

Ensuring Consumer Safety at a Sports Event - Case Tough Viking Helsinki 2016

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Bachelor's Thesis
Degree Programme in
International Business
2016



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Degree programme International Business	
Report/thesis title Ensuring Consumer Safety at a Sports Event - Case Tough Viking Helsinki 2016	Number of pages and appendix pages 28 + 7
<p>Every event organizer aims to produce a successful and safe event for its visitors. A growing number of different kinds of sports events and obstacle races has brought new concerns about the safety of consumers. The popularity of challenging oneself at such events is rising, which makes the availability of clear directives very important.</p> <p>The Consumer Safety Act was updated in May 2016, transferring comprehensive safety supervising authority from municipalities to the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes). The change eases the work of event organizers as safety regulations and obligations are becoming consistent throughout Finland.</p> <p>The safety of consumers is an interesting and important topic, but there have not been too many studies into it. The author of this thesis walked an unknown path to gather information, as there were no literary sources to guide the way. An interview was conducted with two senior officers of Consumer Service Safety from Tukes to support the information and conclusions.</p> <p>The case event, Tough Viking Helsinki, is the only Tough Viking race organized in Finland. It is one of the races of Tough Viking, the leading obstacle race in Scandinavia and Russia. Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 was the third Tough Viking produced in Finland. It was not the biggest race as it had fewer participants than the race in 2015. This thesis analyzes the reasons which led to the drop in popularity and also focuses on the connection between corporate reputation and safety regulations.</p> <p>This product-based thesis aims to help the event organizers ensure their visitors' safety and wellbeing at the events by clarifying the changed regulations and obligations. It also elaborates on what effect the way the event organizer complies with safety regulations has on the reputation of the event. The outcome of this thesis is a checklist meant for the use of the production team of the case event Tough Viking Helsinki but also for other event organizers. This will hopefully have a direct effect to Tukes as the event organizers will be more aware of what is expected of them. The product will hopefully also improve the reputation of those using it.</p>	
Keywords Consumer, corporate reputation, event, event organizer, safety	

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1 Introduction

Safety is all around us. We think about it in our everyday life, if not actively then the thoughts wander in our subconscious. The red lights remind us to stop, to be safe. Commercials remind us to buckle up and to wear a reflector. It comes naturally to us. We watch out for cars before crossing a street, we assess the food we eat or are about to eat and we do not touch the electrical cords while wet. Safety is a priority to us, why should we expect any less from the events we attend?

As sports events become more popular it affects the number of organized events in Finland. Event organizers are facing a demand to grow the size of the events in order to offer the experience to everyone wanting to participate. The pressure to create bigger events brings new problems to be solved and most of them involve the safety of the consumers. How could an event organizer make sure these risks are being limited? What are the aspects they should consider? Have they ticked every box on the checklist? These are some of the questions this thesis is aiming to answer.

1.1 Product objective

The need for this thesis came up in September 2016 as I was working as a production coordinator in the production team of Tough Viking Helsinki 2016. The safety supervising authority in Finland, The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes), paid a check-up visit to the event location on the day before the event. They went through the safety documents and actions the production team had taken to ensure the consumers' safety (Mustonen 18 October 2016).

The background for the project consists of three things:

1. In May 2016 the Consumer Safety Act (920/2011) was changed effecting the consumer event safety regulations
2. One of event organizer's responsibilities is to present information to the event's participants, a responsibility that the case event could have done better
3. The way both of these aforementioned factors are carried out influences the corporate, or in this case, the event reputation

In May 2016 the Consumer Safety Act (920/2011) was changed. Before the change the supervising authority operated in each municipality individually. It had led to a situation where each supervisor was applying the safety regulations differently. The event organiz-

er could never know what was expected of them as the safety demands differentiated in every municipality. (Koponen 18 October 2016.)

The purpose of the law change was to unify the supervising authorities by nationalizing the consumer safety supervising to The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency. The change makes the supervising coherent and allows development of the supervising in a new way. It also clarifies the obligations of all event organizers throughout Finland and gives them consistent support. (Kärnä 2015, 6.)

During the production of Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 the organizer faced challenges in communication with the consumers. The communication was not quite as reliable as it had been during the production of the event in 2015 and it had an effect on the number of participants. This thesis aims to present the event organizer's obligations about informing the consumers in a more comprehensible way to help the case company make the needed developments. It also elaborates the connection between the safety regulations, the challenges and the reputation of the event. This thesis hopes to benefit the commissioning company in their everyday event planning but also the production team of Tough Viking Helsinki as they begin the production of Tough Viking Helsinki 2017.

1.2 Project tasks & methodology

The thesis consists of three project tasks (Table 1) that are: clarifying the changed regulations and obligations of an event organizer (PT1) resulting from the updated Consumer Safety Act, establishing the connection between corporate reputation and safety regulations (PT2) and producing a safety checklist for event organizers (PT3). The research of this thesis was done with a complementary mixture of a desktop study, an interview and analysis of my own professional experience.

The desktop study focused on finding the right acts from Finnish law and understanding the connection between corporate reputation and the safety measures taken at the event. Following the discovery of the suitable acts I was faced with the challenge of converting the language used in the acts into a style that is more comprehensible. Another challenge concerning the research was the lack of sources. There are publications about how to organize an event but most of them focus on the basics and cover the safety aspects only briefly.

The qualitative method used in this thesis was an interview. It was conducted with two senior officers of Customer Service Safety at the office of The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency. Both of the senior officers were familiar with the topic and also with the case

company and were chosen as expert sources for this reason. The interview questions (Appendix 1) were designed to cover the effects the update of Consumer Safety Act has on event organizers in Finland and also to provide feedback of the safety measures taken in Tough Viking Helsinki 2016. Although an interview script was made, the interview did not follow the order of the questions. The interview turned out to be more of a discussion, as the interviewer and the interviewees were familiar with the topic.

I have considerable amount of personal professional experience of the subject. I participated in Tough Viking Helsinki 2015 as a consumer and got to experience firsthand the safety level of the event and obstacles. While writing this thesis I was a member of the production team of Tough Viking Helsinki 2016. It has turned out to be valuable to have both of these experiences, and even more so to experience the event before working on it, giving me the advantage of an unbiased point of view.

Table 1. Overlay matrix

Project tasks	Theoretical framework	Project management methods	Outcomes	Results found in chapter
Clarifying the changed regulations and obligations of an event organizer	The Finnish Acts	Desktop study and qualitative interview	Theory and concepts	2.1-2.4
Establishing the connection between corporate reputation and safety regulations	The factors of corporation reputation	Desktop study and elaboration of own professional experience	Theory and analysis of the case company's situation	2.5 & 3
Producing the safety checklist	The Finnish Acts and the factors of corporation reputation	Thematic analysis of the discovered information	Safety checklist	3 & appendix 2

1.3 Tough Viking Helsinki 2016

Tough Viking is the leading obstacle race in Scandinavia and Russia. It is a Swedish company and a concept that was founded in 2012. During that time obstacle races had started to become more popular and there were multiple races emerging. The founder of Tough Viking, David Klint, wanted to rise up to the challenge and create the toughest obstacle race of its kind. (Stark, T. 2012.)

The first race was held in Stockholm, Sweden in September 2013 and since then Tough Viking has already spread to five countries: Russia, France, Germany, Finland and Norway. The races differ from each other in length and the number of obstacles. The obstacles the participants face differ in size, challenge and variety.

Tough Viking Helsinki is the only Tough Viking race organized in Finland. The first race was organized in 2014 making the Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 the third annual Finnish race. Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 was organized as a co-operation with Tough Viking and a separate Finnish production team. Part of the production team's responsibilities was to make sure all the Finnish acts and regulations were followed and to ease the communication with Finnish authorities. One of their major responsibilities was to compose the safety plans and required documents in accordance with the domestic regulations and to report them to The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency.

Over 3000 individuals participated at the Tough Viking Helsinki 2016, a few hundred less than in 2015. Tough Viking Helsinki will be held again in September 2017. This thesis aims also to elaborate on the reasons, which resulted in the popularity of the race to drop and also help the production team of Tough Viking Helsinki 2017 to make needed developments.

1.4 The commissioner

The commissioning company for this thesis is MagnumLive Oy. MagnumLive is a Finnish company, which resulted of a merger of seven companies from all around the field of event organizing. This completely Finnish company employs close to 50 employees in three cities around Finland. MagnumLive is part of the Mangum concern whose revenue in 2015 was 13,5 ME.

MagnumLive is a company that can offer their customers the full package, an advantage that no one else in Finland has been able to do. They are able to design an event, create

new concepts, build and produce everything that an event might need, in-house. MagnumLive is Tough Viking's production partner in Finland.

1.5 Key concepts

Key concepts introduce the reader to the main idea of the work and help them to see the most important points and to understand the big picture. They are all linked together. A reader is able to connect any one of them together and formulate one of the investigative aspects behind the thesis.

Consumer is an individual who buys products or services for personal use and not for manufacture or resale. A consumer is someone who can make the decision whether or not to purchase an item at the store, and someone who can be influenced by marketing and advertisements. (Investor Words 2016.)

Corporate reputation comprises of social image, financial image, product image and recruitment image. A reputation is built on the impressions of the company held by a number of different classes of people in addition to the consumers of the end product or service. (Roper & Fill 2012, 5.)

Events are planned public or social occasions (Oxford Living Dictionary 2016) that can be categorized in a few different ways. An event marketing competition Evento Awards divides them in four different categories: business events, consumer events, personnel events and launch and promotion events (Vallo & Häyrynen 2014, 61). These include, for example, competitions, concerts and exhibitions.

Event Organizer is a person or an organization that schedules an event, and usually the party responsible of running it and reporting about it. Organizers make sure their events run smoothly, and if there are any problems, resolve them. An organizer can be responsible for the event from start to finish either by themselves or in a co-operation with a production team. (Wizards of the Coast 2016.)

Safety means a comprehensive physical and psychological safety in a way that no one is in a danger of being injured, getting sick or being disabled (The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency 2016).

2 Event organizer's safety responsibilities and reputation

An event organizer faces multiple different responsibilities and obligations. The Consumer Safety Act (920/2011) was modified at the same time when Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes) became the consumer safety supervising authority of Finland in May 2016. The modifications were not extensive but had an impact on the responsibilities and obligations of event organizers.

One of the main things a service company has to protect is its reputation. The reputation is affected by the credibility, reliability, responsibility and trustworthiness. (Roper & Fill 2016, 6-7.) The following responsibilities have a straight effect on the way the authorities and consumers see the event. It is a make or break moment for the event organizer, because if they fail to ensure the safety of their consumers once there might not be a next time.

2.1 Duty to take care

Section 5 of the Consumer Safety Act obligates the event organizer to ensure with caution and expertise required by the circumstances that the provided consumer service would not endanger a person's health or property. The event organizer must have sufficient and correct information about the service and must evaluate the risks associated with the service. By evaluating the risks the event organizer recognizes the situations where the danger is, how likely they are to happen and what kind of injuries can be the results of these situations. (Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency 2015, 15.) This evaluation is the base for ensuring the safety of the consumers.

2.2 Safety document

According to the Section 7 of the Consumer Safety Act an event organizer is expected to create a safety document of an event that withholds a risk that if actualized might cause danger to a consumer's safety. The safety document should include a plan of acknowledging and controlling the risks and informing them to the parties participating in the offering of the service. The Consumer Safety Act update (1510/2015) obligates the safety document to be kept up to date if anything in the organizing of the event changes.

Section 2 of the Government Act of Safety Document Concerning Certain Consumer Services' (1110/2011) sets the guidelines for the content of a safety document. According to those guidelines the safety document should present the following information (Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency 2015, 14):

- 1) Event organizer's name, home town and contact information
- 2) The persons responsible for the safety
- 3) Anticipated dangers and their possible results
- 4) Measures to prevent the dangers
- 5) Instructions for different dangers listed in section 3
- 6) The safety training and briefing of those participating in the offering of the event and their possible competence requirements
- 7) The spaces, structures, equipment, tracks, animals, one's protective devices and other equipment and the requirements considering them and the maintenance of them
- 8) The circumstance restrictions relating to the offering of the event
- 9) The maximum safe number of participants in the event under different circumstances and the health, physical state, experience, training or other requirements of the participants
- 10) The measures ensuring the safety of those not participating but in the event's sphere of influence
- 11) How different accidents, dangers and injury situations are bookkept and how the gathered information is used to develop the safety measures
- 12) Procedures to follow the section 8 of the Consumer Safety Act
- 13) How the information included in the plan are presented to those participating in the offering of the event
- 14) Which of the information stated in the Government Act of Delivered Information of Consumer Goods and Services (613/2004) is given to the participant and to those who are influenced by the event and how the information is given

The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency's composed instructions (2015) state that if the event consists of multiple activities or performance spots the safety document needs to include an appendix of a safety plan. The safety plan should present the following information of each of the activities or spots (Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency 2015, 16.):

- 1) Description of the activity and performance spot
- 2) Name of the person responsible for the safety of that particular activity and the name of the backup person and their contact information
- 3) The driving and other arriving instructions to the spot, including the passageway for the rescue and first responders

- 4) If it is a track: the track narrative, starting and finishing spots, day trips, overnight and break locations and activity locations. Including an appendix of a map of aforementioned points
- 5) The risks concerning the activities and performance spots
- 6) Risk control:
 - a. Maximum number of participants at the spot
 - b. Restrictions of performance (weather or other conditions, drugs, the skills of a participant, physical features etc.)
 - c. Competence requirements of the instructors
 - d. Actions of the instructions before the event starts (e.g. checking the performance spot, the safety and the first aid equipment)
 - e. Brief for the participants
 - f. Equipment (e.g. persons protective devices or other safety equipment)
 - g. Machinery (e.g. the fulfillment of the safety requirements)
 - h. Special equipment
 - i. Transportation, keeping and handling of groceries and water
 - j. Fire safety (e.g. fire alarms, handling of hire and the fire proofing of the materials)
- 7) Procedures of a physical injury happening to a participant or a staff member
- 8) Procedures in other accidents (e.g. fire or a carbon monoxide poisoning)
- 9) General procedures (e.g. fire handling)
- 10) Procedures for time after an accident or an injury:
 - a. Reporting (e.g. bookkeeping)
 - b. Informing of an accident (e.g. the person responsible for informing and the procedures)
 - c. Informing the authorities (e.g. police)
 - d. After-care (e.g. transportation of the injured and possible crisis support)
- 11) Other considered things

While composing the safety plan for each activity the event organizer should consider the possible risks or challenges of each individual performance spot (Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency 2015, 16). How to take into account spots that are on high ground and might result in falling? Or how to make sure the track is safe for the participants from matters not involved in the event e.g. cars, bike passages?

2.3 Reporting of a dangerous consumer service

Section 8 of the Consumer Safety Act states that if an event organizer is notified or should notice, on the basis of their professional abilities, that a consumer service might endanger

person's health or property he or she has to report to the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes) immediately. The event organizer should at the same time describe what measures he or she has taken in order to eliminate the danger or risk. The event organizer is to cooperate with Tukes in the sorting of the danger per request.

It is safe to say that there are multiple close call incidents happening in most organized events. Although the event organizer is bound to report to Tukes the serious dangers, there are incidents that do not need to be reported. Instead of reporting them all to Tukes, the event organizer is expected to compose accident bookkeeping, which is to include the incidents reported and not reported to Tukes. The bookkeeping has to be available for the authorities per request. (Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency 2015, 17.) This kind of tracking helps the event organizer develop the event and gives them valuable insight to the possible grievances in supply chain and safety measures.

2.4 Presenting information to consumer

According to the Section 9 of the Consumer Safety Act, the event organizer is required to provide the consumer and entities equated to consumer clear and comprehensible information needed to evaluate the dangers and risks related to the service. The supervising authority, Tukes, has the right to demand the event organizer to give necessary directives or warnings to the consumers concerning the prevention of possible dangers or risks and deliver them in a convenient, customer-friendly way.

According to the chapter 10 of the Government Act of Delivered Information of Consumer Goods and Services (613/2004) the directives need to include the following information:

- 1) The demand level of the service and the consumer's health or other personal requirements or limitations to take part in the service
- 2) The preparations expected from the consumer, the possibly required advanced knowhow or skillset and the information of required official documents in order for the consumer to participate
- 3) Such effects occurring from the performance of the service to the consumer, which are permanent in nature or the modification of which later may lead to major cost and effort
- 4) Such equipment, which the consumer is expected to bring along, to the performance of the service and possible limitations to the personal equipment used
- 5) Information about service related circumstances that can be evaluated to be significant to consumer's health or can be otherwise assumed to affect consumer's de-

sire to participate in the service, if such circumstances will not be available in the general information concerning the service

- 6) Necessary directives and etiquette during the performance of the service, guidance and directives to the use of required person's protective devices, emergency instructions and directives to discontinuing the service in a situation where a consumer notices a serious danger affecting the health or property while performing the service and the necessary safety directives of the circumstances possibly observed after the performance
- 7) Information given about the goods used in association with the performance of the service has to partly comply with what chapter 4 prescribes about the presentation of information about preventing of the dangers the goods might have on the health or property of the consumer
- 8) The person or personnel responsible for the safety in the service

The importance of above-mentioned information to be given to the consumer is undeniable. As stated before the information has to be presented in a clear and understandable manner. The chapter 11 of the Government Act of Delivered Information of Consumer Goods and Services underlines that the event organizer needs to consider the consumer's knowledge about the offered service, their ability to absorb directives and, in necessary, the needs of special groups participating in the service. It also obligates the information to be given in a written format.

2.5 Corporate reputation

Corporate reputation equals a consumer's opinion of whether the company represents the good or the bad guys. Reputation reflects the company as an entity. According to Weber Shandwick's (Roper & Fill 2012, 9) 63 per cent of company's market value is made of its reputation and the reputation has a direct effect on the company's revenue stream. The company is able to affect it by their actions but the fact is that eventually the different stakeholder groups decide. The more attractive the company's reputation, the more consumers will get interested in it and also recommend the company to their peers. (Roper & Fill 2012.)

What are the factors of corporate reputation? According to Fombrun (1996, Roper & Fill 2012, 7) corporate reputation is affected by four key factors: credibility, reliability, responsibility and trustworthiness (Figure 1). For a company to do well, it has to pay attention to all four factors, as they are the keys to a loyal customer base and higher revenue. Roper & Fill state that investing in reputation will give the company a chance to charge a higher

price for their products and services as they are seen as higher quality (Roper & Fill 2012).

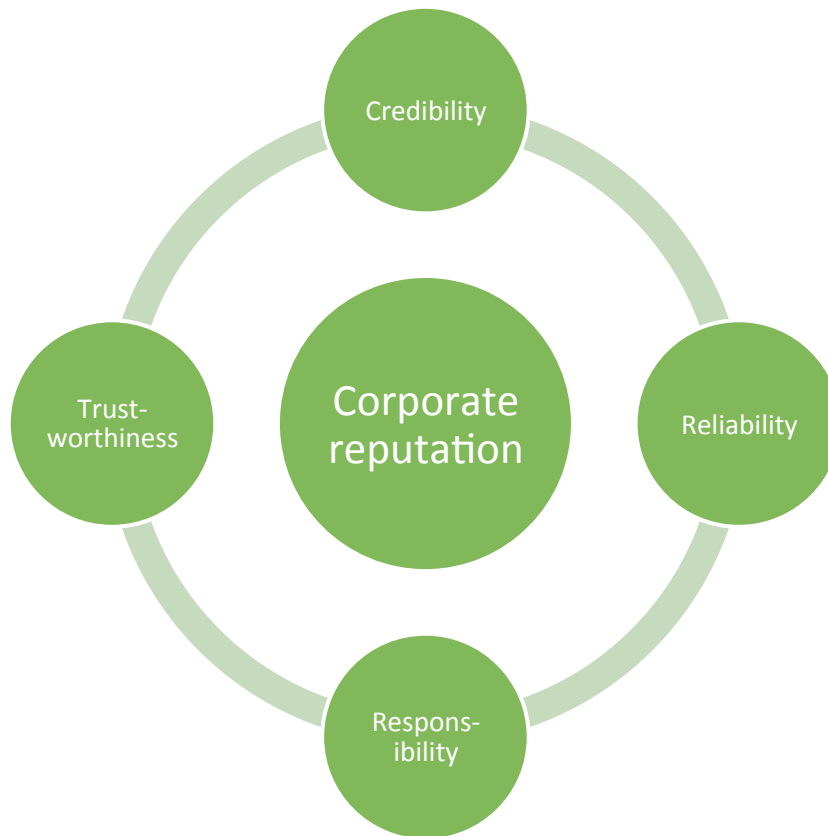


Figure 1 Fombrun's key factors of corporate reputation (1996, Roper & Fill, 2012, 9).

A factor that is not included in Fombrun's four factors is the consumers themselves. As stated by Roper and Fill (2012, 9) "The information revolution is here and has changed things irrevocably. Often uncensored and unlicensed individuals are communicating if not on behalf of the organization then with a clear link to its brand name." Times have changed dramatically since Fombrun's four factors were published and as illustrated below in the figure 2, the interaction with consumers is highly important, in good and in bad.

The corporate reputation acts like a circle where every aspect affects the others. It is simply not enough for a company to be honest, if it is not reliable or to be trustworthy, if it does not interact with its consumers. In the world we live in, it is not an option to overlook the state of the company's reputation. In the case of a sports event the reputation plays a huge role in the success of the event. If the reputation is poor it is more likely to attract fewer participants as it would if the event organizer would focus on these aforementioned factors. It does not matter if the event organizer has nailed the safety aspects if it presents itself in a negative light. This is elaborated in the chapter 3.4 of this thesis.

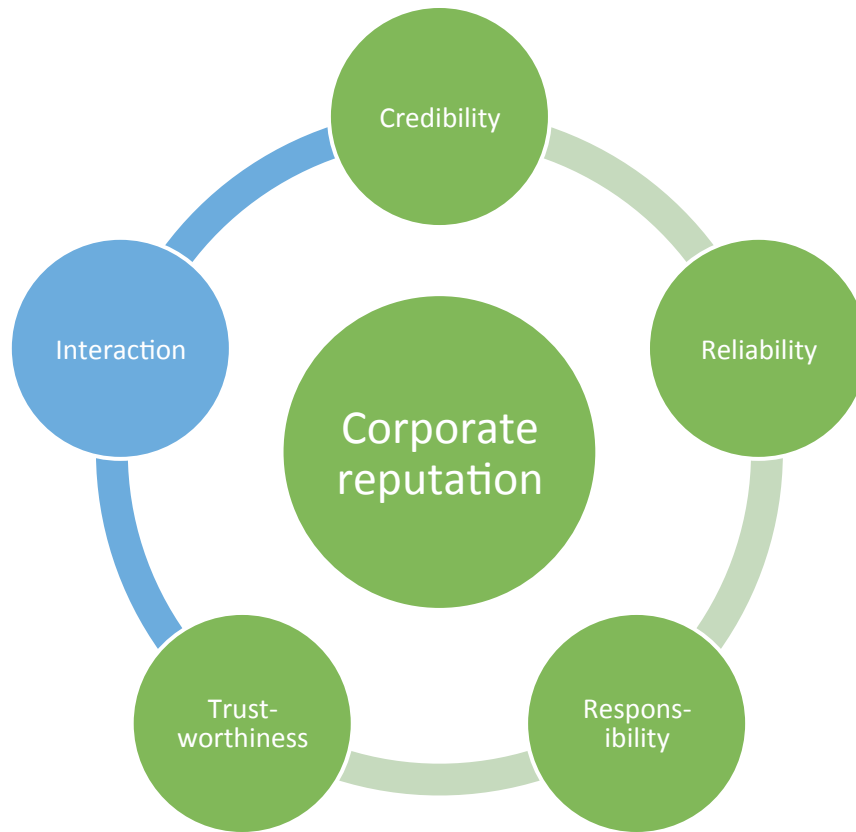


Figure 2 The five factors of corporate reputation.

3 Ensuring clientele and their safety at a sports event

It could be assumed that every event organizer wants their consumers to be safe. The aspect of safety touches every stage of the event, from planning to execution. It has to be considered when planning the activations, when booking performers and when doing the safety plans. It does not matter what the plans or activations are, the event organizers responsibility is to consider the aspects from the consumers' point of view and to ensure their wellbeing.

Safety also relies on communication. How does the event organizer communicate with the consumers and the staff? How does the event organizer communicate the nature of the event? Is it honest and easy to understand? Can the consumer comprehend what they are participating in to and what is expected of them? Are there limitations or skill requirements to the participation?

As assumed before, every event organizer wants their consumers to be safe but how are they able to ensure that they have clientele to take care of? The event organizer should pay attention to their consumers, as they are the heart of the event. If the consumers get a feeling that they are overlooked, the event reputation suffers and in the worst case, there might not be an event or clientele to take care of.

3.1 Analyzing and preventing possible dangers

The analysis and the evaluation are the base for ensuring the safety of the consumer. There are required actions stated in the Section 5 of the Consumer Safety Act and by completing them, the event organizer is able to prepare instructions for the injuries, limit and even prevent possible dangers.

Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 had an advantage over the first time event organizers as they had the possibility to look back at the two earlier Tough Viking Helsinki events and even get information of how other events abroad had been executed. Analyzing of the previous events is important as they are learning opportunities to prevent making the same mistakes twice.

As Tough Viking has grown more popular, the number of participants has been rising as well. Tough Viking Helsinki has prevented the possible dangers resulting from overcrowded tracks and obstacle spots by using a maximum capacity of the participants. The participants are divided into different starting groups that start in 10-minute cycles. One group has a maximum number of 150 participants. By controlling the number of participants

starting at one time, the event organizer is able to reduce the pressure at the obstacles, as there is a limit to the number of participants performing an obstacle simultaneously.

In an event like Tough Viking, the event organizer is obligated to create safety plans for each of the activity spots. In Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 there were 25 different activity spots referred to as obstacles. The obstacles were scattered on a 10-kilometer track and each of the obstacles had at least one supervisor. The production team had analyzed the possible risks and dangers of each obstacle and taken measures to prevent them. As some of the obstacles were high and had the risk of participants falling down, paddings were planned to be placed under and around the obstacles. However, plans do not prevent the dangers, actions do and unfortunately Tough Viking's event organizer was unsuccessful in placing paddings at each of the obstacles as they stated in the risk analysis. You can read more about the obstacles in chapter 3.3.

To help the work of the obstacle supervisors the production team had created a help box for each of the 25 obstacles. The box included a basic first-aid kit, snacks and utilities for the supervisor, forms to fill in case of an injury or a close call and a summarized information leaflet. The leaflet acted as a summary of the most important information from the safety plan required by the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency. The leaflet included the track narrative, important phone numbers, the address and the coordinates of the obstacle and driving instructions for paramedics.

3.2 Internal communication

According to the Section 7 of the Consumer Safety Act the event organizer has to ensure that everyone involved in providing of the service knows the content of the safety document. If the nature of the service or event calls for it, the organizer is required to train the persons involved.

Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 was accomplished with the help of almost 140 volunteers. The Finnish production team was in charge of the recruitment and communication of the volunteers. The communication was done through emails and volunteer newsletters, which included genuine information about the race, the working shifts, up-coming job tasks and the volunteers' responsibilities.

A training session was held a week prior to the event. The session consisted of a thorough presentation of the race. The event organizer had created a risk analysis of the event, covering the racetrack, each of the 25 obstacles and throughout information and instructions of the workstations. It had been reviewed with the Rescue Department of Hel-

sinki and modified to fit their requirements. Although the volunteers were not familiarized with the safety document, the content of the risk analysis nearly resembled it. All of the materials were also distributed through email to ensure that every volunteer had received the information.

On the day of the event, the event organizer coordinated a brief info session for the volunteers, which was held by the first aid and security supervisors of Tough Viking Helsinki 2016. The session consisted of instructions on how to mark the first aid and close call incidents up for the bookkeeping and how to communicate through portable two-way radio transceivers. The event organizer carried their internal communication responsibilities through and therefore all of the volunteers had a good understanding of the task requirements and knowledge of how to handle different situations.

The internal communications development areas lay within the communication of the production team and the cooperative crews. The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes) does not only profile all events but also the events' supply chains, making sure they know who is producing which service. Tukes looks at the event as a whole but focuses on the individual service providers. They evaluate if the supply chain has any weaker providers that might have had problems in previous events and then focus their supervision on them. In the case of Tough Viking, any of the obstacles could be a weaker link that would require more proofing. (Koponen 18 October 2016.)

Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 had an obstacle "Superslide", which could have been seen as a weaker link. A four-meter-high slide that lands the participants in a bay with streams possessed multiple risks. The safety measures were holistic but due to miscommunication and multiple responsible entities the execution did not go according to plan. The information about the mishandling did not find the event organizer before the event was over making it impossible for organizer to report it accordingly (chapter 2.3.) These are clear examples of things Tough Viking Helsinki should develop regarding internal communication and the safety of their obstacles.

3.3 Obstacles

The track of Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 included 25 different obstacles. Most of them were designed and constructed by a Swedish company. The same obstacles have been used in Tough Viking races in different countries and multiple races (e.g. Sweden and Norway). Senior officer Mustonen stated during the interview that having an obstacle that has been tested and used in another race is possibly not enough proof for Tukes that it is safe.

During a random sample check up on the day before the event, the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency pointed out that the documentations about the designing and constructing of the obstacles were constricted. Tukes would have wanted to know more about the background of the obstacles. For the time being, it is a difficult situation as there are no requirements e.g. how these obstacles should be built, on what kind of ground they can be built and what kind of maintenance is needed? (Mustonen 18 October 2016.)

It is recommended for Tough Viking Helsinki to compose a document of the obstacles that will be used in Tough Viking Helsinki 2017, which would provide comprehensive details about the design and construction phases. Senior officer Koponen stated that Tukes has jurisdiction to demand more than the Rescue and Public Works Departments. Koponen also stated that Rescue Department will start to require construction and installation certificates in the future, but when the information of these new requirements finds the event organizers is hard to say, as during the making of this thesis there were no newsletters or other sorts of communication about the matter. These certificates are to prove that the obstacles and structures Tough Viking Helsinki uses have been constructed right. The issue Tukes has with these certificates is that although it acts as a proof that the construction has been done correctly; it has not been assured that this is the correct way as construction guidelines and people responsible for the evaluation have not been clarified. (Mustonen 18 October 2016.)

During the check up, the senior officers of Consumer Service Safety noticed that one of the high obstacles did not have any paddings or safety railings on top. It was stated during the interview with these senior officers, Mustonen and Koponen, that usually in these kinds of situations where the officer observes a shortcoming of safety measures, the event organizer reacts to it immediately and the situation solves itself before any further notices need to be filed. The production team of Tough Viking acted perfectly according to the example as they had the safety railings installed.

Not only is the construction of the obstacles important but the measures that Tough Viking has taken and will take to minimize the risks in case of a slip, fall or changing weather conditions. The most iconic obstacle in Tough Viking is the "Rampage", a five-meter-high ramp that a participant has to run towards and climb up. The material works well in dry weather conditions but if it gets wet, the ramp transforms into a slippery slide. It is those kind of weather changes that the event organizer needs to prepare for. It was stated during the interview with senior officer Mustonen that the event organizer should analyze the risks further. What happens when a regular obstacle is after a water obstacle? The partic-

participants will be wet when they perform it, which results in the regular obstacle to become wet, slippery and possibly dangerous.

3.4 External communication

As discussed in the chapter 2.4 of this thesis, the nature of information and the ways of presenting information are highly regulated by the government. The event organizer has strict obligations of what, when, how, why and where to inform. It is a hurdle that this thesis aims to lower.

3.4.1 Communicating with consumers

Although none of the acts considering consumer safety state the language the information should be available in, it should be comprehensible to everyone. English is considered to be the language of the world but still an event organizer cannot assume that everyone will understand it. Tough Viking's official webpage serves all of the Tough Viking consumers regardless of their origin. The webpage acts as one of the main information sources and has a language variety where a consumer is able to pick the desired language. The problem Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 faced was that not much of the information was available in Finnish and no person had been assigned responsible for answering the consumers in Finnish.

The law does not rule the language of the event information, which makes it difficult to supervise, but the policy Tukes goes by is that the required language should match the area the event is held at (Mustonen 18 October 2016). As the race rules and information were in English for the time leading to the week of the event, most of the consumers were expected to understand English. How can the event organizer be assured that Finnish consumers have understood the rules? The race rules state, "By entering a race, you are explicitly acknowledging that you have read and understood the terms and that you agree to be bound by them" (Tough Viking 2016). Would stating that at the top of the race rules be enough? It would be preferable to get some sort of documentation (e.g. a tab on the signing form or a signature at the registration) from the participants of understanding the race rules because in a conflict situation the event organizer would be the party responsible for the consequences. (Koponen & Mustonen 2016.)

In 2014 Tough Viking Helsinki had the participants sign a discharge waiver (Lehto, E. 2014). Since then the waiver has not been used and Tough Viking Helsinki has used different ways trying to ensure that the participants have read the rules. The Finnish race rules and information are sent to the participants a week prior to the event through the

email address they have provided during the sign up. On the day of the event, the staff at the registration confirms from the participant that they have read the rules. If not, the staff provides the rules for the participant to read before getting the start kit. On top of these ways, Tough Viking Helsinki has an announcer sending the starting groups on their way and his responsibility, on top of setting the mood, is to repeat the most important aspects like obstacles that are prohibited from women who are pregnant.

Although the race rules have been composed by Tough Viking Sweden, they include enough information, which are in accordance with the Section 9 of the Consumer Safety Act in Finland (chapter 2.4). Nevertheless, there are manners that Tough Viking could put to use in the future. As some of the obstacles are prohibited from some participants there could be signs placed at the obstacles as a reminder. With the help of the obstacle instructors at each obstacle and the recommended signs Tough Viking would be able to assure that the participants remember which obstacles were the prohibited ones.

3.4.2 External communication affecting the corporate reputation

The participants of Tough Viking form a community that supports each other through the months of preparing for the race. They share workouts, challenges and positive messages and talk actively to each other. The participants are at the heart of the event and with the hype they have created Tough Viking is growing, or should be growing.

In the world we live in, the corporations, organizations and events are under a magnifying glass. All of their decisions and moves are being noticed, criticized and published globally by the media (Roper & Fill 2012, 5). The consumers have the power of damaging an organizations reputation and for an event like Tough Viking the tight community plays an important, but at the same time dangerous and powerful, role.

Tough Viking Helsinki 2015 was a successful event. There were approximately 3800 participants running the race and sharing the message and good vibes. The hype around Tough Viking was booming and the forecast for next year looked positive but something happened during the months leading to Tough Viking Helsinki 2016. Poor decisions were made, which resulted in a successful event but with a fewer number of participants. Only around 3400 consumers took part in the race. The main reasons for this decline in participation numbers can be found from the previous year:

The last obstacle of the race in 2015 was an electrical obstacle. It had been used in multiple other races before that without any accidents but in Helsinki the obstacle put two men in the hospital. It was a small crisis. The situation hit three of the most popular Internet

news sites within hours. The comment boxes were filled with concerned and reputation damaging comments from citizens unfamiliar with the event and some from the defending participants. The articles included a few comments from the producer of Tough Viking and a representative of the authorities but no further crisis communication was done afterwards. (Hiiru, J. & Tolonen, R. 2015; Särkkä, H. & Turunen, P. 2015; Saarinen, M. 2015.)

Crisis communication is an effort taken by a company to communicate with the public and stakeholders when an unexpected event occurs that could have a negative impact on the company's reputation (Business Dictionary 2016). The comment boxes of those articles tell the truth of the impact the malfunction of this obstacle had on the reputation of Tough Viking. It did affect the reputation negatively; in the consumers' eyes the event was no longer safe. Although most participants knew the risky nature of the event, the event organizer was seen in a negative light.

One could argue that the biggest problem Tough Viking Helsinki has is external communication. After the crisis in 2015 was left unmanaged, Tough Viking Helsinki made another bad call by discontinuing the Finnish customer service. As discussed in the previous chapter the information and communication during the year 2016 was done in English. Without regulations on the language the information and communication should be handled in, Tough Viking did not act against the law but the decision hurt their reputation and the popularity of the race (Table 2).

During the months leading to the race in 2016 Tough Viking Finland's Facebook-page was filled with concerned and disappointed consumers asking questions without getting any answers. As the consumers were waiting for answers, the reliability and reputation of Tough Viking worsened. Multiple posts included a statement saying that it would be their last time participating in the event. The communication did not improve and the results are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Comparing the Tough Viking Helsinki races (2015/2016)

	2015	2016
Participants	3800 (sold out)	3400
Language used	Finnish	English
Responsible	Finnish production team	Swedish production team
Communication with consumers	Active	Inactive
Q&A	Active answering	No answers on emails or

		social media posts
Reaction	The number of participants grew dramatically from 2014 and the event was sold out.	Unhappy consumers saying that they will never participate again due to poor customer service was not worth the price of the event.

As elaborated in the chapter 2.5, the factors affecting the corporate reputation are credibility, reliability, responsibility and trustworthiness. In my knowledge the posts included a good mix of well though criticism and positive feedback on top of the dissatisfied posts. The dissatisfaction is a direct result from the lack of responsible and reliable answering. The problem did not concern only the Facebook page but every communication channel there was.

The community that has generated around Tough Viking is much more valuable to the event that the organizer seems to understand. Those Facebook posts from the consumers are not visible anymore when finalizing this thesis. Tough Viking has hidden the reviews feature from their Facebook page. In addition to the dissatisfaction of answering consumer inquiries, the consumers are given the impression that their opinion does not matter. There might be a good reason behind the hiding the feature but it might speak the opposite to their consumer.

3.5 Constant development

Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 was the third annual Tough Viking race organized in Finland. It is important for an event organizer to constantly listen and analyze what consumers say about their event because they are the ones that see it from an unbiased point of view. During and after each event the event organizers of Tough Viking Helsinki have collected feedback about the race from participants. This has given them valuable information of development points.

The production team had analyzed the event themselves and listened to the consumers as well. The most relevant changes were made to the track narrative and the size of the obstacles. In 2015 the Tough Viking Helsinki track narrated in two directions, which confused the participants. According to the review posts on Facebook the participants were satisfied that the 2016 track narrative was designed to run only in one direction making the track clearer. As stated multiple times before, the popularity of Tough Viking Helsinki has been growing, making the event organizer face the problem of how to prevent the

queues at the obstacles. Limiting the number of participants starting at the same time had come far but it was not enough anymore. Tough Viking Helsinki 2016 grew the size of the obstacles, which eased the racing by making it possible for more participants to perform it simultaneously.

As stated in the chapter 2.3 the event organizer is expected to have accident bookkeeping. The bookkeeping has helped Tough Viking Helsinki to make development choices and improve the race. The obstacles were constructed more professionally and enlarged in size to avoid overcrowdings. The actions taken towards a safer race can be seen by comparing the accident bookkeeping from Tough Viking Helsinki 2015 and 2016. The injuries and close calls were almost halved. Although, one needs to keep in mind that the circumstances of the races were not completely identical as changes were made to the track and one of the most challenging and dangerous obstacles was excluded from the 2016 race.

To round off this chapter, Roper and Fill (2012, 9) state “recovering reputation is considered much more difficult than building and maintaining it and therefore the active management of corporate reputation should be considered a priority by management.” Tough Viking is already constantly developing the obstacles, the co-operatives and all race details but leaving their disregarded.

4 Product

The product of this thesis is an event organizer's checklist to consumer safety in a sports event. It was composed according to the regulations and obligations of an event organizer. The checklist is made for the use of Tough Viking Helsinki but also for all the event organizers in Finland. As The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency requires the event organizers to communicate clearly with their consumers, the responsibilities and obligations of an event organizer should be clear as well. The event organizer's checklist is short and comprehensible, easing the following of the law.

It was designed to be clear and simple to use. I aimed to create an instrument for event organizers that I as a producer would want to use. The layout eases the following of the event producing process. The product is a Word document that is easy to transform into an Excel-file or otherwise personalize. A production team usually consists of multiple people with colleagues handling the same responsibilities and the use of this product helps the communication, as anyone can easily understand what has been done or needs to be done.

The layout of the checklist follows the order of the responsibilities of an event organizer. It follows the order of the Acts easing the search of more information. The checklist consists of two parts, before and after the event. The first part has been divided into four sections, each of them labeled according to the responsibilities. The last part elaborates how the responsibilities affect the event organizer's actions after the event. It is equally important to prepare for the event, as it is to conclude thoroughly.

5 Conclusions

5.1 Product evaluation

The objective of this product was to clarify an event organizer's obligations and responsibilities concerning consumer safety and analyze the connection between corporate reputation and carrying out the new regulations. As the Consumer Safety Act was updated in May 2016 the responsibilities got updated as well. The regulations and information are scattered in multiple different sites making it difficult for an event organizer to reach them. Every event organizer's goal is to guarantee the safety of consumers to the best of their ability and this product aims to ease their task.

The topic of this thesis was completely new. While researching for information and any previous works done of the topic, I did not come across any material done from this aspect. Mixing that with a marketing perspective of corporate reputation, I had really interesting time analyzing the connection from the Tough Viking's point of view. The analysis was fairly easy to make as I have considerable amount of professional experience of the event. The hard part was to focus only on the topic at hand and make sure I would not start to meander.

The product of this thesis is an event organizer's checklist to consumer safety. It is made for the use of all event organizers. It goes deeper than the surface as all of the decisions made considering the safety regulations discussed in this thesis have an effect on the event's reputation. I also considered the aftermath of the decisions when designing the layout of the checklist. Now there is a part of the checklist dedicated to actions after the event. The checklist is unique event organizing instrument and will help not only the case event but also all events held in Finland.

5.2 Recommendations

In conclusion, I recommend the event organizer and production team of Tough Viking Helsinki to keep on developing their safety measures. It will serve them and their consumers well. I recommend the focus to be on the internal and external communications as well as the obstacle safety. The internal communications should be developed to be clearer. The external communication should concentrate on providing the consumers the information and service in Finnish and a more concrete recommendation is to start asking them for a confirmation of the reading and understanding of the race rules.

Although the Rescue Department's requirements of construction and installation certificates have not been released to the public yet, I recommend Tough Viking to compose the certificates or at least provide more detailed background information of how the safety of their obstacles has been confirmed. I would like to see Tough Viking setting an example as an event organizer that does not avoid its responsibilities. It will have an effect on the staff and the consumers and through them the corporate reputation could improve. Also, by composing all the required documents and by starting to report the injuries and close calls to The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency immediately they ease their own doing. I recommend them to continue the cooperation with Tukes as they have considerable experience and knowledge of the situations. Furthermore, they are eager to learn from the events themselves to develop their supervising and actions.

For further development, I would like to see a research done of the consumers' perspective. What do they think of the corporate reputation? Do they see a connection between the safety regulations and corporate reputation? If yes, what kind? The research could involve a case event that has had a recent situation concerning the topic. The researcher could do a quantitative survey and analyze the answers. I have no doubt that the results would be interesting.

5.3 Personal learning evaluation

My personal learning goals for this thesis were to understand the big picture of what goes into the planning and executing a safe event from the consumer's perspective. As I recently started working as a producer in a production and event company, I aimed to learn valuable information to ease my own and the whole production teams' job. The other aspect of the learning goal was to gain knowledge of the consumer's safety regulations and the working ways of The Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency (Tukes). I will be a part of the production team of Tough Viking Helsinki 2017 and the learning goals are to support my work. I also planned ahead by thinking of having this knowledge giving me a great advantage in the future.

On top of the safety measures I was interested to see what kind of an effect they have on the event's reputation. I had thought about it on my own and was not hugely surprised by the results. I experienced Tough Viking Helsinki 2015 as a consumer, the year they certainly succeeded in communicating with the consumers. I wanted to be able to prove that the dissatisfaction of the consumers in 2016 was connected to the poor level of information.

The research and information gathering stages were difficult as there are no books written about the topic. The sources I had to rely on are the Acts, the webpages of Tukes, the interview and my previous knowledge. This proves that there is a great need for the thesis and the product will possibly be practical not only for Tough Viking Helsinki but many other event organizers as well. I found the process very interesting and could have easily spent more time with the topic. I would not doubt if I might find myself doing a deeper research paper about it for my master's studies.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview questions

1. What is the safety level of Finnish events?
 - a. What is the safety level of sports events?
2. What does the law require from the event organizer?
3. What is the most common shortcoming in the Finnish events?
 - a. What about sports events?
4. How important is it to offer customer service in Finnish?
 - a. Is it required or can an event organizer assume that Finnish people understand English?
5. Do you co-operate with the Rescue Department?
6. There was a change in the law in May 2016.
 - a. What was the reasoning behind it?
 - b. How does it affect the event organizer and their responsibilities?
 - c. What are you trying to pursue with it?
7. What kind of reports do you need from the event organizer?
8. What is the habit of the event organizers
9. Do you monitor the progress of the events through the reports?
 - a. What is the goal of the reporting?
 - b. How do you react to the shortcomings in events?
10. What did you thought about the organizing of Tough Viking 2016?
 - a. Why did you have a meeting at the Tough Viking 2016 location on the day before the event?
 - b. What are the aspects we did well?
 - c. How could we improve the safety level?
 - d. How (if anyway) did you react to the electricity obstacle in Tough Viking 2015?

Appendix 2. Safety checklist



Duty to take care

1. Have you done a risk analysis?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Safety document

2. Have you done a safety document?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

3. Have you included all of the following information in the safety document?

	Yes	No
Event organizer's name, home town and contact information		
The person(s) responsible for the safety		
Anticipated dangers and their possible results		
Measures to prevent the dangers		
Instructions for different dangers listed in section 3		
The safety training and briefing of those participating in the offering of the event and their possible competence requirements (e.g. first aid)		
The spaces, structures, equipment, tracks, animals, one's protective devices and other equipment and the requirements considering them and the maintenance of them		
The circumstance restrictions relating to the offering of the event		
The maximum safe number of participants in the event under different circumstances		
The health physical state, experience, training or other requirements of the participants		
The measures ensuring the safety of those not participating but in the event's sphere of influence		
How different accidents, dangers and injury situations are bookkept		
How that information is used to develop the safety measures		
Procedures to follow the section 8 of the Consumer Safety Act (check ques-		

tion 18)		
How the information included in the plan are presented to those participating in the offering of the event		
Which of the information stated in the Government Act of Delivered Information of Consumer Goods and Services is given to the participant and to those who are influenced by the event		
How above mentioned information is given		

4. Does your event include installations (e.g. tents, obstacles, constructions)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

5. Have you composed a construction and installation certificates for them?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

6. Does your event consist of multiple activities or performance spots?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

If no, move to number 8. If yes, continue from here.

7. You answered yes to question above, your event needs a safety plan. Have you done it?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

8. Have you included all the following information in the safety plan?

	Yes	No
Description of each activity and performance spot		
Name of the person(s) responsible for the safety of that particular activity and the name of the backup person(s) and their contact information		
The driving and other arriving instruction to the spot, including the passageway for the rescue and first responders		
If it is a track: the track narrative, starting and finishing spots, day trips, overnight and break location and activity locations		
A map of aforementioned points		
The risks and challenges concerning the activities and performance spots		
Risk control:		
a) The maximum number of participants at the spots		
b) The restrictions of performance (e.g. weather conditions, drugs, the skills		

of a participant)		
c) The competence requirements of the instructors (e.g. first aid)		
d) The actions of the instructors before the event starts (e.g. checking the performance spots, the safety and the first aid equipment)		
e) The brief for the participants		
f) The equipment (e.g. persons protective devices)		
g) Machinery (e.g. the fulfilment of the safety requirements)		
h) Special equipment		
i) The transportation, keeping and handling of groceries and water		
j) Fire safety (e.g. fire alarms, handling of fire and the fire proofing of materials)		
Procedures of a physical injury happening to a participant of a staff member		
Procedures in other accidents		
General procedures (e.g. fire handling)		
Procedures for time after an accident or an injury:		
a) Reporting (e.g. bookkeeping)		
b) Informing of an accident (e.g. the person responsible for informing and the procedures)		
c) Informing the authorities (e.g. police, Tukes)		
d) After-care (e.g. transportation of the injured and possible crisis support)		
Other considered things		

9. Does your event contain fire (e.g pyrotechnics)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

10. Have you considered fire safety?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

11. Do you have a first-aid plan?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

12. Have you contacted your local first-aid service?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

13. Have you acquired an emergency response unit to the event?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

14. Have you presented the safety document/plan to the cooperative entities and the staff of the event?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

15. Have you organized a training session to the staff?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Reporting of a dangerous consumer service

16. Do you have a bookkeeping system?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

17. Does your staff know how to use the bookkeeping system?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

18. Are you organizing a briefing for the staff about the bookkeeping system?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

19. Have you picked a person responsible for reporting to the Finnish Safety and Chemicals Agency in a case of an endangering service/activity/performance spot?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

20. If your event consists of multiple performance spots, have you considered how the communication is handled?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

21. Does your staff know the communication way and how the etiquette?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

Presenting information to consumer

22. Have you created the information material for the participants?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

23. Have you included the following information in the material?

	Yes	No
The demand level of the service		
The consumer's health or other personal requirements or limitations to take part in the service		
The preparations expected from the consumer		
The possibly required advanced knowhow or skillset		
The information of required official documents in order for the consumer to participate		
Such effects occurring from the performance of the service to the consumer, which are permanent in nature or the modification of which later may lead to major cost and effort		
Such equipment, which the consumer is expected to bring along, to the performance of the service and possible limitations to the personal equipment used		
Information about service related circumstances that can be evaluated to be significant to consumer's health or can be otherwise assumed to affect consumer's desire to participate		
Necessary directives and etiquette during the performance of the service		
Guidance and directives to the use of required person's protective devices		
Emergency instructions		
Directives to discontinuing the service in a situation where a consumer notices a serious danger affecting the health or property while performing the service		
Necessary safety directives of the circumstances possibly observed after the performance		
The person or personnel responsible for the safety in the service		

24. Is the information clear and comprehensible?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

25. Is it in a written format?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

26. Have you written them in an order of priority?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

27. While composing the materials, have you considered the needs of special groups participating in the service?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

28. Have you provided them to the participants?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

29. Do you have a way to document that the participant has read the materials (e.g. waiver)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

30. Have you pointed a person responsible for answering the possible messages from consumers?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

31. Do you have a plan for crisis communication?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

32. Have you pointed out a responsible person for contacting the media in those situations?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

33. Have you pointed out a responsible person for communicating with the authorities?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

After the event

34. Have you created a feedback poll for the participants?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

35. Have you used that information to develop your event?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

36. Have you gathered the information from bookkeeping?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

37. Do you have it ready for the authorities?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

38. Have you wrapped up the event (e.g. what went well and what are the developments needed)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

39. Did you have any challenges/crisis during the event?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

40. Did you communicate it with the consumers (social media, newsletter etc)?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--

41. Have you evaluated the effect it had on the reputation of your event?

Yes		No	
-----	--	----	--