

# **Increasing the effectiveness and integration of company marketing communications activities**

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<b>Degree programme</b> International Business	
<b>Report/Thesis title</b> Increasing the effectiveness and integration of company marketing communications activities at Höyhentämö.	<b>Number of pages and appendix pages</b> 53 + 19
<p>This study, aimed at increasing the effectiveness and integration of the company's marketing communications activities was conducted for the Höyhentämö (Pluckhouse) theatre organisation. The primary activities of Höyhentämö focus on producing contemporary theatre, dance and other performances. The objective of the research study is to find the most useful promotional tools for Höyhentämö that will enhance and improve awareness of their brand, thus resulting in brand recognition.</p> <p>The research problem was formed based on the outlook and surrounding situations of the topic. The subject is divided into four main parts. First, the need to ascertain the current marketing communications mix of Höyhentämö was imperative. Second, information on what kind of marketing communications the target groups or customers prefer was needed. Third, investigating the differences between the current marketing communications mix of Höyhentämö and those preferred by the target groups or clients was studied. Finally, recommendations for designing an integrated marketing communications mix for the promotion of theatre arts and other related performances were given.</p> <p>The researcher collected the secondary and primary data for the study. Secondary data was in the form of marketing communications theories from a variety of books and internet sources, while the primary data was gathered through a computer-administered survey and e-mail interviews with four employees of Höyhentämö. Altogether, there were 36 respondents in the survey. The collected information was analysed and final recommendations were constructed for the study.</p> <p>The outcome showed that e-mail marketing and a monthly newsletter, Facebook advertising, advertising in the local newspaper, internet advertising, magazine advertising, blogging, special events, participation in more social media like Twitter and Instagram, digital marketing, theatre brochure; Teatterijoukko and Väliverho are the means of revamping the brand recognition of Höyhentämö.</p>	
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Marketing Planning, Communications Mix, Corporate Communications, Integrated marketing communications (IMC)</p>	

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# **1 Introduction**

The research study centres on how to increase the effectiveness and integration of marketing communications activities of a company. It is essential and paramount that organisations should understand the importance of marketing communications, and hence establish relevant approaches that could be adapted to reach target customers.

In our contemporary world, the small, medium and large businesses need to develop an efficient and integrated marketing communications program to convey its value propositions through a well-designed message and selection of right communication mix. Good coordinated, integrated marketing communications activities are one of the chances left for the company to survive in a highly competitive market. The importance of this topic prompted it's commissioning by a registered association in Finland, a theatre company called Höyhentämö (Pluckhouse).

## **1.1 Background and objective of study**

The registered organisation called Höyhentämö was first contacted in March 2016, and a meeting was arranged. The association expressed openness to negotiate a commissioned topic, and this resulted in detailed discussions, and the research objectives were set.

In the recent development, Höyhentämö was in a situation where the expected number of customers that turn-up for their theatre performances was considered to be low. They needed to increase awareness about their product offerings to the target customers. The identification of this problem presented a better opportunity to look into the effectiveness of Höyhentämö's marketing communications approach. The process of understanding the target group of the company and the promotional tools they like are the stepping stone towards establishing means of reaching them.

The study will also examine the current marketing communications mix of Höyhentämö and their target group's choice of receiving promotional news, so that better ways could be determined to increase the effectiveness and integration of their marketing activities. The objective was to generate ideas and recommendations for Höyhentämö to improve and boost their marketing communications to raise awareness about their products and to build a long-term relationship with customers.

## **1.2 Research problem and investigation questions**

The research problem is

**How to increase the effectiveness and integration of company's marketing activities?**

The investigative questions are

1. What are the current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämo?
2. What type of marketing communications tools does the target customers of Höyhentämo prefer?
3. What is the nature of differences existing between the current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämo and that of their target customers?
4. How should the integrated marketing communications of höyhentämö be designed to reach target customers?

## **1.3 Demarcation**

This study focuses on how to increase the effectiveness and integration of company's marketing communications activities by giving more attention to creating marketing communications plan to reach target customers through the selection of right medium. The company (Höyhentämö) is a small organisation operating in central Helsinki that is into theatre performances. After appropriate assessment of the current situation with the company's representatives, we agreed that it would be of benefit to tackle the issue of marketing communications of Höyhentämö by comparing company's marketing communications mix and customer preferences. The organisation has four major artistic programs; each of the programs showcases unique performances to their target group. So, it is important to design the marketing communications mix that would convey the uniqueness of these performances to current and potential customers. The current problem and the investigative questions were formed. The research question is "how to increase the effectiveness and integration of company's marketing activities".

The current marketing communications mix of Höyhentämö appeared to be the first investigative question? This issue was seen appropriate to start the study by working towards understanding the current situation and the mix which is in use by the organisation. The first investigative question shall be answered with the help of interviews and business plan

of *Höyhentämö* which will cover the most used marketing communications channels which include direct marketing, advertising, sales promotion, personal selling, and public relations.

The second investigative question is "What type of marketing communications mix does the target customers of *Höyhentämö* prefer". Essentially, the aim of the question was to determine the right medium that can be efficient in reaching target customers. The answer will link certain communications media tools like an active Facebook group with regular updates, e-mail advertisements, traditional paper ads in newspapers and magazines. This question also offers a better chance for the target customers to share what kind of marketing communications is acceptable by them.

What is the nature of differences existing between the current marketing communications of *Höyhentämö* and that of their target customers is the third investigative question? These aspects of the issue deal with the comparison between first and second investigative questions to find out significant differences that exist to be able to establish comprehensive recommendations. The same elements used in first investigative question; advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling and direct marketing will be applied here to answer the third investigative question.

The fourth and final investigative question is "How should the integrated marketing communications of *Höyhentämö* be designed to reach target customers?. At the realisation of customers' preference as addressed by the third investigative question, the final or fourth investigative question is to propose recommendations concerning the marketing communications mix that best suits the needs of the organisation, reaches the target customers, and complements the brand identity and the uniqueness aspect of the theatre performances. The third investigative question shall act as a parameter to determine the required areas that need urgent attention, and therefore, serve as the primary source for recommendations which will follow the categorisation of marketing communications tools already mentioned above. The promotional tools subsequently mentioned are given adequate attention.

The design of questionnaire is limited to current and potential customers, and interview questions are built for the employees only because of the size of the theatre organisation. There will not be any face-to-face meetings with current and potential customers due to lack of personal access to them. The survey will be carried out online with the help of the theatre organisation. The questionnaire will be sent to the respondents by e-mail through

company's database. The outcome of the results was applied in broader range or spectrum to close-up the measures the organisation will take to boost their marketing communications activities.

#### **1.4 International Aspect**

The international dimension of the thesis is not too significant. However, the general character was derived from the personal background of the staffs that experiences different cultural diversity and coming to work together. Some of the staffs live abroad even though they are Finns, but they have integrated into international theatre performances and want to apply the knowledge they have gained to create something different and spectacularly entertaining and educating for both citizens and tourists. They also have an affiliation with some other theatre and art organisations in Germany as a result of one board member who resides in Berlin.

In my opinion, the study is a good learning experience. It will enable the creation of contacts for possible future use. Finally, the thesis work plays a role in bridging the gap between theory and practice for further improvement.

#### **1.5 Benefits**

**Case company:** this helps the organisation to gain more insight into their marketing communications activities and to understand better ways on how to promote its products (theatre performance events). The company benefits by choosing the right channels in order to reach their target customer. Lower budget, providing clarity and consistency to brand messages to gain brand loyal customers and return on investment/profitability are other benefits to the case company.

**Personal benefit:** this offers an opportunity to know more about the subject area. The advantage of getting exposed deeply into the topic, learn better ways of corporate negotiations and interactions while engaging in discussions with organisation's representative. It is also paramount to my graduation as well.

**Others:** the expectation of thesis work is to help solve the problem, and I believe that the outcome of the end results contained herein will provide extensive knowledge to research work on this particular area to researchers who intend carry out more research work on the topic. Furthermore, other companies could use it as a guide in developing or boosting their marketing communications activities.



## 1.6 Key Concepts

The key concepts for the thesis are considered essential for clarity of the topic being research. The concepts are examined through the coincide definitions of the term below:

**Marketing Planning:** Marketing planning is a carefully managed process and fundamentally driven by researching and analysing market situations to arrive at better decisions on strategies, program implementations, evaluation and control to provide value to customers, stakeholders and the organisation (Wood 2014, 4).

**Communications mix:** communications mix is the technique that allows the combination of different communication tools into a seamless unit for the particular purpose that suits promotional objectives of communicating customer's value and building customer relationships (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 426).

**Corporate communications:** are the integration of internal communications between departments in organisations and involving all stakeholders to foresee appropriate balance between strategic objectives, corporate identity and corporate image (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 16).

**Integrated marketing communications (IMC):** Is the combination of different communication disciplines like advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion and public relation because of their strategic functions that are necessary for providing clarity, consistency and the maximum communication impact (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 7).

## 1.7 Höyhentämo (Pluckhouse) and Finnish Theatre

According to TINFO (2006), Finnish theatre can be dated back as far as 1640 with Amateur performances by students which were recorded as the first known theatrical performances proper in Finland. In 2002, Finnish theatre marked their 130 years anniversary since the beginning of professional theatre activity in the country. Finnish theatre is governed and protected by Theatre and Orchestra law. 96 theatres have been identified to be covered by this law which 56 theatre receives state support governed by legislation. Another 40 theatre and dance companies receive regular support from the state and local authorities. The total spectator figures for the theatres operating throughout the year estimated at a total of 2.9 million. Furthermore, a total of over 3.6 million sold tickets per year is actualized if the spectators of professional summer theatres and regional operas are included. This impressive figure represents more than 50 % of the country's 5.2 million

inhabitants. Furthermore, there are growing numbers of theatres and dance ensembles which do not fulfil the criteria govern by the Theatre and Orchestra law. Among this group, 23 theatre groups and 11 dance ensembles received a state grant during 2001 which Höyhentämö was a member of the group (TINFO, 2016.)

In 2006, the government subsidy and local authorities grants for theatres were €42.7 million and €58,4 million respectively. The National Opera receives a direct subsidy of €30.5 million from the state and €4.5 million from the local authorities not included in the first funding. Therefore, averagely 25% and 45% of Finish theatre budget are accounted by state and local council respectively. The remaining 30 % comes from income the theatre generates (TINFO, 2016.)

Höyhentämö is a Finnish theatre organisation based in Helsinki, producing contemporary theatre, dance and other performances. The concept of the theatre depends on a diverse interest in the forms and methods of the performing arts. The company's chairman/coordinator is Juha Sääsäski. Höyhentämö was established in 1995 and was formerly known as Teatteri Naamio a Höyhen (N&H). The theatre organisation engaged with experimental, dramatic and post-dramatic, physical, participatory and passionate pieces. The theatre has its stage and headquarters in Helsinki. Höyhentämö has four unique artistic programs, Dances to a Beat, The Autopsy of Democracy, Lust and Fear in the Pluckhouse and massescape. Each of the artistic programs has a unique line of art performances (Höyhentämö 2015 & 2017.)

Besides its artistic productions, Höyhentämö offers variant show services. For over ten years the theatre has produced entertaining shows for business companies, societies and private customers. Recently, the organisation focuses more on individual customers as a primary target market. Höyhentämö has six employees with an annual turnover of € 58 171.02 in 2015 (Höyhentämö 2015.)

## **2 Marketing communications activities: company's way forward.**

Marketing activities such as consumer research, product development, communication, distribution, pricing, and service are core marketing activities companies carry-out to build and increase brand awareness (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 31). The concepts of marketing activities are extensive; this means that it encompasses all means businesses create awareness about their products to their target audience.

Kotler and Armstrong (2010, 31) states that Communication is a core marketing activity that organisations engaged to increase awareness of their offerings. The approach or means that companies use to reach their target groups are given priority in this research work. So, therefore, possible ways businesses can increase the effectiveness and integrations of marketing communications activities shall be discussed. The final recommendations will rely on the theoretical framework of the study. The essence is to present a few possibilities that can help to increase the effectiveness and integration of marketing communications mix.

### **2.1 Marketing communications**

Marketing communications could just refer to the manner organisations communicate with their current and prospective customers. According to Morris (2003, 3), marketing communications is a subset of Integrated Marketing which focuses solely on coordinated promotion or communication.

To fully understand the concept of marketing communication let's take a quick review of some marketing principles. Let's start by looking at marketing strategy. Koekemoer and Bird (2004, 2) highlights the processes embarked by companies and organisations to communicate their products or services to their target audience or target market. The target audiences are groups of existing and potential audience or market, and the goal of the company is to meet those needs or demands through their products and services. The target market is categorised into demographic, geographical and psychographic characteristics. Companies adopt marketing mix to influence their audience purchasing behaviour. This marketing mix consists of four essential elements: product, price, place and promotion.

Integrated marketing (IM) is the aspect of marketing concerned with strategic issues of product, price, and place, and the tactical issue of promotion (Morris 2003, 3). In a more

simplified way, marketing communications are clearly one element of the list of marketing strategies used by businesses or organisations to promote product offerings since it focuses solely on the coordinated program. Kotler & Armstrong (2012, 432) defined marketing communications as “the communications correctly used by the company to persuasively communicate customer value and build customer relationships”. It is important that organisations should continuously fashion out ways to effectively communicate their products and services to their target group because if the awareness stage is void of proper coordination and management, it becomes difficult to lead customers through other stages of behavioural responses. According to Fill (2013, 115), consumers passes through six stages of behavioural actions before making up their mind about buying a product(s) beginning with awareness- knowledge- liking- preference- conviction- purchase, which is known as a hierarchy of effect. Kotler & Armstrong (2012, 433) proclaimed the six stages of behavioural actions are called six buyer readiness stages. So, therefore, awareness and creation of knowledge about product offerings should form part of the essential objective of marketing communications activities considering the outlined sequence of behavioural responses that consumers pass through.

Marketing communications are consequently experiencing changes in recent times because of several influencing factors such as consumers, marketing strategies and communications technology. Consumers behaviours are changing, marketing strategies are changing, and communication technology are causing enormous changes in the manners organisations, and customers communicate with each other (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 433.) Therefore, organisations need to adapt themselves to the subsequent changes emerging from the consumers, marketing strategies and communications technologies to find the right mix of media that best communicates the brand message and improves the customer’s brand experience.

Furthermore, marketing communications is a coordinated program. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2012, 433), the next step after the identification of target audience is setting communication objectives. The marketing communications objectives should be alignable with overall marketing strategies of the organisation which geared towards achieving the holistic blueprint of the corporate goals.

Egan in (2014, 7) defined marketing communications as a process adopted by suppliers of goods, services, values and ideals to sell their concept to their respective audience or customer thereby establishing a prospective dialogue and relationship. This definition encompasses various forms of business organisations ranging from co-operating, commercial, government, non-profit, etc. with the singular purpose of establishing a prospective dialogue with their respective audience through effective communication strategy. In this process, the audience is educated, informed, and reassured about the product or idea.

Table 1. Marketing Communications (Egan 2014, 7)

<b>Key Characteristics of Major Marketing Tools</b>					
<b>Communications</b>	Advertising	Sales Promotion	Public Rel'ns	Personal Sales	Direct Marketing
<b>Ability to deliver personal message</b>	Low	Low	Low	High	High
<b>Ability to reach large audience</b>	High	Med	Med	Low	Med
<b>Level of interaction</b>	Low	Low	Low	High	High
<b>Credibility given by target audience</b>	Low	Low	High	Med	Med
<b>Costs</b>	Advertising	Sales Promotion	Public Rel'ns	Personal Sales	Direct Marketing
<b>Absolute cost</b>	High	High	Low	Med	High
<b>Cost per contact</b>	Low	Med	Low	High	High
<b>Wastage</b>	High	Med	High	High	High
<b>Size of investment</b>	High	Med	Low	High	Med
<b>Control</b>	Advertising	Sales Promotion	Public Rel'ns	Personal Sales	Direct Marketing

## 2.2 Importance of marketing communications

The role of marketing communications is to stimulate an audience response (Fill, 2013, 12). Importantly, organisations need to create a message that conveys their value propositions, and clearly, efficiently and consistently managed to stimulate target audience responses towards their product offerings. Companies hoping to achieve success in their marketing communications activities have to plan their communication programmes carefully to prevent futile marketing efforts and loss of customers' interest and purchasing intent. According to Fill (2013, 3), the use of marketing communications varies from organisation to organisation depending on the common condition or context. The marketing

communications planning framework identifies the sequence of decisions companies undertake when preparing, implementing and evaluating communication strategies and plans.

Kitchen (2002, 7) is of the opinion that marketing communication is of great importance in the business world. It helps to create brand awareness because the target groups need to be aware of the company's existence. It also exploits ways in growing the company's fiscal revenue by developing a strategic vision for the enterprise. Marketing communications enable businesses to review and exploit new opportunities for growth and stability. Companies use marketing communications to portray a real image coupled with a safe and conducive working condition.

### **2.3 Integrated marketing communications**

Integrated marketing communications (IMC) is the concept that marketing managers use to increase the effectiveness and integrations of marketing activities in their respective companies. Chris (2010, 9) stated that the logic of integrated marketing communications is an attractive concept that draws attention in a powerfully irresistible way. So, for business to thrive they need to do the following: communicate customer values, be differentiated through their offerings, maintained quality customer relationship, and create and enhance brand recognition. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 7) stated that integrated marketing communications activities are executed within a set budget and integrated into the strategic marketing plan. According to Pelsmack, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 7), integrated marketing communications acknowledges the combination of different communications disciplines; advertising, direct marketing, sales promotion and public relation with the aim of providing clarity, consistency and the maximum communication impact (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 7).

There is a general saying; if we fail to plan, then we plan to fail. So, the development of integrated marketing communications plan comes with an objective of minimising errors and provide for efficiency and effectiveness (Pelsmack, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 7). There are important elements necessary in marketing communications strategic planning process and these elements was considered in developing an effective and integrated marketing communications plan. Fill (2013, 164) stated that, the marketing communication decision-making process includes context analysis, the setting of objectives, the decision on communications strategy, coordinated communication mix, resources (human and fi-

nancial), scheduling and implementation, evaluation and control, and feedback. It is also important to acknowledge more modern framework like SOSTAC model (Situation analysis, Objectives, Strategies, Tactics, Activities, actions and analysis, Control) established by Smith (2003). Fill (2013, 163) explained that SOSTAC model has proven to be an excellent model of the marketing communications decision-making process. Wood (2004, 23) presented four major subcategories of elements; external, internal, choice of tools and message and media. These elements are considered necessary when developing an integrated marketing communications strategy. The major four key elements with more details are shown in figure 1 below.

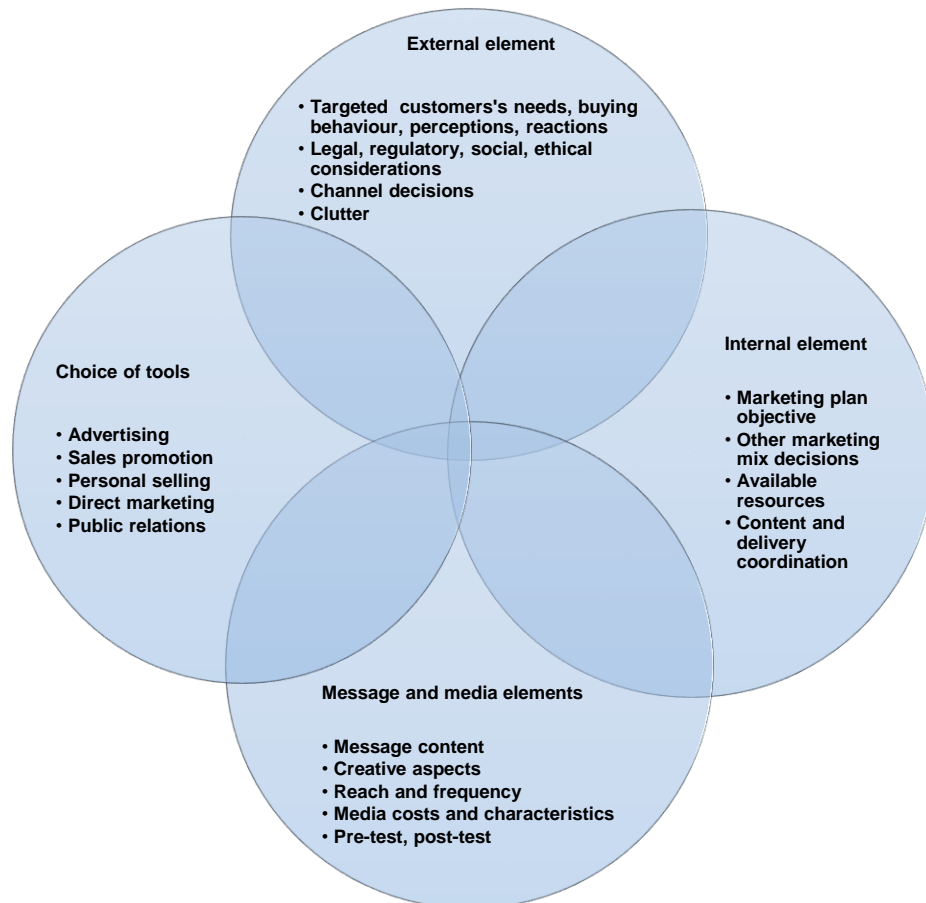


Figure 1. Elements of integrated marketing communication strategic planning process (Wood 2004, 23)

Shimp (2007, 17) presented a framework that shows two major subcategories of decisions which include all the most important decision elements concerning the strategic process of Marketing Communications (Marcom). Shimp (2007, 17) explained that Marketing communications decision-making process have two sub-categories namely: fundamental

and implementation decisions (see figure 2 below). In another hand, these subcategories could also be referred to as strategic and operational decisions.

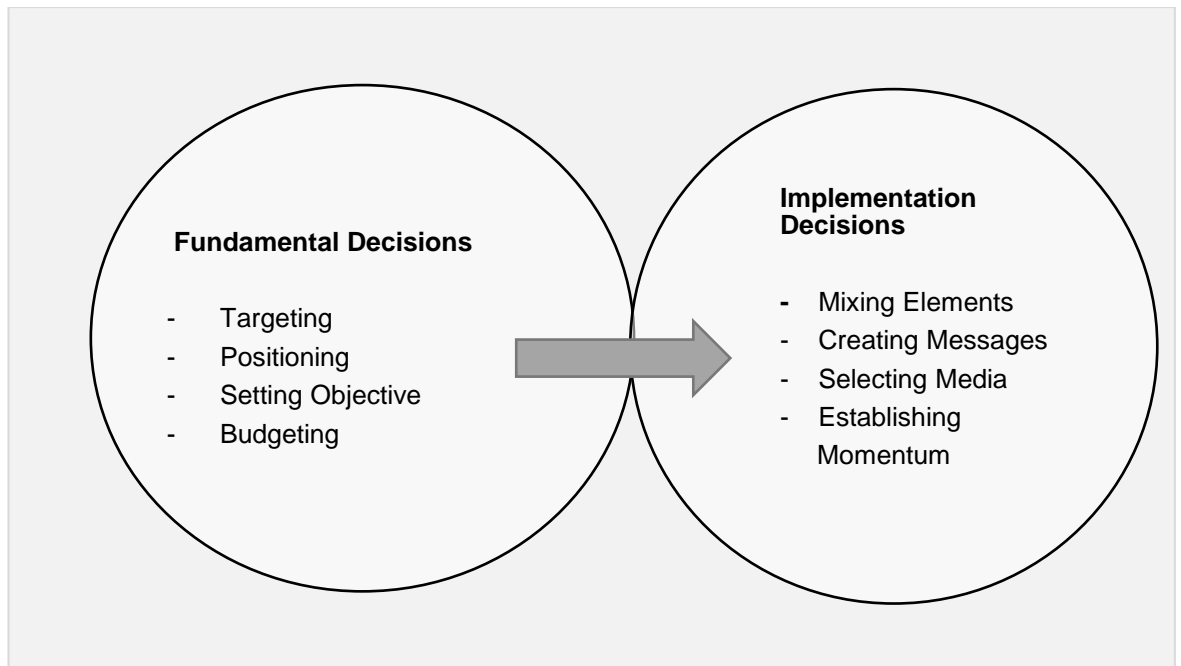


Figure 2. Marcom strategic decision-making process (Shimp 2007, 17)

The difference between Mariam Wood's strategic process of marketing communications and Terence Shimp's strategic process of marketing communications would be a matter of splits in some subcategories if strictly observed. If carefully analysed the external, internal, choice of tools and message and media elements subcategories presented by Wood aligns to Shimp's fundamental and implementation decisions respectively. However, Shimp's theory frame of strategic process is more simplified than Woods'. The outcome instigated the choice of looking more into details of Shimp's marketing communications strategic decision-making process.

Therefore, for IMC to be successful the following points should be taken into consideration such as (Ang 2014, 14- 15):

- Planning process and proper execution
- Ensuring that the company's chosen promotional mix complement each other
- A well carried out research work using diagnostic tool should be used to support IMC and hence increase possible growth.



- Attention was placed on the audience or target market. These entails the understanding of audience's purchasing behaviour and attitude, preferences, spending habits, and decision-making processes
- The aim of the programme must be result oriented both short and long-term return on investment
- Clear and consistent brand product message to avoid confusion

## 2.4 IMC planning process

According to Ang (2014, 14- 15), IMC can be divided into nine steps

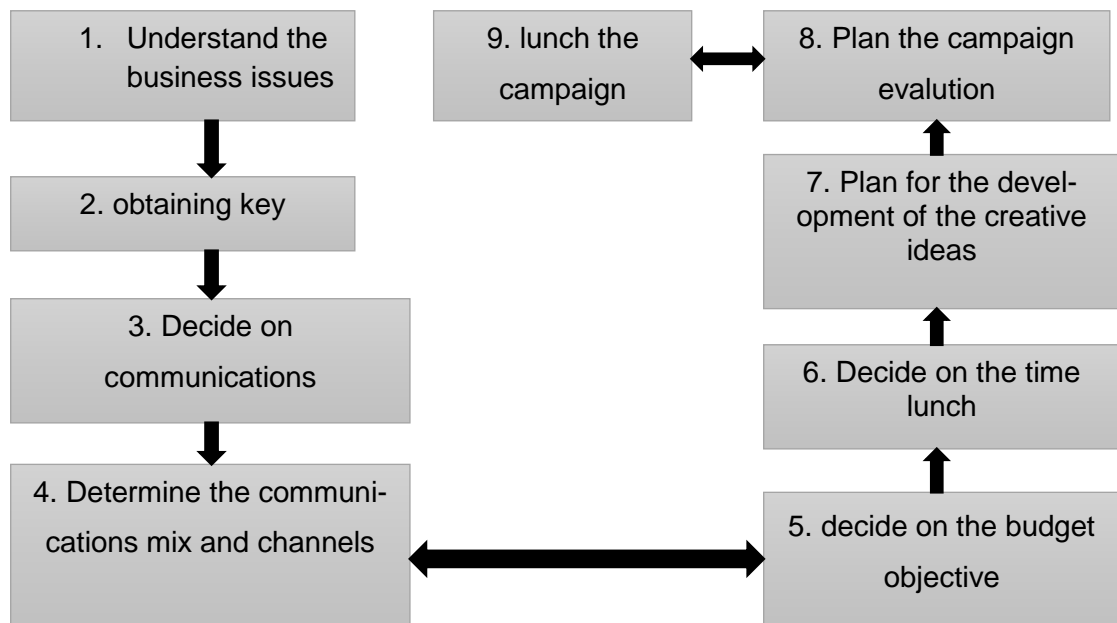


Figure 3. IMC sequence of planning process (Ang 2014, 4-5)

Key questions to ask when developing a planning process (Ang 2014, 4-5)

- ✚ Who are the target audience and what motivates them
- ✚ How large is the target market and how much of it is reachable
- ✚ What influences the target audience purchasing behaviour
- ✚ What factors can hinder the target audience decision to purchase
- ✚ What are the ways to overcome customer hesitation to purchase brand
- ✚ How can these communication options be harmonised for efficiency

## 2.5 Marketing communications mix

Marketing communication mix or promotion mix as used by some authors' constitutes different elements of marketing communications. Kotler & Armstrong (2012, 432) defined marketing communications mix as marketing communications tools that are specifically blended to communicate customer value and build customer relationships persuasively. According to Egan (2014, 7 ), marketing communications mix contains all the promotional tools such as advertising, public relations, sale promotion, public relation, personal selling, and direct selling for communicating the target audience (see figure 4 below). Wood (2004, 233) stated five major promotional tools as marketing communications mix which corresponds with Kotler and Armstrong's marketing communications mix. These marketing communications mix are advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion and direct marketing.

Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2010, 4) categorised marketing communications mix into eight elements; advertising, brand activation, sales promotions, sponsorship, public relations, point-of-purchase communications, direct marketing, and e-communications. Kotler & Armstrong (2010, 427) drafted sponsorship into public relations, e-communications into direct marketing while point-of-purchase and brand activation were left standing alone. Furthermore, Blythe (2006, 42) stated four elements of marketing communications mix which he termed taxonomy of promotional tools. These are advertising, public relations, sales promotion and personal selling. The glaring difference between Blythe taxonomy of promotional tools and Kotler and Armstrong's marketing communications mix tools is the exclusion or inclusion of direct marketing as a single element of marketing communications tools, but rather Blythe presented direct marketing to be under personal selling.

In my opinion, marketing communications mix of an organisation should be a balanced blend of advertising, public relations, personal selling, sales promotion, and direct marketing tools. These tools should be used to create and deliver strong messages to the target audience. It is important to have the right combination of communication tools because of their various strengths and weaknesses that complement each other. For example, advertising tool is very efficient in creating product awareness but less effective in sales persuasion while personal selling, on the other hand, is more efficient in increasing sales. Therefore, it will be practically advisable to combine advertising and personal selling for excellent marketing communication efficiency. Choosing the right marketing communication tools to depend on the characteristics attached to the tools.



Figure 4. Integrated marketing communications mix framework (Kotler and Armstrong 2012, 437)

In practice, the choice of marketing communications mix varies from company to company. Different companies choose a particular blend based on their marketing communications' needs and objectives. However, company's choice of marketing communications mix is necessary to align with the marketing communications objectives, strategies, and the overall corporate goals.

### 2.5.1 Advertising

Stewart H. Britt said that "Doing business without advertising is like winking at a girl in the dark; you know what you are doing, but nobody else does" (Chunawalla & Sethia 2007, 13). Advertising is one method that allows mass communication which defines a way of communicating to a large audience through a medium so that company's product offerings may receive maximum exposure. In this context, advertising is defined as a form of a public announcement about a product, service or idea through a medium like newspapers,

posters, banners, radio, TV, video, cable, internet, and hoardings which are usually paid for by the advertiser (Chunawalla & Sethia 2007, 15.) The American Marketing Association defines advertising as a non-personal communications that are necessarily paid for by a sponsor to achieve the objective of reaching their target audience (Chunawalla & Sethia. 2007, 15).

The goal of advertising is to communicate the cooperate brand, objectives and the value proposition to current and potential customers, and as well step-up the level of brand awareness among the target audience. Advertising ensures that sales of goods, services, images and ideas are promoted through information and persuasion (Chunawalla & Sethia. 2007, 14). Successful advertising is achieved by always sending consistent messages through different mass communication channels or medium within an accessed balance that appease the emotional, rational and moral expectations of the target customers. Notably, advertising has a limit to what it can do, it doesn't restore a poor product or revamp a declining market but only helps to create awareness; thus resulting in increasing in sales through persuasive communication (Chunawalla & Sethia. 2007, 14).

Advertising exists in different types under different categories (Chunawalla & Sethia. 2007, 15). Advertising was categorised into the geographical spread and target group. The geographical spread includes national, local, and global advertising while target group was subset into consumer, industrial, trade, and professional advertising. National advertising deals with selecting media with a countrywide base when targeting an entire country. Local advertising was used when focusing on a particular region or state. Small companies that operate within domestic market adopt local advertising when targeting customers within the region or state. Global advertising uses a media that reaches the entire world to announce product(s) offerings. Multinational companies like IBM, Coca-Cola, etc. are notable for the adoption of this type of advertising. The consumers were more conveniently reached through print media like newspapers, and magazine (Chunawalla & Sethia 2007, 85).

## **2.5.2 Public relations**

This aspect of marketing communications tool is concerned with establishing and maintaining goodwill between the public and company. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010, 472), public relations helps to position a company with real credibility and reputation publicly, build corporate image and protect the business identity in the situation of crises. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2010, 339) defined PR more clearly as the tool used to

promote the goodwill of the company as a whole. Companies use publicity to convey their messages through third-party media such as magazines, newspapers or news programs (Fill 2013, 25). Other forms of tools used by public relations include event management, public affairs, sponsorship and lobbying, news, speeches, special event, written materials, audiovisual materials, corporate identity material and goodwill contributions to public service activities (Fill 2013, 25 & Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 474). The role and impact of public relations are to create public awareness at a much lower cost than advertising. Free media coverage of news about a company or its product tends to have more credibility than advertising by paying a staff to develop, circulate information and to manage events (Fill 2010, 472). According to Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2010, 340), the advantages of public relations include: presenting companies as good citizens, advising on significant trends, breaking the barrier of the difficult-to-reach audience, more precise on objective, cost effective, message flexibility, and crisis management.

Launching of ambassador programme, sponsorship and buzz marketing campaign can be considered as extensions of public relations due to the relevancy of attracting third-party media by obtaining favourable publicity and enhancing relationship building between stakeholders and the company.

### **2.5.3 Sales promotion**

Sales promotion was seen as a controllable and non-personal form of communication (Fill, 2010, 24). Sales promotion reinforces and increases sales for a short period (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 274). Wood (2014, 155) it is a tool for combating competitive pressure, influencing trial, awareness and consumers buying altitude apart with the aim of accelerating short-term sales. Sales promotion acknowledges the use of incentives by activating some stimuli that seek to persuade customers to buy, thus increasing sales growth in a short-term period. When customers were rewarded with sales promotion, it helps to reinforce the future behaviour (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 374). The attribute or concept of sales promotions has effectively proven to be a successful way to provoke an immediate behavioural response of customers towards purchasing goods and services.

The main difference between sales promotion and other marketing communications tools is that sales promotion gives customers a reason to buy. The consumer promotion, retail promotion, trade, and sales force promotion are the four main categories of sales promo-

tion (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 377). According to Wood (2004, 246) summarised the sales promotions techniques as shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Main techniques applicable in sales promotions (Wood 2004, 246)

<b>Technique</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Sample</b>	Free trial of goods or service
<b>Coupon</b>	Certificate redeemable for money off a product's price
<b>Premium</b>	A free or low-priced item offered to induce purchase of a product
<b>Sweepstake or draw, contest, game</b>	Chance to win cash or prizes through luck, knowledge or skill
<b>Refund, rebate</b>	Returning part or all of a product's price to the customer
<b>Price pack</b>	Special price marked by producer on the package or for multiple products bought together
<b>Loyalty reward</b>	Opportunity to earn gifts or cash for continuing to buy a certain product or from a certain company
<b>Point-of-purchase display or demonstration</b>	In-store materials promoting a product or in-store product demonstration
<b>Branded speciality</b>	Everyday item such as a calendar or T-shirt bearing the product name or brand, for reminder purposes

The use of sales promotion by theatre organisation will help to generate ticket sales and increase customer base because of the growing importance. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 374) sales promotion attracts the attention of target groups and seduces them into purchasing the company's products. The ability of sales promotion to seduce customers into buying define the extent it can persuasively influence customer's behaviour. The incentive is veritable tactics in sales promotion (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 374).

Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 374) identified seven factors affecting the increasing use of sales promotions as "lack of differentiation, distribution channel power, measurability, short term orienteering, buying decision made at the place of purchase, declining brand loyalty, and communications clutter and ad avoidance". In general, sales promotion is used based on the communications objectives and target groups of the company. According to Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 377), the main objectives of sales promo-

tions includes “giving back to loyal customers, making existing consumers loyal, creating an opportunity for trial by new customers, to increase the market size or base and to reinforce other communications tools”.

Understanding the vulnerability of using sales promotions is necessary. On this note, sales promotions can cause decreased brand loyalty and exposes customers to brand switching (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 390). The effect of prolonged indulgence of sales promotions tool has devastating consequences. When Consumers adjust price expectation, it damages brand image most especially for non-loyal customers, and it usually requires lots of impressive incentive to remedy the problem.

Sales promotion can be more effective when integrated into the overall marketing communications efforts. Promotions can be announced via TV, social media, and reinforced by point-of-purchase communications. Public relations can be merged with sales promotions to create events and specific brand experiences using the coupon, free tickets and buy-one-get-one-free (BOGOF). This process can be used to boost the consumers' confidence level, and to open the door for increased patronage.

#### **2.5.4 Direct marketing**

Direct marketing is acknowledged as a means of personal communication. Hughes defined direct marketing as “any activity in which company attempt to reach the consumers directly or have them reach the company” (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 423.) Direct marketing is achieved using direct media such as mailing (post & e-mail), telephone calls, catalogues, and brochures. There are three ways companies get an instant response from their customers: The Internet (e-mail, website, and social media), personal calling/ visiting, and coupons (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 423).

The building of customer's database is one aspect of practising direct marketing. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 423) agreed that the establishment of the database is at the centre-point of direct marketing. Database marketing is “the collection of interrelated data of customers and prospects which are use for analysis, individual selection, segmentation and customer retention, loyalty and service support”(Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 437.) It is important for a company to have knowledge of their customers and accessible information over time that could be used to tailor personalised communications about company's offerings. The act of database marketing helps to establish long-term relationships and brand recognitions. The essence of direct marketing is to expand

the customer base on the reasons of quantity and frequency of individual customer patronage (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 424). Direct marketing is used for direct sales, sales or distribution support, and customer's retaining and loyalty purposes (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 425-428).

Direct marketing is categorised into two media: addressable and non-addressable media (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 428). Addressable media uses new interactive means like e-mail, the Internet, website, direct mail, catalogues and telemarketing to reach target customers while non-addressable media uses direct response means like print advertising, TV/radio and Teletext to reach target customers. Kotler & Armstrong (2012, 524), listed the following activities as part of direct marketing: Face-to-face selling, direct-mail marketing, catalogue marketing, telemarketing, direct response TV marketing, kiosk marketing, new digital technologies, and online marketing

The success of direct marketing communications tool or ROI is measured by the use of a well-known scoring model called RFM-model (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 445). RMF- model is an acronym that stands as Recency-Frequency-Monetary value model. It is generated based on the customer's behavioural responses, and it has been established to improve the effectiveness of mailing or e-mailing campaign (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 445). Direct marketing provides an easy approach to inform customers about company's offers tailored towards meeting their personal needs. It improves relationship marketing, and it is relatively cheap and flexible to be used by marketers.

### **2.5.5 Personal selling**

Personal selling is one-to-one means of communication. It a communications tool marketers or salespeople uses to inform, persuade, convince and close the deal with customers and prospects about company's offers. If personal selling is accepted as a Face-to-face selling or marketing, then, it would be a sub-category of direct marketing as mentioned by Kotler and Armstrong. Personal selling embraces the hard sell by using unrelenting and persuasive messages to lead the customer to buy decision (Fill 2010, 516). When a consumer wants to buy a particular goods or services from a company, the salesperson engages into interaction with such customer to help identify the actual need of that customer and finally leads the customer to buy called buying process. According Fill (2010, 516) explained that buying process had been observed to involve personal selling activities at various stages because of the high potency of personal communications and message that can be adapted to meet the requirements of both parties.



Personal selling is a unique marketing communications tool compared to other in the communications mix (Fill 2010, 516). It means two-way communications that involve two persons which result in immediate feedback and evaluation of transmitted messages to enable well-tailored personal communications than any other methods.

The role of personal selling was expressed by Reid as getting, giving, and using information (Fill 2010, 518). Getting information refers to acquiring information from the customer, markets and competitors. Giving information refers to disseminating information to customers and other stakeholders while using information is the using of information by the salesperson to help solve a customer's problem.

## **2.6 Online marketing**

Online marketing is the fastest-growing form of direct marketing (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 528). The internet has tremendously influenced the position of marketing today. Companies are building websites, owning the online store, creating pop-up ads and banners on other websites. According to Kotler & Armstrong (2010, 528) concluded that it's almost impossible to find a company today without a substantial web presence. Online marketing involves different channels that are used simultaneously. The web-site is the most common used channel. Search engine marketing is a way of increasing web-site visibility and brand awareness. There are two main search engine marketing techniques which include engine optimisation (SEO) and Pay-per-click (PPC) (Fill 2010, 668). SEO is the process deployed to achieve a high ranking position on major search engines and directories. PPC is similar to display advertising found in offline print formats. SEO is found to topple PPC quite substantially, but both complement each other to gain a more competitive advantage. Fill (2010, 655-672) said that blogs and social media enable people to share experiences, and they provide opportunities for the company to reach a vast range of their target customers. The use of e-mail is considered as a part of online marketing because it is a web-based activity. Emergent of viral marketing has become popular through the use of e-mail to convey messages to a small part of the target audience and after that shared with friends because of the emotional feelings attached to the content of the messages. Other online marketing activities such as microblogging, podcasting, RSS (really simple syndication, short messages service (SMS), Apps, etc. could be an important medium of reaching the target audience. For example, Apps helps users to do things like finding a cinema, restaurant, church, bank and other destination.

### **2.6.1 Search engine optimisation and Advertising**

SEO is the process deployed to achieve a high ranking position on major search engines and directories (Fill 2010, 668). The essence of SEO is that it gives visibility to the customer when the information search is carried out about something that linked to product or services offered by the company. The SEO is one essential way that helps attract customers to the company through their website by improving listing in search engines. A research study by PEW Internet in May 2011 show concrete evidence backing the importance of using SEO which revealed that 92% of online adults use a search engine to access information on the web, and companies that are top users of SEO in the US have benefited more from SEM (search engine marketing). The registering of the site in the top and niche search engine and improving their rankings on the engine can be achieved by using specific meta tags, reciprocal linking, page titles, hidden keywords and multiple domain names because it influences search engine robots' behaviour (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 490.)

### **2.6.2 Facebook**

Facebook is a well-known social site founded in 2004. The social media networks is a platform with highest customer adoption (Chris & Mari 2010, 30). According to Judy & Raymond (2012, 333) stated that Facebook was rated 81% as the most popular and used social media network in 2009. It has revealed that 51% of Facebook users are more likely to buy as expressed by Judy & Raymond (2012, 333).

### **2.6.3 E-mail**

E-mail is an online marketing method used to target customers directly. It is effective for targeting and personalising messages to influence and activates buying behavioural responses from the target customers. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 506) stated different types of e-mail available to marketers as direct e-mail, retention e-mail, and ads in an e-mail of third parties to reach target customers of the company. The direct e-mail is used to send a promotional offer with the intention of creating a purchase stimuli, and this type of e-mail can be inbound and outbound. Retention e-mail in other hand is used to fortify the brand attitude and experience which helps to build long term relationship with target customers, for example, e-newsletter. Ads in the e-mail are the method of selecting and buying advertising or content space on the newsletter of a third party rather than issuing a newsletter of their own. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2013, 506) in compari-

son with the internet and traditional methods of mailing, the first method have been found to provides speed, flexibility and low costs, and making customization and full individualisation much easier and cheaper. This tool of marketing communications has grown significantly high in the contemporary time, and company can use Click-through rates (CTRs) to determine the effectiveness of customer's response. The outcome of E-mail marketing has shown that it is more effective than traditional direct mail or other web campaigns such as Banners. An estimated percentage of CTRs for well segmented and tailored or individualised e-mail lists (B2B and B2C) are often in the 10%-20% CTR range as against Banner CTRs which are far below 1% (Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh 2013, 506.)

## **2.7 Summary of the theory frame**

In summary aspect of the theory frame of the study, marketing communications activities of companies comprise of direct marketing tool, advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 437). Apart from the categorization made by Kotler & Armstrong (see figure 5 below), there are other scholars with different sets of ideas (Egan 2014, 7). Another marketing scholar limited marketing communications disciplines of companies to four categories. The disciplines mentioned are advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and public relations (Blythe 2006, 42). The major difference between the two scholars is that Kotler & Armstrong directly mentioned direct marketing as a single discipline of the marketing communications in the listing, and Blythe excluded direct marketing from appearing directly in the categorization but included it as a sub-group of personal selling.

The combination of the concepts and ideas of marketing communications from the two business and marketing scholars are important to gain knowledge and understanding of the study. Furthermore, fundamental and implementation decisions are considered necessary in marketing communications program (Shimp 2007, 17). The decision-making processes are not negligible, most especially, when there are objectives of developing an effective marketing communications program. The decision-making processes are a complimentary part of the framework to realise an efficient and effective integrated marketing communications. So, Höyhentämö gets marketing communications recommendations to increase the effectiveness and integration of marketing communications activities in their company through the carefully researched outcome of every single detail mentioned in the theory frame of the study.

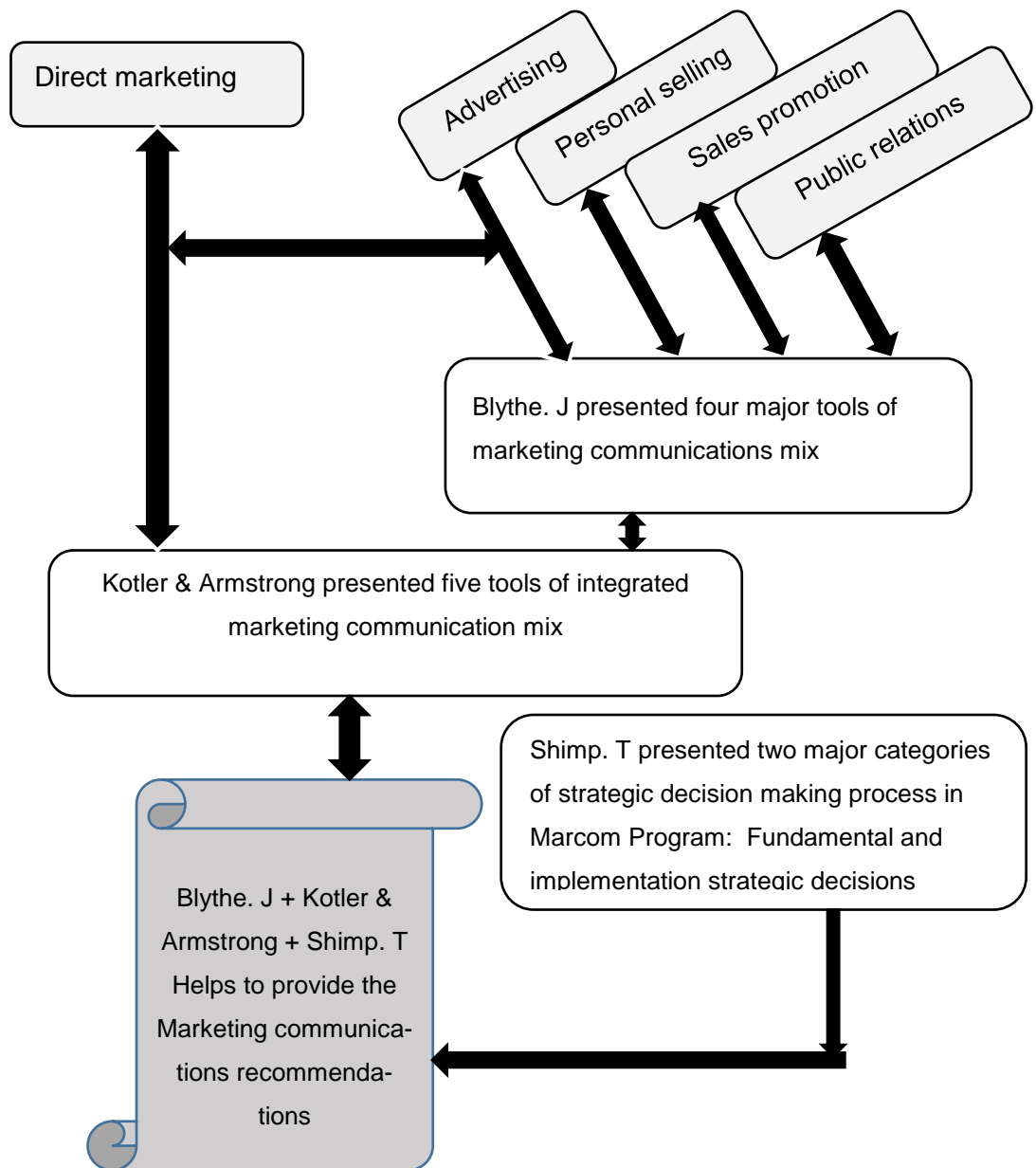


Figure 5. The Key theoretical framework. Shaped by Blythe (2006), Kotler and Armstrong (2012) and Shimp (2007)

### **3 Research method**

This chapter shall discuss the steps taken to achieve the thesis work at hand. Several levels were passed through in the research study and aimed towards actualizing good results outcome. The steps taken into considerations were the aspects of the research process, quantitative and qualitative research, primary and secondary data collection approaches, the consideration of informants, and lastly, the evaluation of the reliability and validity of data used for analysis in this study.

A survey and interviews were conducted to get an in-depth answer about the core objective of the study. The survey and interview helped to understand how Höyhentämö can increase the effectiveness and integration of their marketing communications activities through the investigation of their current marketing communications, and the most suitable marketing communications mix of customers, then pointing out the differences that exist between them.

#### **3.1 Research process**

The research was carried out in three parts. The literature review forms the first part of the thesis work. This specific part involves the gathering of information by reviewing literature from different marketing communications and advertising promotion books to achieve a strong theoretical foundation that supports the relevancy of the study. Secondly, the designing and computer-based survey administration followed. This method acknowledged quantitative research method which helped to collect information about the level of brand awareness of Höyhentämö, their current and prospective customers' interest in patronising their theatre performances, and the most suitable marketing communications mix of the customers. Qualitative research was also considered relevant to help disclose deeper information about Höyhentämö current marketing communication mix. The employees of Höyhentämö are interviewed, and interesting data collected. The current and potential customers were not interviewed because of the difficulties in reaching them.

The essence of the interview with employees was to help review more information or bridge the gaps not covered by the use of survey method. Interviewing is usually an interactive way of retrieving information from target audience by the researcher. The interview for the employees was written interview because of time factor challenging the scheduling of an appointment for oral interviews; the interview questions were sent to the employees

through e-mail. The mechanism for the participation and collation of data was specifically computer-based to help fast-track respondent's answers.

After gathering all the data, I proceeded with the interpretation and analysis of results in alignment with the collected theory. Finally, recommendations were offered to Höyhentämö based on the research findings. The result is not absolute, and therefore, the researcher will state that the company is allowed to use the information and the results to the best of their knowledge.

### **3.2 Primary and secondary data**

According to Burn & Bush (2010, 174) defined Primary data as information a researcher developed or specifically gathered for the purpose of its research work. Primary data for this research study were the information gathered from the surveys. The surveys include an interview and a general questionnaire. The interviews were in a written format, and sent via e-mail to the employees of the company only, while the general questionnaire based on online participation were sent to the current and potential customers of the company through their e-mails.

Secondary data is information that has been gathered by other authors or scholars than the researcher for other purposes that are not specifically meant for the project at hand (Burns & Bush 2010, 174). In other words, secondary data are referred to as information and theory that are related to my topic gathered from other authors. The secondary data were reviews from marketing communications theory books such as: Principles of Marketing (Philip Kotler & Gary Armstrong 2010 & 2012), and Marketing Communications (Chris Fill 2013, Terence Shimp 2007, Patrick De Pelsmacker, Maggie Geuens & Joeri Van Den Bergh 2013, and Blythe 2006) represents a good examples of secondary data in this thesis work. Information sourced from websites and other related internet materials used in the thesis are secondary data. To maintain accurate information, the collection and analysis of the internet sources reliability were carefully carried out.

Furthermore, it's important to consider likely errors that could affect the research process. The identifications of main factors affecting the research process help to minimise the problems of errors and increase the level of accuracy in the results. According to Nair & Suja (2008, 58-59) inappropriate population specification, sampling errors, sample selection when adopting the non-probability method, sample frame, non-response, substitute/

surrogate information, measurement error, and experimental errors could impose negative outcome of the research process.

### **3.3 Sampling**

The sample size for interviews was small because of the size of the company. The overall sample size was 40. The number of employees interviewed was 4, while the number of participants in the general questionnaire was 36. It was important to make sure that the respondents fit into the target customer group of Höyhentämö; the age bracket is somewhat open to accommodate 17-75years and above. The target customer group was also considered to have a reasonable interest in theatre performances. The survey was designed in the Finnish and English languages, but only the survey in the Finnish language was distributed to the current and potential customers of Höyhentämö through e-mail. The non-Finnish speakers were directed to use the link provided for the English version to participate in the survey to avoid denials because of the language barrier.

Burn & Bush (2010, 366) defined sample as “a subset of the population that suitably represents that entire group”. Samuel Paul defined sampling as “the selection of some part of an aggregate or totality by when a judgement or inference about the aggregate or totality in made” (Sontakki 2009, 106). Convenience sampling method was used for selecting the respondents for the surveys. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling method (Burn & Bush 2010, 380). This method is a sub-category of a non-probability sampling which does not recognise the selection of respondents at random thus the sampling error may not be estimated in this method (Sontakki 2009, 127). Convenience sampling method is considered somewhat risky since It “may lack Representativeness” of that researched due to the samples are “drawn at the researcher convenience” (Sontakki 2009, 128).

### **3.4 Qualitative research**

The main objective of administering an interview was to answer the investigative questions and research problem. Arranging for meetings and making consultations with the organisation played an essential role towards finding better ways of harnessing information with the aim of answering the investigative questions 1 and 3. Question 6 in the survey was set to help answer the investigative question 2. Interview question 2 and 9 are two sets of questions directly linked to the investigative questions to establish a skeletal frame that will help to answer the questions.

### **Interview question set for the employees of Höyhentämö**

The employees of höyhentämö were asked the following questions. The interviews for the employees are performed in a written format via official e-mail of the employees.

1. Do you think that marketing communications are important in moving Höyhentämö forward? And why?
2. Who are your target customers?
3. What type of marketing communications tools and media channels do you know that Höyhentämö has used before? And which one do you think that worked best?
4. What are the current marketing communications tools used by Höyhentämö?
5. What is the budget of höyhentämö on marketing communications per month?
6. How do you internally manage your marketing activities in Höyhentämö?
7. Do you think that if customer loyalty program is introduced, it will help to attract, retain and build strong customer relationships? (Please give your view.)
8. In your opinion, what are the challenges affecting Höyhentämö from reaching their target customers?
9. What would be your suggestion to improve Höyhentämö marketing communications plan to achieve better and optimum results in their marketing activities?

### **3.5 Quantitative research**

Quantitative research was carried out to find out more about the marketing preferences of current and potential customers of Höyhentämö. A pre-testing of the questionnaire was carried out with eight persons in October 2016, and they were able to give feedback for subsequent improvement. Their suggestions were put into consideration to finalise the design of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is an online administered, and the essence of choosing this method comes handy because of the fastness, cost-efficiency, user-friendly, and no influence on respondents. The total amount of 16 questions is contained in the general questionnaire that was answered. The survey was conducted through e-mail. A link to the survey was also added to Facebook page and newsletter of the company. Altogether 36 responses were collected over a period of four weeks.



### **Questionnaire for current and potential customers**

The questionnaire was translated in the Finnish language as well (See attachment 3).

1. Your age?
2. Your gender?
3. How far do you live from Helsinki city centre?
4. Do you attend theatre performances?
5. In general, do you follow companies on Facebook?
6. Which channels do you hear about new theatre performances?
7. How would you like Höyhentämö to contact you about their theatre performances?
8. How regular would you like to receive promotional material from Höyhentämö?
9. How are the following important to you as a customer?
10. Do you use the höyhentämö website?
11. How often do you use the höyhentämö website?
12. Do you feel that Höyhentämö website is attractive?
13. In general, what social network do you follow the most?
14. Would you like to watch a theatre performance trailer online?
15. Do you read theatre magazines?
16. What would be your suggestion to improve Höyhentämö marketing communications plan to achieve better and optimum results in their marketing activities?

## **4 Findings and discussion**

In this chapter, the research findings are based on the questionnaire data and interview that was gathered and showing relevance to the theoretical frame carried out in chapter two. The objective was to seek answers to the investigative questions and also move further to address the research problem “how to increase the effectiveness and integrations of company’s marketing activities”. The findings will be analysed and discussed in accordance to the investigative questions.

The essence of conducting the research was to establish a clear picture of the current marketing communications of Höyhentämö and to find out which way the target customers preferred to be reached. Subsequently, the gap between the organisation current marketing communications mix and customer’s preferences will help recommend better ways for future actions based on the findings.

### **4.1 Current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö**

Current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö were the first investigative question in order of hierarchy. The information gathered from the interviews and combined with theory will help to cover this aspect. The purpose was to go through the different elements of integrated marketing communications by Blythe (2006) and Kotler & Armstrong (2012 & 2010) that applies to the case of Höyhentämö. These marketing communications elements include advertising, public relations, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion and online marketing (Blythe 2006, 42. & Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 437).

Höyhentämö is a theatre organisation into theatre performances and located in Helsinki. They are small theatre group that is funded by state and municipality. The funding from the state, municipality and others are in percentage of 80%, 17% and 3% respectively (TINFO, 2016). Höyhentämö engages into experimental, dramatic and post-dramatic, physical, participatory and passionate pieces (Höyhentämö 2015 & 2017.)

It is a known fact that the planning and execution of promotional campaign require a huge amount of resources to some extent to achieve successful results, but the limited resource of Höyhentämö have placed them on limited promotional activities (interview 2016). Marketing communications budget of Höyhentämö has estimated at 1000-2500euros annually which is a clear indication of a small size business with the minimal financial capacity to

engage in the costly promotional campaign (Höyhentämö 2015 & 2017). Nevertheless, a well-planned low-key marketing communications budget for the small organisation could be a turning point for a competitive advantage. Therefore, a small organisation like Höyhentämö can grow their presence and increase sales of their products and services effectively to target customers if they engage the right tools within the range of their financial capacity. Now, it is important to looking into the current marketing communications situation of Höyhentämö to find out their practices.



Picture 1 Business environment of Höyhentämö (2017)

The marketing communications of Höyhentämö automatically start with the physical appearance of the organisation. As part of the public relations, Höyhentämö corporate identity and brand culture acknowledge the interior and exterior visual manifestations that make it a brand. Pelsmacker, Geuens, & Bergh (2010, 18) defined corporate identity as “a tangible manifestation and visual representation of personality or corporate culture of an organisation”. The theatre is small in size with a capacity of about 50 spectators (see picture 1 above). The entrance to the main theatre gives the right feelings about the business environment where theatre arts takes place. The lighting on the stage roof and walls re-

flects different lights from many locations which add life and style to the theatre performances. The exterior of the theatre cannot be influenced much because the business operates on rented premises, but the organisation's sign post creates possible awareness to passers-by about the existence of Höyhentämö.

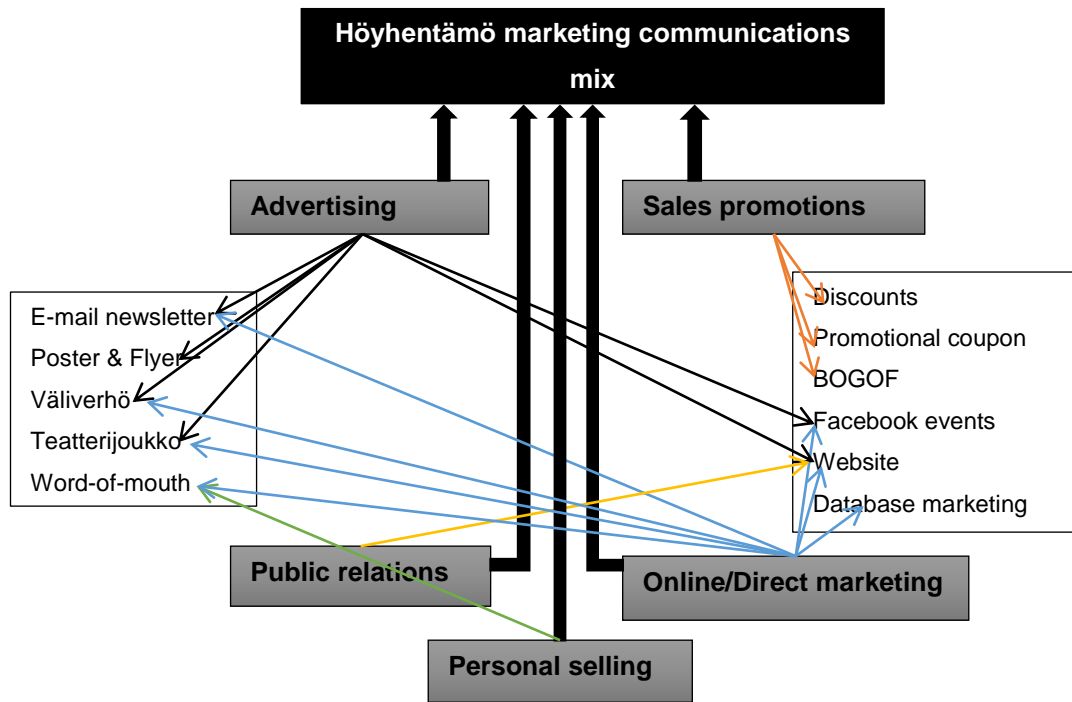


Figure 6. Höyhentämö current communications mix (the researcher's work 2017)

Höyhentämö has practised advertising, and there most frequently used channels have been Teatterijoukko, Välliverho, E-mail Newsletter, Poster and Flyer, Facebook events, and website (See figure 6 & 7). Teatterijoukko and Välliverho are bi-annual brochure publications and digitally accessible online. Teatterijoukko is a brochure from Teatterikeskus; an association that brings professional theatres and group theatres together (Teatterijoukko 2016). Välliverho is a cultural calendar published in the metropolitan area of Helsinki (Välliverho 2016). The two theatre brochures connect content to target customers about all theatre performance events happening in the metropolitan area of Helsinki.

Höyhentämö has also used the promotional tool of buy-one-get-one-free (BOGOF) or buy more and get some discounts which are an example of sales promotion (See attachment 2, question 4). Their sales promotion strategies also include offering free tickets as a

means of giving back to their loyal customers and building stronger customer relationships.

As Kotler (2010, 441) describes, personal selling “face-to-face interaction with one or more prospective purchasers for the purpose of making sales” personal selling has been diagnosed as an organisation’s most expensive promotion tool. Höyhentämö practice personal selling on the level of in-house ticket sales. The advantage is somewhat leveraged by sales people to interact with customers and subsequently advertising upcoming event of the theatre by handing over a kind of pamphlet, flyers, etc. to the customer, and thereby increases awareness level about the event in prospect (See attachment 2, question 4). The approach and manner the employees attend to customers are very necessary; customer service has been placed a priority to help stand-out in the competitive market. Personal selling also includes sales call, telesales and telemarketing, but Höyhentämö does not practise any of these forms of personal selling.

Direct marketing is interactive, less public, immediate and customised (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 442). The most popular direct marketing practised by Höyhentämö is e-mail newsletter marketing and online Marketing through their website. The use of Sendinblue web-app to target and reach customers by sending newsletters and other forms of promotional materials is a significant marketing activity in the organisation. Sendinblue is a simplified, reliable and cost-effective direct marketing software application (Sendinblue 2016). Face-to-Face selling, direct-mail marketing, catalogue marketing, telemarketing, online marketing, kiosk marketing, direct-response television marketing and new digital technologies are forms of direct marketing (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 524). Database marketing is also inherently adopted by the organisation. The company do not use catalogue marketing, telemarketing, kiosk marketing, and direct-response television marketing and new digital technologies in their current marketing communication mix.

Furthermore, online marketing activities have been visible through Höyhentämö Facebook page, Website and Email newsletter marketing. Höyhentämö has a website ([www.hoyhentamo.fi](http://www.hoyhentamo.fi)) and Facebook or account (<https://www.facebook.com/Hoyhentamo/>) where information about the organisation’s upcoming theatre events was disseminated. Höyhentämö Facebook page offers a social platform that allows interaction between customers and the organisation which results into built-up opinions toward their offerings. Recently, Höyhentämö Facebook platform have received 530 likes, two talking about it, and 112 visitors, this shows the level of activities on their Facebook page within the time of this research work (Höyhentämö Facebook page 2016). Online booking for theatre event is

functionally active through Höyhentämö website, and recently the website at this time is undergoing redesigning to boost its attractiveness. Instagram and Twitter are part of social media tools for marketing communications but not yet in use by the organisation.

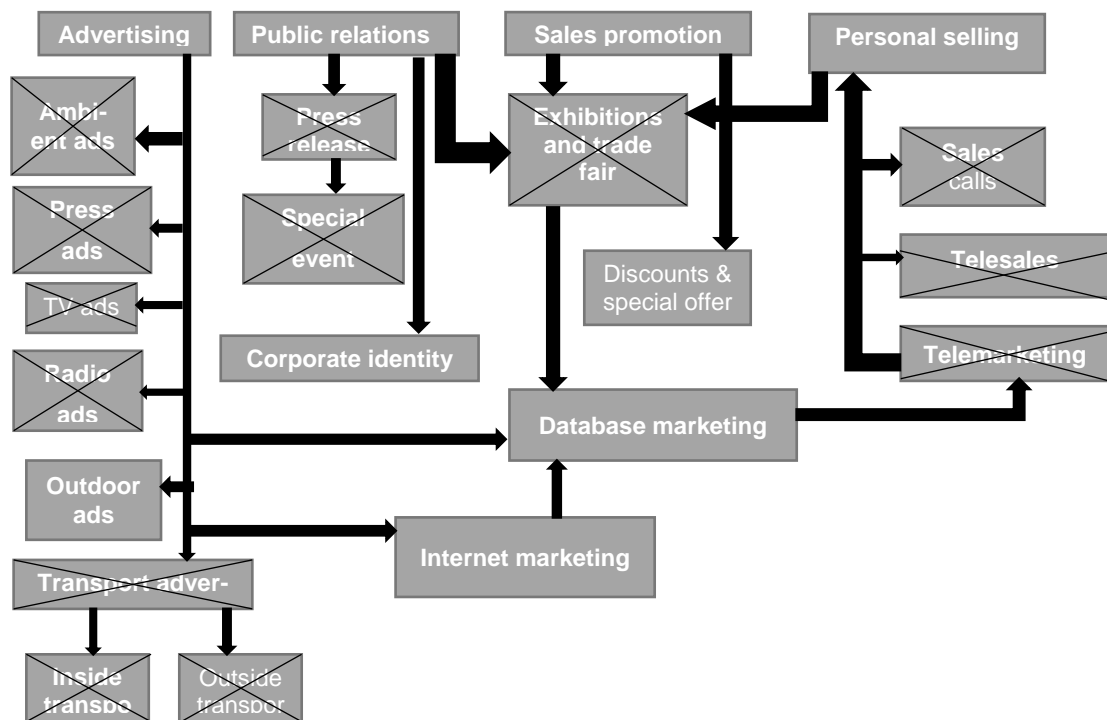


Figure 7 Current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö. Shaped by the taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006, 43)

#### 4.2 Target customers enthusiasm on marketing communications tools.

The second investigative question “What type of marketing communications tools does the target customers of höyhentämö prefer”. It is important to identify what target group want which makes it easier for companies to position themselves towards selecting the effective channels to reach their target group, and hence, improves brand image and recognition through quality customer relationship management. The data collected through the survey helped to answer the question about the marketing communications preferred by potential customers.

The target groups consist of male and female between the ages of 17-75years that has moderate purchasing power. The target group of Höyhentämö are those who delight in things of art and theatre related style. I started the questionnaire with more of basic questions like age and distance, etc. to ascertain the validity of the respondent’s answers by

fitting into the target group of Höyhentämö. They were altogether 36 respondents. The target groups were categorized into eight different age brackets, and their subsequent responses show accordingly (See attachment 4 chart 1-16). According to the survey, 7 of the respondents were male 19.4%, and 29 of the respondents were female 80.6% (See attachment 4 chart 2).

The distance was measured to determine coverage of the respondents. The results showed that the higher percentage of the respondents live between 5-10km, 0-4km and 21-30km respectively (See attachment 4 chart 3). To further verify that the respondents fall within the potential customers of Höyhentämö and to enhance the validity of the research, question 4 tried to find out if the potential customers have a passion for theatre performances. The results showed that 90.9% of the respondents have a passion for theatre performances while 8.3% respondents were not certainly sure about it (See attachment 4 chart 4).

The aspect of public relations which entails the creation of mutual understanding between a company and its public considered a customer-loyalty program to be needful. Question 12 in the questionnaire was about the customer-loyalty program and what it means to the potential customers. The result showed that 58.8% consider it not at all important, 29.4% not very important and 11.8% quite important. Though the majority of the respondents considered the customer-loyalty program, not at all important, 29.4% and 11.8% still see somewhat benefit from it. So, if the customer-loyalty programs are properly tailored towards meeting the demand of the potential customers, it will be an effective way of reaching target customers.

Another essential tool for marketing communications is advertising. The survey respondents were asked through which channels they hear about new theatre performances and through which channels they would like to be contacted about theatre performances by Höyhentämö (See attachment 4 chart 6). Based on the data collected, the most effective channels that potential customers hear about theatre performances are e-mail advertising with 83.8%, Facebook with 69.4%, Newspaper with 66.7%. Furthermore, Brochures and Internet advertising have a tie of 36.1%, Magazine with 27.8%, Väliverho with 25%, Blog and Traditional mailing have a tie of 22.2%, Teatterijoukko with 19.4%, Radio and TV with 16.7% and 8.3% (See attachment 4 chart 6)

Furthermore, question 7 in the questionnaire try to find out through which channel customers would like to be contacted about theatre performance events (See attachment 4

chart 7). The survey result showed that 77.5% of the respondents preferred to be contacted by e-mail, 44.4% by Newsletters and Facebook, and 11.1% preferred to be contacted by printed ad, and 2.8% stated other. No potential customer showed interest to be contacted by a phone call and SMS.

Reaching target customers through a magazine would seem to be a good choice. Theatre magazine is one segmented channel also considered to be important in reaching target customers. The question about reading theatre magazine was asked (See attachment 4, chart 15). The outcome of the survey showed that 37.1% said they read theatre magazine, 28.6% said no, and 34.3% said maybe. If 37.1% of the respondents read theatre magazine, then it would be profitable advertising through such channel.

The use of advertising to increase the effectiveness of brand awareness and recognition to create a strong brand position and differentiation in company's marketing activities need proper management. Question 8 in the survey asked how often customers would like to receive promotional material from Höyhentämö (See attachment 4 chart 8). The resultant outcome showed that no one wants to be contacted on a daily basis. The most acceptable period was once a month with 62.9% and followed by less than once a month with 22.9%. 8.6% of the respondents accepted to receive promotional material once every two weeks, 2.9% preferred once or twice a week and once a year respectively. No respondent indicated not interested, meaning that everyone would like to receive promotional material from Höyhentämö (See attachment 4 chart 8).

A promotional sale is a veritable tool in marketing communications. The use of discounts in ticket sales, use of coupons, buy one gets one free (BGOF), etc., special offers, information on new theatre performance, and information about the customer-loyalty program are very important in the promotional sale. Question 9 helped to answer how important ticket discounts, special offers, information on new theatre performance, and information about the customer-loyalty program is to the customers of the company (See attachment 4, chart 9). The survey result showed that an average mean of 22.3% accepted it as very important, 27.43% said it quite important, 26.18% said not very important, and 24.1% said not at all important.

Regarding the website, question 13, 14, and 15 addresses some of the necessary issues. Question 13: Do you use the höyhentämö website? 47.2% of the respondent said "yes", 22.2% said, "No", another 19.4% said "maybe", and 11.1% said, "I have not seen it" (See attachment 4 chart 10). To further engage target customers through the website, question



14 was asked: "how often do you use Höyhentämö website". The outcome of the survey result showed that 61.1% majority of the respondents preferred to use the website "less than once a month". 5.6% claim to use it once or twice a week, 2.8% use it once every two weeks, and once a month respectively, only 27.8% said: "Never" (See attachment 4 chart 11). The Website of an organisation is expected to be attractive because the design and outlook form part of the corporate identity. For that reason, question 15 was asked: "Do you feel that Höyhentämö website is attractive?" The survey result shows that 48.1% said "No, not very attractive", 44.4% said "Yes, somewhat", 3.7% agreed that the website is "very attractive" and another 3.7% said, "No, not at all" (See attachment 4 chart 12). It is also important to mention that the website of Höyhentämö has undergone reconstruction in January 2017 which was after the survey have already been completed, and that the subsequent results outcome stated above do not represent the company's current website page.

Social media usage is very important in marketing communications. Social media consist of numerous social networks, and it is necessary to determine what kind of social networks that customers preferred. Question 16: In general, what social do you follow the most?. Facebook reached 93.1% to be the most preferred social media network by customers and followed by Instagram with 55.2%. Twitter also showed a preference at 20.7%, Pinterest was 3.4% and others by 10.3% (See attachment 4 chart 13). To further determine target customers that follow the organisation on their Facebook page, question 5 put it straight by asking: In general, do you follow the company on Facebook?. The survey result proved that 60% follow the company on Facebook, 25.7% do not, and 14.3% maybe. Question 17 also asked if target group would like to watch a theatre performance trailer online, and 62.9% said "yes", 28.6% said "maybe", and 8.6% said "No" (See attachment 4 chart 5).

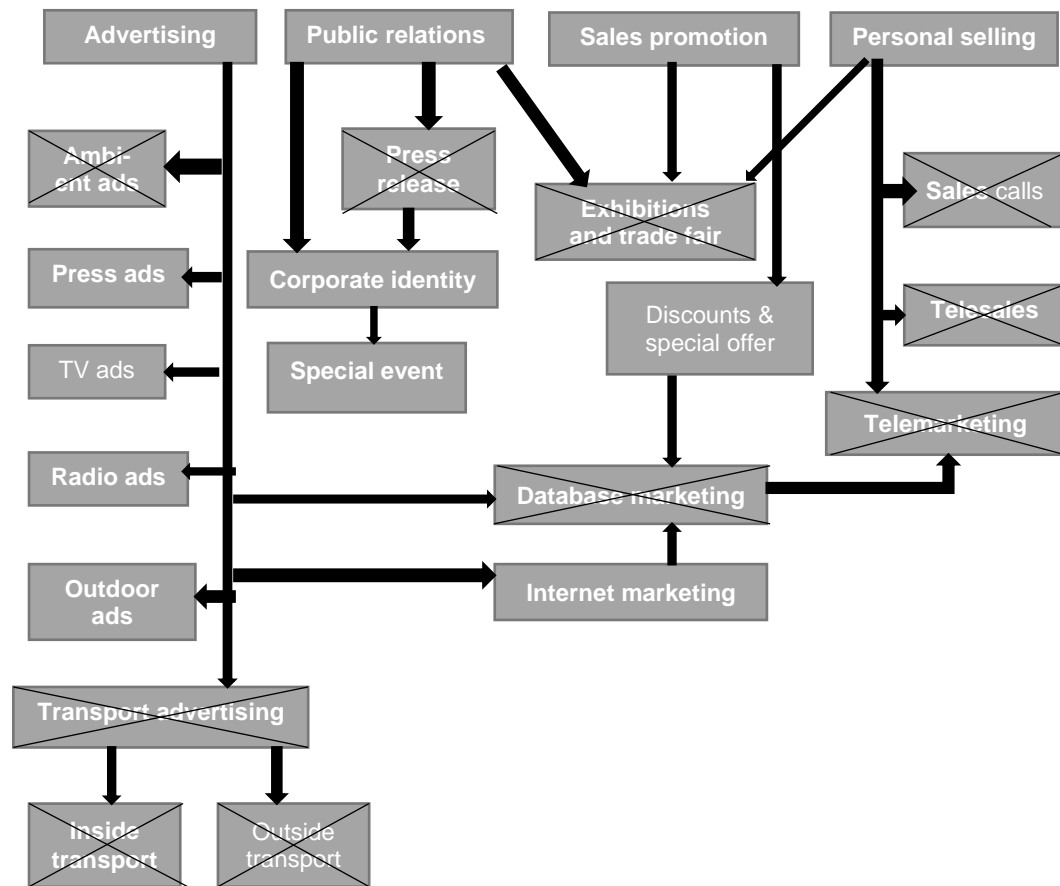


Figure 7. Marketing communications channels referred by the target customers. Inspired by the taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006, 43)

### 4.3 Differences between current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö and that of their target group

The differences between current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö and that of their current and potential customer fall in the third Investigative question. The main reason for this question is to understand what Höyhentämö lacks but is necessary to increase brand awareness through marketing efforts according to customer's preferences. The differences between the organisation and target group could emerge as the key reasons challenging the theatre organisation from reaching their potential customers. The investigative question 1 and 2 in the previous sub-chapters will be used to compare and determine the differences between the current marketing communications of Höyhentämö and preferred marketing communications of their target groups.

Table 3. Comparison between the current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö and that of their current and potential target groups

<b>Current marketing communications tools</b>	<b>Preferred marketing communications tools</b>
<b>Promotional channels</b>	
Advertising in Teatterijoukko and Väliverho	E-mail, Facebook, and Newspaper are the first most preferred. Internet-advertising, others, brochures and magazine come second. Teatterijoukko and Väliverho are slightly used.
Promotional e-mail (Newsletters)	77.8% prefer it over electronic mail. 44.4% prefer it over newsletter and Facebook. No one wants to be contacted by text message and phone
Facebook page	93.1% are present on Facebook. 20.7% on Twitter 55.2% on Instagram
Poster/ flyers	36.1% accepts brochure
<b>Advertising</b>	
Advertising in Teatterijoukko and Väliverho	66.6% prefer Newspaper 36.1% prefer Brochure and Internet advertising 27.8% prefer Magazine advertising
No TV or radio advertising	16.7% and 8.3% prefer Radio and TV respectively
No active Facebook advertising	60% follow companies on Facebook, and 44% want to be contacted through Facebook
<b>Public relations</b>	
No customer membership program	11.8% accepted that customer loyalty program is quite important
No blogging	22.2% considered Blog to be important for them
<b>Sales promotion</b>	
No active sales promotion	On average mean, 22.3% and 27.43% accepted Ticket discounts, Special offer, Information on new theatre performances and Customer-loyalty program to be "very important" and "quite important" respectively
<b>Direct marketing</b>	
No traditional mail	22.2% prefer to get Promotional material by post.
<b>Online and social media</b>	

No active internet advertising	36.1% considered t internet advertising to be good for reaching them.
No Instagram/ Twitter	55.2% uses instagram and 20.7% uses twitter
No online theatre performance trailer	62.9% prefer online performance trailer.

The above table compares the differences between the current marketing communications tools of the company and that of their target customers which showed some significant variations. The emerging differences are handled based on the size of the company, scarce time, financial and human resources that are available. Nevertheless, some certain factors that exist are still influenceable.

According to the survey results, the target groups of Höyhentämö prefer to hear about new theatre performances through e-mail, and also find Facebook, Brochure, Newspaper, magazine, and internet advertisement effective. On the other hand, Höyhentämö has concentrated on e-mail newsletters, Facebook, Poster/Flyer, Teatterijoukko and Väliverho. Database marketing is also used by Höyhentämö to build customers' e-mail addresses through a procured software application called Sendinblue. Sendinblue is used to send promotional material to target groups for efficient reach-out. The resulting outcome supported that 77.8% of respondents want to be contacted by e-mail over phone, SMS and printed ads (See attachment 4 chart 7). Therefore, e-mail marketing is a powerful promotional tool to use by any company.

Höyhentämö uses Facebook for a marketing campaign. 93.1% of respondents are present on Facebook, and 60% of respondents follow companies on Facebook (See attachment 4 chart 5). According to an interview with an employee of Höyhentämö, their Facebook campaigns have not proven effective. Furthermore, Höyhentämö has not tried advertising through the blog, the internet ads, traditional mail, magazine, radio and TV which are potential channels preferred by target customers. The financial capacity and size of the organisation are challenging factors. Also, Blogging about different subjects have increased in popularity recently, and 22.2% of respondents use the blog as a means of getting information about company's offerings (See attachment 4 chart 6). Blog, Internet advertising, traditional mail and magazine are financially manageable while Radio and TV seem more capital intensive as regards to Höyhentämö's financial resources.

Teatterijoukko and Väliverho are published bi-annually. The publication comes in brochure form which is slotted into Helsinki Sanomat and distributed through Helsinki metropolitan area. The survey results showed that Teatterijoukko and Väliverho are preferred by 19.4%

and 25% of the respondents respectively (See attachment 4 chart 6). These channels slightly yielded a positive outcome.

#### **4.4 Designing of IMC to reach target customers**

I do believe that IMC design is tailored in a manner that suits the needs of the organisation. The fourth investigative question will highlight all the previous results and put them together to find better ways of reaching target customers. The fourth investigative question is how to design the integrated marketing communications activities of the company to reach the target customers.

According to the interview with a producer in the organisation, and whom also manages the marketing activities of the company stated that the organisation do not have marketing communications plan in the real sense, but yet it is something that cannot be avoided in the business. The current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö and that of their target customers are already established in figure 6 and 7 respectively. So, the effective management and integration of the differences by the organisation will help to increase the efforts in reaching their target customers.

Noticeably, the survey results showed that e-mail is the best marketing communications tool for the company. 83.3% of the respondents hear about new theatre performances through e-mail (see attachment four graph 6). E-mail is a form of personalised and direct marketing (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 449). It was also interesting to see that 77.8% of the respondents accepts be contacted by e-mail and 44.4% by newsletters. I think the two tools have a blurring difference, but at the same time, they differ from each other in the actual sense. According to Nick (2016) stated in the online article that "promotional emails drive actions while Newsletters add value and build relationships". The usage of e-mail and e-newsletter should be given top priority in reaching target customers. To further understand the degree at which the target customers are willing to get information about new theatre performance, the survey result also confirmed that 45.7% and 40% of the respondents accepted that it is "very important" and "quite important respectively".

The introduction of a membership loyalty program should be given a chance by höyhentämö. The employees of the organisation expressed their opinion about the aspect of introducing customer loyalty program, one of the employee said it would be beneficial if the right program that speaks to the customer's need are implemented. Another employee was not sure what it means, but she thinks that it sounds interesting.

Facebook emerged as one of the most preferred channels to reach the target customers of Höyhentämö (see attachment 4, graph 6). According to the interview with the employees of Höyhentämö, Facebook was already one of their current marketing communications tools which mean that Höyhentämö has chosen correctly by using Facebook advertising. Furthermore, the interview showed that the Facebook page is not actively managed to yield optimum benefit. According to Steven (2009, 129-156), Facebook advertising requires the knowledge about the prevailing types of ads and how to maximise the use of news feeds to reach out to the right target customers. Steve (2009, 129) "You can target ads to specific demographics with unparalleled precision in Facebook". Subsequently, the survey result showed that 72.7% of the respondents preferred to be reached through Facebook. Facebook was projected as the second largest preferred channel in reaching the target customers. In my opinion, Facebook advertising is not expensive, it is easy to use, and it targets the right potential customers, and delivers effective ROI (return on investment) on advertising campaign if properly implemented. So, I recommend Höyhentämö to continue and actively engage the use of Facebook campaign towards reaching target customers.

Newspaper advertising also falls within the major line that is deemed to be of the high potential tool in reaching target customers. According to the interview results with an employee of Höyhentämö, in 2005 they tried advertising through Helsinki Sanomat and Teatteri ja tanssi. After 2005, the organisation has not engaged in newspaper advertising again because of the lack of financial capacity as a challenging factor. However, the survey results showed that 66.7% of respondents preferred to hear about theatre performance events by Newspaper (see attachment 4, graph 6). Due to Höyhentämö's limited financial resource, an alternative way would be to start advertising in local newspapers as opposed to Helsinki Sanomat which is more expensive for the organisation.

The target customers acknowledged Brochure, magazine and internet advertising as preferred channels of hearing theatre performance events. The channels above fall within an average percentage of preference. Surprisingly, the magazine is not in use while Internet advertising is only limited to the höyhentämö website. It would be beneficial if Höyhentämö could publish their brochure at least 4-time in a year, and also a source for upcoming magazines that are averagely recognised within Helsinki metropolitan area to advertise in their magazine while because 59.4% of respondents is willing to get promotional material once a month. Internet advertising and Search engine optimisations would

also help to create online visibility and increase support to the höyhentämö website by generating traffic.

Teatterijoukko and Välliverho is a form of the brochure that majority of theatre organisations in the Helsinki metropolitan area buys a space to advertise their organisation and their offerings. Teatterijoukko and Välliverho are bi-annual publications that consume 56% of the annual marketing communications budget of Höyhentämö. However, Teatterijoukko and Välliverho have slightly shown positive outcome as regards to the channels target customers hear about Höyhentämö theatre performance events. Teatterijoukko and Välliverho are also published digitally through their website. Considering the slight positive outcome of advertising in Teatterijoukko and Välliverho, the channels should be continued and then supported with organisation quarterly own brochure.

The blog has shown up slightly as one medium target customers hear theatre performance event. 21.2% of respondents endorse blog as a channel of hearing theatre performances. A blog is a vital tool in marketing communications activities. Therefore, Höyhentämö should connect with different bloggers in Helsinki area and Finland generally to escalate their brand awareness. Recently, Bog has gained a lot of exposure in the use of internet, and one in three internet users read blog in Finland (Statistics, 2007.)

## **5 Conclusion**

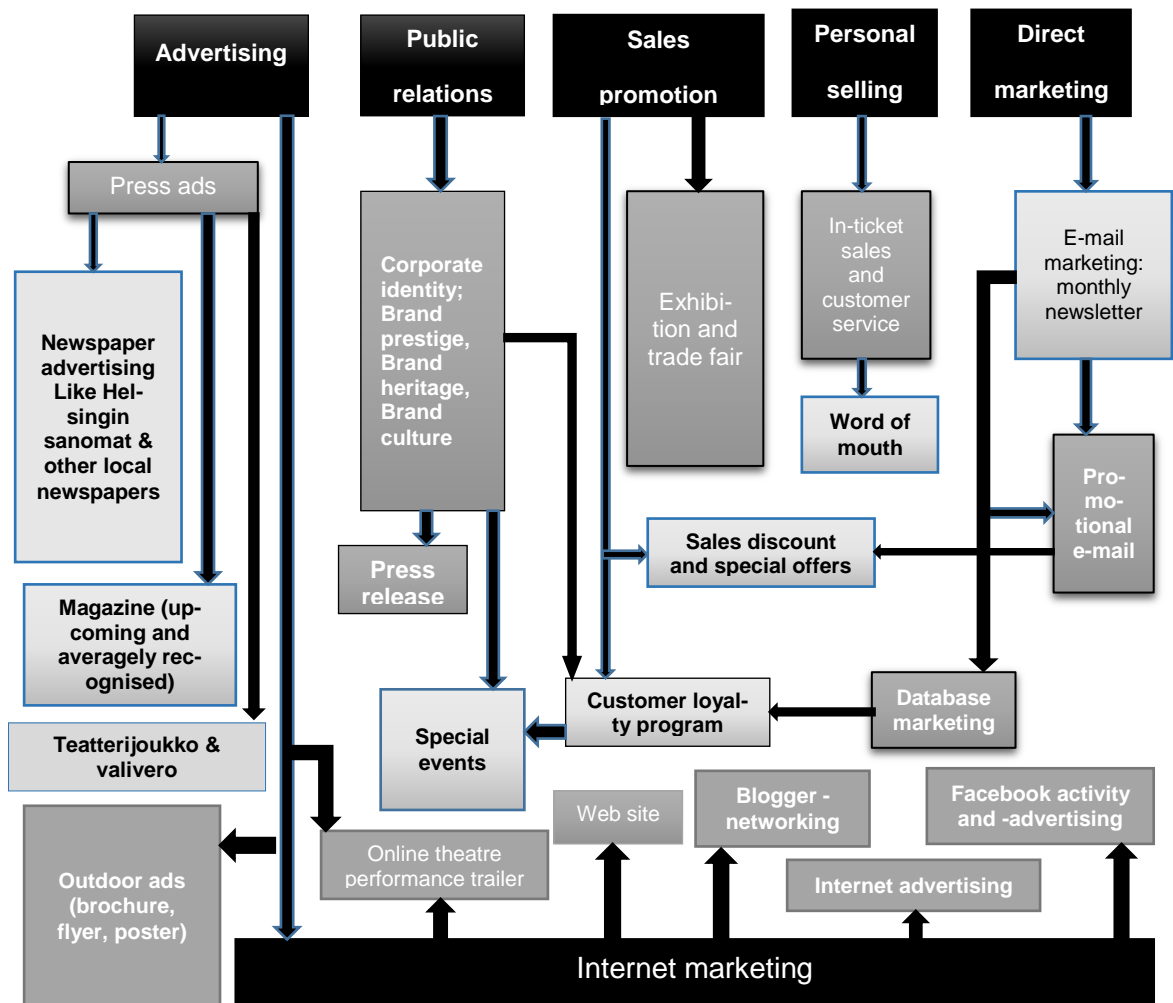
This research was done for a registered association Höyhentämö to increase the effectiveness and integration of their marketing activities. Literature reviews relating to IMC theories in conjunction with the data collected from the survey and interviews created room for a broad knowledge to be gained. The outcome of the results will be used by the researcher to make final conclusions on the area of the topic and gives recommendations to Höyhentämö.

### **5.1 Key findings**

The research works are built on a theoretical framework. The theory framework is bedrock for the underlying research, and these consist of Marcom-decisions by Terence Shimp (2007, 17), and two integrated marketing communications mix theories of Jim Blythe (2006, 43) and Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong (2012, 437) were taken into account. According to Shimp (2007, 17), the marketing communications decision-making process are based on two type of decisions like fundamental and implementation decisions. The fundamental and implementation decision mentioned by Terence Shimp Includes targeting, positioning, setting objectives, budgeting, a mixture of communication elements, creating a message, media selection and establishing momentum. The research has focused on Implementation decisions and precisely selecting proper media for Höyhentämö.

Integrated marketing communications mix in this research includes the following elements such as advertising, public relations, sales promotion, personal selling, and direct marketing. According to Blythe (2006, 43), he used a taxonomy model in presenting the elements, which the research found very useful in constructing this study and its interpretation of the results. Blythe (2006, 43) categorised integrated marketing communications into four elements. Blythe avoided mentioning direct marketing as one category of the mix but presented direct marketing as direct –mail marketing and online marketing in subgroups. Notwithstanding the manner of categorization by Blythe, they are suitable means of communications for Höyhentämö.





Recommended marketing communications tools for Höyhentämö. Shaped by the taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006, 43)

Advertising is the first element mentioned in Blythe's taxonomy. I recommend that the company (Höyhentämö) should advertise in Helsinki Sanomat, but considering the financial power of the company an alternative suggestion is advertising with other local newspaper within Helsinki metropolitan area that will suit their marketing communications budget, for example, Metro newspaper, Vantaa Sanomat, etc. Apart from advertising in the newspaper, the act of targeting digital form of the newspaper will be an added advantage aimed at increasing awareness about the company. Furthermore, the influencing power of magazine in advertising campaign cannot be underestimated. The magazine has been seen to be potentially viable in the area of publicity, and Höyhentämö would benefit from the utilisation of magazine in advertising their products. As a small organisation, they should search for upcoming magazine editorial agency that is averagely cheap, and rec-

ognised by customers to advertise in their magazine. Networking and building a strong relationship with such magazine agency, bloggers and editors would also earn the company an article about them and their products in the form of press release. Finally, I would recommend that the company should engage in quarterly publications of their brochure and flyer to support Teatterijoukko & väliverho in advertising efforts. So, Teatterijoukko & väliverho should be maintained since they have shown some evidence contributing to boosting company's presence.

In the aspect of public relations, the sculpturing of good brand identity through IMC is important. I would recommend that Höyhentämö should host special events within their premises by inviting customers, other theatre organisations, editors, actors and actresses to create more attention, collaborations and publicity. Another recommendation for Höyhentämö is the establishment of excellent customer service and quality interactions with customers during in-house ticket sales. This process is very vital because it represents one of the corporate cultures of the organisation, and therefore, it should be properly communicated because the communication between the customers and company staffs in the sales process can either elevate or crush the brand's reputation.

Furthermore, direct marketing is a personalised way of communications (Kotler & Armstrong, 2012, 524). Therefore, the monthly newsletter would be encouraged. It should be sent to all identified as a potential customer of the company. Subsequently, promotional e-mails about a special offer, discounting on ticket sales, and information about current products should be projected just-in-time towards reaching the targeted customers. Word of mouth is a stronghold when you talk about direct marketing. Höyhentämö should encourage their staffs to disseminate information about company's offerings to families, friends, and well-wishers thus escalating awareness. Again, the company should increase its active presence on a social network such as Facebook which was one of the very important key findings in the study. The Facebook page should be consistently managed, monitored and updated with new material and other necessary information. The use of social network in the enterprise has become the most popular of social media for the purpose of making better the enterprise's image or market products (Statistics Finland 2013). Search engine optimisation (SEO) will also help to increase traffic in the online engine search and Höyhentämö web-site. Online trailer of theatre performances is another acceptable means that will attract customers. The study showed that 63% of the respondents are willing to watch the online trailer of theatre performances (see attachment 4, chart 4). So, I would recommend this kind of marketing communications strategy to Höyhentämö. Other aspects that Höyhentämö will be expected to consider are re-design

and re-construction of their website and internet advertising (see attachment 4, graph 6 & 14). The survey results suggested an improvement on the look of Höyhentämö's website and also encouraged the use of an internet advertising tool based the respondent's feedback.

To summarise the final recommendations for marketing communications for Höyhentämö, I would categorise the most important sequences of actions as follows:

1. Direct e-mail marketing and a monthly newsletter should continue
2. The company should actively engage in Facebook advertising
3. Advertising in local newspapers like Metro, Vantaa Sanomat, etc. considering the cost effects of advertising in Helsingin Sanomat
4. Advertising in Teatterijoukko and Välliverho should continue with a support of quarterly owned brochure publications of the company
5. Internet advertising and search engine optimisation should be given a considerable chance in the selection of communications media
6. Networking with Bloggers to increase awareness and brand recognitions
7. Projecting theatre art performance trailer in the form of digital advertising, for example, making a theatre trailer video and uploading to YouTube, Facebook page, etc.
8. Organising special events and collaborating with other theatres for examples Club events will help in the aspect of public relations.
9. Advertising in the theatre magazines
10. Active participations in other social media tools such as Twitter and Instagram
11. Improving on customer service that will contribute to positive word of mouth

## **5.2 Research reliability and validity**

The Secondary data and relevant information required for the study was carefully collected, and the sources of information used were also confirmed to be trustworthy, for example, the information gotten from the Principles of Marketing by Kotler & Armstrong 2012, marketing communications book by shimp 2007, etc. I also invested a lot of time and efforts in the collection of primary data. The primary data are collected from the questionnaires and interviews. An interview was conducted for the employees of Höyhentämö, and questionnaires were designed for the target groups of the company. The target groups matched the frame of Höyhentämö which enhanced the reliability and validity of the study. The topic provides an easy means to reliably find information on the area of

marketing communications which has been extensively researched, and making information readily available. It was challenging to select only the appropriate or relevant theory without escalating the risk of widening the topic too much.

To successfully achieve an optimum result, I committed enormous time and effort into constructing the analysis and combining data gathered from the interviews and surveys to align with the theory. Different kinds of theories were generated from different secondary sources which support the study and increase the integrity of the research work. However, the reliability of these sources could be questioned, but I am optimistic that the sources are reliable and valid. I am also quite satisfied in how the chosen theories form the base for the study and support the research though the researcher still sees room for improvement in connecting the theory with the results and findings. On the other hand, online sources were carefully selected by focusing on finding the connections between internet sources and reliable books.

Furthermore, in the situation of the sampling method, it was adhered to correctly. Convenience sampling is the sampling type used for the research work: the questionnaire and interviews (Burns and Bush 2010, 380). This type of sampling would have given room to the researcher to select appropriate respondents that fall within expected parameter of the target group to get a valid picture of the real situation. The respondents and employees of Höyhentämö were reached through the internet. To motivate the respondents five tickets incentive was used as a motivation to the respondents. Altogether 36 responses were collected for the survey. The surveys were carried out through the database of the company which also strengthens the validity of the sample and results outcome. The company helped to provide some relevant internal information and assisted in guiding the distributions of the questionnaires to the target groups. The company showed enthusiasm in supporting the research work to achieve better results.

### **5.3 Limitations**

Some limitations were encountered in the research work. One of the limitations is the difficulty of meeting with the employees of Höyhentämö for a face-to-face interview. The company's staffs were busy to grant an interview appointment which prompted an alternative of e-mail interview through a written format.

Secondly, financial resources were another limitation to this research work because I would have given out more incentives to encourage the respondents to answer the questionnaire which would generate more respondents' outcome.

Thirdly, time management also counted as one limitation. Getting a good topic, sourcing for relevant materials, organising the materials, formulation of questionnaires, getting responses, analysing and interpretations of results all circles on a specified time frame. The process of getting responses from the respondents are not controllable, the respondents do respond on their own free time and choice.

#### **5.4 Further research ideas**

In the course of examining the study topic, further research and development ideas were gained. The ideas are practical if given due attention. The planning and formulation stage of questionnaire helped to review some ideas that do not necessarily contribute directly to the answers of the investigative questions. These ideas maintained some crucial aspect of the study but will require a different research towards realising the objectives in relations to the study at hand. The further research and development ideas focus on the following:

- Measuring and evaluating the recommended solutions after one year if they were implemented
- How current and potential customers view the theatre performances of Höyhentämö
- A SWOT analysis of Höyhentämö in the theatre industry

The first further research idea will help to confirm if something has changed towards the aspect of brand recognition and people's awareness of the brand's existence while the second ideas are deemed to find out about the overall customer's satisfaction. The results would position Höyhentämö towards strategic development. A SWOT analysis of the industry would be important to strengthen their continuing operations and competitiveness of the organisation by benchmarking competitors' marketing communications mixes and their effectiveness.

#### **5.5 Self-evaluation and development ideas**

Research work has always required lots of commitments. Acknowledgeable, the research process is lengthy starting from the formulations of ideas for the topic to the analysis and its conclusions. In the time of conducting the research and analysing the results, it evi-

dently generated new ideas for the whole topic, and different questions apparently surfaced. This whole exercise helped to gain an in-depth knowledge about marketing communications as related to its important contributions toward companies and other complexity in general. I have also thought to myself if whether or not an individual could cover the coined topic. In future, a narrower topic would be chosen as the need for such study arises. Research work is a continuous thing in life so that the experience will remain handy, and ready for deployment at the appointed time.

Furthermore, the acts of solving problems come with challenges. The research processes were challenging; the most difficult aspects include: choosing the topic and demarcating it, planning and formulating the questionnaire and representing the generated data into understandable forms. Another significant challenge was meeting up with the time frame. Time management in research work is not as simple as assumed, not getting everything done on time could slow down the earliest event completion time of the research work, but surprisingly, I was able to manage the situation properly.

The opportunity of finding a commissioning company that operates in a corresponding business interest was a positive step towards the research work, and I am glad for such accomplishment. The formal relationship and relentless supports from the company have kept the motivation to work on the topic even though it is a small size company. In my opinion, the commissioning company has shown lots of appreciations on the work done so far. They have expressed relentless supports and encouragement, and have applauded the energy and time invested towards realising the project. I am hopeful that the conclusion of this project shall help to direct Høyhentämö towards improving their marketing communications tools, and hence, achieve better brand recognitions.

I have also kept excellent communications with my thesis adviser and improved on necessary suggestions. The contributions from my thesis adviser have efficiently led to the successful outcome of the project work. Finally, learning is a continuous process, I have learned more about myself as a student, and have understood better ways of handling things. The research work has increased my academic confidence level in one's talent and skills.

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## Attachments

### Attachment 1. Overlay matrix

Research Problem	Investigative Questions (IQs)	Theoretical Framework	Measurement Questions	Results
<b>How to increase the effectiveness and integration of company's marketing communications activities</b>	1. What are the current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö?	Taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006)	See the Interviews with höyhentämö employees; question 3-4	Facebook site, Website, Direct mail marketing (E-mail/Newsletter), Brochure (Teatterijoukko and Väilverho ),
	2. What type of marketing communications tools does the target customers of Höyhentämö prefer?	Taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006) Integrated marketing communications (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012)	Survey questions 6-15	Facebook and Internet advertising, e-mail advertising, magazine, newspaper, brochure, direct mail advertising, radio, TV, Twitter, Instagram, online trailer, blogs
	3. What is the nature of differences existing between the current marketing communications tools of Höyhentämö and that of their target customers?	Taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006) Integrated marketing communications (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012)	See the Interviews with höyhentämö employees; question 3-4  Survey questions 6-15	No active Facebook and internet advertising, no newspaper ads, no Magazine ads, no TV ads, no radio ads, no twitter, no online trailer, no blog presence, no Instagram, e-mail ads very effective

	<p>4. How should the integrated marketing communications of höyhentämö be designed to reach the target customers?</p>	<p>Taxonomy of marketing communications (Blythe 2006)  Integrated marketing communications (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012)  Marketing communications (Shimp, 2007)</p>	<p>See the Interviews with höyhentämö employees; question 3-9  Survey questions 6-16</p>	<p>Direct e-mail newsletter, active Facebook indulgence, advertising in local newspapers, digital marketing, brochure publications, Twitter, Instagram, word of mouth.    Survey questions 5-16 and interviews</p>
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## **Attachment 2. Interview with four employees of Höyhentämö on 18.11.2016**

**Do you think that marketing communications are important in moving Höyhentämö forward, and why?**

1. Yes, furthermore audience targeting is important in this.
2. Joo, että saa lisää yleisöä, eh?
3. Yes. As we are running Höyhentämö with only funding money, it would be important to gather a wider customer base also to stabilise ticket sale income. Nothing else will bring more customers than increasing marketing.
4. Creative and cheap new ways to do it would be useful

**Who are your target customers?**

1. We hope to reach new audiences in addition to the typical contemporary theatre audience, but I consider it difficult to reach new audiences without a stellar marketing campaign
2. Uuh, paha sanoa. Varmaan punavuorelainen hipsteriyleisö, hih. Ja sitten Kaikki perus kulttuurista kiinnostuneet tahot.
3. Young people and adults, we hardly ever produce productions suited for children, although our dance productions could also be interesting for children to experience.
4. People interested, or potentially interested in performing arts, looking for new approaches. Curious people.

**What type of marketing communications tools and media channels do you know that Höyhentämö used before? And which one do you think that worked best?**

1. Email newsletters, FB events, web page. I, however, have gone to see performances at Höyhentämö due to other reasons than marketing.
2. Ainakin Facebook ja sitten niitä teatterilehtiä (Väliverho). Varmaan face on nykyään aika hyvä. Insta ja twitter pitäis tietty kans olla, jos ei jo oo.
3. In the past, before 2015 Höyhentämö has tried some individual newspaper ads in Helsingin Sanomat and Teatteri ja tanssi. Last year and this year Höyhentämö has also tried Facebook campaigns, without any proven benefits.
4. Please look at the next answer

## **What are the current marketing communications tools used by Höyhentämö?**

1. To my knowledge, email newsletters, FB events, web page.
2. Newsletter, face ja noi väliverho ym?
3. Höyhentämö publishes an ad in Teatterijoukko and Väliverho brochures two times a year: 1 in spring, 1 in autumn, those are printed ads, but they also publish our ads on their websites, so with this Höyhentämö reaches all of their audience. Monthly Höyhentämö sends out a newsletter through sendinblue web app to customers who have expressed their interest in receiving that, an amount of 300 recipients. Whenever there is an on-going production, Höyhentämö sent out invites and a special newsletter "tiedote" for the press, an amount of 1150 recipients. Höyhentämö also prints few posters and flyers when a production needs that. About five posters to use in its theatre space it's vicinity and 100-300 flyers to give out to potential customers. There is maybe a potential error here because Höyhentämö flyers are not spread that widely. All the participants in the productions get about 20 flyers and are free to spread them. But Höyhentämö does not have a general visibility for example in the Helsinki city scene. There's a lack of distribution plan for flyers. Höyhentämö has a website and a Facebook page. During my time as the producer as it comes to sales promotion, we have not done much, but we have made discounts through Facebook to our likes. For example: "Use this code when you reserve your tickets and get two tickets for the price of 1." Also in some productions, our normal ticket prices which are 12/22e do not apply, and we have asked for the customers to pay whatever they want between 4-24e. From the producers perspective, it would be important to be seen online. Right now we are putting a lot of money from our little marketing budget on renewing our website. I believe our site is the biggest tool we have and it should attract people and make them come back on the site and also make them book tickets there.
4. Info letters, Facebook, direct emails, informing medias (press releases, etc.), few adverts by the opening of each season

## **What is the budget of höyhentämö on marketing communications per month?**

1. I don't know.
2. No idea! Ei varmaan paljoo? Enkä oo ihan varma pitäisikö. Tai tää on tää peruskysymys: Ohjataako raha taiteen tekemisen sisältöihin (esim. teokset) vai ulkoisiin asioihin (esim. markkinointi).

3. The estimated amount that has been used for marketing expenses this year is 2500e of which 1100e goes to printed brochures: Väliverho and Teatterijoukko, 900e to our posters and flyers for our productions and to an outside graphic designer for designing a new poster of Höyhentämö new program for years 2017-2019 and 500e for a company to design and code and implement our new website.
4. Don't remember. Rosa has the numbers

### **How do you internally manage your marketing activities in Höyhentämö?**

1. Scheduling and planning the materials with the work group, negotiating with Höyhentämö staff.
2. I can see myself posting stuff on FB :)
3. I, the producer, take care of the marketing. There is no marketing plan, but marketing is still a part of Höyhentämö's yearly business/project plan. So we do plan ahead if and how we want to market.
4. By discussing them in board meetings and with our producer

### **Do you think the introduction of customer loyalty program will help to attract, retain and build strong customer relationships? (Please give your view)**

1. Depends on the benefits and "attractively" of the program. It should be a program that speaks to the costumers' need to belong and promote (i.e. offers the customer a community s/he wants to belong to, speaks of issues that are important to him/her or builds her/his sociocultural environment toward the way s/he wants to see it develop)
2. I don't know what that is. (Sounds interesting.)
3. I haven't heard that any theatre in Finland uses customer loyalty systems, so I'm having difficulties imagining how it could help. But I guess the point would be that our audience would commit to us?
4. It would probably affect a handful of people, which is nevertheless relevant

### **In your opinion, what are the challenges affecting Höyhentämö from reaching their target customers?**

1. Lack of club events at Höyhentämö premises, the small number of visible collaboration with festivals and other cultural venues, the small number of Höyhentämö's

performances tours in other venues. All in all, Höyhentämö's art is not very visible beyond its premises, and there are not many other kinds of events than performances at Höyhentämö, which would bring new audiences.

2. Lack of resources, lack of acknowledging the target customers??
3. Low budget, bad website, lack of a marketing plan.
4. Low marketing budget to lift it up on a different level

**What would be your suggestions to improve Höyhentämö marketing communications plan to achieve better and optimum result in their marketing activities?**

1. Club events and other events at Höyhentämö, making the premises known to new audiences. The collaboration with other cultural institutions, educational institutions and festivals. Active touring. Active social media involvement, also in other issues than marketing the performances.
2. Ei muita ideoita just nyt.
3. From the producers perspective, it would be important to be seen online. Right now we are putting a lot of money from our little marketing budget on renewing our website. I believe our site is the biggest tool we have and it should attract people and make them come back on the site and also make them book tickets. Also, next year will bring Instagram to Höyhentämö
4. To be fast, to be specific, to know what is going on elsewhere in the scene to contextualise our message and to make better use of our speciality.

### **Attachment 3. The original questionnaire in Finnish**

#### **1. Ikäsi**

- 17 tai vähemmän
- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- 66-75
- 76 tai enemmän

#### **2. Sukupuolesi**

- Mies
- Nainen
- En halua  
kertoa
- Other

#### **3. Kuinka kaukana asut Helsingin keskustasta**

- 0-4 km
- 5-10 km
- 11-20km
- 21-30 km
- Yli 30 km

#### **4. Käytkö teatterissa**

- Kyllä
- En
- Ehkä

#### **5. Seuraatko joidenkin yritysten Facebook sivuja**

- Kyllä



- En
- Ehkä

6. Mitä kautta saat tietoa uusista teatteriesityksistä

- Televisiomainokset
- Radio
- Aikakauslehdet
- Lehdet
- Sähköposti
- Lehtiset
- Tavallinen posti
- Facebook
- Internet mainokset
- Blogit
- Teatterijoukko
- Välivero
- Other

7. Kuinka haluaisit Höyhentämön ilmoittavan sinulle esityksistään

- Sähköposti
- Uutiskirje
- Painetut mainokset
- Puhelimitse
- Tekstiviestitse
- Facebook
- Other

8. Kuinka usein haluaisit vastaanottaa mainoksia Höyhentämöltä

- Päivittäin
- Kerran tai pari kertaa viikossa
- Kerran kahdessa viikossa
- Kerran kuukaudessa
- Vähemmän kuin kerran kuukaudessa
- Kerran vuodessa

- En ole kiinnostunut

9. Miten tärkeitä seuraavat asiat ovat sinulle asiakkaana

	Ei ollenkaan tärkeää	Ei kovinkaan tärkeää	Melko tärkeää	Hyvin tärkeää
Lippujen alennukset				
Erikoistarjoukset				
Uusien esitysten mainokset				
Tietoa asiakasuskollisuusohjelmista				

10. Käytätkö Höyhentämön internetsivuja

- Kyllä
- En
- Ehkä
- En ole nähnyt niitä

11. Kuinka usein käytät Höyhentämön internetsivuja

- Päivittäin
- Kerran tai pari kertaa viikossa
- Kerran parissa viikossa
- Kerran kuukaudessa
- Vähemmän kuin kerran kuukaudessa
- En ikinä

12. Ovatko Höyhentämön internetsivut puoleensavetävät

- Hyvin puoleensavetävät
- Melko puoleensavetävät
- Eivät kovin puoleensavetävät
- Eivät ollenkaan puoleensavetävät

13. Mitä sosiaalisia medioita käytät yleensä

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Pinterest
- MySpace
- Other

14. Olisitko kiinnostunut katsomaan teatteriesitysten trailereita internetissä

- Kyllä
- En
- Ehkä

15. Luetko teatteriaiheisia lehtiä

- Kyllä
- En
- Ehkä

16. Kerro oma parannusehdotuksesi Höyhentämön markkinointiviestinnän parantamiseksi, kiitos

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#### Attachment 4: Survey data charts

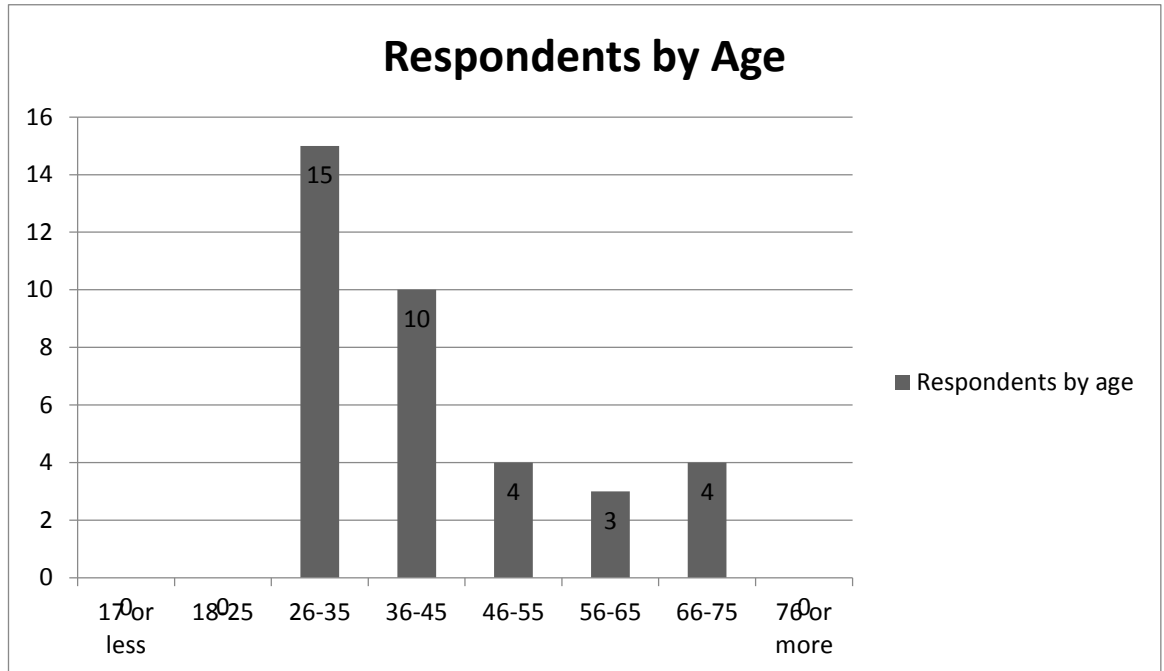


Chart 1 (Question 1: How old are you?)

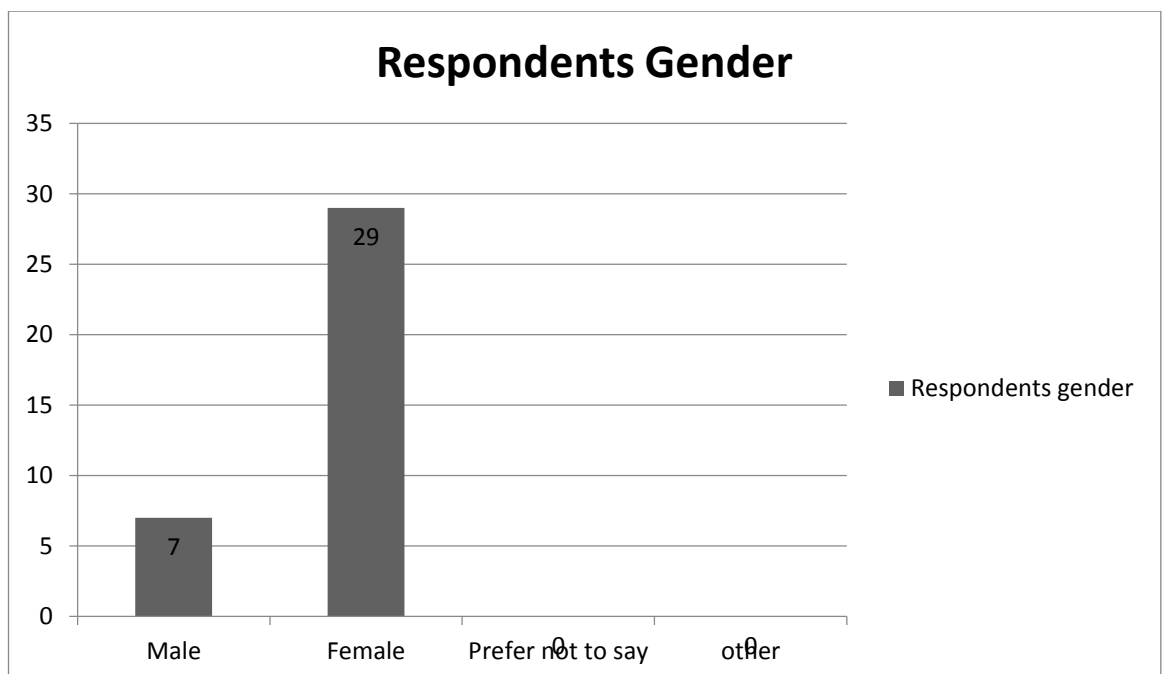


Chart 2 (Question 2: what is your gender?)

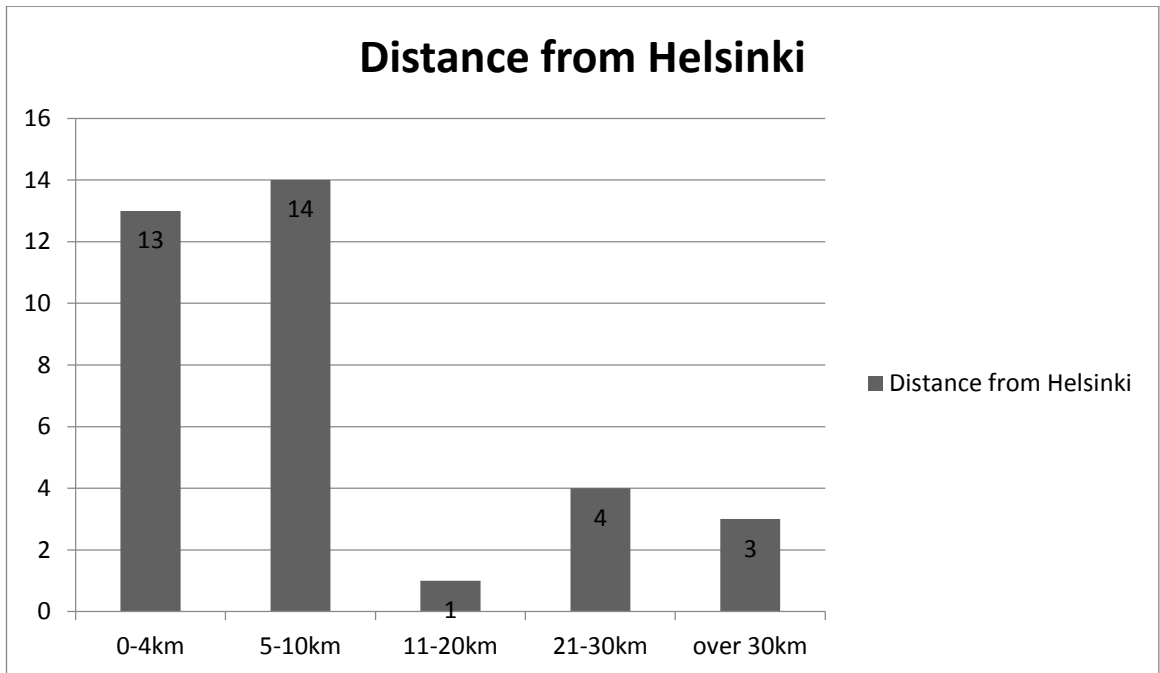


Chart 3 (Question 3: How far do you live from the Helsinki city centre?)

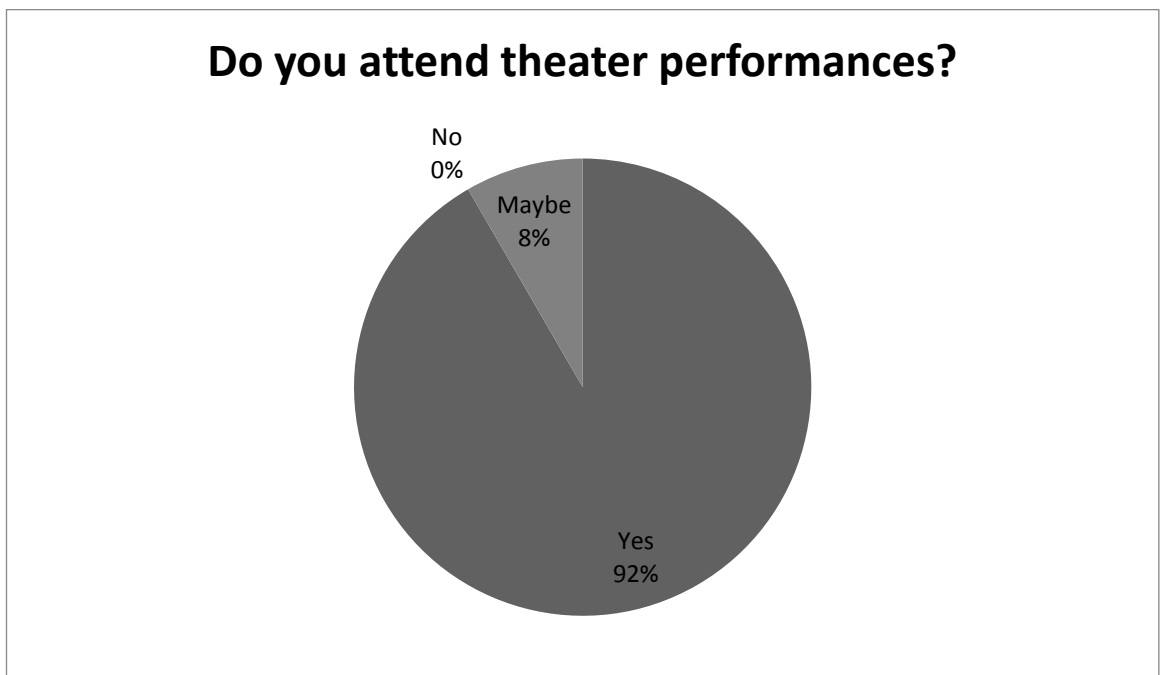


Chart 4 (Question 4: Do you attend theatre performances?)

## Do you follow companies on Facebook ?

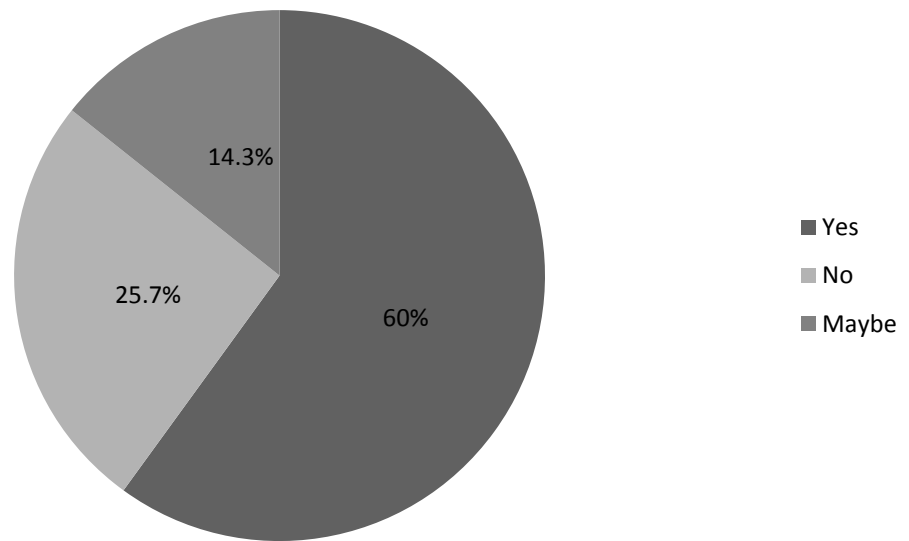


Chart 5 (Question5: In general, do you follow companies on Facebook?)

## Which channels do you hear about new theater performances?

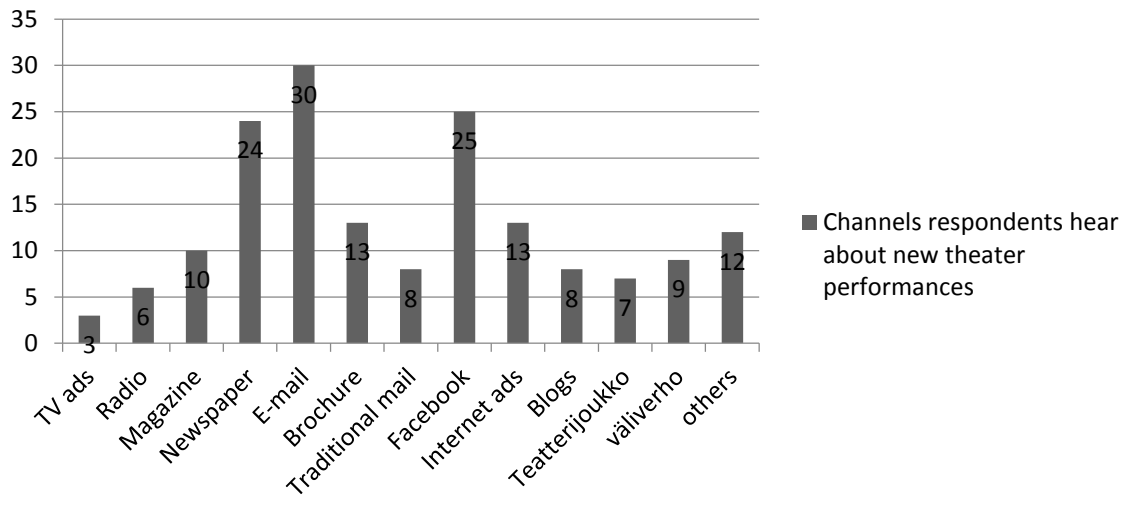


Chart 6 (Question 6: which channels do you hear about new theatre performances?)

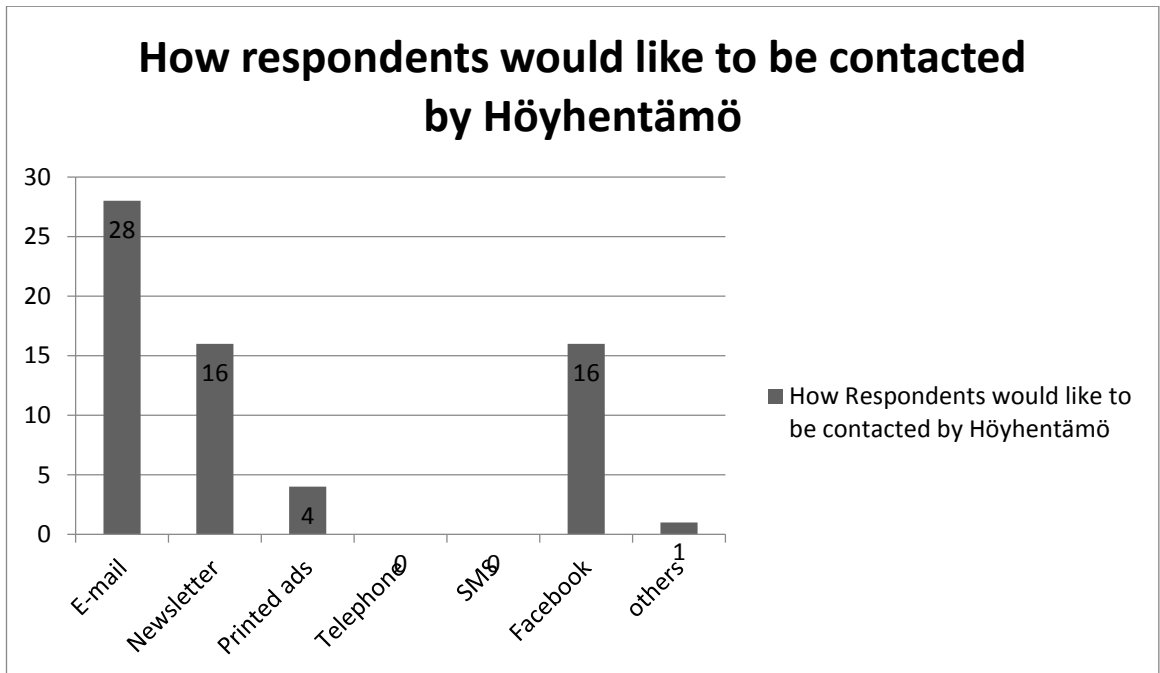


Chart 7 (Question 7: How would you like Höyhentämö to contact you about theatre performance?)

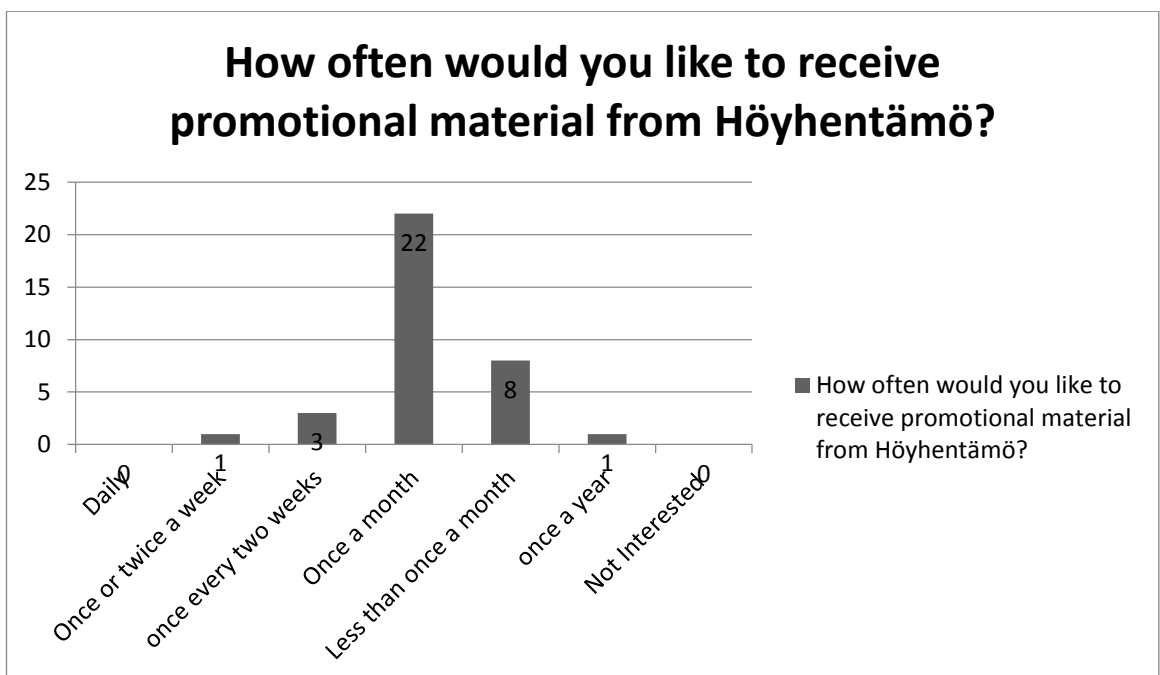


Chart 8 (Question 8: How often would you like to receive promotional material from Höyhentämö?)

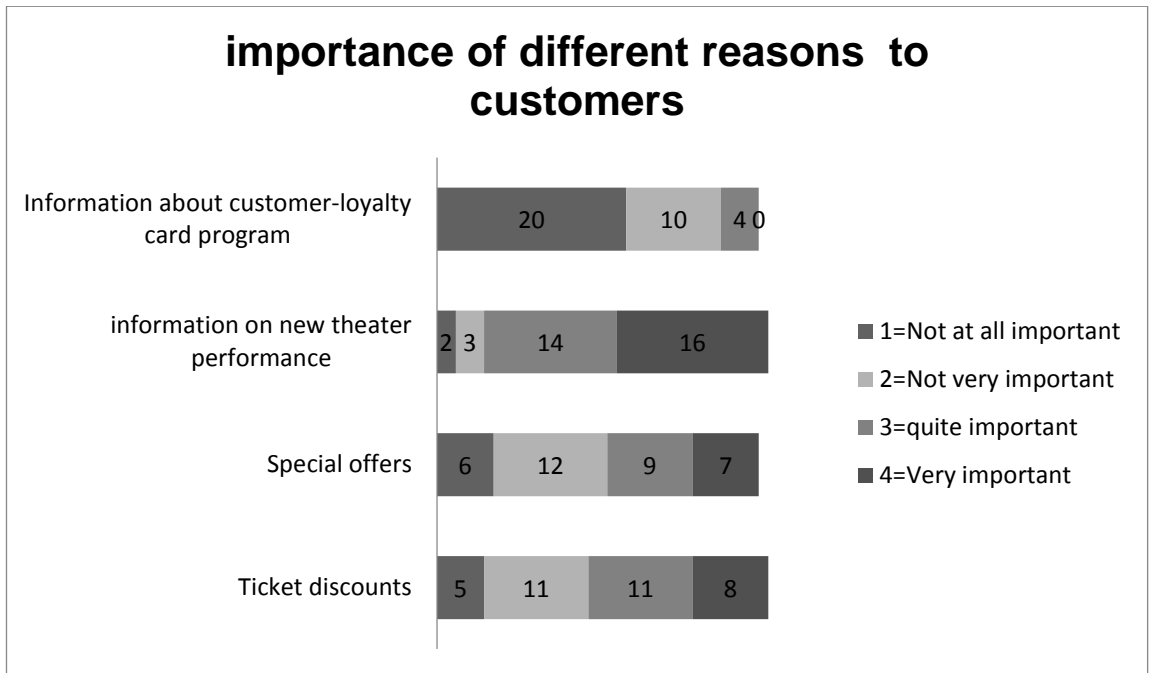


Chart 9 (Question 9: How are the following important to you; ticket discounts, information on new theatre performance, special offers and information about customer loyalty card program?)

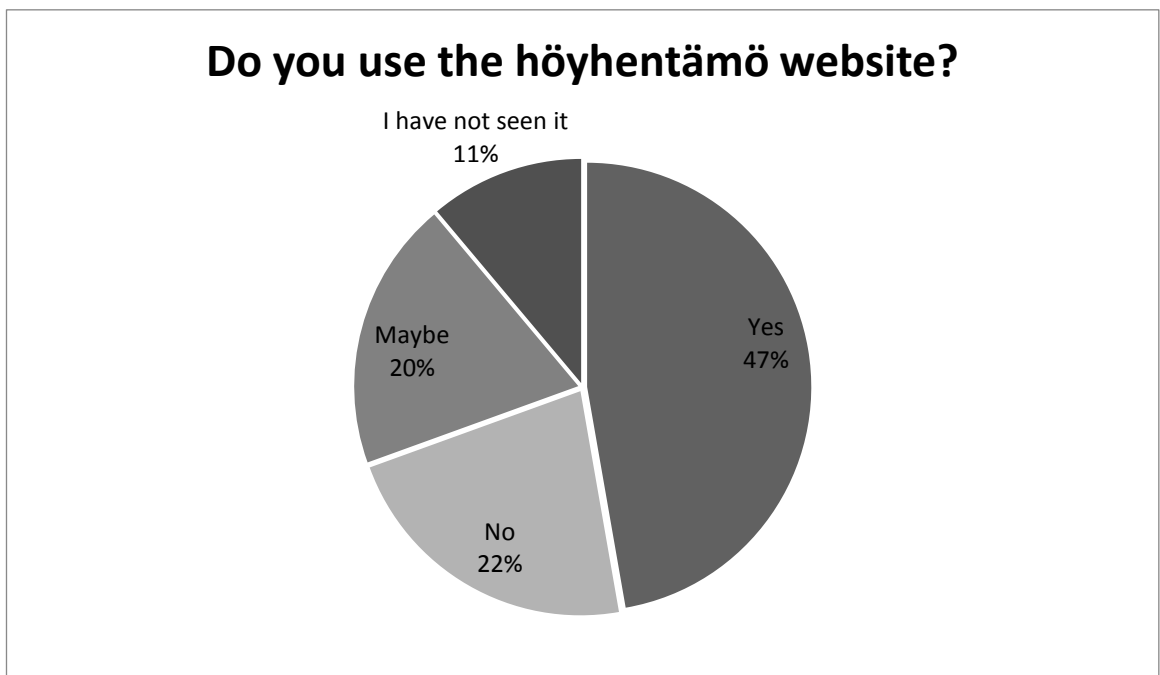


Chart 10 (Question 10: Do you use the Höyhentämö website?)



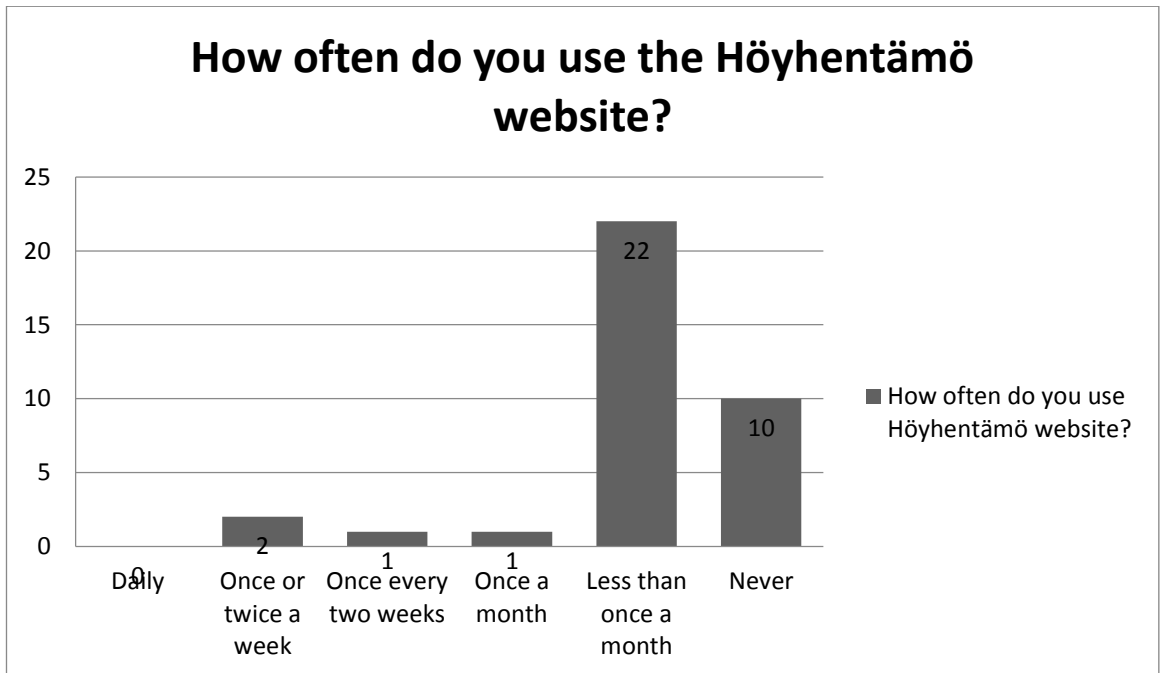


Chart 11 (Question 11: How often do you use Höyhentämö website?)

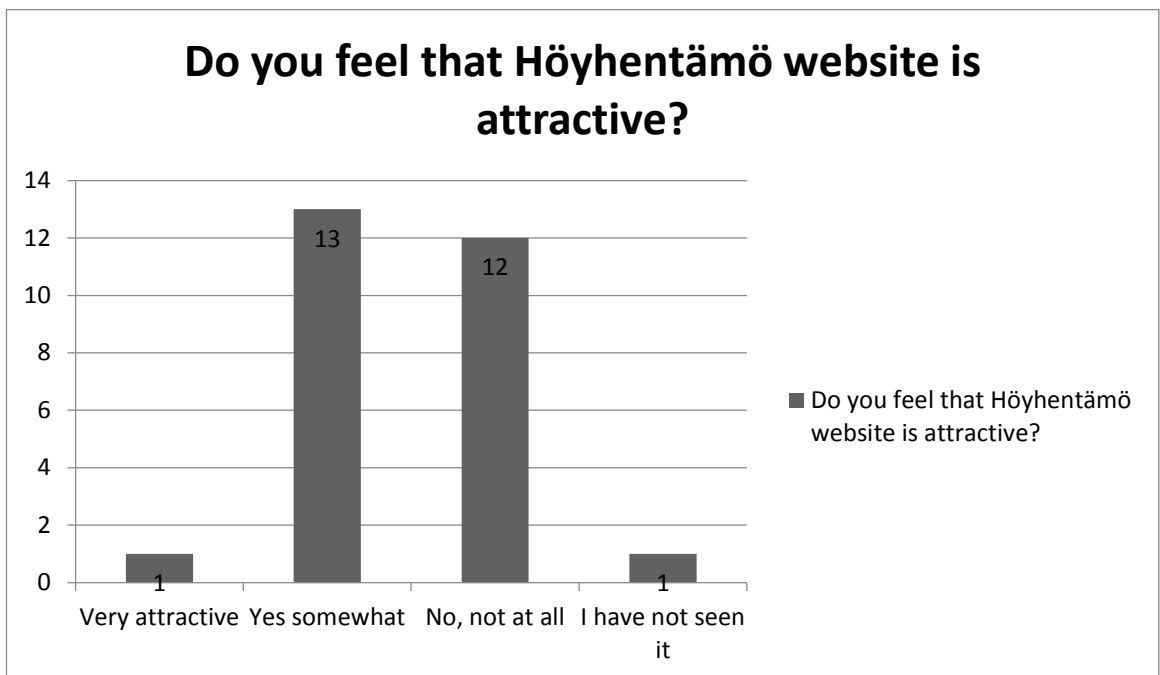


Chart 12 (Question 12: Do you feel that höyhentämö website is attractive?)

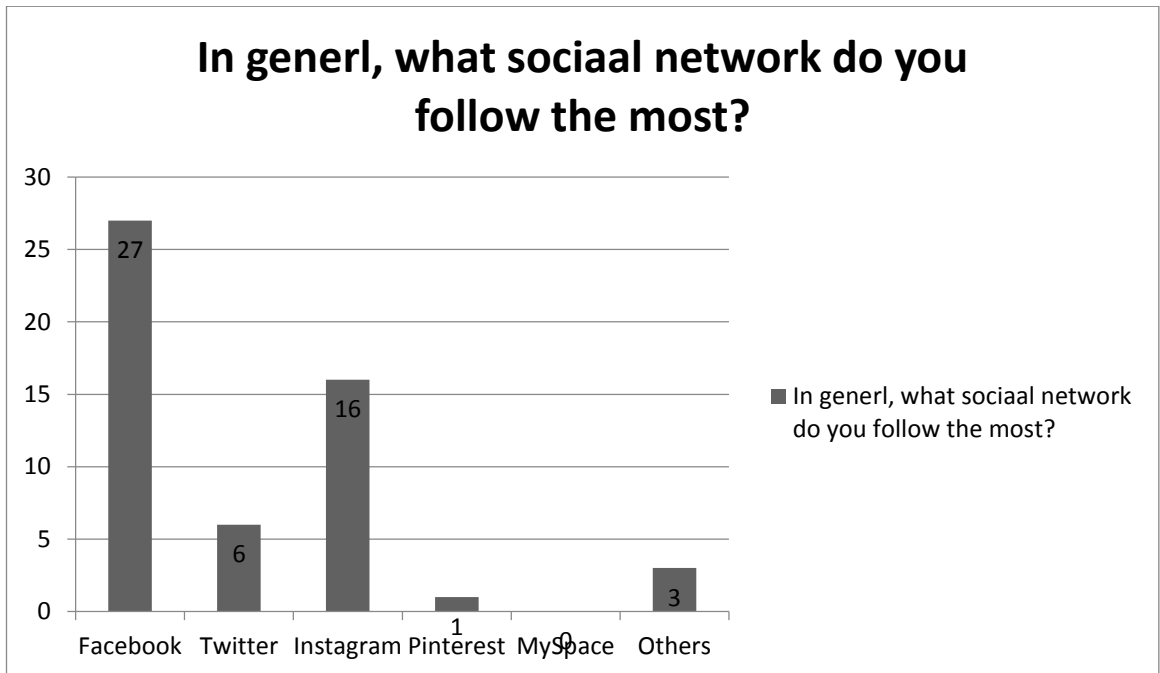


Chart 13 (Question 13: In general, what social network do you follow the most?)

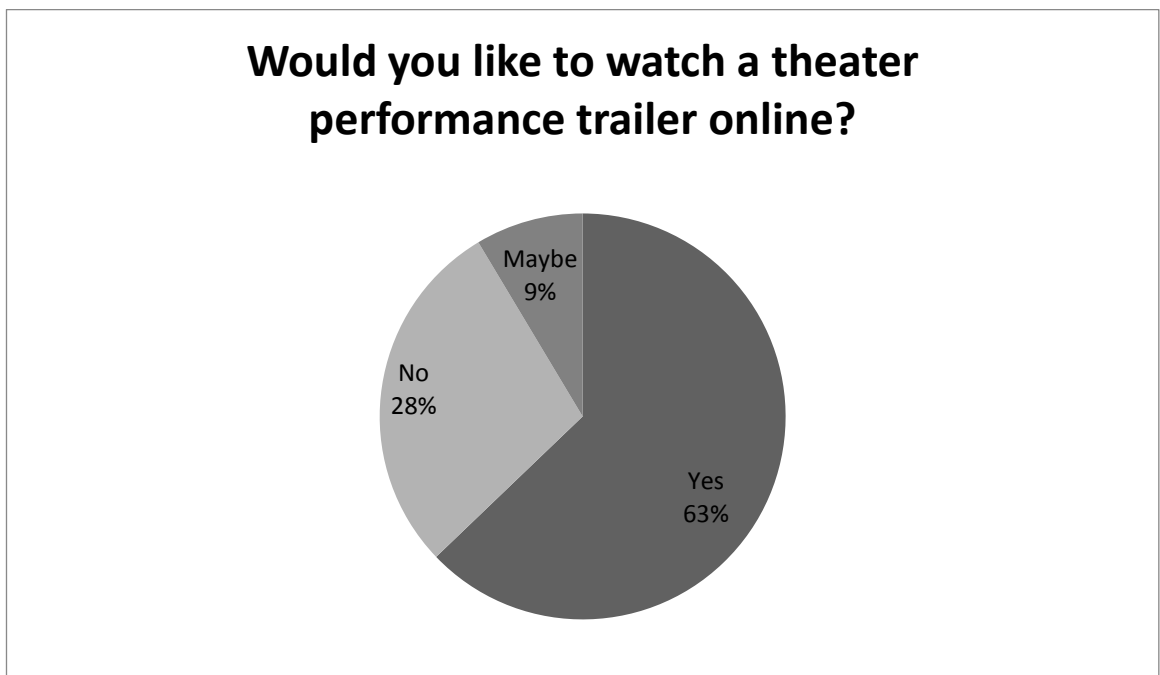


chart 14 (Question 14: Would you like to watch a theatre performance trailer online?)

## Do you read theater magazines?

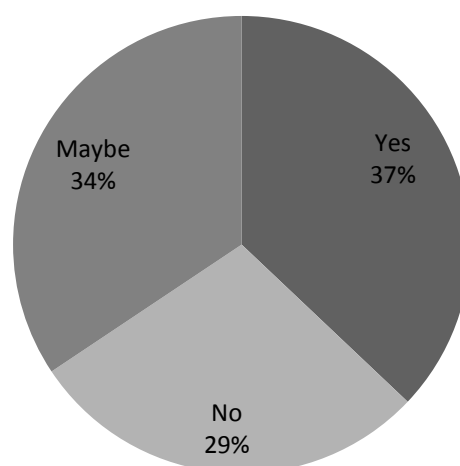


Chart 15 (Question 15: Do you read theatre magazines?)

Table 4. What would be your suggestions to improve the marketing communications of Höyhentämö?

Respondent Age	Answer
17-76	Club events, collaborations, press release, etc.

## Attachment 5. List of figures, pictures and tables

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Picture 1 Business environment of Höyhentämö

Table 1. Marketing Communications (Egan 2014, 7)

Table 2. Main techniques applicable in sales promotions (Wood 2004, 246)

Table 9. Comparison between the current marketing communications tools of höyhentämö and that of their current and potential target groups

Table 10. What would be your suggestions to improve the marketing communications of höyhentämö?