

Customer Journey and Experience in The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017

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<p>This report covers a research of a Customer Journey and Customer Experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017.</p> <p>The key aim of this research is to do a research for the event and analyse their customer journey and customer experience. In that way aim is also to help event organizers with developing events in the future. Specific service points and service touch points along the customer journey are analysed in this research. Commissioner of this research is the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Commissioner will get useful information and feedback from this research for the future event development. Aim of this research is also to find out how successful event was from the customer point of view.</p> <p>Theoretical framework of this research consists of topics Service Design, Customer Journey and Customer Experience. For studying the content, written and online material was used.</p> <p>This research started during the winter 2016-2017. The main event, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, took place in 22.2-5.3.2017. Data collection method for this research is participant observation, and the event was observed by the author during 28.2-1.3.2017.</p> <p>Results from the research were mainly positive. Event organizers showed well customer-oriented event planning. Customer-oriented event planning, good service offering at the event, good way finding and signs, good flow between people, company, sports, wide selection of food, drinks and toilets, and different kind of stands and great sports experiences formed good customer experience.</p> <p>Customer Journey that was planned by the event organizers beforehand was considered to be fluent and well planned. Customer Journey was realistic and suitable for the customer. From the customer point of view the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships - event was successful event.</p>	
Keywords Customer Journey, Customer Experience, Service Design, Observation, Sport event	

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1 Introduction

When attending to an event, from the moment when arriving to the moment when leaving the event, customer will go through customer journey. When attending, customers face different service touch points along their journey. Customers also have different kind of factors that all affect to their experience. For the event organizers, it is useful to know afterwards how well they succeed to create the event and experience for the customers in order for the future development.

The subject of this thesis is the customer experience and journey in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. The commissioner for this project is the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 were held in Lahti, Finland, during 22.2-5.3.2017. As a big international sport event, it attracted many guests from all over the world. As there are no events without customers, it is important to put effort to the customer experience at the events. This report and results will help event organizers of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 to develop events in the future. They will also get to know how well they succeed with Customer Journey and Experience at the event. Feedback from the customer point of view is important for the future development. Also for the event organizers it is important to get to know the outcome of Customer Journey and Experience: how well they managed to plan especially Customer Journey.

During the project customer journey and experience in the event were experienced and analysed. The aim is to help event organizers with developing and improving customer experience in the future events by analysing and describing specific touchpoints along the customer journey. The aim is also to observe how successful event the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was in the customer point of view. Research questions that followed this research are:

1. How was the customer experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017?
2. What aspects formed good customer experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017? What could have been developed?
3. How well-planned Customer Journey in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was for the customer?
4. How successful event the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was from the customer point of view?

The main data for this report is the data collected from the event. Data was collected by observing and attending the event during 28.2-1.3.2017. Observation, particularly participant observation was used as a data collection method. Theoretical framework was created by studying written and online materials related to customer experience, customer journey and service design.

The aim of this project and research is to do research of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 -event and analyse customer experience and journey of the event from the customer point of view. Aim is to help the organizers to get to know the success and feedback of the event from the customer point of view in order to develop events in the future. For the author of this thesis it is also interesting to get to know more about organizing sport events and to know more about customer journey and experience. The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 is also interesting as an event, so as an event management student, author will get lot of useful experience for the future career path from this project.

This research is limited to do a research only from the customer point of view, and this research examines only things that are mentioned. Key point of view is to do research of Customer Journey and Customer Experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, from the customer point of view.

After this introduction, in chapter 2 the commissioner of this research is presented. Information, background and key elements of the event are presented in chapter 2 as well. Chapter 3 consists of theoretical framework, that is divided into three parts: Service Design, Customer Journey and Customer Experience. Theoretical framework is created by studying written as well as online materials related to the topics mentioned. In chapter 4 participant observation as a data collection method is presented and also motivated. Chapter 5 presents the results of this research: first Customer Journey of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 is analysed and then the main pieces that affected to the Customer Experience the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Results are presented along with the pictures. Discussion, references and appendices are available at the end of this report. In discussion part answers for the research questions will be presented.

2 Commissioner: The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017

Commissioner for this project and thesis is the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Since 1985 the Championships have taken place in every two years. In 2017, the event was held in Lahti, Finland, during 22.2-5.3.2017. Events in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships always include Nordic skiing's three genres: cross-country skiing, Nordic combined and ski jumping.

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships brings athletes, fans, coaches, teams, sponsors and many more people together. In 2017, athletes came from in total 61 countries to compete in cross-country skiing, Nordic combined and ski jumping. (Lahti2017.)

Customer-oriented event planning is crucial, as it is important to get good feedback to develop events further. According to Jesse Kiuru, who was event director for the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, customer-oriented event planning was extremely important when planning the event. Customer-oriented event planning was taken into account all the time in the planning process. (Kiuru, 2017.)

Event organizers of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 made "service promise" before the event. According to Jesse Kiuru that means that they wanted to organize an event where everyone enjoys their selves. That was their value and also aim: to create event where everyone are comfortable, enjoy, and have a good time. (Kiuru, 2017.)

The Customer Journey was planned for the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships beforehand. Kiuru said, that for the event they made 8 different target groups and planned services by considering those target groups. Target groups were: cross country skiing activists, sports fanatics, sports fans, adults who are there to have fun, seniors, young people, young adults and families. Services and products for the event were planned for those target groups. As the aim was to create event where everyone enjoys, they had several target groups in order to take into an account several kind of people using the service. (Kiuru, 2017.)

3 Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses theoretical framework of this report. Concepts called Service Design, Customer Journey and Customer Experience are in an important role when creating and improving services and successful events. Theoretical Framework of this thesis consists of Service Design, Customer Journey and Customer Experience, that are all part of services and events as well. As services and events can not be successful without satisfied customers, nowadays it is important to create customer-oriented services. Service Design, Customer Journey and Customer Experience are used when creating, improving and making successful events and services by keeping customers and their needs and expectations in mind.

3.1 Service Design

There are no services and events without customers. Therefore, when creating services, it is important to put customers first. Quoting Steve Jobs, "You can not ask from your customers what do they want and then try to give it to them. By then, when you have the product on the market, people already want something else." Successful services know their customer's needs and expectations and in that way create success. Recently method called Service Design has gained more use when developing and improving services. Instead of having clear definition, service design is described to be a general way of thinking, philosophy, a process and a tool selection that is used to develop successful services. Service Design brings customer point of view in the centre of developing services, as Satu Miettinen states in her book *Palvelumuotoilu*. Service Design creates and develops good customer experiences and strong business by keeping in mind the needs of customer and provider of the service. (Palvelumuotoilun työkalupakki; Tuulaniemi 2011, 60.)

Good customer experiences based on the customers wishes and needs are made with the help of service design. The base and key concept with Service Design is to understand customer's needs and expectations in order to create successful services. By providing services that are based on what customer's need and want, as a result successful services and good customer experiences are made, as well as successful organizations. In addition, understanding customers and what they experience when using the services helps organizations and business to build better interactions between the organization and customers. (Miettinen 2011, 30&55.)

Customer understanding is crucial, and a key element in Service Design. It means that service providers and organizations have to understand the reality where their customers live, operate and act. Customers' real motives, expectations, needs, and also the values that customers' choices are based on, are crucial to know. Organizations can take advantage of customer understanding by creating new service concepts and design services and customer experiences that stand out from others. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 71.)

By using Service Design, the aim is to ensure that services that are offered are useful, usable and wanted in the customer point of view. It is also crucial that services offered stand out and are effective in the provider point of view in order to develop and create strong organizations and business. Juha Tuulaniemi states that Service Design is crucial for those organizations and people who are interested in service innovation, producing special experiences and taking care of the interaction between the brand and the customers. (Miettinen 2011, 55; Tuulaniemi 2011, 61.)

According to Satu Miettinen, the process and tools of Service Design emphasize strong communication skills, empathy towards customers, as well as creativity and visual way of thinking. Miettinen also presents an example of Service Design process, that is made by Engine-Service Design office. Presented Service Design process has three steps. In the first step it is important to understand environment of the service, understanding the customer and business as well. It is crucial to understand what customer needs. In the first step also design solution for the service is identified. In the second step design solution is identified and created. In third step design solution is evaluated. (Miettinen 2011, 32.)

In Design Thinking (Lockwood, 2009), Roberto M. Saco and Alexis P. Goncalves state, that in this world full of services, it is important to identify the language and artifacts of the world of service. They suggest that people may have to create totally new "language of service". It means that people have to invent and develop new ways to create and provide services, as the world is changing and there are constantly brand new services available. They describe Service Design as a practical method and approach what many companies, such as Ritz-Carlton and Herman Miller, have used in order to deliver more branded customer experience. Saco and Goncalves state Service Design to be a human-centred approach that has a focus mainly on customer experience, as it is extremely crucial and important to create good and unforgettable customer experiences. The key value for success is considered to be the quality of service. But, on the other hand, they also state Service Design to be "a holistic approach that considers in an integrated way strategic, system, process, and touchpoint design decisions." All in all, in Service Design it is all about delivering services that are useful, efficient and effective. (Lockwood 2009, 159.)

3.2 Customer Journey

Service Design is based on customer-oriented designing. Customers and users of the service are in the center of when designing services. Therefore, it is extremely important to understand how customers are using the service and how the service that is used is experienced. Customer Journey makes it possible to see the service through customers eyes. (Miettinen 2011, 49.)

Customer journey describes what customer observes during the time period that the service is used, and how customer experiences the service. According to Juha Tuulaniemi from his book *Palvelumuotoilu*, service is a process, and using a service means experience is consumed, used and experienced in a certain time axis. To create customer-oriented services it is important to know what customers experience in that time axis, and how customers experience the journey. As stated before, empathy is crucial in order to really understand what customers are experiencing. (Miettinen 2011, 55; Tuulaniemi 2011, 78.)

Customer Journey pays attention and makes sure that customer's needs, choices and behaviour are in crucial role in order to have customer-oriented services. Customer Journey is a description of whole service concept. Customer Journey that customer experiences is usually described step by step by dividing it into different kind of sections and points in order to analyse it well.

There are several ways to divide the Customer Journey into sections. For example, Tuulaniemi describes how Customer Journey can be divided into three sections: pre-service, main service and post service. Customer Journey is divided into those three specific steps from the perspective of the value that is formed for the customer by using the service. Pre-service takes place before the actual, main use of the service. In pre-service customer, for example has being in a contact with the company by phone or email, booked the tickets or reserved time for the service. Pre-service does not give the actual value for the customer, but it prepares customer for what is coming when actually using the service. Pre-service prepares the value what customer is going to get from the whole service. Main service is the actual use of the service or, for example, attending the event. In the main service customer gets the actual value of the service. Post service consists of the customer's contacts to the service provider after the service use or attending the event. These can be for example customer feedbacks.

Every service is made up of main steps and key encounters where service production and interaction between the customer and service provider happens. These key steps and encounters are called service points. Service points are points of customer contact, before, during or after the usage of the service. Service points can be for example buying the ticket, doing check-in for the flight and so on. (Miettinen 2011, 49; Tuulaniemi 2011, 79.)

One service point is only one individual part of the service experienced by the customer. Service is time progressing process which consists several steps that follow each other. These service points frame Customer Journey. Customer Journey is made up of these several service points where customer is in interaction with the service –before, during or after the usage of the service. Picture 1 (page 10) presents and demonstrates how several service points frame the customer journey. (Miettinen 2011, 49.)

Every service point is made of several service touch points. Through touch points, customer experiences, feels and sees the service and the brand. With touch points, customer is in contact with the service with all their senses. Service touch points can be noticed with all senses (hearing, taste, smell, eyesight and touch), and touch points are divided into four different groups: people, environments, objects and behaviours. (Miettinen 2011, 51; Tuulaniemi 2011, 80.)

People who use the service (customers) and people who provide services are part of service touch points. People have extremely important role in services. Interaction between the customers and customer service staff affects a lot to the customer experience. When planning the service it is important to plan suitable roles for customer service staff: for example, can they approach customers in a relaxed way, or is formal approach needed? How customer service staff should be dressed up? For those questions, answers depend on the service. It is crucial to hire people who are suitable for the service. (Miettinen 2011, 51; Tuulaniemi 2011, 80.)

Environments are places and areas where the service provided for the customer happens. Environments can be physical (for example airplane or stadium), digital (for example internet) or immaterial (mobile service). Most services use multiple environments at the same time: service can be provided by using many environments and medias at the same time. Environments have extremely huge impact on service success. For example in physical environments, for example in venues, stadiums and airplanes, many different kind of service touch points are affecting to the customers experience: smell, lights, noises, customer service, food offering and so on. (Miettinen 2011, 51; Tuulaniemi 2011, 81.)

Objects as service touch points are goods and equipment's that customer uses and needs. They can also be objects that customer service staff uses and that affects to the customer, for example food serving carts on an airplane. Other objects as service touch points on a flight can be for example food offered on a flight, customer loyalty card, safety instructions, magazine and ticket. (Miettinen 2011, 52; Tuulaniemi 2011, 82.)

Behaviours are specific and beforehand decided behaviours and ways to provide the service. Behaviours of customer service staff that are part of the service are operating models, and can be seen as service touch points. Processes and routines of services can be detailed and planned extremely well beforehand. (Miettinen 2011, 52; Tuulaniemi 2011, 82.)

When planning specific service point along the customer journey, it is important to think what service touchpoints are important for the customers and what service touch points bring a lot of value for the customer with little expenses. It is crucial to offer needed service touch points for the customer in order to provide customers what they need and expect. (Miettinen 2011, 53.)

3.3 Customer Experience

In customer-oriented services, customer's experience is essential. Customer experience covers the entire supply of the service provider: advertisement and other contacts before the usage of service, quality of customer service, service features, and reliability and ease of use. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 74.)

Juha Tuulaniemi presents, that customer experience can be divided into three levels: action, emotions and meanings. Level of action tells how well service meets customer's needs, how easy it is to reach the service and how smoothly it can be used. Action also means how diverse and effective the service is. Tuulaniemi underlines that in this level it is crucial to meet the demands in order to keep the services on the market. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 74.)

The Level of emotion means immediate and personal experiences and that customers get when using the service. That can be measured for example by thinking how pleasant, easy, interesting and appealing the experience was of the service. The highest level of customer experience is level of meaning. It means what kind of dreams, hopes, stories, observations, cultural aspects and meanings customers have related to the experience,

and how personal the experience is, as well as if the experience is somehow related to the lifestyle and own identity of the customer. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 74.)

By combining these three levels; action, emotions and meaning, customer experience is formed, according to Juha Tuulaniemi. Good customer experiences are made by responding well to customer's expectations and needs on an emotional level, and making sure that the service is effective and easy and pleasant to use, and also offering meaningful experiences. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 74.)

4 Participant observation as a Data Collection Method

This chapter describes research approach, data collection method and reliability of the study of this research.

4.1 Research approach

This research is qualitative research. Qualitative research is useful when the aim is to find out how people think or feel. In qualitative research, information collected is not in numerical form, for example unstructured observations and interviews, as well as open-ended questionnaires. Data collected in qualitative research is called qualitative data and it is often hard to analyse as it is usually descriptive data. (Qualitative vs. Quantitative, 2017.)

The main methods that are used in qualitative research are for example different kind of observation methods (such as direct observation and participant observation), case studies and unstructured interviews. In this project, observation, particularly participant observation, was used as a data collection method. (Qualitative Methods, 2006.)

Participant observation as a data collection method has its own strengths and limitations. In participant observation, the researcher participates and takes part in outgoing event and activities and record observations. By participating the researcher is able to get an “insider” viewpoint and information of the chosen study topic, and as the researcher participates in the action, the information and study process may be extremely rewarding. This “insider” kind of viewpoint can be seen as a richness in data collection part, and it is huge strength. Limitation of participant observation is that it really depends on the experience of the participant observer. (Participant Observation)

4.2 Data Collection at the event

The event was participated during the days 28.2-1.3.2017. The event was participated as a visitor/customer. The data was collected from a customer point of view with observation forms (Appendices 1-3) that were created beforehand. Forms were created during winter 2017 and the forms were checked by thesis coordinator Monika Birkle. Three different observation forms (see appendices 1-3) were create in order to collect data as well as possible. Forms were used as data collection tools. Observed data was recorded by writing and photographing.

As by attending event and observing was thought to be good way to do research of the event, it was chosen to be the data collection method for this research. It could have been quite unreliable to do research of the event without attending it, and as the topic is customer experience and customer journey, it felt important to attend the event.

4.3 Reliability of the study

Objectivity in the research is crucial. Objectivity is same as personal neutrality. It means, that researcher allows the facts to speak for themselves, and deduces results and conclusions from the facts. It is crucial that the researcher does not let own personal opinions and values affect to the research. It is also important that researcher's previous experiences do not affect. (Macionis 2009, 20.) In this research, results and conclusions were made by the facts. Data collected and information observed were gathered by participant observation. So, results and conclusions in this research are made by the facts observed in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships -event.

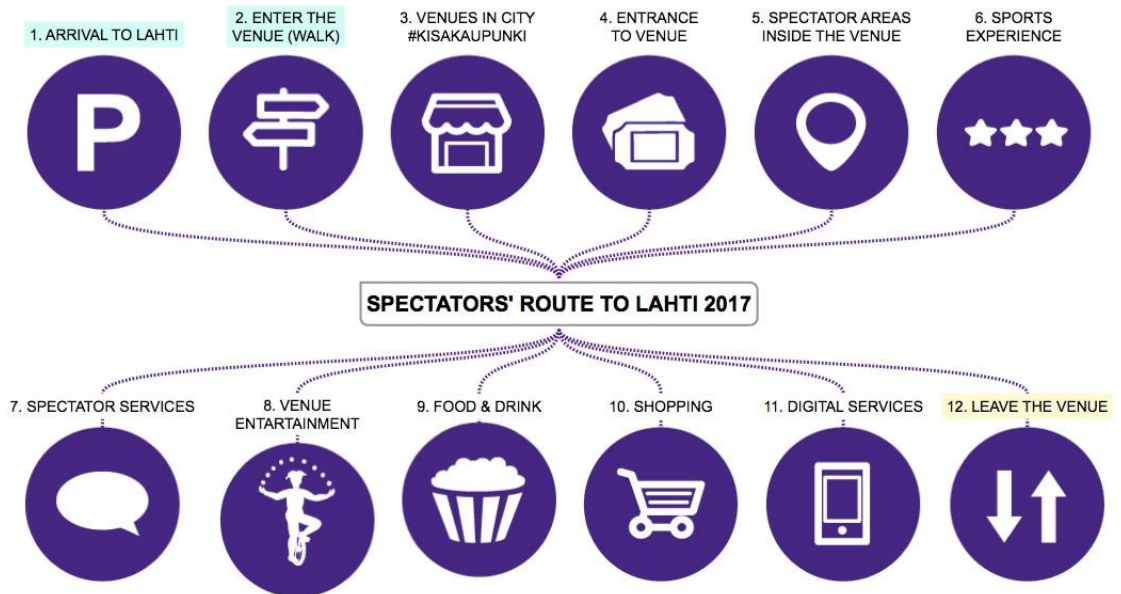
Subjectivity in research is different than objectivity. In subjectivity researcher's own personal opinions, beliefs and even personal character affects to the research. In this research, subjectivity was not affecting to the research, but in this research results and conclusions were made from the author's customer experience . Event was observed by the author. It is crucial to remember, that different people may have different experiences and opinions. (Subjective vs. Objective.)

In this research, trustworthy and updated sources were used. Also, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 -event that was under the study, was observed and participated by the author herself. These add reliability to the study and research, as the results and conclusions are made from the data and information that were collected and observed by the author herself.

5 Results

In this chapter the results and observed data will be presented along with the pictures taken from the event. All of the pictures are taken by the writer of this thesis, Johanna Pelttari, if not mentioned otherwise. Pictures are taken during 28.2-1.3.2017.

5.1 Customer Journey in the Nordic World Ski Championships 2017



Picture 1: Customer Journey in the Nordic World Ski Championships 2017

Picture of Customer Journey in the Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was created by the event organization beforehand (Picture1). Different service points, in total 12, are presented in the picture below. Customer Journey describes the spectator's route in Lahti from the moment when arriving to the city and the venue, participating the event, to the moment of leaving the venue. Results from analysing and observing the Customer Journey will be presented in the following subchapters.

5.1.1 Arrival to Lahti & Enter the Venue (walk)

Arrival from Helsinki to Lahti was easy with the public transport. Due to traffic, it was highly recommended by the event organization to use public transport in order to arrive early enough to Lahti. Extra services to bus and train timetables were added, so it was easy to choose pleasant time when to travel.



Picture 2: Welcome to Lahti.

When arriving to Lahti, customer was greeted by welcome -sign (Picture 1). This sign was located in the railway and bus station. It was easy to notice that there was big event going on in the city as there were adds, signs and logos related to the event shown in the area. There was no feeling of being lost. This gave good first impression of the event.





Picture 3&4: On the way to the venue.

Signs and logos guided customer directly to the venue (Picture 3 and 4). Signs and guides began from the railway and bus station, so straight after arriving to Lahti, it was easy to find the venue. Walk to the venue was easy with the help of them. Venue was close to the bus and train stations that made it easy to approach the venue after arriving to Lahti. Walk to the venue was extremely easy with the help of signs and logos that appeared often enough and guided customer/visitor directly and easily to the venue. Signs were helpful, and it was impossible to be lost in the city. These signs and logos that guided customer directly to the venue increased the good first impression of the event: as coming to the city for the very first time ever, and not really knowing where to go, it was extremely helpful to see the signs and follow them. Walk to the venue from the railway and bus station was a bit over 1 kilometre, so signs and guides were needed.

5.1.2 Entrance to the venue

Entrance to the venue was easy to approach with the signs, and it was easy recognise and see. Next to the entrance there was booths where to buy tickets, and also ticket prices were clearly visible. It was clear and easy to spot that where to buy tickets if needed and where to enter to the venue. Entrance to the venue was lightened, so it was easy to spot at the evening too. There were no confusion that where to enter and what to do, as the entrance was so visible and big.



Picture 5: Entrance of the venue.

Entrance to the venue was clear, easy to recognise and it stood out, as presented in the picture 5. Lights helped customer find a way in the dark too. Also customer service was really nice and polite. The base of good customer experience is to provide good customer service from the very beginning of the event, and good customer service at the gate gave good first impression.



Picture 6: Find your way.

After the main entrance, gate with “Find your way” -signs helped customer move around in the area, like can be seen in the picture 6. Signs were extremely well done in the area, it was easy for the customer to find a way. Part of customer-oriented service design is to create services that are easily available. It is important to make sure that customers know where they are going, and if they do not know, they can ask from somebody. Setting up signs and guides is simple thing and makes customer’s experience much better when they know where they have to go and where is what.



Pictures 7&8: Tickets

Before the main entrance it was easy to see where to buy or collect tickets if needed (Pictures 7&8). Prices, map and other information were easily seen and available to the customers. There were not many people around in the ticket booths, as many people had bought tickets earlier, so queueing seemed pretty fast.

5.1.3 Venues in the city #Kisakaupunki

City of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, Lahti, offered a lot for the tourists during the event. There were a lot of smaller events, restaurants were open and there were special offers, and bars were full of people. In this case venues and other happenings in Lahti were not really needed as the whole day was spent at the venue watching sports. But for those who wanted to get to know Lahti city as well and party, Lahti offered a lot.

5.1.4 Spectator areas inside the venue

Venue offered many different kind of areas and spots where to watch competitions and where to spend time. In addition to the stadium area stands, other different kind of stands were built with different kind of themes. For example, it was possible to walk to the forest and watch competitions there. There were maps and marked paths in the forest. In addition, "Röllli Winterland" –stand offered funny atmosphere, activities, big screen and many good spots next to the ski trail where to cheer and follow up the competition. "Mielensäpahoittajan Metsäkatsomo" was designed with an old-fashioned skiing ambiance, and was located in the forest as well. Also, traditional stadium stands offered good and spacious spots for people to watch the best parts of the competition near the finishing line. Many different kind of options offered something for everyone, and it was fun to change the place if the tickets were bought for several days.



Pictures 9&10: Different kind of stands for cheering.

There were several options of stands where to watch competitions. Some of the stands are presented in pictures 9 and 10. It was easy to see from the back line too as the stands were often with platforms with different levels. It was crucial that possibility to see competition areas well was good.



Pictures 11&12: Themed stands

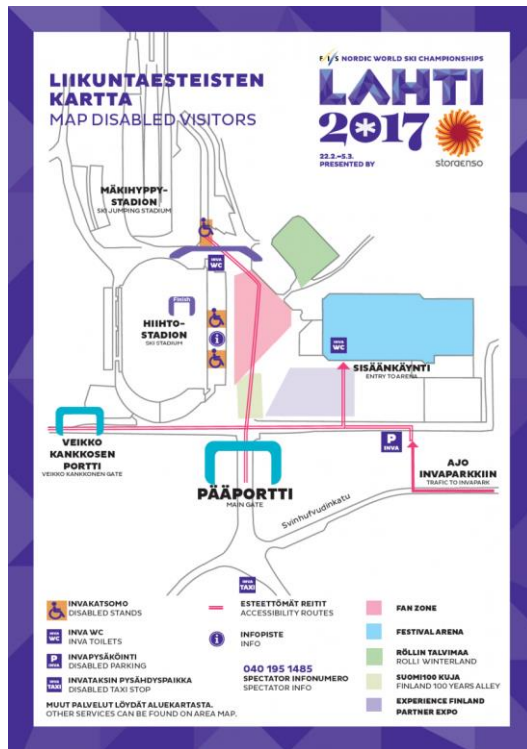
Some stands had theme. These pictures 11 and 12 are from "Röllli Winterland" -stand and it offered activities for children, character Röllli wandering around, good location by the forest to watch competitions, big screen, kiosk, and fireplace.



Picture 13: Map of the stand areas.

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 offered many kind of stands and areas where to cheer and watch the competition. Effort was seen from the arrangements, and arrangements were suitable for the customer's needs: lot of options where to choose from (Picture 13). When attending sport events, customers might often expect good arrangements and spots, and good possibility to see every moment of the competition. These expectations were extremely well fulfilled with spacious and good stands and big screens in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017.

Source of the picture: <http://www.lahti2017.fi/kartat#Katsomokartta>



Picture 14: Map for disabled visitors.

Noticeable was also that the area and venue was well planned for disabled visitors (Picture 14). There were also special stands only for disabled visitors. When planning events it is extremely important to take disabled visitors into an account, so that everyone has possibility to attend the event. Inva toilets, disabled parking area, disabled taxi stop and accessibility routes made sure that disabled's visitors needs were noticed. Source of the picture: <http://www.lahti2017.fi/kartat#Liikuntaesteistenkartta>

What was highly expected before attending the event, was easy movement inside the venue, and that expectation was fulfilled: guides, signs and customer service staff helped with moving around and finding right place. Spectator areas at the venue were clearly marked. Spectator areas were also extremely comfortable and nicely decorated with sport-themed decorations.

5.1.5 Sports Experience

From this event, Sports Experience was the most important experience. It was the main reason why most of the people came to the event: to watch sports. It is important to note that this experience is individual for everyone: everyone has their own favourite teams and athletes, so people will feel the competition and results in a different way. It affects to the experience in a positive way if favourite athlete wins.

When watching the competition, excitement starts even before the start. Everyone cheer their own athletes, and many are guessing that who will win. Drama, incidents and the sequence of the events during the competition rise the excitement and bring emotions. It is exciting to see the competition till the very end in order to see the winner, silver medallist and bronze medallist, and other results. The results do not satisfy everyone, but that is what sports are about.



Picture 15: Winners at the podium.

Three best women getting their flowers in a ceremony after 10km race (Picture15). Norway, who has dominated women cross-country skiing a lot, got gold and bronze medal, and Sweden silver medal. As a fan of Norway and the winner (Marit Bjoergen), for me the results were pleasant. Pleasant and happy results made it worth to come to the venue to watch the event.

Event organizers can not guarantee happy results from the sports experience to every customer, but what they can do, is to offer good spots and possibilities where to watch competitions smoothly and pleasantly. In Lahti, big screens and very well planned stands and spots for the customers ensured good experiences when watching sports.

LAHTI 2017 MEN 15.0 KM INDIVIDUAL STANDING AT FINISH			
1	64	NISKANEN Iivo	FIN 36:44.0
2	70	SUNDBY Martin Johnsrud	NOR +17.9
3	66	DYRHAUG Niklas	NOR +31.3
4	60	BESSMERTNYKH Alexander	RUS +41.8
5	42	TOENSETH Didrik	NOR +53.2
5	46	LARKOV Andrey	RUS +53.2
7	29	POLTORANIN Alexey	KAZ +1:06.3
8	38	JAUHOJAERVI Sami	FIN +1:09.7
9	52	OLSSON	SWE +1:10.6



Picture 16&17: World Champion

Finnish athlete Iivo Niskanen won gold medal in men 15km classical (Picture 16 & 17). As FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 were held in Finland, it was a big thing that Finnish athlete won a gold medal. Huge part of audience were Finnish, supporting “their” boy. It was emotional and nice to see it, gold medal for Finland in Finland. Especially that experience made memories to remember and something to talk about for a long time.

5.1.6 Spectator Services

Sports Experience are big part of the event, but that is not the only part of it. It is important to think what kind of customers event have and what do they need. To make sure that customer's experience of the event is as good as possible, it is important to know your customers and offer them services that they are expecting and needing. Offering customer-oriented services is crucial nowadays in order to create successful services and good customer experiences. As events attract lot of people and the venues are big, it is crucial to prepare for that something can always happen. Extremely important is to offer customer service at the venue, so that customers can ask if they are lost or need help. With big amount of people, it is also crucial to have customer service there to guide people to the right place without causing rush or jams.

In the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, it was easy to see that organizers had thought customers when planning the event and its services. There were massive amount of volunteers working at the event, and part of those were part of "Spectator Services" group who were at the venue to help customers and guiding them to the right place. In addition to that, there were few info points at the venue, where were maps and customer service available.

Customer service at the event was mainly good. It was nice to see so many customer service staff and info points available and to know that there were those available who can help if needed. At some points, when help, instructions or advice was being asked, answer was: "I don't know." Also, at some point the service was not the nicest service experienced and there were also moments where staff would have at least show a little smile instead of showing uninterested attitude. Luckily those moments were rare, and all in all the customer service was good. But it is important to remember that sometimes bad interactions with people stay in mind better than good ones.



Picture 18: Info point in action.

When organizing the event, it is crucial to prepare for that everything does not go always as planned. For the customer, it is important to have info points available in order to ask help when needed. Info points and staff around the venue helped and guided customer throughout the event in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Info points (Picture 18) at the venue helped customers in a various problems.

There were also other kind of services available for the customers. Disabled visitors were taken into account with special stands for them and accessibility routes. Also families were thought. For example, for the children there were character called "Röllli" wandering around the area and greeting children. Also, different kind of actions and games were organized for the children. Families with very small children were also kept in mind by having baby buggy parking area, area for the children indoors where they could play and also spacious toilets.

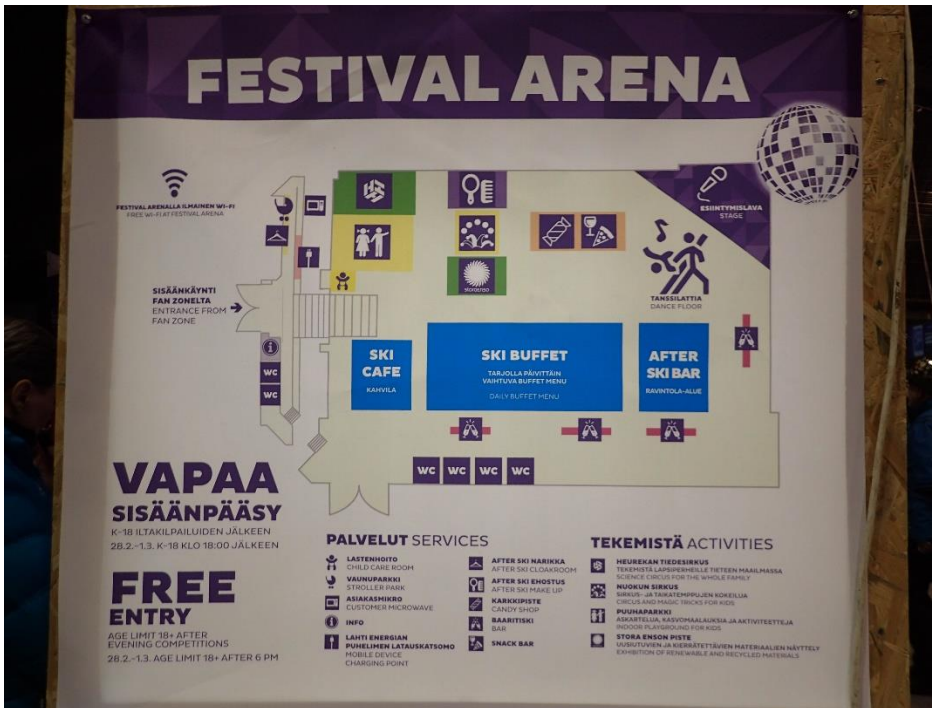


Picture 19: Rölli sitting around the campfire with the children and other customers.

5.1.7 Venue Entertainment

In sport events, in addition to sports other kind of entertainment is good to provide in the area, especially if the sports do not last all day. If there is other entertainment available in the venue, customers stay longer.

In the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 there were lot of venue entertainment and other things to see and wonder. For example, indoors there were massive festival arena where it was possible not only have lunch and drinks, but also enjoy live music and dancing. There was big stage with different kind of singers and lot of space for people to dance or watch the concerts. There were also options for children to play. After long day watching sports and after eating, not much of other entertainment were needed for us, but we still enjoyed the atmosphere and wandered around the area.



Pictures 20&21: Festival arena was full of activity and entertainment.

There were several spots to rest, sit down, eat and have a snack or coffee. For the adults, there was after ski bar arranged, and singers on stage made sure that the place was full of music, like presented in the pictures 20 and 21. It was extremely well organized that there were entertainment for people for all ages, and that festival arena was indoors, so that weather could not ruin it.

5.1.8 Food & Drink

When providing customer-oriented services it is important to provide food and drinks at the venue for the customer. By offering food and drinks at the venue, not only it is easier for the customers but it also makes them stay longer, and that is always good thing for the event organizers if the customers enjoy their selves and wants to stay longer. Especially in all day long events it is crucial to offer possibilities to eat, and possibilities to eat are also what customers are expecting to have at the venue.

In the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 there were several options and spots where to eat, all around the venue. Like can be seen from the map below, there were something for everyone: smaller cafes with special sweets, treats, coffee and other drinks, several places where to get barbeque sausages, fast food, bar, stalls with snacks and other stuff, big lunch area indoors with buffet and so on.



Picture 22: Map of Food Selection

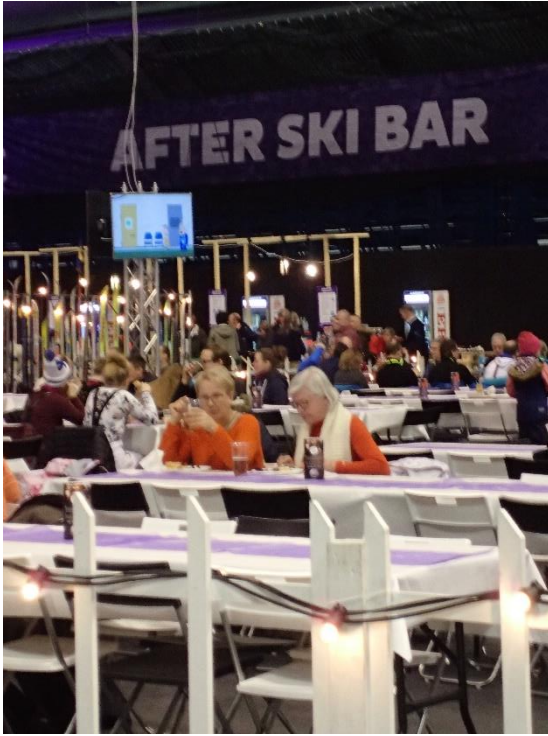
Food selection offered something for everyone. Picture 22 presents the map of food selection in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Source of the picture:

<http://www.lahti2017.fi/kartat#Aluekartta>



Pictures 23&24: Food areas inside

What made customer experience better in my case, was the possibility to eat warm food indoors (Pictures 23&24). In the festival arena there were huge lunch buffet with several tables and chairs organized. It was well organized since the lines were not too long and also space was enough. Several food options are important and possibility to eat indoors is great, in case the weather is not so good. Lunch buffet area was located in the festival arena, same area than the stage. It was okay, but the music was very loud, and several comments were heard that “The music is too loud”, when people wanted to have conversation. Some people actually stayed there after eating to have a conversation with other people and to get to know new people, so loud music caused problems.



Picture 25: Going to after ski after ski
After Ski Bar at the venue offered alcoholic drinks for the adults and made sure that nobody left thirsty. Bar was located next to stage where several singers performed, which was good for those who were there to party. After Ski Bar is presented in the picture 25.





Picture 26&27: Food options.

Venue offered possibilities to buy barbeque sausages, but also to do it on your own (Pictures 26 & 27). Different kind of kiosks and stalls at the venue offered something for everyone. There were lot of possibilities both indoors and outdoors.

5.1.9 Shopping

Events always have possibility to do merchandise related to event and sell it at the event. It is good way to earn money, for customers to support the event, and for event organizers to get publicity when customers are for example wearing hats and clothes with their logo.



Picture 23: Lahti Merchandise

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships had produced different kind of merchandise for the customers to buy (Picture 23). There were for example lot of winter clothes with their logo and sign, and those were available to buy at the venue. Lot of people actually were seen to buy those, and there were usually lot of people around to buy them. In the Lahti city event merchandise was seen a lot around by people using it a lot.

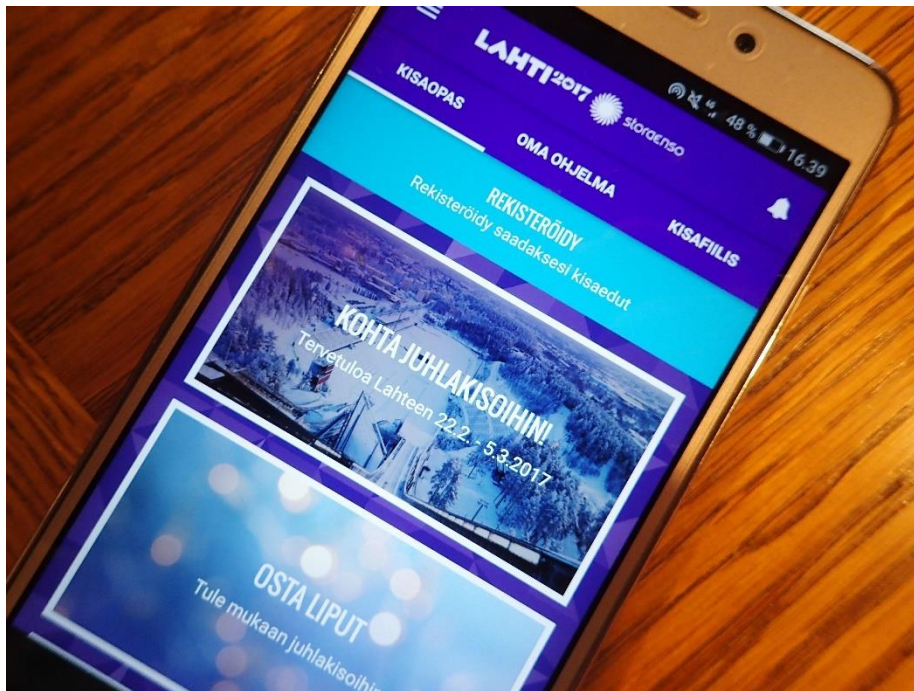


Picture 24: Shopping at the venue.

One happy surprise was that there was official shop of Intersport at the venue, like can be seen in the picture 24. Actual possibility of shopping at the venue was not in the mind before attending the event, but a surprise was, that there was Intersport's official shop. Related to the theme of the event (sports), it was good idea from event organizers to arrange Intersport shop there for the customers -and that is something what customer-oriented services should offer: event related services that customers might need and expect. Shop was popular: it was busy all the time, as many people were there to buy sport clothes and equipment.

5.1.10 Digital Services

For the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, a mobile app was created. It was strongly recommended from the organizers to download it beforehand. In the app there were daily schedules, food options and maps available. It was also possible to organize personal daily timetable based on interests and whether the customer is attending the event with a family, as a sports fan and so on. The app was free, and it helped customers to get most out of the event.



Picture 25: Mobile app for the customers.

What showed customer-oriented event planning from the event organizers, was their offer of a mobile app for the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Mobile app helped customers to get the most out of the event.

5.1.11 Leaving the Venue

Good things always come to an end. Leaving the venue arranged smoothly and without panic, as everyone left the venue tranquilly and signs and guides helped customers to find their way back. Thank you –sign at the railway station thanked customers and then journey back to Helsinki began.

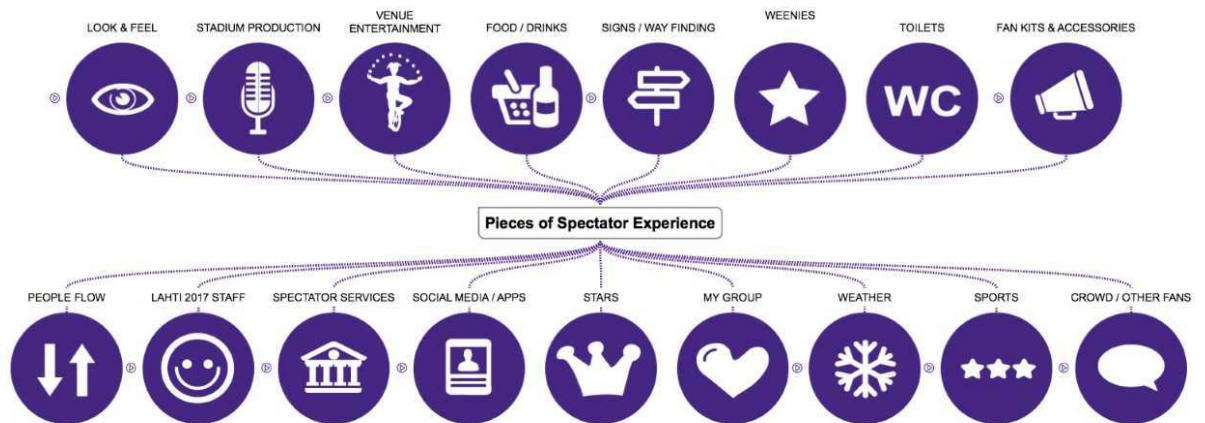


Picture 26: Thank You.

Sign thanking customers when leaving.

5.2 Pieces of Customer Experience in the Nordic World Ski Championships 2017

In this chapter Customer Experience in the Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 will be discussed and analysed. There are many kind of things that affect to the customer experience, but in this chapter, the most impressive things will be analysed, things that affected the most to the experience. Picture below (Picture 27), that was created by the organization beforehand, presents pieces that affect and are part of customer's experience.



Picture 27: Pieces of Spectator Experience

Customers value different kind of things in a different way. For example, some may think weather is extremely important, and some are ready to stay outside whatever kind weather it is. In this chapter, only pieces of customer's experience that were valued most and that were most impressive in my case are analysed: Signs, people flow, Lahti 2017 Staff, App, Stars, My Group, Sports, toilets, food & drink and Other Fans. These were the things that stood out the most and mattered the most in this case.

5.2.1 People Flow & Other Fans

What is clearly the most remarkable thing to bring up, is the people flow in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Atmosphere, ambience and spirit between people there were extremely good. People were open minded to get to know new people, cheered athletes over the boundaries, cheered athletes who were not so good and who were good and people also showed polite and respectful manners towards each other. People had dressed up wearing their countries colours and showed what they were supporting, but also people were respecting others and other countries. Many comments were heard about the great atmosphere. Great atmosphere is something that stays in the mind in a positive way and something that leaves warm memories of the event. Great atmosphere is also something that makes customer experience much better and unforgettable.



Picture 28: Flow between Norway and Italy.

Norwegian fans having fun with an Italian fan. What was positive to see, was that even though people supported their own favourites, they still respected and cheered for others too. People seemed to have fun and there was good flow at the venue.





Pictures 29&30: Crowd

The FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 brought people from tens of different countries during the event. Atmosphere and flow was extremely good, and as other people, fans and overall atmosphere left a warm feeling, it made customer experience better. To have successful customer experience it is important to feel good at the event and have positive feeling of other people.

5.2.2 Lahti 2017 Staff

As people are part of service touch points that affect to the customer experience, it is important to provide excellent customer service. Mainly customer service was good. But in some cases customer service staff showed uninterested attitude and did not really know how to help. Those cases affects to the customer experience in a negative way, but luckily mostly customer service was good. It is important to note that there were massive amount of customer service staff available, which was extremely good thing.

5.2.3 Signs/Way Finding

What is usually expected when attending any kind of event is that customers do not want to get lost and they want clear instructions how they can find what they want. Sometimes bad instructions and defective guidance can cause extra harm and problems and even ruin someone's experience of the event. In the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships that did not happen. Guidance and signs were well planned and thought, and as from the point of arriving to Lahti till the point of leaving Lahti it was impossible to get lost, happily can be said that customers were well taken into an account. Customer understanding in this area was extremely good. It can be said that good signs and way finding affected extremely

positively to the customer experience, as it was easy to move around the venue and find what was needed to be found.

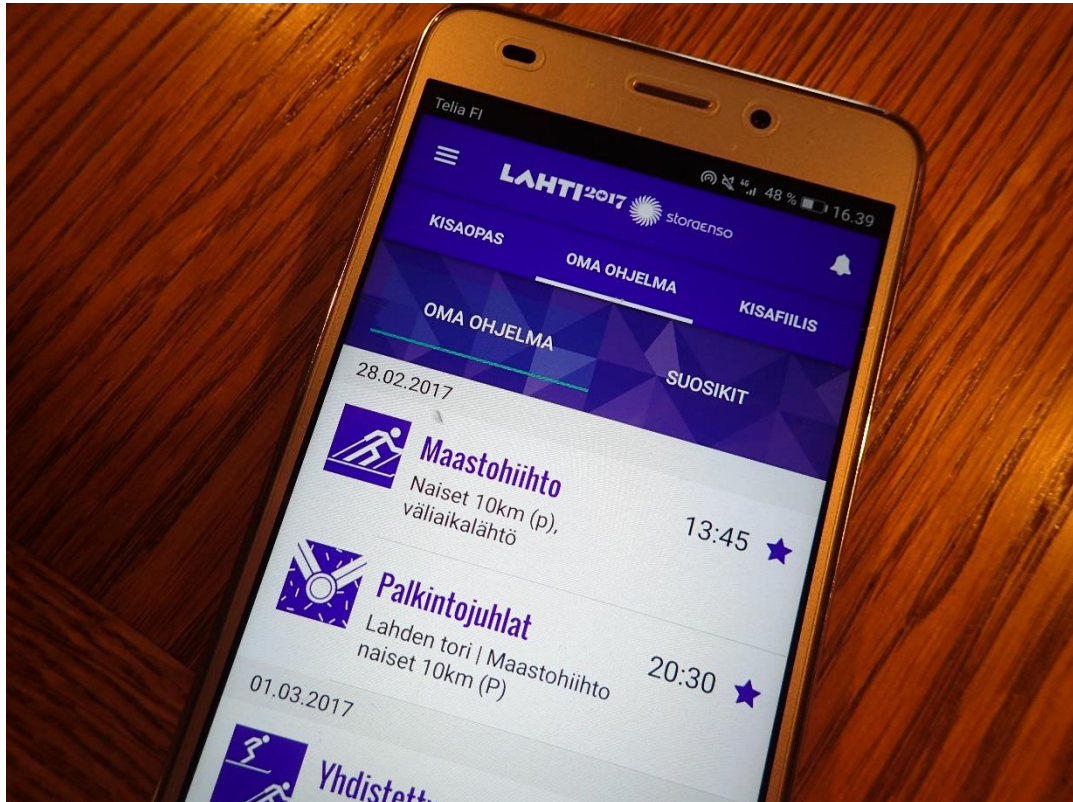


Picture 31: Signs to anywhere

Well-planned signs and good way finding was crucial in order to have good customer experience. This part was extremely well-planned and helped customers find their way.

5.2.4 App

Environments at the events can also be digital, for example mobile apps. Mobile app that was created for the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was considered to be extremely helpful. Timetables, maps, programs and other information were easy to check from the mobile app. Mobile app made customer experience in this case much better, as it helped to plan the daily program and follow up the competitions. Mobile app was extremely well planned. Mobile app also responded well to the customer's needs and probably exceeded expectations. By providing mobile app for the customer's needs, it showed excellent customer understanding from the event organizers.



Picture 32: Mobile app in action

Mobile app affected extremely positively in customer experience. It helped to follow and plan daily programs. Mobile app also offered daily program planning, maps, news and so on. By offering mobile app that helped customers, service was easier to use.

5.2.5 Stars

When attending sport events where the whole idea is to watch competitions, of course stars are important. It is also important to get to see the stars, and in this case, athletes, well. What was extremely nice for the customers, was the possibility to get to see the best three athletes in the podium after the competitions, as the customer service staff opened the gates to the stadium stands so that people had good places to see. Possibility to see and spot stars at the venue and possibility to get to see athletes made customer experience better. Of course emotions and own feelings also affect to this part: it depends what kind of results are and what athletes are taking part of, as people tend to have different feelings and favourites. This aspect of the event offered lot of meaningful experiences.



Picture 33: Stars at the venue

Very well-known Finnish athlete Juha Mieto greeting fans. Possibility to spot the stars can make customer experience better, as it affects positively to feelings.

5.2.6 My Group

It is clear that company affects to the customer experience. It is important to take part of the event with company who have same interests. My group at the event was good, and as we had fun together, the experience of the event was extremely good.

5.2.7 Sports

This is one of the most important parts of the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017: Sports. This event is nothing without sports. Event organizers were planned the program in a way that it was possible to see every sport. As sports areas and stands were well planned and it was easy and pleasant to watch the competitions, experience was great.

5.2.8 Food, Drink & Toilets

One of the most important things when planning events is to provide food, drink and toilets for the customers. Especially in sport events where customers can be at the venue all day, they really do expect to have enough food, drink and toilets available. It is crucial to offer something to eat and drink for everyone and take different kind of allergies into an account. Also it is important to provide clean toilets and many of them to avoid big lines.

In the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 several kind of options to eat and drink and also clean and spacious toilets indoors affected my customer experience in a very positive way. It was good that this one of the most important parts were planned well. If not good options to eat and if not possibilities to use toilet, customer experience could have been very bad.



Picture35: Well-planned food and drink options gave something for everyone.

Food areas inside were nicely decorated, and several toilets at the area were available. It was important that there were toilets available also indoors, as everyone won't feel comfortable with using outdoor toilets. Personally, my customer experience at the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 event came much better when I realized that there are indoors toilets available too. As the weather was not so good all the time, possibility to eat indoors was well-planned idea and showed customer understanding from the event organizers.

6 Summary of the Results

It is noticeable that the results from the research were mainly extremely positive and satisfied. Especially mobile app, spectator areas inside the venue, signs/way finding, food options and sports experiences got lot of praise. They were extremely well planned from the customer point of view.

Customer service was mainly good, but it is important to mention, that it was not too good: there were moments when customer service would have been better. When helping and dealing with customers, it is important to remember to smile, and staff did not always remember that.

According to the results, from the moment to arriving till the moment of leaving, the experience of the event was great. It can be seen from the results that the pieces that affect most to the customer experience in this case were Signs, people flow, Lahti 2017 Staff, App, Stars, My Group, Sports , toilets, food & drink and Other Fans. These clearly affected most in this research. It is important to bring out, that especially people flow and signs were extremely good at the event.

Results have connection to Juha Tuulaniemi's three levels of customer experience. Like presented earlier in chapter 3, Tuulaniemi states that customer experience can be divided into three levels: actions, emotions and meanings. Level of action measure how well the service provided responds to the customer needs and how pleasant service is to use. Level of emotions means personal experiences what customer gets from using the service, and how interesting and pleasant the experience was. Level of meanings tells what kind of dreams, hopes and stories customer has from the service, and how personal the experience is. Combining these three levels, customer experience is formed, according to Tuulaniemi.

When thinking about those three levels, it is noticeable that results have connections to those. According to the results, the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 responded extremely well to the customer's needs and expectations. Service was all in all pleasant to use, and customer-oriented event planning was seen and well succeeded. Event was interesting, and personal experiences were made. Especially flow between people and left warm memories, and experience of the event was pleasant. Many dreams and hopes were fulfilled when watching sport competitions. Three levels combined, it can be said that customer experience is formed and results seem to be great.

7 Discussion

Customer experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was after all extremely good. As it was event organizers' aim to provide event where everyone enjoys, it can be said, that they succeeded with it. In this research, customer experience was good. Event offered a lot for the customer. As event offered services that are effective and easy to use, meaningful experiences and responded well to the customer's needs and expectations, it can be said, that customer experience was good. Like it was presented earlier, according to Juha Tuulaniemi, customer experience is formed by combining three levels when providing services: action, emotions and meaning. In this case, those earlier in theory part presented three levels, were extremely well offered for the customer. Services available at the event were effective and pleasant to use, especially food options and way finding. Event offered meaningful experiences in a field of sports; dreams and hopes were fulfilled and new stories created. Level of emotions was fulfilled too, as event offered highly praised new personal experience. New people were met, good flow between people was emotionally beautiful, and lot of nice experiences were made at the event. So, all in all, it can be said, that customer experience was good. Customer experience was formed from many different kind of things, and when combining those three levels, it can be said, that customer experience from the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 was extremely good.

Usually there are several aspects that affect to the customer experience, and in that way, also several aspects that form good customer experience. In this case, and in this customer experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017, there were several things worth mentioning.

Customer-oriented event planning, providing lot of services at the event, good flow between people, company, sports, wide selection of food, drinks and toilets, extremely well planned way finding and different kind of stands and possibilities to follow sports competitions formed good customer experience. Especially customer-oriented event planning was easy to observe: event responded well to the customers' needs and expectations, event offered services and products that were needed, and took into an account several kind of needs and expectations. From the arriving till the point of leaving the event and city of Lahti, guidance was extremely well planned for the customers' needs. Using the service, and in this case the event, was pleasant with good guidance and signs. This was important aspect that was part of good customer experience. Also very well planned possibilities (themed stands, screens etc.) to watch and follow up with the sport competitions

were extremely important aspect that formed good customer experience as well. As flow between people was extremely amazing, it was easy to see that people were enjoying the event, and that is good sign of many more customer experiences in addition to this one.

As something can always be developed further, some points where to develop in the future are now presented. In the future events, it would be good to make sure that customer service provided for the customers would be as best as possible. If possible, it would be good to organize several customer service training sessions for the customer service staff. In the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 customer service was mainly good, but customer service is the area where developing would be needed. It is important to remember that the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 is international event with customers from many different countries, so little extra smile, small talk, happiness and stepping over the finnish boundaries would cheer up the customer's experience.

One thing also to develop in the future is to consider putting live music and inside food options to the different places. In this case, loud live music while eating was considered to be disturbing.

It is strongly recommended, that event organizers would organize more international sports events in the future. Well succeeded customer-oriented event planning is something what they should make use of, and also share knowledge.

Customer Journey in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 seemed fluent, suitable and pleasant to use. It was realistic and responded to the customer's needs. Customer-oriented event planning was seen, as lot of services were provided and many things were taken into an account. Customer Journey consisted each needed step, and steps seemed to be planned well, as there were no problems for the customer. Customer Journey was planned well according to the results, as it worked well, and every needed aspects were planned well and taken into an account.

In this report when looking the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 -event as a whole, the event was all in all successful, emphasizing that from the customer point of view. Big things and smaller details were planned well, and for the customer, it seemed that all went well. Event provided experiences, services and products that customers were expecting, and event seemed to go on without bigger problems. When considering event as a whole from the customer point of view, it is clear that customer-oriented event planning comes along. In this event, customer-oriented event planning was easily observed. It is extremely important point as without customers, there are no events.

Thesis process was extremely interesting. As sports fan, it was a pleasure to do thesis for the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017. Observing the event was interesting, and considered to add trustworthiness to the research. Chosen topics; service design, customer journey and customer experience, were interesting topics to learn more about. When studying the topics, lot of useful information was learnt for the future career path. When studying, lot of trustworthy sources were used, especially books related to the topics.

Thesis process went on smoothly. Timetable for thesis making was alright. The idea was to write most of the thesis during the summer, and the aim was to finish thesis before moving abroad in august. Timetable was successfully planned, as thesis was completed during august, before moving. Writing during the summer holidays happened fast and smoothly, and thesis process was all in all pleasant.

What was hoped from the thesis coordinator, was more guidance and especially more useful guidance. Comments about the thesis process did not always help forward at times, and guidance could have been more helpful. Guidance was deficient. But, after all, even with a little guidance, this research was done. Research work was done very independently. It was also confusing and made the process more difficult that during this thesis process different instructions were received from two different coordinators.

By doing this research and by studying chosen topics, lot of useful information and experiences are given for the future career path. This research was interesting and pleasant to do, and commissioner will get lot of useful feedback from the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017 from this research.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Observation form for the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017

Date:



Johanna Pelttari

Elements ->	Stadium Production	Food/Drink	Signs/Way Finding	Toilets	Fan Kits & Accessories	People Flow	Lahti 2017 Staff	Stars	Weather	Sports	Crow/Other Fans
Touchpoints + Time											
1. Arrival to Lahti											
2. Enter the venue											
3. Entrance to venue											
4. Spectator areas inside the venue											
5. Sports experience											
6. Spectator services											
7. Food & Drink											
8. Shopping											
9. Leave the venue											

Appendix 2. Observation form of Pieces of Spectator Experience in the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017



Pieces of Spectator Experience in Lahti 2017

Date:

Stadium production	
Food/Drink	
Signs/Way Finding	
Toilets	
FanKits/Accessories	
People Flow	
Lahti 2017 Staff	
Stars	
Weather	
Sports	
Crowd/Other Fans	

Johanna Pelttari

Appendix 3. Observation form of Touchpoints of Spectators Route to the FIS Nordic World Ski Championships 2017



Touchpoints of Spectators Route to Lahti 2017

Date:

1. Arrival to Lahti	
2. Enter the venue (walk)	
3. Entrance to the venue	
4. Spectator areas inside the venue	
5. Sports experience	
6. Spectator services	
7. Food & Drink	
8. Shopping	
9. Leave the venue	

Johanna Pelttari