitials are ads which appear on the screen while loading a new page. They are separate windows displaying a product or service. Pop-ups are separate windows appearing to the screen. Nowadays it is possible for a web surfer to block the pop-ups but marketers have designed a new version, pop-unders which appear behind a page a surfer is viewing. Another way of advertising is search-related ads which is form of advertising through search engines. These are textual ads appearing next to the search engine results. (Kotler–Armstrong–Wong–Saunders 2008, 854.)

Marketing in the Internet has many benefits for customers but also for companies. For customers it is a convenient way of shopping. They get information of the products and services from Internet and make the whole purchase process at home. Also costs are lower. For companies advantage marketing through Internet gives is a reduction in investments. For example personal selling costs are lower. Companies can interact with customers

directly and not through intermediaries. Distribution improves and customer relationship building opportunities grows. It is also a great opportunity to find new markets. (Jobber 2004, 579.)

The limitations of Internet marketing for customers are a lack of flexibility in information they can get via Internet and delivery times. Also consumers need to have an access to advanced technology and make investments to it for example by buying a computer and Internet access. For companies the limitations are high costs in starting the Internet marketing. There is a need for updating the marketing regularly and be alert all the time. Also the authenticity may have some lack in market research results. (Jobber 2004, 579.)

3.14 Word Of Mouth

Word of mouth means an informal marketing what customers make for the company. Customers share their opinions about their experiences of the products and services to other people. It can be both negative and positive depending on customer's experience. Nowadays consumers also interact via Internet and that has increased the meaning of word of mouth. Some researchers have argued that WOM may have most influence on consumer's buying behavior of all the communications tools. (Feng–Papatla 2011). Especially in the tourism industry WOM has been discussed to be extremely powerful tool for advertising. This is because mostly the products are services and intangible which is why people want to know other consumer's experiences before purchasing a service. (Litvin–Goldsmith–Pan 2007.)

3.2 Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC)

As traditionally marketing is thought to be different communications channels used separately, in integrated idea they are one flow of information. All the instruments are combined which creates consistency between the tools and messages. IMC has extra value compared to traditional way of marketing. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 8.)

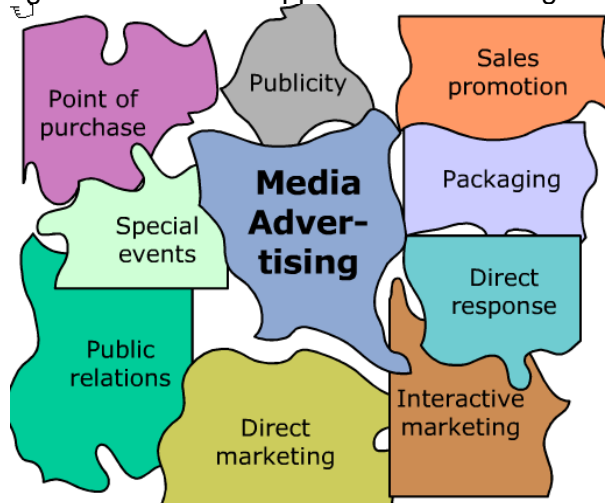
From a customer point of view, IMC is just one form of marketing. A consumer does not recognize the differences between advertising and sponsorship. For him/her it is just how a company tries to catch a customer's attention. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 8.)

To be able to succeed in IMC, a company must plan carefully its communications mix. They need to create a coherent and consistent plan and it needs to create synergy which means an increase of the effectiveness of the instruments. All the departments of the company which are involved in marketing activities need to communicate with each other. The manager has a responsibility on creating and maintaining a successful IMC. (Pelsmacker–Geuens–Van den Bergh 2007, 8 - 9.)

When IMC has been well implemented, it can give many benefits to the company. A competitive advantage increases, sales and profits can grow and time and money are being saved.

A good way to show the difference between traditional way of marketing and IMC is shown in the figures below. In the first figure (figure 4) a communications channels are separate tools and in the second (figure 5) they are integrated together as one tool.

Figure 4. Traditional Approach to Marketing Communications



(McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 2007)

Figure 5. Contemporary IMC Approach



(McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. 2007)

4 COMPANY

4.1 Introduction of the Company

Retreat Safaris in Lapland is a new company which offers safaris affecting to human's psycho-, social- and mental well-being. The company was created by a local family, Kari and Kati Liikonen. So far the products and services have been implemented only on a test level. The plan to start selling them is in summer 2012.

The products and services take place in Vikajärvi which is a little village 15 kilometers north of Rovaniemi. The family Liikonen lives in the same village so they know the area very well. They want to be able to enjoy the life in relaxed way and use what the Lappish nature has to give. The same idea is behind their business; to offer relaxing services to people.

The products vary from summer products to winter products. In the summer they have safaris offering sauna experiences, getting to know to herbs from Lappish nature continued with foot treatment, and canoeing continued by sauna session. All the products happen by the lake so there is always a possibility to jump in to Lappish water as well. Also there is a hot tub which can be used after safaris. Winter products offer snowshoeing, ski safaris and sauna sessions. Also herbal foot treatments are offered. The product cards can be seen in Appendix 2.

Family Liikonen has specialized in different kinds of massage treatments as well. A customer can purchase a normal massage or for example aroma therapy treatment or Indian head massage. All the products serve customer from wellness point of view. The products and services can be tailor made so it is possible for a customer to ask for a special package with an accommodation included.

4.2 SWOT of the company

Retreat Safaris in Lapland has some special strength as there are not many companies in the area offering similar products and services. Their business idea is quite unique in the market as most of the businesses in Rovaniemi offer safaris such as husky rides, reindeer safaris and snowmobiling. Another benefit for Retreat Safaris in Lapland is that both of the owners, Kati and Kari have a long history in tourism business so they are professionals in the field. They are locals with practical experience in offering tourism services to customers and this strengthens the reliability of their services.

Some weaknesses are seen as well. Kati and Kari have some other companies also and this limits the time which can be given to Retreat Safaris in Lapland. Also the business is not making a lot of contacts with other service providers in Lapland so it diminishes the possibility of awareness among target markets. Because their company is situated away from the city, it is difficult for consumers to find information about their company. The location decreases the visibility and can affect the purchase decision, especially because international tourists rarely have their own car with them when visiting Rovaniemi. The fact that the products are designed to foreign individuals cuts a half of the markets away as 50% of the tourists are Finnish visitors in the area.

The weaknesses could be turned into opportunities if the business could network with other companies in the area. This could increase their awareness and grow their profit and sales. It is beneficial always to have visibility in case of losing customers even the company wants to have a low number of participants. The opportunities for the business at the moment are good as not many companies offer same products. By good marketing strategies the business gets visibility and can increase sales. In the modern world many people have a busy lifestyle and a lot of them are looking for relaxing holidays and treatments which gives a great opportunity for growing the business for Retreat Safaris in Lapland.

Threats for Retreat Safaris in Lapland are other companies. Many of the tourists, especially international visitors buy typical products which are being served by the big companies in the city center. The competition is huge in Rovaniemi and a business needs visibility for success. If the visibility does not grow for the Retreat Safaris in Lapland, a risk can be that there will not be enough customers to run a business. Also seasonality is a threat to the company as in the end of the spring time and before winter season there are not many tourists in Rovaniemi. Global warming can also be seen as a threat in the future for the winter season.

4.3 Retreat Safaris in Lapland: Market segmentation and Market Targeting

In year 2010 there were almost 500.000 tourists visiting Rovaniemi. More than half of them were foreigners, most of them Russians followed by Germans, British, French, Spanish and Italians. (Rovaniemi Tourist Information 2010). As Finnish people have already experience and knowledge of the services Retreat Safaris in Lapland offers, the business has decided to concentrate on international individuals. The company offers safaris and treatments to small groups and individuals, maximum of four people. They market their products in the web pages and in the tourist info of Rovaniemi and at the moment try to catch the international individual travelers through those channels.

4.4 Retreat Safaris in Lapland: Market Positioning

The positioning for the products of Retreat Safaris in Lapland is in good level as not many companies offer the same. The company has a competitive advantage on selling different kinds of Lappish products and services than its competitors. They have added some extra value to their products.

4.5 Marketing Mix of the Company

Retreat Safaris in Lapland is a new company and the products are still on test level. They have been tested and planned and the first real safaris are planned to implement in the summer 2012. (Liikonen 2012.)

The core products are safaris in the nature and relaxing massages. The products want to offer the customers psycho-, socio- and mental well-being moments to their busy lifestyle. Augmented benefits the products do not have yet. The money can be return in case of an unsatisfied customer. Both summer and winter products are based on nature activities without automobile devices. Also the company offers normal massages and relaxing massages like Danish healing massages. The overview of the products can be seen in the appendix 2.

In the questionnaire the commissioner wants to find out the feelings towards prices of the products. The prices are set but they are still convertible. The place of the products is Lake Vikajärvi. All the activities happen there and it is situated approximately 20 kilometers from Rovaniemi to north. Customers have an option to choose a transportation arranged by the company. Results of the survey will guide the company on choosing distribution channels. The questionnaire will also guide the company on promotion, in which markets to concentrate on. At the moment the only co-operator for the company is Rovaniemi tourist info as customers can purchase products from them.

As Retreat Safaris in Lapland is small company it has an advantage on giving a special personal touch on customer service level. Also the staff has a lot of previous work experience in tourism field so a customer can feel him/herself safe.

5 RESEARCH

5.1 Quantitative Method

Quantitative research is based on getting considerable data from a larger population. This data is gathered from the possible end-users and is in form of numbers (Black 2005, 9). Quantitative methods are mostly surveys and questionnaires made face-to-face, by telephone, online, through webmail or via website. It can help a small company to find answers to questions of what kind of perceptions their customers have towards the products and services. These answers and opinions give a company facts and statistics to help succeeding in the business and improving customer satisfaction. (BHP Information Solutions, 2009-2012.)

Face-to-face survey is good to implement when there is a need for explaining something to the respondent. In this thesis research face-to-face system is implemented to be able to communicate with the respondents, explain the products to them and to be able to answer their questions. Via telephone and emails it can be more difficult to get many responds as people may not answer their phone or just ignore the email. (BHP Information Solutions, 2009-2012). The most common research and the one used in this project is survey research (Muijs 2011, 30). It tries to find out facts about the population and reasons for people's behavior and attitudes. (Giddens–Sutton 2010, 55). In a quantitative research the target audience answers to the same structured questions. (DJS Research Ltd. 2005-2011.)

5.2 Objective of the Research

The objective for this thesis project was to find out the most effective marketing communications channels for Retreat Safaris in Lapland. To get the best results, it was decided with the commissioner to plan a quantitative survey for tourists in Rovaniemi. The wished outcome was to have 40 respondents for a questionnaire of ten questions in it.

The plan was to find out first the demographical data of the respondent; age, gender, country of origin and traveling status. This was followed by a question of perceptions the respondent has towards the products and its prices. After that we wanted to know where the respondent normally gets information of the possible activities offered during their holidays and where they are usually purchased. Answers to these questions would help on finding out the solution for the research problem. The commissioner wanted to find out if to market their products and services in Internet, in hotels or in tourist info. Also the commissioner wanted to find out if the possible end users are interested in dog-sledging and river rafting so the ninth question tried to solve this out. The last question was to ask generally feelings about the company and its products. The survey can be found in the appendix 1.

5.3 Implementation of the Research

The questionnaire was created by using Webropol. It was printed out on paper, all together 50 copies. The analyzing was done by Excel-program.

The research was supposed to implement in the Rovaniemi Tourist info during a few days in the end of May 2012. As May is the most quiet time in Rovaniemi when it comes to tourism, it was difficult to reach respondents there. It was decided to change the place where to implement the survey at the Arctic Circle as there were more tourists at that moment.

During three days the survey was conducted at the Arctic Circle asking foreign tourists to answer to the survey. During those days the weather was good so that most probably affected the fact that there were tourists visiting. In the beginning it was difficult to find respondents as answering to the survey takes five to ten minutes. I needed to introduce the respondents to the products. I did that through the product cards (Appendix 2) I had made.

Most of the respondents were quite interested in the products and services Retreat Safaris in Lapland offers. No one had ever heard of the company before. Together there were 36 respondents. The wished outcome was 40.

5.4 Results of the Research and Suggestions for Marketing Communications

5.4.1 Age

Most of the respondents' were 25-44 years old and there were 16 male respondents and 20 female respondents.

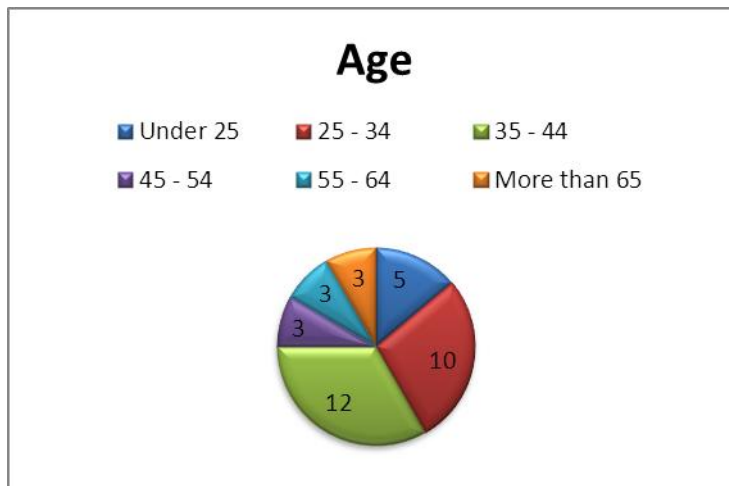


Figure 6. Age of the Respondents.

5.4.2 Country of Origin

The respondents' country of origin differed very much from each other. Most of the respondents came from Germany. After that Italy, Norway, Sweden, Japan, Spain and England had all three respondents. Poland and France had two respondents and one was from Russia.

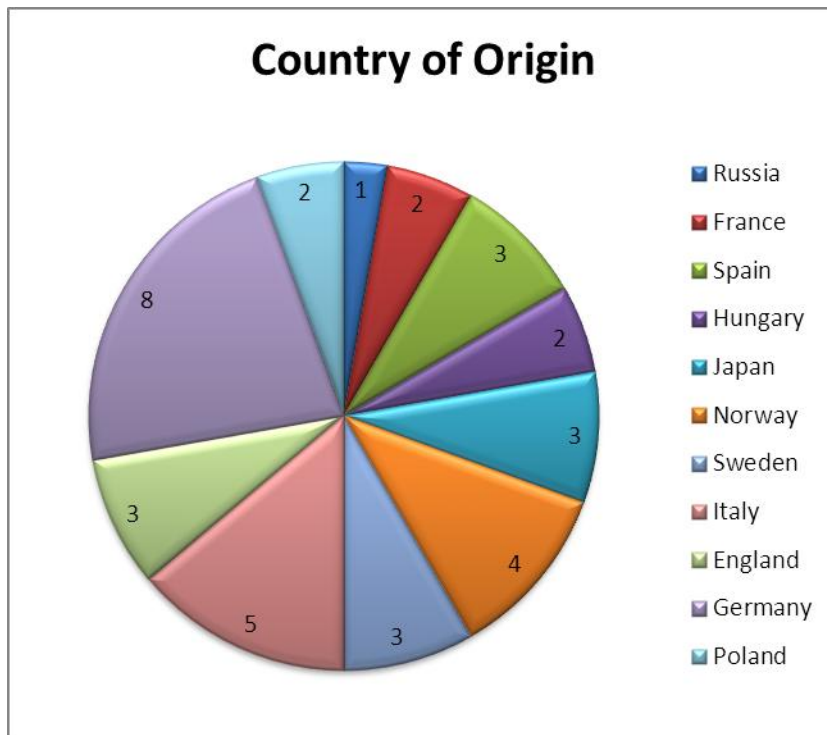


Figure 7. Country of Origin of the Respondents.

5.4.3 Traveling Status

The majority of the respondents were travelling as a couple or with a friend. In the survey there was missing the option “with a friend/friends” but people wrote it on the paper themselves. That also helped me to explain the products to them at the same time when they were more than single travelers. Nine of the respondents were traveling in a group of more than five people. Only one family answered to the questions and 2 single travelers.

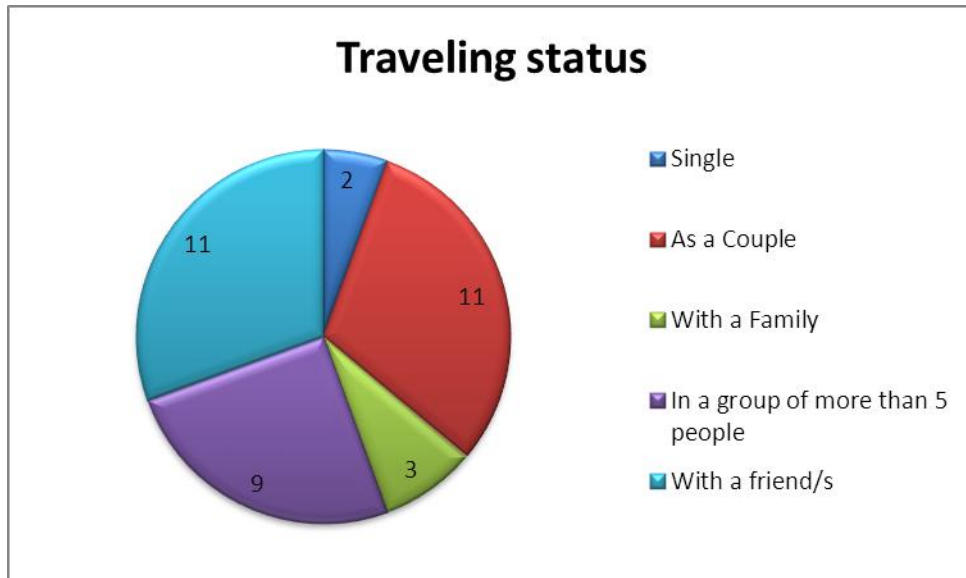


Figure 8. Traveling Status of the Respondents.

5.4.4 Feelings and Perceptions of the Products

The respondents were asked about how interested they were in the products. Fifteen out of 36 seemed quite interested and could have imagined purchasing a product. 13 out of 36 were quite interested but were not sure if they would buy one. Only one of the respondents was not interested at all.

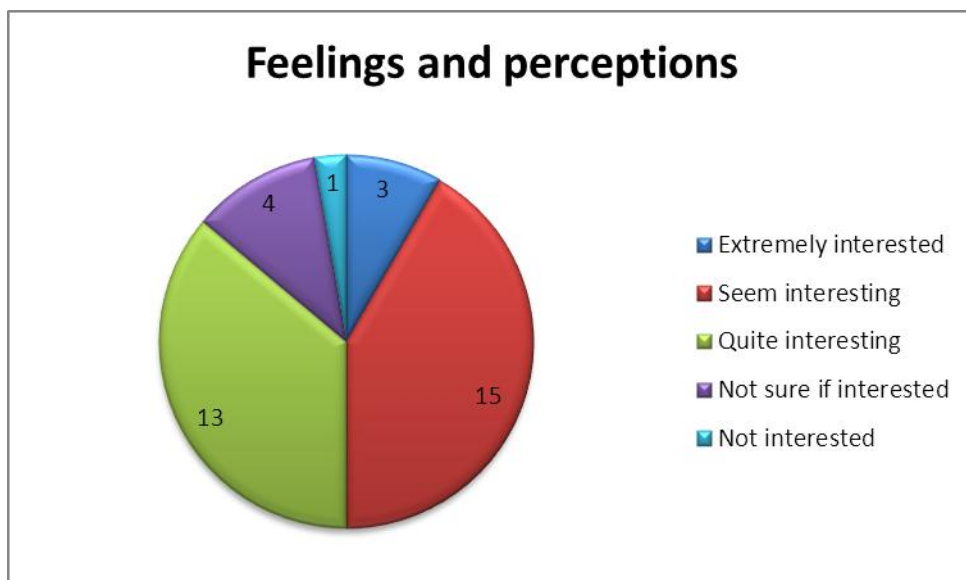


Figure 9. Feelings and Perceptions of the Respondents.

5.4.5 Suitable Price for the Products

The respondents were asked how much they would be ready to pay for a product like these. Many of them said that it depends on the product but marked what they think in general. 13 people marked they think a suitable price would be less than 80€. Many of them said that for a four hour safari they could image paying more money. Eight out of 36 respondents thought 125€ - 150€ could be a suitable price for the products. Some said that for the normal massages they would not pay that money though.

Retreat Safaris in Lapland has set the prices for its products which are quite the same that the respondents were ready to pay. This reveals that there is no need for resetting the prices. One of the products, a four hour Sauna Elf's Special in the winter season is 150€ and no one thought that they would pay more than 150€ for a product. So that is a maximum price they could image paying.



Figure 10. Suitable price for the products.

5.4.6 Information Acquisition on the Activities

The survey revealed that most of the information on the activities was acquired from the Internet. Also traveling magazines got 14 votes out of 36. People mentioned friends and relatives who have visited the place as well

and also tour operators as a sources where to get information on the activities. Television received ten points and happenings and events only five points. People were able to mark as many options as they wanted.

Retreat Safaris in Lapland should invest in Internet marketing. The company has created its webpages but as the company's target markets are international individuals, the improvement of the English version is evident. The products should be explained with pictures to hook the customers. Also writing a blog or starting conversations in the traveling forums is a good idea as nowadays people search information from other travelers' experiences. For a company this does not cost anything but time. As it was mentioned from the respondents, a possibility to purchase a product through webpage is a great idea and convenient for a customer. Retreat Safaris in Lapland could make this possible for its end-users as well. They could make reservations in any place at any time.

TripAdvisor is a large travel online service which offers interaction between customers and companies. Marketing through TripAdvisor is cost-effective as it is free. In TripAdvisor there is a big variety of reviews of travel service providers. A company can request a listing and then write responds to possible end-users and add photos of its services. (TripAdvisor 2012). This tool is effective especially for Retreat Safaris in Lapland as it can reach international individuals through the system.

Facebook is nowadays popular among all the nationalities and all ages, and it can reach a large target audience. It can give visibility to any company. (Facebook 2012). Facebook Page can be a cost-effective marketing tool for a company to reach traveling individuals and maintain the relationship with old customers. Retreat Safaris in Lapland could create a Facebook Page to market the products and use Facebook for customer relationship management. As the company's services are based on close personal communication, the owners can ask their customers to join the page and that way extend the visibility of the company.

As people also find information on the traveling magazines, but the target group for the company is international travelers, it is good idea to sell stories to the international journalists about the company and its products. For example a free product for a journalist in exchange of an article in a magazine or in Internet magazine is a cost-effective way to market the products to the chosen target audience.

As advertising on television is very costly and not many respondents chose that as a source of information, it is not suggested that Retreat Safaris in Lapland chooses that as a marketing tool. Happenings and events had fewest points but Matkamessut in Finland once a year is not very costly and can be a good place for networking. That is why it is suggested to attend trade fairs once a year.

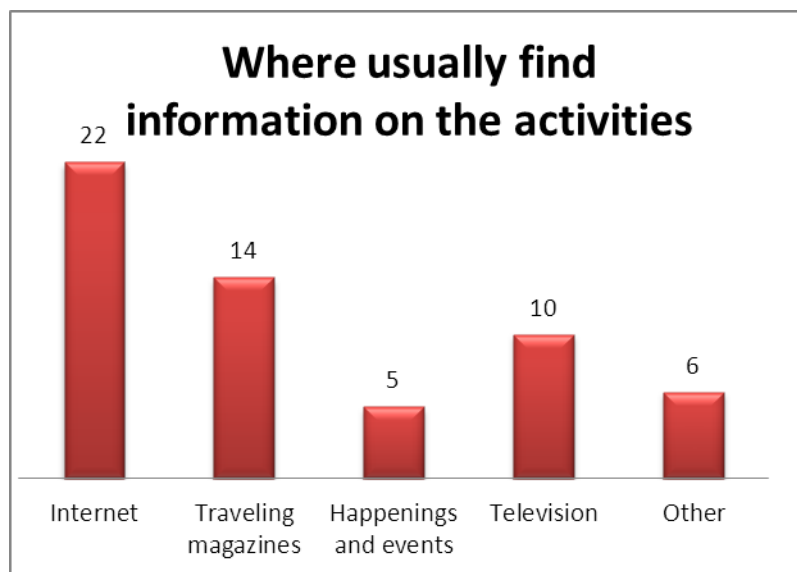


Figure 11. Information Acquisition of the Respondents.

5.4.7 Convenient Place for Buying Activities

The eighth question revealed that people would like to have a possibility to buy a product from a hotel in a destination. Many said that it is convenient as it is in the place where they stay every day. Also the company's webpages was mentioned as a convenient purchase place. Some respondents said that they prefer buying straight from the company and interaction in Internet is time saving. At the moment Retreat Safaris in Lapland cooperates with

Rovaniemi tourist info and eight of the respondents mentioned tourist info as a good place to purchase a product. Only five selected tour operator from their home country which was surprising. Some of the tour operators were mentioned; Hummel-Reiseideen was a tour operator one couple had used once and were now on their own planned trip. Also Santa Tours from England was mentioned.

As hotels were chosen as a best choice for purchasing a product, it is suggested that Retreat Safaris in Lapland creates product brochures. In Rovaniemi there are many accommodation providers which cooperate with safari companies. In a hotel possible end-users can find product brochures and decide to buy a product. This brings visibility to the company and can increase sales and profits. The more attracting the brochure is, the more possible it is that a customer takes a look at it. That is why it is suggested for Retreat Safaris in Lapland to invest in the brochures.

In the survey it can be seen that there should be a possibility for the end-users to purchase a product from the company's webpage. It is convenient for the consumers and makes possible an increase of sales and profit. Creating a purchase site in the company's webpages does not need a lot of effort and money. It is a good choice as it will not need a lot of updating. Once it is done, the only effort a company has to do is in the purchase moment.

Only nine respondents prefer to buy a product from the shops in a destination and eight in tourist info so it is not suggested to invest in these. When the company grows and extends its business, more options can be taken into account. Now the request from the commissioner was to have a cost-effective plan as the company is not planning on investing a lot of money on marketing.

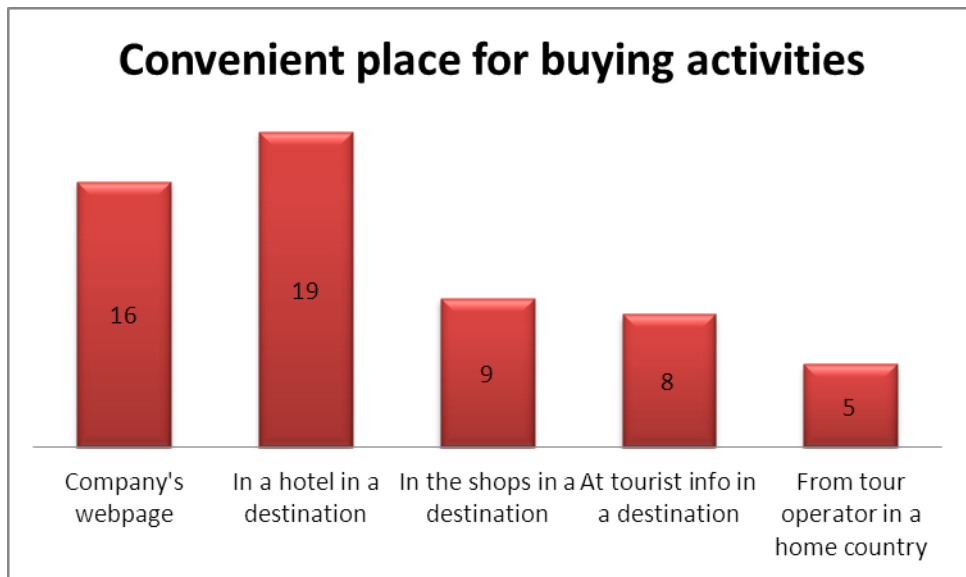


Figure 12. Convenient Place for a Product Purchase.

In the survey it was asked if the respondents were interested in trying dog sledging or river rafting. This question was created from the commissioner's request. It was an open question so the respondents had a possibility to write their thoughts about those products. The company is thinking of creating products based on these activities. The survey revealed that nine of the 36 respondents are interested in trying river rafting as it is an exciting activity. Eleven out of the 36 respondents are willing to try dog sledging. The open questions stated that dog sledging in the winter with huskies is an interesting choice. Two of the respondents said they could try both.

5.6 Thesis Process

The purpose of this thesis project was to find out the most effective marketing communications channels for a new tourism company in Rovaniemi. The process started with an idea of making a marketing plan for a tourism company. I was able to find a commissioner at the end of the year 2011 and plan an idea paper which was approved in December 2011. The brainstorming of the subject happened during the spring 2012. The project plan was drafted in April. Also writing the theory started in April. As I have been very interested in marketing the whole studying period in University level, I already had good knowledge of the subject. The research was planned in May 2012 and implemented and analyzed at the end of May 2012.

Table 2. Thesis Process.

Period of Time	Task
December 2011	Idea paper approval
January 2012 - March 2012	Subject brainstorming and thesis project plan created.
April 2012 - May 2012	Theory part created
May 2012	Research part planned and implemented
May 2012 – June 2012	Analyzing results and making conclusions

6 CONCLUSION

Marketing communications channels was an interesting subject to study and to create a thesis about. It is important for a company to have good marketing strategies to success in the markets. To know where to find the right customers is crucial as the target audience is big and the customers nowadays have different needs and wants. A company should know which marketing tools to use and in which channels to reach their own customer segment.

The objective of this thesis was to create a marketing communications plan for a new company in tourism field in Rovaniemi. The company's name and the commissioner was Retreat Safaris in Lapland. As it is a new company, it did not have an existing marketing plan or strategies yet. The outlines were set to find out the right marketing communications channels and tools. The fact that a company is new and missing visibility in the markets, and the commissioner was not willing to invest a lot of money in marketing; the cost-effective actions have been suggested.

After gone through in the theory part the possible marketing communications tools, a survey was done to foreign tourists in Lapland. It was created together with the commissioner to find out the answers to research problems. In the survey there were questions for the research part and extra questions which the commissioner wanted to find out. I was able to get 36 responds out of wished 40. The high number of respondents was unrealistic wish because of the survey was done in the most quiet tourism time in Rovaniemi. The first idea was to collect the answers in Rovaniemi tourist info but as there was very quiet while I was there, I decided to implement the survey in Arctic Circle. The fact that the days were sunny and warm, there were tourists in a good mood and I was able to conduct responds to the survey. Finally the outcome was satisfying.

From the survey I was able to find out the answers to the research problem. As at the moment the company does co-operation only with Rovaniemi

tourist info, I have suggested some other options for the company. All the suggestions are based on the survey results.

The company has already set the prices for its products but the commissioner wanted to find out what the possible end-users think about the costs. The survey revealed that the prices are set well as the respondents were pretty much ready to pay the same costs.

The survey showed that it is evident for Retreat Safaris in Lapland to invest in Internet marketing. The improvement of the English version of the webpages is crucial. E-communications is growing in the marketing field and everything happens in Internet. People are interested in other travelers' experiences and word-of-mouth has a big impact on people's buying behavior. It is suggested to the company to start a Facebook Page and join TripAdvisor travel community. These are good tools for customer relationship management as well as the company can communicate with its customers through these channels. Also it is recommended to the company to enter the conversations in the travel forum to increase the visibility of the business.

People nowadays want to have a time-saving and convenient way of making business. As everything happens in Internet, the respondents were willing to have a possibility to purchase products straight from the company's webpages. It is proposed for Retreat Safaris in Lapland to create a site in their webpages where the end-users can purchase their products.

The last recommendation for the company is to create attracting brochures of its products and services and make co-operation with the accommodation providers in Rovaniemi. This is the part which takes some money but was suggested in the survey as a best choice where to buy products and services. It is recommended for the company to choose these tools and channels and use them in an integrated way.

These suggestions are recommended for Retreat Safaris in Lapland to get visibility for the company and possibly increase sales and profit. The company can decide to what extent to implement them.

The thesis process was interesting and did not take as much time as I thought. The idea of the marketing subject I had already in the end of year 2011 and the plan was drafted in the spring 2012. As I did not have any classes or work anymore after March 2012, I was able to concentrate on the thesis every day. Theory part was gone through fast in one month and the research part also in one month. All together with brainstorming the thesis process took one semester. I have gained a lot of relevant information of the subject and want to continue in this field in the working life.

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APPENDICES

Questionnaire
Product Cards

APPENDIX 1
APPENDIX 2

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Survey: Retreat safaris in Lapland

I am a tourism student in Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. This survey is made to help me my thesis project in the spring 2012. I am trying to find out the best communications channels for a local company in Rovaniemi. By answering the questions you would give me a great help on my research problem. Thank you!

1. Age?

- Under 25 25-34 35-44 45-54 55-64 More than 65

2. Gender?

- Female Male

3. Country of Origin?

4. Traveling status?

- Single As a couple With a family In a group of more than 5 people

5. What kind of feelings and perceptions do the products give to you?

- I am extremely interested in the products and want more information.
 The products seem quite interesting to me and I could imagine trying them.
 The products seem quite interesting but I am not sure if I would purchase one.
 I am not sure if I am interested.
 I am definitely not interested.

6. What would be a suitable price for a product like these?

- Less than 80€ 80€ - 100€ 100€ - 125€ 125€ - 150€ More than 150€

7. Where do you usually find information on the activities?

- In the Internet
- In traveling magazines
- In happenings and events
- On television
- Other?

8. Which is the most convenient place for you to buy activities for your holidays?

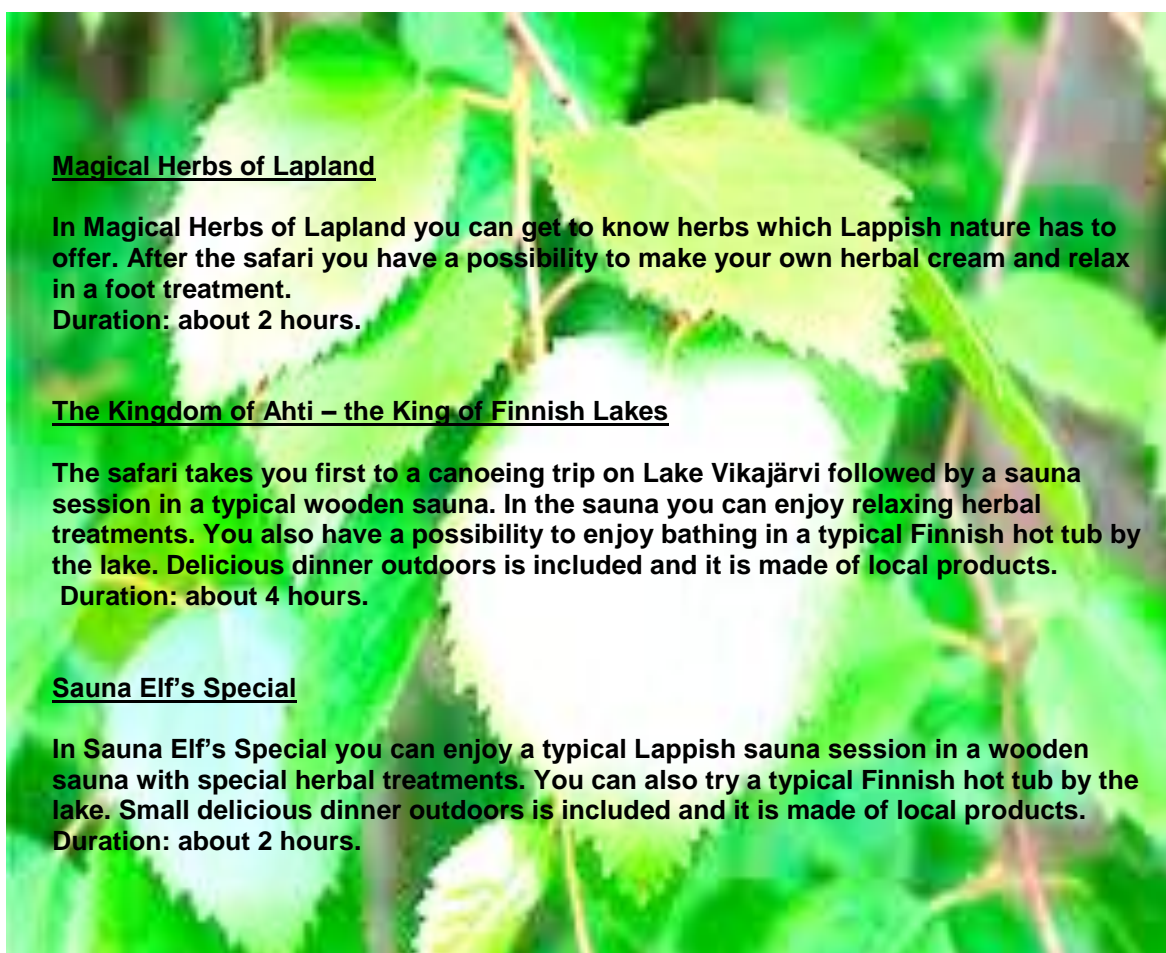
- In the company's web pages
- In a hotel in a destination
- In the shops (service provider) in a destination
- At tourist info in a destination
- From the tour operator in your home country. Which tour operator?

9. Would you be interested in trying dog sledging or river rafting activities? Which one? Why?

10. What other feelings do you have about the products?

Thank you for your answer!

Appendix 2. Product Cards.



The Kingdom of Tapio – the Bear King

The safari takes you to a typical Finnish skiing trip in breathtaking Lappish nature. Warm coffee is served during the safari. After that you can enjoy a herbal foot treatment and you can relax after the safari.

Duration: about 3 hours.

Mielikki – the Queen of the Finnish Forest

Mielikki is a snowshoeing safari in magical Finnish Lapland. Warm coffee is served during the safari. After that you can enjoy a special herbal foot treatment and you can relax after the safari.

Duration: about 3 hours.

Sauna Elf's Special

This is a typical Lappish sauna session in a wooden sauna with herbal treatments. You can also try a typical Finnish hot tub by the lake. Small delicious dinner outdoors is included and it is made of local products.

Duration: about 2 hours.

