

Bachelor's Thesis  
International Business  
2017

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# AIRPORT MARKETING TRENDS

– The Impact on Customer Experience at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport



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### - The Impact on Customer Experience at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport

This thesis focuses on the most significant airport marketing trends that have developed the aviation industry in current decade. The objective is to look into how the new airport marketing approaches affect on the airport customers at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, and whether they have a more positive or negative impact on their airport experience. The marketing trends that the author focuses on are advocacy, crowdsourcing, innovative air service development, social care, storytelling, red carpet and virtual shopping.

In order to meet the thesis objectives, the author gathered profound knowledge of the current airport marketing trends, airport marketing research techniques and Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. As primary sources, the author interviewed the Customer Insight Manager of Finavia, and conducted an airport passenger questionnaire. Finally, a hundred Helsinki airport passengers were interviewed about their personal experiences of the airport marketing.

The results indicate that most of the marketing activities have an impact on airport customer experience. Social care improves the customer experience most significantly, and it was found out that the customers value human to human service over social media or other online channel services that the airports focus on developing. Virtual shopping and crowdsourcing opportunities had very high demand and would potentially improve the customer experience at the airport. When it comes to connecting with the airport product, storytelling and advocacy marketing have lots of potential but are yet performed ineffectively, according to the customers.

The author estimates that today's connected passengers will require more attention in the airport's commercial development. Customers are willing to not only consume, but also communicate and connect with the airport product. Currently, customer experience and marketing research teams are relatively small compared to the commercial departments at the airports. In addition, commercial success and increased profit of marketing activities do not measure the airports key performances. By co-operating more closely with the customers and communicating efficiently with them, the airports are able generate a higher value for their commercial activities.

#### KEYWORDS:

Airport Marketing, Innovative Marketing, Customer Experience, Service Development

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## LENTOKENTTÄMARKKINOINNIN TRENDIT

### - Trendien vaikutus asiakaskokemukseen Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä

Tämä opinnäytetyö keskittyy tärkeimpiin lentokenttämarkkinoinnin trendeihin, jotka ovat kehittäneet ilmailualaa tällä vuosikymmenellä. Tavoitteena on tutkia, kuinka uudenlaiset lähestymistavat lentokenttämarkkinoinnissa vaikuttavat Helsinki-Vantaa lentokentän asiakkaisiin, ja onko niillä enemmän positiivisia vai negatiivisia yhteyksiä asiakaskokemukseen. Markkinointitrendit, joihin opinnäytetyö keskittyy, ovat asiakaskannatus, asiakasosallisuus, innovatiivinen ilmailupalvelukehitys, sosiaalinen huolenpito, tarinankerronta, kiinalaisille kohdennettu markkinointi, sekä virtuaaliostaminen.

Saavuttaakseen tutkimustavoitteet, opinnäytetyö sisältää perusteellisesti koottua tietoa tämänhetkisistä lentokenttämarkkinoinnin trendeistä, tutkimusmenetelmistä, sekä Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentästä. Ensisijaisina lähteinä on käytetty Finavian tutkimuspäällikkö Sanna Vajuksen haastattelua, sekä lentokentällä toteutettua matkustajakyselyä. Osana tätä opinnäytetyötä, kaiken kaikkiaan sataa matkustajaa haastateltiin heidän henkilökohtaisista kokemuksistaan Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä.

Tutkimustulokset osoittavat, että suurin osa markkinointiaktiiviteeteistä vaikuttavat asiakaskokemukseen lentokentällä. Sosiaalinen huolenpito parantaa asiakaskokemusta kaikista merkittävimmän, ja tutkimuksessa havaittiin että asiakkaat arvostavat ihmiskontaktia palvelutilanteissa enemmän kuin online- tai sosiaalisen median kanavia, joita lentokentät parhaillaan kehittävät. Virtuaaliosto- ja asiakkaiden osallistumismahdollisuudet herättivät paljon kysyntää ja mahdollisesti parantaisivat asiakaskokemusta lentokentällä. Kun puhutaan asiakkaan sitoutumisesta lentokenttäbrändiin, tarinankerronta ja asiakaskannatus markkinoinnilla on paljon potentiaalia, mutta eivät ole asiakkaiden mukaan toteutuneet kentällä tehokkaasti.

Tuloksista voidaan päätellä, että tämän päivän verkostoituneet matkustajat vaativat enemmän huomiota lentokentän kaupallisessa kehityksessä. Asiakkaat eivät tahdo vain kuluttaa, vaan myös kommunikoida ja sitoutua "lentokenttätuotteeseen". Tällä hetkellä asiakaskokemus- ja markkinointitutkimustiimit ovat suhteellisen pieniä kaupallisiin osastoihin verrattuna. Lisäksi, markkinoinnin kaupallinen menestys ja kasvava liikevoitto eivät takaa lentokentälle menestyvää toimintakykyä. Tiivimmällä yhteistyöllä ja tehokkaammalla kommunikoinnilla asiakkaiden kanssa lentokentät pystyvät luomaan enemmän arvoa myös kaupallisille toimintoilleen.

#### ASIASANAT:

Lentokenttämarkkinointi, asiakaskokemus, palvelukehitys

# CONTENT

<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>2 HELSINKI-VANTAA AIRPORT AND FINAVIA</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>3 AIRPORT MARKETING</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Definition and Development	12
3.2 Airport marketing trends of the current decade	14
<b>4 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT THE AIRPORT</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>5 MARKETING RESEARCH IN THE AIRPORT ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>6 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – INTERVIEW WITH THE CUSTOMER INSIGHT MANAGER</b>	<b>36</b>
6.1 The Interview	36
6.2 Findings and Analysis	38
<b>7 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH – THE PASSENGER QUESTIONNAIRE</b>	<b>40</b>
7.1 Definition of the Problem and Research Objectives	40
7.2 Implementing the questionnaire	41
7.3 Findings	43
7.4 Research Analysis	54
<b>8 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>REFERENCES</b>	<b>58</b>

## APPENDICES

- Appendix 1. Interview with Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus
- Appendix 2. Airport Passenger Questionnaire and Results
- Appendix 3. Asiakaskysely lentokenttämatkustajille

## FIGURES

Figure 1: The most necessary services for Chinese outbound tourists, ( World Travel Online, 2017) .....	23
Figure 2: Virtual Shopping opportunity's impact on customer experience.....	43
Figure 3: Potential users of the virtual shopping wall .....	44
Figure 4: Customers willingness to participate crowdsourcing .....	45
Figure 5: Most preferred channels to deliver ideas.....	46
Figure 6: Channel preferences to contact staff in unexpected situations.....	47
Figure 7: The impact of the service factors .....	49
Figure 8: Would you recommend Helsinki-Vantaa Airport? .....	50
Figure 9: What the airport customers value the most .....	51
Figure 10: Identity of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport .....	52
Figure 11: Passengers interested in storytelling.....	52

## TABLES

Table 1, Airport Marketing Characteristics, Halpern and Graham, 2013	13
Table 2, Fundamental socio-psychological needs and satisfiers in airport industry, Kaufmann, 2015	15

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS (OR) SYMBOLS**

ACI	Airports Council International
ASD	Air Service Development
ASQ	Airport Service Quality
B2B	Business to Business
B2C	Business to Customer
CIM	Chartered Institute of Marketing
CPH	Copenhagen Airport
CX	Customer Experience
GAO	U.S. Government Accountability Office
HRG	Hogg Robinson Group
NACEM	National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine
NBAA	National Business Aviation Association

# 1 INTRODUCTION

As commercial enterprises, airports compete with unique marketing strategies and promote their efficiency with operational results and customer satisfaction. A relatively new and recently commercialised industry is currently developing the most effective tools to differentiate their identity from competitors. In order to be profitable, airports put a lot of effort on their innovative marketing strategies. On the other hand, to highlight their performance and efficiency, airports must pay attention on customer experience. According to Airports Council International (2014), these are the two strategies the success of which persuades customers, such as passengers, airlines and service providers to pass by the specific airport and/or, to operate in there. How marketing strategy actually affects on customer experience, and how it can be utilized to support the customer satisfaction? The author focuses on this specific relation at Helsinki Airport, on the perspective of seven global marketing trends discussed later.

This thesis aims to provide answers on these research questions:

1. What is the relationship of airport marketing and customer experience?
2. Which marketing activities have positive/negative impact on customer experience at Helsinki Airport?

In 2013 the world's leading airline focused marketing company SimpliFlying conducted a major report on airport marketing trends of the decade, called *The State of Airport Marketing; Seven Key Trends and Case Studies*. It describes the direction of the marketing development, future prospects of customer behaviour and finally, the innovative marketing activities to engage the customers and become successful. These marketing activities have been adapted at international airports in these four years, and this thesis analyses their benefits, shortages and mostly the impact on customer experience. However, there are other innovative approaches in airport marketing, but in order to frame this research the author focuses only on the seven globally recognised trends that have significantly changed and developed the industry in this decade.

Pal (2013) lists the seven trends in the airport marketing ecosystem as innovative air service development, virtual shopping, red carpet, advocacy, crowdsourcing, storytelling and social care. This thesis focuses specifically on these trends, by providing examples, researching their effect on customers, and analysing their existence or potential

implementation at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. Since the global airport marketing trends are developed during the technological era, observation and online sources are the most crucial secondary sources to provide information on the trends. In addition, Halpern and Graham (2013) frame the airport marketing activities and marketing research in a wider, theoretical perspective, and are another cornerstone sources of the theory. Nevertheless, the unique contribution of this thesis are the primary internal sources, such as the interview with Finavia's Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus and Airport Passenger Questionnaire conducted at Helsinki Airport.

By observing the marketing activities, interviewing a member of staff and conducting a comprehensive customer survey, the author aims to indicate shortages and potential improvements to airport marketing, based on customers' experiences at Helsinki Airport. Finavia, the corporation that owns Helsinki Airport, would ideally use the results as a basis of their innovation marketing - and service development - which is their current strategic objective. In addition, the results would also provide valuable information on the performance of Customer Experience team. Essentially, as a personal objective, the author aims to contribute a relevant, valuable study on commercial airport activities, conduct a successful thesis research and deepen her industry knowledge.

The author's personal relation to Finavia is her current employer, Finavia's daughter company Airpro. Originally, the idea was to contribute a thesis for Finavia's Commercial Department. Despite the attempts, the commercial department did not have enough resources to cooperate with the author in this thesis research, and it ended up being contributed independently. However, due to the author's personal interest, Finavia and Helsinki Airport are the main focus of this thesis, reflected to the global industry activities, theory background and international comparison. After all, this thesis as a personal achievement brings additional value to the research.

Recent announcements and commercial success makes this thesis topic relevant and accurate. Helsinki Airport is nominated as "The best Airport in the World 2016," according to Travellink international airport survey (Travellink, 2016). Also, Helsinki Airport is the largest and the most international airport in Finland, having 17 million passengers in 2016 (Finavia, 2016). Strategically, Helsinki Airport's profitability and service development are the key objectives of Finavia's new development plan. Finavia has announced an investment of 900,000 million euros into Helsinki Airport's development program, and launched a new terminal earlier this year. In addition, the overall goal of Finavia is to be a profitable, well-managed and respected service company in a global scene, in all of

their business areas. By researching the commercial activities and their potential development from a global and innovative perspective, the author is able to contribute valuable and actual thesis research in 2017.

During the author's studies in Belgium she got interested in the new way of thinking and new development approaches, and started to follow the rising industries that have changed and developed their operational strategies recently. One of the remarkably rising industry is, indeed, civil and commercial aviation. For instance, airport marketing reached an official industry acceptance in 2001, and ever since it has been recognised as its own, special service industry (Graham, 2012). According to Pal (2013), airports have developed from mere transit hubs more into commercial, competitive platforms. He explains that organisations have started to realise the great opportunities inherent to a captive audience. Many airports have established Customer Experience teams in this decade, increased the number of employees in the commercial departments and created new positions and titles in their operational fields.

In addition, the author has a background of working at the Helsinki Airport for over two and half years. Her working environment has inspired her to deepen to aviation industry, and her innovation management studies in Belgium supported her theoretical vision of the airport related thesis topic. As a personal goal, the author wants to specialise in commercial activities and development of aviation industry, and use this thesis as a source of interest. In addition, this thesis will support the author's aspiration to find a future career in the aviation industry.

## 2 HELSINKI-VANTAA AIRPORT AND FINAVIA

In order to study airport marketing and its impact on customer experience, the author finds it important to have a concrete environment to allocate the research. As every airport implements an unique business strategy and determines its own commercial objectives, the organisation environment and marketing activities vary significantly in different airports. However, the operational activities must align with the specific commercial objectives, and therefore it is necessary to understand the explicit airport environment and the organisation running it. Choosing Helsinki Airport, its passengers and Finavia as the object to this research was a natural choice for the author due to its accessibility, success in Airport Service Quality benchmarking programme and personal connections to the airport.

Helsinki Airport is the biggest airport in Finland, and it was visited by record amount of 17,2 million passengers in 2016 (Finavia). 74% of its passengers travel internationally, while 24% took domestic flights. The airport community includes 1 500 companies and organisations, which employs approximately 20 000 people. In addition, 350 flights depart from Helsinki Airport each day (2017) to the airports' overall 135 direct destinations. (Finavia, 2017)

Helsinki Airport is exceptionally well-connected considering the size of Finland's population. It is an important air traffic hub in Europe and it has the fastest and most direct route between Europe and Asia, according to Finavia's website (2017). It is the leading transit airport with its 2.7 million transit passengers between the two continents (2016). The travel from Asia to Finland increased by 4.7% in 2016, and is expected to continue growing. In Nordic Europe, Helsinki Airport is the leading airport for long-distance connections. The most popular long-distance destinations from Helsinki are Tokyo, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Seoul, New York, Shanghai, Osaka, Beijing, Singapore and Nagoya.

The airport has been recognised by several international awards for its excellent services, and it was named The Best Airport in the World in an international survey released by Travellink (2016). The CEO, Kari Savolainen, explains that strong results support systematic development and improvement of services, both to airline and passenger customers. Also, the success ensures good international connections and facilitates the profitability. Therefore, Finavia (2017) has announced to invest 900 million

euros for the development of Helsinki Airport. Kari Savolainen reminds that staying competitive will bring more investments into Finland, support the Finnish tourism sector and enhance the well-being of Finnish society.

Helsinki Airport is at the core of the corporation's strategy, as it is the biggest, most profitable and most international airport in Finland. The strategy focuses on highlighting the smooth travelling, short transit times and attractive services, which are the strengths of Helsinki Airport. By its safe, cost efficient and high-quality services, Helsinki airport aims to promote its mobility and increase Finland's internationality. The strategy is targeted for both customer groups, passengers and air traffic operators, and its success reflects to the whole airport network in Finland. (Finavia, 2017)

The owner of Helsinki Airport, and the other 20 national airports in Finland, is Finavia Corporation, owned by the Finnish Government. In 2016, Finavia gained a record revenue of 380.9 million euros, which was positively influenced not only by increased level of air traffic, but also by the success of commercial services at Helsinki Airport, stated on Finavia's website. In addition, Finavia Group includes two subsidiaries that promote the company's core businesses; LAK Real Estate Oyj and Airpro Oyj.

Finavia (2017) names its two key strategic objectives as improved profitability and customer service development. Global success in all areas of businesses is an important goal for the company. With its operational values, Finavia focuses on environmental and social responsibility, safety, customer orientation, collaboration and transparency. As government owned corporation, social and economic success play the main role in the operational strategy.

The main tasks of the company are building, serving and maintaining infrastructure at the airports. In addition, Finavia aims to be attractive employer, as well as ideal business partner. It promotes well-being at the workplace and offers multiple opportunities for development. As a business partner, Finavia highlights the engagement and close dialogue with its partners, authorities and neighbour organisations. (Finavia, 2017)

However, this thesis focuses on commercial activities and customer experience development that Finavia executes. Some of Finavia's commercial activities will be introduced and analysed later in this thesis, when discussing airport marketing and customer experience.

### 3 AIRPORT MARKETING

The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) defines marketing as "the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitable." The key is to focus on the identification of customer requirements and built objectives around them; long term objectives to anticipate them and short term objectives to satisfy them. (CIM, 2009) Airports are essentially service providers, thus the key objectives normally focus on brand identity, customer loyalty and service quality, to name a few. (Halpern and Graham, 2013) This chapter explains the unique airport environment and its commercial development in more detailed, which gives a basic understanding of the industry. Furthermore, the author summarises the key marketing activities of the current decade and provides examples of their implementation. The insight of the current trends and their impact on customers are the core elements in the customer questionnaire conducted as part of the research.

#### 3.1 Definition and Development

According to Halpern and Graham (2013), airports had a passive approach to marketing until the 1980's. They were operating as natural monopolies, until the air transport industry was de-regulated in New Zealand, Chile and Canada in 1980's and finally in European countries in 1990's. New business models started to emerge and airports were able to exploit opportunities to develop their commercial activities and diversify their business operations. Emergence of *Airport Marketing* got officialised in 2001, when it received industry acceptance.

In case of airport marketing, the target audience of the marketing is not only passengers, but also airlines, workers and society at large. Airports have a great impact on economic and social development of the surrounding area, and thus they often operate as public-private partnerships (Airport Council International Europe, 2016)

The amount of air-passengers is expected to increase by 4,7 per cent each year by 2031, meaning over 7,1 billion passengers. Due to the industry growth, travellers are more experienced and less loyal, generating greater demand on airport facilities (Halpern, Graham, 2013). This creates challenges for the marketing departments and increases

the importance of marketing operations at the airports. Due to industry development, airport marketing focuses mainly on long-term objectives.

Due to the de-regulated characteristics of the air transport market, airports have a greater incentive to develop innovative, proactive and aggressive approaches to their marketing. Contemporary approaches have evolved, such as relationship marketing, industrial marketing, social marketing, social media marketing and e-marketing (Halpern, Graham, 2013). Marketing activities contribute approximately 4,5 per cent of total airport operating costs (Airport Council International, 2010) and according to FAA, 116,6 million dollars was spent on marketing, advertising and promotions in the US in 2011.

Airport marketing adopts the five key characteristics of services. Halpern and Graham (2013) introduce a table that indicates in detailed how each of the characteristics has implicated especially for airport marketing, with concrete examples. This table frames the basis of the airport marketing objectives and the key operational activities that the amarketing strategy should contain.

Table 1, *Airport Marketing Characteristics*, Halpern and Graham, 2013

<b>Service characteristics</b>	<b>Implications for airport marketing</b>
<p><i>Inseparable</i></p> <p>The airport product is generally produced and consumed simultaneously, often through interaction between the airport, other service providers and the end-user</p>	<p>Important for airports to develop and maintain close relationship because interaction determines the service outcome</p>
<p><i>No transfer of ownership</i></p> <p>Airport customers do not generally gain personal or unlimited access to the products and services they pay for</p>	<p>Important for airports to reinforce brand identity and encourage loyalty</p>
<p><i>Intangible</i></p> <p>Airport products and services generally have no substance; they cannot be seen, tasted or touched</p>	<p>Important for airport to develop tangible cues that provide evidence of the benefits available (e.g. levels of service quality)</p>
<p><i>Heterogeneous</i></p> <p>The quality of airport products and services generally varies depending on when, where and how they are provided, and by whom</p>	<p>Important for airports to invest in quality control (e.g. staff training and management systems)</p>
<p><i>Perishable</i></p> <p>Airport products and services generally cannot be stores for later sale or use</p>	<p>Important for airports to anticipate and plan for future demand and use elements on their marketing mix to influence and respond to changes in supply and demand</p>

To conclude, airport marketing is a complex strategy employed by airports, and its objective is to attract travellers, businesses and employees. With a successful airport marketing strategy, the results likely increase economic and social value not only for airport operator, but also for the surrounded society.

### 3.2 Airport marketing trends of the current decade

Pal (2013), the vice president of SimpliFlying, examines the airport marketing trends and future prospects of the industry in his report *The State of Airport Marketing; Seven Key Trends and Case Studies*. These marketing trends have been executed in several airports throughout this decade, with unique approaches and different outcomes. In the following chapter, each of these seven trends will be introduced in more detailed with practical examples . The basic knowledge of each marketing trend will support the understanding of today's commercial airport industry and its relation to customer experience development. This chapter is the most important part of the secondary research of this thesis.

*Advocacy marketing* is social, customer-dependent marketing strategy that is based on customers' network and eagerness to share their experiences through it. Pal (2013) highlights that airports need advocacy marketing to encourage existing customers to talk about the brand and services. By offering memorable experiences to customers, airports keep them engaged, enhance word-of-mouth marketing and differentiate the airport from the competitors. Therefore, airports are dependent on the satisfied customers and their social networks. Advocacy marketing affects on the airport's brand from all perspectives; as a product, partner and employer. Accordingly, it is targeted not only for passengers, but business partners and workers. (National Business Aviation Association, 2013)

The airport passengers' motivation for volunteering to share information among their network is based on the fundamental socio-psychological needs, according to Kaufmann (2015). Thus, the motivation can be achieved by satisfying those needs, including self-determination, competence/recognition, relatedness and meaning. Communication circumstances must be natural between the airport and the customer, and their

community must be authentic, rather than sponsored. Kaufmann (2015) also indicates that Social Software Platform, SSP, is the ideal platform for advocates, as it is a contribute to the satisfactory of the need of belong, the need to acquire social status and the need for autonomy and independence.

Table 2, *Fundamental socio-psychological needs and satisfiers in airport industry*, Kaufmann, 2015

Human Need	Satisfier
Self-Determination	Autonomy-supportive communication context: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication is not controlled by events – for example deletion of critical user posts</li> <li>• Passengers are free to express their ideas and opinions with regard to the airport and their service</li> </ul>
Competence/ Recognition	Competence-supportive communication content: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication enables passenger to achieve expected outcomes (fast resolution of service request etc.)</li> <li>• Communication is interesting and opens up new perspectives</li> </ul> Competence-supportive communication tonality: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passenger ideas and suggestions are valued and encouraged</li> <li>• Airport provides positive competence feedback</li> </ul>
Relatedness	Personalized communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication acknowledges unique distinctness of passenger</li> </ul> Community building communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication creates a sense of belonging – passengers feel like part of a larger airport community</li> </ul>
Meaning	Orientation supportive communication: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transparent communication of value propositions regarding the airport service portfolio</li> <li>• Fulfillment of promised value propositions</li> <li>• Authentic communication in case of service shortfalls</li> </ul>

Note. Information compiled by author.

Helsinki Airport and Finavia are present in social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Sina Weibo, WeChat, Instagram, VKontakte and Youku, in order to reach all of their customer segments. This wide presence aims to encourage advocates to communicate with the organisation, and relate them with the airport community. Finavia also implemented a fully social media focused campaign *Match Made in HEL* in 2016, in order to improve the brand awareness and their important role as a connection airport. In addition, Helsinki Airport was named as the Best Airport in Social Media by SimpliFlying, in 2012, which underlines Finavias ability to use SSP's in their marketing activities. (Finavia, 2017)

In addition, more than 80% of customers search online before making the decision, and 63% trust other customers' opinions. The trust in recommendations of friends and family is even higher, 83%. (Big Commerce, 2017). The studies illustrate that advocacy

marketing is more appealing and impactful than direct advertising, and brand advocates are the strongest salesforce the company can possibly have. It is also cost-effective, as it is one of the most affordable methods of acquiring new customers.

When it comes to operational activities, consistency is a very important factor to support advocacy. For example, airports' customer support should answer questions within a set period of time. This builds trust on the company as the customers know what to expect. When customers can rely on a company to operate in a certain way, they are more likely to advocate for it. Additional factors to assist advocacy are brand identity and outstanding customer experiences, as they give a strong evidence to recommend the company. (Big Commerce, 2017) At Helsinki Airport, service quality is one of the key strategic cornerstones to enhance customer experience and acquire advocates. (Finavia, 2017)

In order to satisfy and build relationships with all types of customers, Finavia's customer experience development and research focuses on four customer segments. Segmentation allows a better understanding of each customer group and operational decisions can be improved to satisfy specific needs of each customer group. Finavia's Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus (2017) explains that each customer segment, habitual travellers, fast and efficient flyers, enjoyment seekers and safety seekers, have very different needs. By focusing on the service process of each segment, it makes the need recognition and development decisions more specific, and enhances the overall experience.

What makes advocacy marketing extremely difficult for airports, is the fact that the customer is served by different companies. The airline is responsible for the check-in and the trip execution, an outsourced company takes care of the security control, the airport provides all the relevant information and a propitious environment, while the catering company is in charge of feeding the customers. The entire airport process consists of services from multiple companies, and in most cases one failure in the service process leads to an unsatisfactory overall airport experience. In order to encourage advocates, airports must research and develop a consistent process strategy and a stable, efficient airport community. (Kaufmann, 2015)

As a conclusion, airport advocacy requires both customers and the airport community's satisfaction as a basis for its implementation. Service quality and consistency are the key objects to persuade customer satisfaction, by feeding their specific needs. Finally, when a certain level of satisfaction is achieved, the motivational trigger is required. Authentic

communication and customer engagement are important tools to implement advocacy marketing successfully.

Another important marketing activity is *innovative air service development (ASD)*. In order to differentiate from the competitors, airports must create an innovative strategy for their air service development. According to U.S. Government Accountability Office's report in 2003, the need of obtaining or retaining air services is defined by conducting studies that determine adequate demand for services, adding marketing to increase passenger demand and offering incentives to airlines (Mills et al. 2015). Air service development strategy should be identified and valued with the airport's domestic and regional market. It must be aligned with the market analysis and fit in the marketing strategy (Budd and Ison, 2016). By conducting the ASD research process, the airports determine the demand of the new routes and the potential service providers to be connected. In addition, the potential target airlines should serve the strategic markets of the airport, which requires a lot of marketing research. (Halpern and Graham, 2013)

According to the author's observation and research, Helsinki airport has focused its air service development on high quality airlines and haul destinations. The most commonly known low-budget airlines, such as Vueling and Ryanair, do not operate in Helsinki Airport, but other Finnish airports. The high-quality theme is also shown in the airport's service supply and atmosphere. In addition, the service mix, staff and available languages refer to the target market of Asia and Russia, and the routes to those areas have been launched recently. The air service development is aligned with Finavia's strategy; Helsinki airport to remain a significant connection airport between Europe and Asia, and to deliver exclusive haul destinations.

The objective of innovative air service development is to be more appealing than the neighbour airport, destination or tourism product, in order to remain competitive and profitable. It allows to segment the potential customers, fill up the planes and ultimately attract more airlines to operate at the airport. Incoming and outgoing air services stimulate revenues, investments and both aeronautical and non-aeronautical activities (Pal, 2013). A well-developed air service network facilitates not only commercial success, but also the connections between the local and regional economies, and the rest of the world. Potentially, it enhances the airport region's value, and contributes investments and business activities. (Budd and Ison, 2016)

According to the latest report of Uudenmaanliitto (Uusimaa Alliance), Helsinki airport has a significant, positive influence on the economy, development and business activities in Vantaa, neighbour cities, Southern Finland region and the overall Finnish economy. When it comes to the competition with the neighbour airports, in Finland all the commercial airports are owned by the same corporation Finavia. This mutual ownership allows focusing the airports on different target markets. Based on author's observation, Rovaniemi Airport is highly focused on Lapland tourism, Oulu for business travellers, Turku for leisure and Helsinki for wide international connections and transit passengers, to name a few examples. Helsinki Airport is a remarkable airport connecting Asia and Europe, and the leading airport for haul destinations in Northern Europe. Helsinki Airport has a unique air service strategy compared to neighbour airports in Northern countries.

Along with the partnership, air service provider becomes a part of the airport community, thus, they also share the financial risk of developing the new service at the airport. Although, being part of the airport community does not guarantee a greater level of air service, according to Mills et al. (2015). Thereby, to attract the most valuable carriers, airports must create successful trade and tourism environment, by providing community-, promotional and financial incentives. They are used to minimize landed costs, maximize community benefits, support airline revenues and promote airports knowhow and facilities. Mills et al. (2015) also examined that more than 81% of the airports offer their incentives as packages, and approximately 76% of them have resulted a new service or enhanced an existing one. This kind of approach increases the value of the partnership. However, incentives must follow the FAA criteria referring to revenue restrictions, time limits, and certain types of carriers.

Marketing and promotional support (incentive) offers cost efficient visibility and brand loyalty to the service operator. The main challenge of the marketing support is that the group of travellers may have loyalties to another carrier or may travel to a nearby airport for their air travel needs. Therefore, local communities are often used in incentive packages to provide wider and more efficient marketing assistance. (Mills et al., 2015)

Community incentives are not bound to FAA criteria, so the program can be designed in any manner. However, airport sponsors must not be involved and the airport revenue cannot be used. Mills et al. (2015) state that community incentives are the least common intensives, normally to attract specific service to a particular destination.

Financial incentives includes typically beneficial waivers of airport-levied fees and charges that establishing a new service occurs. Start-up costs for an air carrier can be up to 200 000 dollars, and thus financial incentives are the most attractive and the most commonly offered, according to Mills et al. (2015). However, waivers do not require substantial community involvement, which might be seen as a weak community commitment to a new service.

Finavia's (2015) advertisement and marketing campaigns are often focused on the airport brand; *#LifeInHel*, *Welcome to HEL*, *Made in HEL*. However, some campaigns are often co-operated with Finnair, which is the main partner and airline operating in Helsinki Airport. In addition, Helsinki Airport partners work closely together with Visit Finland tourism organisation and advertises connections also to other cities in Finland. Currently, the new routes to Middle-East and Asia are advertised at the airport by Finavia, as they were launched this year. The author assumes that these cases represent community intensives and marketing and promotional supports for the airline.

In addition, airports have recognised the potential of social platforms in their air service development strategy. Airports constantly research new ways to align social media and customer engagement to their air service development. For example, social media platforms, such as Twitter and Facebook, enable airports to segment the passengers efficiently and cost-effectively, and to target them with specific offers and information. By reaching the target audience more effectively, they can also promote air-services and expand the awareness of the new routes more dynamically. Thereby, airports attract new passengers and ultimately, new airlines to operate through their airport community. The industry develops constantly the new, bespoke blueprints to improve the air service development. (Budd and Ison, 2016) In addition, Helsinki Airport is very active in several social media platforms, advertising both the airport and its routes and offers.

Finavia and Helsinki Airport's wide presence on social media is assumed to have a positive influence on the air carrier's decisions of partnership. According to the author, Helsinki Airport's business accounts on Weibo, Youku and WeChat can be advantageous when attracting Asian airlines as operational partners. How the airport boosts its sales, reaches its target audience, as well as its number of followers may affect crucially on decisions, especially among competitors.

After all, all the stakeholders must be satisfied with the direction of air service development. Mann and Ronell (2016) underline that airports must ensure that all the

stakeholders' needs are addressed and they all benefit from evolving developments. Network coverage and flight frequency must be enhanced, the markets must be continuously researched and facilities must be up-to-date. In order to invest in new developments, the existing community must be considered. With collaborative communication and cooperative dialogue, the community maintains a constructive, long-term relationship. Connections, quality and loyalty are the important factors to execute innovative service development.

Helsinki Airport mainly increases the number of routes and airlines by operating at the airport, due to its expansion and increased revenue. New haul destinations, for example San Francisco and Astana, have been launched this year and the weekly amount of flights in Europe and Asia has increased. In 2016, Qatar airways started to operate at Helsinki Airport as a new airline, and this year Finavia confirmed the first Chinese carrier Lucky Air to launch at Helsinki Airport in January 2018. However, in some cases the connections have been cancelled and routed through another airports. For example, in 2016 Hogg Robinson Group reported that Lufthansa cancelled its route between Helsinki and Zurich, and this will be replaced with transit flights through other airports. This happens most likely due to the lack of passengers, contract issues or financial lucrativeness. (Ison and Budd, 2016)

To summarize, innovative air service development is mainly a B2B focused marketing activity that considers the airport passengers as an acquisitional target. It deals mainly with airline - and service customers that the airport aims to attract and retain. Its main tools are incentives and efficient communication, which makes the airport community loyal and attractive environment to operate.

Pal (2013) names *crowdsourcing* one of the most important marketing trends for airports. He defines it as a customer-generated content creation activity, that allows customers to affect on the airport product or service. Typically, it is executed by seeking ideas, opinions, solutions or feedback from large audiences. Traditionally it uses offline tools, such as feedback collection and questionnaires, but more often airports have started to use online, social platforms to reach more customers efficiently and instantly. Crowdsourcing allows customers to join the service development and express their preferences. It is cost-effective marketing tool to connect with customers and realise their

demand. The main use is to improve customer experience and community development, as well as to generate new ideas for the product, brand and its activities.

Following the success of airlines, airports have recognised the crowdsourcing as an effective tool to connect the customers with the brand, according to Airport Council International (2014). A number of airports have started their own crowdsourcing program in order to improve passenger journey and airport efficiency, and mainly to develop more personalised customer experience. Crowdsourcing has been effective tool for product innovations, mobile applications, loyalty tier awards and for improving services.

Bratvold (2012) lists the benefits of well executed crowdsourcing. He underlines the increased speed of content creation process that crowdsourcing enables. Another crucial benefit is getting the existing and potential customers involved with their opinions and indicates the actual customer needs. In addition, crowdsourcing offers diversity and a creative choice to develop your product or service. Even though, it has been known for several years as a “marketing trend”, it can be used in more creative ways and adapted to the other marketing activities with innovative approaches.

For instance, at Copenhagen Airport crowdsourcing is used in rather an innovative and capturing way. They launched a programme called “CPH Ideas” that aims to gather customer-generated ideas for their future expansion plan. They are seeking for innovative ideas to bring the airport to the next level, and in order to determine the most preferable facilities that are currently not available. According to Karen Bender, the E-commerce and Marketing Director of Copenhagen Airport, “CPH Ideas” core is to draw travellers closer to the airport brand, add a personal touch to the travel experience and build customer loyalty. (Airport Council International, 2014)

In addition, in 2014 Helsinki Airport established a crowdsourcing campaign “TravelLab”, which gained international success in Service Design Award Competition by winning the category of “Prototyping of Organizational Change”. After creating over 200 ideas, the campaign tested 11 service prototypes at the airport environment with the customers. As a result, customer testing became a part of the service development process, and the new ideas are tested as early as possible with the customers. (Finavia, 2017)

Another innovative use of crowdsourcing is student involvement. *Ideas for Boarding* student competition was launched by Aéroports de Paris in 2015. The objective was to gather mobility solutions for the biggest airport in Paris, Roissy Charles de Gaulle, by challenging students all over the world to share their ideas and design innovative mobility

solutions for airport use. The airport got lots of positive attention and innovative development ideas, and enhanced its relation network. (Studyka, 2015)

As a conclusion, crowdsourcing is a content creation activity that involves communicational activities between the customers and the airport. It strengthens the customer relationship and helps to identify the actual needs of the customers. There are many creative activities to implement crowdsourcing, and it is time- and cost-efficient alternative to develop the airport into more innovative direction.

So called *Red Carpet* is a marketing trend that focuses on serving the new passenger segments from newly industrialised countries, for example from China. The rise of the middle-class in such countries has expanded the travel market and brings new challenges to the airport service providers, according to Pal (2013). The world Tourism Organisation, UNWTO, estimated in 2012 that outbound tourists from China will reach 100 million by 2020. However, the amount of Chinese outbound tourists reached 122 million already in 2016, and China remained the world's largest number of outbound tourists (World Travel Online, 2017). In addition, Chinese traveller's total consumption overseas reached 109,8 billion dollars in 2016, which demonstrates the potential of the segment. At Helsinki Airport, Chinese are the fastest growing passenger group, as the proportion of Chinese passengers grew by 7,5% in 2016. In addition, Chinese spending culture is also attractive, as the Chinese passengers spend the most money at airport compared to any other passenger groups. (Finavia, 2016)

As an important connection point between Europe and Asia, Helsinki Airport has a significant focus on Chinese passengers. According to Finavia (2017), there are currently 17 direct destinations in Asia, of which five in China. Therefore, in January 2016, Helsinki Airport established in cooperation with Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) an extensive collaboration with the biggest airport in Asia, Beijing Capital International Airport. This kind of sister airport agreement was the first of its kind in Europe and Finavia's staff members travelled to Beijing in order to learn the Chinese service culture and understand the customer needs.

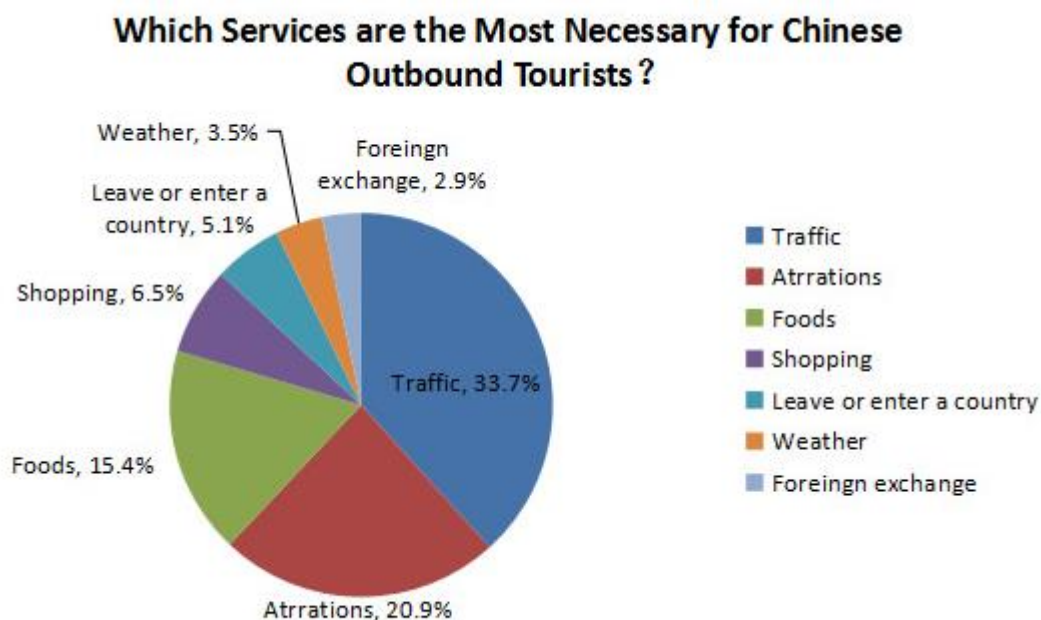


Figure 1: The most necessary services for Chinese outbound tourists (World Travel Online, 2017)

According to the leading Chinese outbound travel portal, World Travel Online (2017), the main necessities for Chinese tourists are traffic, attractions, foods and shopping. The customer segmentation study Finavia conducted in 2012 also indicated that 73% of the Chinese travellers were identified as enjoyment seekers, which draw the focus point on them. According to Finavia (2017), Helsinki airport aims to provide smooth travelling and improve the service quality for Chinese passengers with multiple operational and commercial developments. For example, in 2016 Finavia hired Chinese speaking staff, and obtained Chinese signs. Also, the airport staff have received additional cultural training and languages courses in order to understand Chinese buying - and travelling behaviour.

In addition, Finnair airline provides a group check-in option for bigger passenger groups to smoothen the check-in process. On Tax refund and outlets, Chinese passengers can use a Chinese mobile payment application, AliPay. Finavia has also created own user accounts in Weibo and WeChat, Chinese social media platforms, in order to communicate and engage the Chinese passengers. Moreover, Helsinki Airport has

recently built hot water points for the need of Chinese customers, and launched an e-translation service. Also, the increased amount of storytelling and the range of products have considered Chinese passengers, who prefer shopping mainly cosmetics, watches, jewellery and fashion from European luxury brands. (Finavia, 2017)

To conclude, considering the Chinese passengers, their habits and expectations, airports can grow their profitability, seek new business opportunities and develop more diversified services. By fulfilling the needs of growing customer segments airports can enhance their performance and competitiveness in international comparison. In addition, research and cultural adaptation brings more value to the airport also in customers' perspective.

*Social care* has become a trend to be considered in the airport marketing mix, and its importance tempts to grow along with the connected travellers and technological development, including social networks, connectivity and smart devices. Social care refers to the customer service and communication activities between the airport and its customers. According to Pal (2013), its main objective is to enhance the customer experience at the airport. He underlines that today's connected passengers are keen to get information on the go and they want to share their experiences through different medias in real time. Hence, it is important for airports to enable and participate the interaction, to communicate with passengers, provide information efficiently and solve problems instantly. Airports recognise the need of serving their customers with online tools and have created more innovative communication activities, for example with their social media presence. (Airports Council International, 2012)

Before the online era, airports' public relations was simple and the main communication tool was press releases, announcing the new projects and services at the airports. Airports Council International (2012) highlights that today's vibrant and high-profile airport environment requires more tools in order to take care of the customer experience and information fluency. Airports uphold their own social media accounts, constantly update their polished websites, share videos, develop mobile applications, spread their own specific hashtags and even organise high-end events at the airports to enhance the positive customer experience. Many airports follow their social media presence constantly and focus on real time communication with their customers. According to Sarah McDaniel Langhorst (2012), Manager of Communications and New Media at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, online interaction is a very powerful customer service tool for the airport. They also collect important online data, such as the amount

of tweets and retweets on Twitter; “The airport compiles weekly reports that analyse the reach and success of not just its social media channels, but individual posts”, Langhorst (2012) addresses.

According to Airport Council International's article *Scaling New Heights*(2014), airports' social media budget increased significantly in 2014. The most of it was dedicated to social media advertisement and staff training. In addition, airports' have dedicated more man-hours and created new jobs around their full-time social media services in the last few years. The internal priorities and business goals related to social media are mainly customer service, loyalty and revenue. However, the airports struggle to measure the driven goals they are seeking with social media marketing. ACI (2014) article also underlines that the number of likes, shares and fan base does not effectively act as the key performance indicators. However, social media marketing have been the greatest solution for the dilemma of “unknown passengers” that airports have struggled with, and through their social connections they manage to examine their target audience more efficiently.

This leads to another approach to develop airports' social care, which is by recognising customer segmentations. Rather than focusing on mass passenger trends, airports may research the specific needs of certain customer groups. Traditionally, customers can be divided as landside and airside customers, business and leisure passengers, country of origin or other demographics (Halpern and Graham, 2013). In addition, passenger segmentation studies give an overview of the biggest customer groups and their characteristics. By segmenting the passengers, airports can better understand the customer needs and focus their services. Nowadays, there are more innovative approaches to segment the passengers even more detailed, and as mentioned, social media channels are efficient sources to collect customer data. According to Finavia's Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus, the results of segmentation research at Helsinki Airport in 2012 identified four main passenger groups according to their travel habits, attitude, needs and expectations. The results help developing the airport services to serve specific customer types.

In 2016, Manchester Airport focused its social care strategy on increasing segment of Chinese passengers (ACI, 2016). While launching a new route to Beijing, the airport established profiles on Chinese social media platforms, Weibo and WeChat, by co-operating with a Chinese digital agency Red Lantern. In the same year, also Helsinki Airport opened a business account on those platforms, and additionally on Youku

(Finavia, 2017). On Weibo and WeChat, the airports communicate with the Chinese passengers and publish content of their airport services and news in Mandarin. This approach aims to serve the growing amount of Chinese tourist groups and favours also the other marketing trend discussed earlier, the Red Carpet. In addition, it supports the engaging and understanding of the Chinese customers and enables to develop other marketing innovations. (Airports Council International, 2016)

To summarize, social care has always been a crucial part of the service industries. However, the changing needs and expectations of the customers, technology and globalisation has directed the marketing activity into new, more complex levels. With media activity, cultural knowledge, research and communication tools airports can efficiently recognise and respond to the actively changing and diversified customer needs.

*Storytelling* is a content marketing concept that plays an important role in marketing communications. It aims to create emotional bonds between brands and consumers, and enhance the customer loyalty through its authenticity and transparency. Story telling conveys the brand personality and strengthens the relationship with the customers. (Budd and Ison, 2017) In addition, it is a feasible way to differentiate the brand from the competitors and engage the customers. (Halpern and Graham, 2013).

Instead of theoretical facts and statistics, storytelling focuses on evoking feelings and emotions through real life stories. According to Pal (2013), by telling real stories of customers, employees or the brand, with illustrative and memorable words and images, the target audience captures the marketing message more effectively. Airports, such as London Heathrow, have used storytelling effectively in several years. In 2009, the airport invited a philosopher Alain de Botton to live at the airport and observe the employees and passengers. He got inspired of the experience and ended up writing a book entitled "A week at the Airport", where he shared his ideas and promoted Heathrow Airport with his empirical experience. (Budd and Ison, 2017) Furthermore, in 2016 Heathrow airport had another approach to storytelling concept. They launched an online story campaign to inspire customers and employees to share their airport memories via dedicated, online microsite. They gathered all kinds of stories and shared them as a content in their marketing campaign, which celebrated their 70 years anniversary campaign. (Gioglio, 2016)

Finavia has not had any specific storytelling campaign before. It has several articles of “People in HEL”, which introduces the airport employees to the audience, with a low volume. However, in October 2017 Finavia launched a significant storytelling campaign “LifeinHEL”, with an internationally well-known reality producer Gary Carter. The campaign follows a Chinese reality star Ryan Zhu, who was invited to live at the Helsinki Airport for 30 days. His purpose was to find out whether Helsinki Airport is the best airport in the world, as stated in 2017. The main objective of the content marketing campaign is to increase the global awareness of the Helsinki-Vantaa’s innovations and excellence in different business areas in order to attract new customers, promote the service quality and increase profitability. To conclude, “Life in HEL” campaign has commercial objectives, which are promoted by customer (Ryan’s) experience. (Finavia, 2017)

All in all, as content marketing seems to be a trend itself, airports have especially focused on storytelling concept for its authenticity. For big commercial enterprises, storytelling is considered to be efficient approach to engage the individual customer with the airport. In addition, with their vibrant environment, implementing stories around the airport brand should be relatively effortless, and yet interesting. Thus, empowering the real life stories from the airport in their marketing activities, airports build their unique identity and connect better with their customers.

When it comes to airport shopping habits, *virtual shopping* is the trend that has arrived in the airports in recent years. Euromonitor International (2017) released that faster shopping is a top consumer trend in 2017. Rapid convenience and “the rush population” challenge the marketers to create innovative shopping opportunities, also at the airports. Virtual shopping is one of the marketing activities to respond to this demand, and the use of which at airports is estimated to expand in the near future, according to Airports Council International, (2015).

In addition, Interbrand Germany’s Managing Director Nina Oswald (ACI, 2015) highlights that predetermined sequence of events in a certain location is no longer required when shopping. She emphasises the opportunities for online and mobile shopping at the airports; before, after and during the airport visit. Virtual online - and mobile payment process includes gathering information about the product, choosing the product, paying for merchandising and finally organising the delivery. Oswald sees this as a great possibility for a customer, however, she underlines that it creates pressure for airport’s retail stores to add value with their service; “Physical retail spaces at airports will need to take on a new role, offering an integrated experience – a unique, memorable moment

within the traveller's journey." Therefore, virtual shopping is not just an additional opportunity, it would likely change the shopping culture of the whole airport environment.

Several airports, for example Frankfurt International airport, have launched their first virtual shopping opportunities. Virtual shopping works with mobile payments by using phone orders or QR codes for purchasing, and it reduces the time and effort for buying goods while travelling. The main target in a customer point of view is to make the shopping more relaxing and easier. At the Frankfurt Airport, virtual shopping wall is a trial to find out its potential. The trial's main objective is not to gain profit, but to examine how it is used and which nationalities it appeals to most. (Airports Council International, 2013)

Instead, at Helsinki Airport the new adopted virtual payment method is AliPay, the Chinese mobile payment application. The adoption of this payment method is based on the fact that Chinese passengers is the group that spends the most money of all the passenger groups. With AliPay payment option, the airport aims to improve the customer experience by providing familiar and safe option for the most rapidly growing customer group (Finavia, 2017). However, there are no other virtual payment opportunities targeted for any other passenger groups at Helsinki airport.

In addition, virtual shopping innovations are about to expand in a near future. In August 2017, Auckland Airport published their plan to launch digital multi-retailer mall in 2018, according to Airports Council International. The online platforms allow passengers to shop at any stage of their travel journey by using their online devices and choose a convenient, desirable place for them to collect the purchased goods. This is an example of using digitalisation to ease the travel shopping and currency loss, and to enhance the customer experience by providing additional alternatives for airport shopping.

To conclude, virtual shopping will most likely change the airport retail shopping concept in total, and the new shopping concepts will be adapted in the near future. The testimonials have aimed to examine the customer adaptation of the innovative shopping opportunities, and will be further studied. The change in retail shopping culture requires both technological - and social development, which are already evoking.

Every airport has their own, unique environment to operate in, which depend on their location, partners, employees, stakeholders, local government restrictions, culture and of course, passengers. When planning the marketing mix, all these factors must be considered and researched. There are multiple approaches to these marketing trends discussed above, which makes them innovative in the specific airport environment.

However, these seven trends have changed the future prospects of the airport marketing, more or less, and direct the airport culture by customer adaptation. Airports are no longer generically international, but can consider specific cultures in their marketing. Today's airports communicate with their customers through social media, their shopping processes have new virtual features, and customers can truly know the airports, their employees and travellers. These changes are happening at the airports through these marketing activities, and they crucially impact also on the customer experience.

In addition, all of the marketing trends introduced above, consider the changing needs, habits and expectations of today's diversified customers. In Pal's (2013) report, he refers to the actual customer demands when it comes to connecting, communicating and consuming the airport product. The most important service characteristics have developed and airports have become innovative marketing platforms with their customer research and knowledge of the target audience.

## 4 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AT THE AIRPORT

Every airport has its own level of focus on customer experience and resources to pursue their customer experience strategy. This chapter focuses on Finavia's customer experience, its objectives, strategy and implementation. The author also analyses the relation between customer experience and airport marketing, and considers the benefits and possible shortages. Eventually, this chapter aims to explain why customer experience is important for the airport industry.

The major change of the customer experience development is that airport passengers have become customers, according to Boudreu et al. (2016). Today's airports are able to recognise their customers' needs and preferences, and aim to adapt them in their service strategies. Excellent customer experience occurs when the the airport service chain manage to exceed the customer expectations. This objective can be met by improving the performance and innovating across the entire service delivery, Boudreu et al. (2016) highlight. However the shared nature of airports service chain requires effective partheship and collaborative community at the airport, which is the biggest challenge of the concept.

The importance of customer experience has been recognised and its supportive impact on strategic goals have been underlined only in the last decade (Boudreu at al. 2016). At Finavia, customer experience plays an important role in customer service developing, brand enhancing and differentiation in global competition. Finavia's website underlines that a well-established and successful customer experience strategy has a positive impact on the airport brand and persuades customers to use the airport and partnership with it.

Finavia's (2017) article *Improving customer experience at airports* states that one third of passengers choose their flight route based on the reputation of the transfer airport. Successful customer experience strategy also gives advantage of differentiating the airport in the global competition and brings international attention to the airport. Finavia has won several awards in global comparison of customer satisfaction and holds currently the title of "the best airport in the world 2016", according to a passenger survey provided by Travellink (2017). The strengths of Helsinki-Vantaa airport are friendly staff, innovative world-class services and short transfer times.

Finavia's customer experience team has four very practical goals to pursue; smoothly running processes, comfortable and functional terminals, high quality and up to date services, and friendly and context sensitive customer service. Customer experience team pays attention to decoration and atmosphere, service supply and - quality, customer mobility and operation fluency. The key of successful customer experience at Finavia is the customised time that passengers spend at the airport; the moments and memories they will have and the willingness to share their experience with their networks, according to the article (2017).

In order to establish successful customer experience solutions, the company has to be open for new ideas and adapt quick implementations (Boudreau et al., 2016). Finavia's customer experience team runs pilot projects and different experiments within a quick schedule in order to remain on the edge of innovations. They do not discard any ideas before a deeper analysis in different perspective. Customer experience team must consider the safety, eco-friendliness and ethicality in their creating process, and keep in mind the 50,000 passengers visiting the airport daily. Surveys, feedback and social media support their decision- making by providing valid information from the potential target groups. Not only passengers, but also carriers and employees influence on the direction of improvements and new innovations at the airport. (Finavia, 2017)

The article (2017) underlines that the airport improvements require lots of resources, such as time, money and workforce. A research team provides constantly new information about customer satisfaction and shortages, service providers work 24/7 to deliver the latest service models and financial department invests 900 million euros on future improvements at Helsinki-Vantaa airport.

However, the success of customer experience does not generate direct profit growth to the airport. Boudreau et al. (2016) highlight that it supports the commercial success by emphasising the reputation, and by enhancing the brand and attracting services. Therefore, customer experience activities are often linked to marketing activities at the airport. Specific customer segments and new innovative services are often part of the marketing strategy and designed to increase the commercial growth. However, these activities have a mature impact on customer experience and thus serve also the operational goals of the customer experience team.

The relation between customer experience and marketing activities must be taken care of in order to avoid disadvantages. The author highlights that sometimes new marketing approaches may cause customer frustration and confusion, while from B2B perspective they are the best possible solutions. For example, airports prefer co-operating with the best service providers, while customers might prefer to be served by one company. Also, the best commercial partner to the airport is not necessarily the best option for the passenger. Marketing department aims to make the best possible decision to all of the parties, but they have to highlight certain benefits above others. Later on in this thesis, the author will examine and analyse how marketing impacts on customers at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport.

## **5 MARKETING RESEARCH IN THE AIRPORT ENVIRONMENT**

This chapter examines why airport marketing research is important and what makes it relatively different compared to any other marketing research. Also, the author will present the methodology of her own research process, including the most relevant methods, decisions and considered limitations when establishing her airport marketing research.

The airport operators have become more engaged in marketing their services and thus the quality of airport marketing research has improved in recent years. According to Halpern and Graham (2013) airport marketing research plays an important role between the customer and the marketer, as the obtained information helps airports to identify marketing opportunities, solve problems, refine marketing actions and monitor the performance. They also highlight that having access to a considerable amount of data regarding passenger numbers, air transport trends and airline services, airport marketing research is relatively easy. In addition, the airport environment has several other benefits when it comes to the execution of marketing research; the volume of passengers and the time spent at the airports affect positively on participation rates. Also, passengers go through the same processes during their stay, so the surveys can be easily standardised.

For these specific characteristics, the author decided to use mixed method on her research, in order to get evidential and dimensional results. Mixed method is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research, and serves the detailed designed research questions, which the author has defined. According to Bell and Bryman (2015), the method provides a better understanding of a specific phenomenon, and by integrating qualitative and quantitative data, it allows inductive and deductive thinking and reasoning.

Airport marketing trends, customer experience and airport research were relatively unknown topics to the author before the thesis research. Therefore, the author chose sequential exploratory design, starting with qualitative research, of which results could be quantified afterwards. According to Graham and Halpern (2013), this is a typical method for airport studies. Bell and Bryman (2015) highlights that this specific design serves research objectives that focus on observation and development, and therefore

was the most relevant choice for this thesis. The author gathered secondary data from Airport Council International's website and online publications, she read a several books from the industry specialists and accessed a few online reports and guidebooks. For primary, qualitative data collection, she established an unstructured interview with Finavia's Customer Insight Manager, and reflected the results on her research process and final analysis. The author chose an unstructured interview in order to let her interviewee to highlight the most important focus points. However, the author had some structured questions designed beforehand.

After qualitative research, the next phase is to quantify the qualitative results (Bell and Bryman, 2015). The author conducted a passenger questionnaire in order to collect quantitative, numerical data to support the qualitative findings, scale them, and finally interpret the combination of the sources. At Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, there can be up to 50 000 passengers daily, which means that it is important to get an overview of randomly sampled passengers. The airport aims to serve all types of customer regardless of their demographics, and especially when searching customers' experiences, random allocation was the most relevant sample technique. However, the author combined some elements from cluster sampling, as she targeted passengers from three different areas; terminal one, terminal two Schengen area, and terminal two non-Schengen area. In addition, there were three sampling days and different sampling times, in order to reach various customers. Airports Council International has settled these additional features for random sampling at the airports. In order to gather enough evidence and confidence for the results, the author sampled one hundred passengers.

When it comes to the results, by combining qualitative and quantitative research, the final analysis is a combination of interpretation and in-depth knowledge of the marketing and customer experience, supported by numerical data of their impact on airport customers. According to Bell and Bryman (2015), mixed method provides broader perspective of actions, situations and consequences, which can be used in development of the airport marketing and customer experience.

Nevertheless, there are also certain challenges in the airport environment, when it comes to marketing research. The wide range of different airport customers makes it complicated to fully research the needs and trends of all customer types, and it is problematic to analyse the research results as the participants are from different countries and their customer behaviour varies substantially. In addition, the security regimes and safety regulations set certain requirements for the execution of the survey.

When it comes to secondary sources, a competitive and regulated airline industry doesn't allow access to their airline-specific data, which makes it problematic for airport marketers to collect external sources. (Halpern and Graham, 2013) Additionally, Bell and Bryman (2015) identify the limitation of qualitative research, which is the risk of biased information. The author aims to avoid this problem by combining secondary and primary sources. On the other hand, as the author's main focus is Helsinki-Vantaa Airport and Finavia, she considers the qualitative interview with Finavia's representative to be a relevant source and give beneficial insight of the company. The limitation of quantitative research is the risk of losing the context, but with mixed method and well-designed questionnaire the author aims to avoid it (Bell and Bryman, 2015). However, when integrating qualitative and quantitative methods, there are typically limitations in statistical measurement and vulnerable data of qualitative research. There are certain other limitations to the research, just as difficulties to reach the industry experts, security regulations and language barriers, when operating in such an international environment. However, the author believes that the final analysis is relevant, referring to the amount and quality of sources, challenging method, and the sample size.

As a conclusion, due to the characteristics of airport marketing, mixed method is the most relevant research method for airport marketing research. The combination of qualitative and quantitative research provides dimensional results, and allows to combine interpretation and statistics (Bell and Bryman, 2015). The research design is sequential exploratory, which is relevant for relative and developmental objectives. Airport customers are sampled randomly, with certain clusters determining the time and location of the research, following the ACI standards. The author aims to avoid major limitations of the actualized methods, and focuses on certain points of view and a well-designed questionnaire.

## 6 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH – INTERVIEW WITH THE CUSTOMER INSIGHT MANAGER

Helsinki-Vantaa Airport has been successful with its marketing campaigns and customer satisfaction, and therefore, the author wants to examine how Helsinki-Vantaa Airport conducts researches. As a primary source, the author interviewed Finavia's Customer Insight Manager to find out how Helsinki-Vantaa Airport examines their customers, which are the most important element in their marketing strategy. Additionally, she analyses the main findings of this qualitative research.

### 6.1 The Interview

Helsinki-Vantaa airport is currently expanding and has a major focus on service quality and customer experience, thus it is important to know how marketing research supports the future development. In addition, airport marketing research indicates the current customer satisfaction and competition status that the airport has, and it is the main source for customer experience – and commercial teams to focus their operational activities. The research processes were discussed with Finavia's Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus. Since December 2016, Sanna Vatjus has been in charge of Finavia and its airport community's commercial studies, including both B2C and B2B sectors.

Vatjus underlines that the main strategical objective for Finavia is the customer satisfaction. Finavia maintains a year-round research to have up-to-date data of the current situation and actively adjust their operations accordingly. Vatjus explains that there are certain standards that have to be met when collecting research data. For example, quartal data research must be running every day 24/7 at every airport. The standards are determined by ACI (airports council international), in order to collect comparable, relevant data from every airport globally, Vatjus explains.

Another continuous research Finavia maintains is ASQ (Airport Service Quality) survey. According to Vatjus, this survey focuses on measuring the airports performance on offering smooth travelling through its processes that customers go through, including the speed of security checks, tidiness, information accessibility, price-quality ratio, etc. In

addition, data collection of airline customer profiles, who they are, where are they going to and how much money they spend, is another continuous research object. Those results can be used in e.g. customer need recognition and air service development.

Additionally, Vatjus addresses that the research agencies conduct also nonrecurring, specific studies in order to assist the development of the airport product. She gives an example of customer segment research, which helped the marketers to focus on four main segments and their requirements when planning new marketing activities and operational changes. Moreover, the results can be advantageous as a secondary source for other surveys. Vatjus also provides a list of examples of typical research methods, such as mystery shopping, mobile applications, B2B customer surveys, price visualisation campaign and concept testing. In commercial sector, her team conducts a yearly research on a current topic, which can refer to any innovation in the industry.

When asking about research comparison with other airports, Vatjus explains more about the ASQ research, which is the global benchmark research that every international airport participates. This kind of global testing standardises the airport industry and boosts the competition between the airports. In addition, Vatjus adds that ASQ provides the quartal level information of their success in the competition and an overview of how their own objectives have been reached. Normally, the comparison concentrates on certain global panel (countries) which are considered to be the most competitive airports with similar target audience and focus points.

At Finavia, every department has the access to the research data and can use it as a secondary internal source. Vatjus has a relevant role in result optimisation, and depending on the results, she presents them to every department the results affect and benefit mostly. She analyses the monthly results of the continuous surveys with the commercial department, but highlights the main findings also in the meeting of the board members. She underlines the importance of internal communication and the transparency between the departments. In general, people at Finavia are very interested in the researches and the results, and there are lots of departments who follow the results continuously. Vatjus adds, that sometimes she would need additional resources to be able to present the detailed results to everyone who they refer to.

At the moment, Finavia does not have any specific research on customer experience and marketing activities, which makes it ideal for the author to conduct her survey of

marketing trends. However, they are active on social media platforms and they collect actively data from there about customer preferences and needs.

In order to collect research data cost-efficiently, relevantly and fast, the surveys are mostly executed at the airport. Vatjus underlines that email - and other online surveys are very problematic in the airport environment, which drives airports to use innovative techniques to collect customer data. In the airside, there are self-standing screens to reach the customers in real time, as well as NPS, Net Promoters Score, which measures the recommendation rate of the customers. NPS has been perceived very useful operational tool also for Finavia's partners. She values the importance of innovative approaches in data collection techniques, and names it as a competitive advantage of Finavia, as she compares their approach to the other airports' techniques.

When it comes to qualitative and quantitative data, Vatjus explains that the method depends on the objective. Most of the time, the best solution is first to understand the basics with qualitative research and then the results are quantified to see the scale the proportion of the results, according to Vatjus. Mostly they combine these two at Finavia, depending on the need.

Interview of Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> September, Finavia Head Quarter

As a conclusion, in order to implement successful airport marketing, there must be continuous and specific research in both B2B and B2C sectors. There are also international research standards that make airports comparable and set specific implementation requirements. This is one of the main reasons why the airport industry has developed such competitive and innovative platforms. However, not just the object of the research is important, but also the tools and technology used in marketing research to improve the research efficiency.

## 6.2 Findings and Analysis

Marketing research in the airport environment is strictly regulated globally, which makes the competition highly transparent and therefore more competitive. The author highlights the pressure that is generated by the quarterly performance results, which challenges the airports to develop their operations and innovative marketing strategies. In addition,

it seems that airport marketing research is location-dependent, and therefore is only relevant in the actual airport environment. These characteristics must be considered also with the author's own passenger questionnaire at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, in order to provide liable results.

Vatjus' interview also highlights the fact that airport marketing is not targeted only for passengers, but also for partners and employees. However, the interview focuses on passenger research's perspective, but the overall target audience must be acknowledged. In a competitive framework, it is important to know your customers, and Vatjus underlines the global panel they refer their performance to. This panel appears to be the closest competitor of Finavia, and Helsinki-Airport's marketing strategy aims to differentiate from them. However, Vatjus does not reveal the panel, but based on company visions, customers, locations and connections, the author supposes Copenhagen, Oslo Airport, and Arlanda to be part of it.

The author thinks that marketing research plays such an important role in the industry that it will require more workforce in the future. Even though technology enhances the efficiency of the research, the analysis and interpretation, as well as the improvements must be actualised faster in the future, while airports are expanding and customer volumes are rising rapidly.

In addition, most of the research is executed with a mixed technique of qualitative and quantitative data, which is a similar method to this thesis research. Vatjus also confirms that they have not studied how marketing affects customer experience. These two findings refer to the potential of contributing this thesis research in accurate time and with relevant methods.

As a conclusion, technology and digitalisation plays an important role in Finavia's marketing research, as they can reach the customers effortlessly and collect real-time data. In addition, the mixed method is the most used method at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport's marketing research, but there is only one person in charge of analysing and contributing the results, which might be disadvantageous. When it comes to competition, it is limited to a certain panel, of which results are followed quarterly. Globally regulated research features standardise the service quality sampling, and makes the competition both transparent and challenging.

## **7 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH – THE PASSENGER QUESTIONNAIRE**

After focusing on the airport marketing trends and airport marketing research techniques, and qualitative research, the author conducted a quantitative passenger questionnaire with nine marketing related questions. In this chapter, the author determines each stage of the research; definition of the problem and research objectives, implementation, and finally, the research findings.

### **7.1 Definition of the Problem and Research Objectives**

The first phase of establishing a research is to define the problem and research objectives. Earlier in this thesis, the author discussed the seven innovative marketing trends and how Finavia actualizes them at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. The crucial part of the research is also to identify some marketing activities that are implemented in other international airports, with the case studies and examples provided earlier. In addition, the author aims to examine the passengers' perspective of the airport marketing development, and how it impacts on their airport experience during their visit at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. Therefore, she conducted a passenger questionnaire that includes nine specific questions that aim to identify how passengers experience the airport marketing trends and their implementation. The author expects to find the most successfully implemented activities and be able to name some shortages that can be improved. In addition, she wants to analyse the potential activities and highlight in which cases the customers' experiences should be considered in commercial decision making.

There are many studies of marketing effectiveness and customer satisfaction, however, the link between commercial marketing activities and customer experience has not been researched at Helsinki airport. Marketing activities aim to increase the profitability of the airport, while the service quality and atmosphere aim to increase customer satisfaction. However, researching marketing activities at the airport from customers' perspective provides a causal understanding of how they impact on each other.

## 7.2 Implementing the questionnaire

According to Graham and Halpern (2013), the most effective way to execute airport customer surveys is to reach the airport customers at the airport's gate area with printed questionnaires. The author printed English and Finnish copies of her passenger questionnaires and faced each passenger individually. The author visited the airport in three days; Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>, Friday 13<sup>th</sup>, and Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2017. The author collected respondents between 8am and 13am, except on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> after 8pm. The objective was to reach evening, morning and day passengers travelling to both European - and haul destinations, in order to reach wide range of different passengers. Even though the author has the access to the secured gate area on behalf of her job, the airport security monitoring room had to be informed of this after-work activity at the airport, due to the strict regulated environment and airport ID card usage policies.

The author reached the passengers in both terminals, and eventually 19% of the overall responds were collected in terminal one, while 81% in terminal two. Terminal two is the bigger terminal at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, and it includes also the Non-Schengen area. 30% of the respondents were flying to Non-Schengen destinations.

The questionnaire papers were organised in Finnish and English piles, and passengers got to choose their preference language. Eventually, 44% answered the questionnaire in Finnish. The author targeted men and women in different age groups, ending up having 49% male and 51% female respondents, in the average age group of 31-40 years old (29%). The author collected overall 101 respondents. As expected, passengers waiting at the gate area were ideal target group for the questionnaire, and that is how most of the respondents were reached. 80% of the respondents would participate a similar questionnaire again, which indicates that it was favourable activity to the passengers. Approximately every 6<sup>th</sup> passenger was willing to participate the questionnaire, according to the authors estimation. 1% of the passengers did not finish the questionnaire, and eventually his answers were not taken into consideration.

Every respondent was given a writing pad, a questionnaire paper and a pen. While respondents took their time on answering the questions, the author found additional respondents or collected the previous answers in one result file. After receiving the filled questionnaires, the author checked every question and filled the possible missing

answers with the respondent. Overall, collecting 101 answers took approximately 9 hours.

The author collected and analysed the answers manually and transferred the final percentages on one file. This method was very time-consuming, but the most relevant for this type of research. The final results were also sent to Finavia's Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus, as beneficial source of customer insights of the current situation.

Each question had an introduction to the marketing trend and opinion question of its impact on an individual customer. Some of the questions were hypothetical, proposing marketing activities to be implemented at Helsinki airport, while some of the questions focused on studying the existing marketing activities.

The author reached respondents from every continent. However, 72% were from Europe, 13% from Asia and 7% from North America. Other continents were represented in few percentages. In addition, the continent of origin did not affect significantly of the responds.

23% of the respondents travelled for business purposes, 74% for leisure and 3% for other purposes, such as family visits. The average respondent travels 3-5 times a year (33%), and the majority of 78% were not at Helsinki airport for the first time. Overall 52% of the respondents spend 2-4 hours at the airport, as officially suggested by the airlines. The percentage of transfer passenger (47%) was almost equal to the passengers with direct flights (53%), which is typical for Helsinki-Vantaa Airport as an important transit airport in Europe.

This basic background information was collected due to regular data collection. The author wanted to collect an evidence of diverse respondents and examine how long time and how often Helsinki airport passengers travel by air. However, demographical factors were not analysed with the marketing research questions, as they do not pay a significant role in this research. Helsinki-Vantaa Airport serves all kinds of customers from different age groups, different origin, and with different travel habits, and the customer experience research does not depend significantly on these factors, but must be researched as diversely as possible.

### 7.3 Findings

The author aimed to clarify the potential of virtual shopping opportunities at the airport. The trend has been tested on Frankfurt airport with a virtual Tax-Free shopping wall as a non-profitable pilot. This question examines the opinion of such shopping opportunity, and finally measures how many respondents would actually use it.

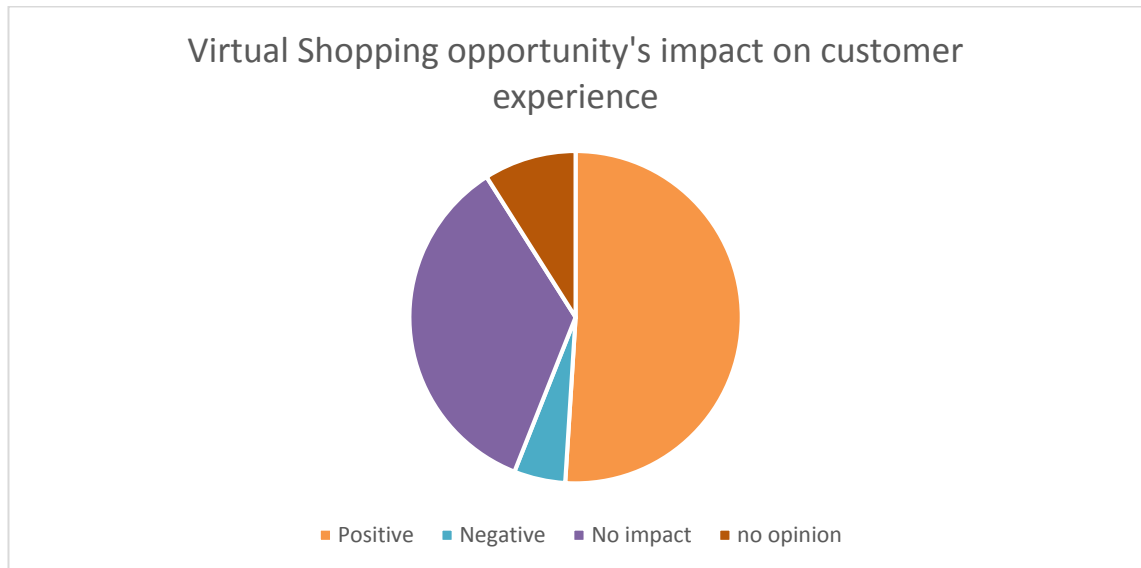


Figure 2: *Virtual Shopping opportunity's impact on customer experience*

Virtual shopping opportunities seem to have a very positive influence on airport customer experience (Figure 2). The questionnaire examined whether Helsinki Airport passengers would prefer a similar virtual shopping opportunity than in Frankfurt Airport, and 51% would be positively influenced by such opportunity, and the similar percentage would actually use it (Figure 3). The author underlines that these results indicate the potential of such marketing input, and would allow more choice for shopping methods and change the retail culture at the airport, in more futuristic direction. The minor 5% considered virtual shopping wall having a negative impact on their experience.

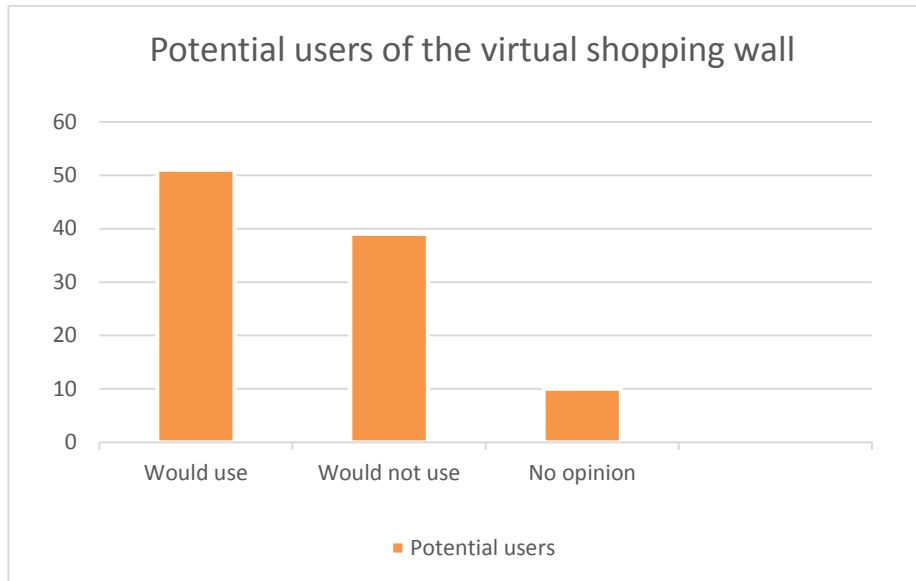


Figure 3: *Potential users of the virtual shopping wall*

According to the questionnaire, 39% would not use the shopping wall at the airport (Figure 3). The author supposes that it's caused by the unknown technology, since virtual shopping is not very common trend in retail shopping in general. 10% of the respondents do not have an opinion whether they would use virtual shopping wall, and this is caused probably the same reason described above. However, the author thinks it is a marketing activity that should be considered, as variety of shopping options has a positive influence on more than half of the airport customers examined. In addition, as majority of the respondents had an opinion on this, it is crucial to consider the airport customers when developing similar marketing activities, as it certainly influences their experience.

The next question refers to the marketing trend of crowdsourcing, and introduces the marketing activity used in Copenhagen airport. With the concrete example of the activity the author wanted to know whether similar concept would interest the customers and what would be the best possible way of execution.

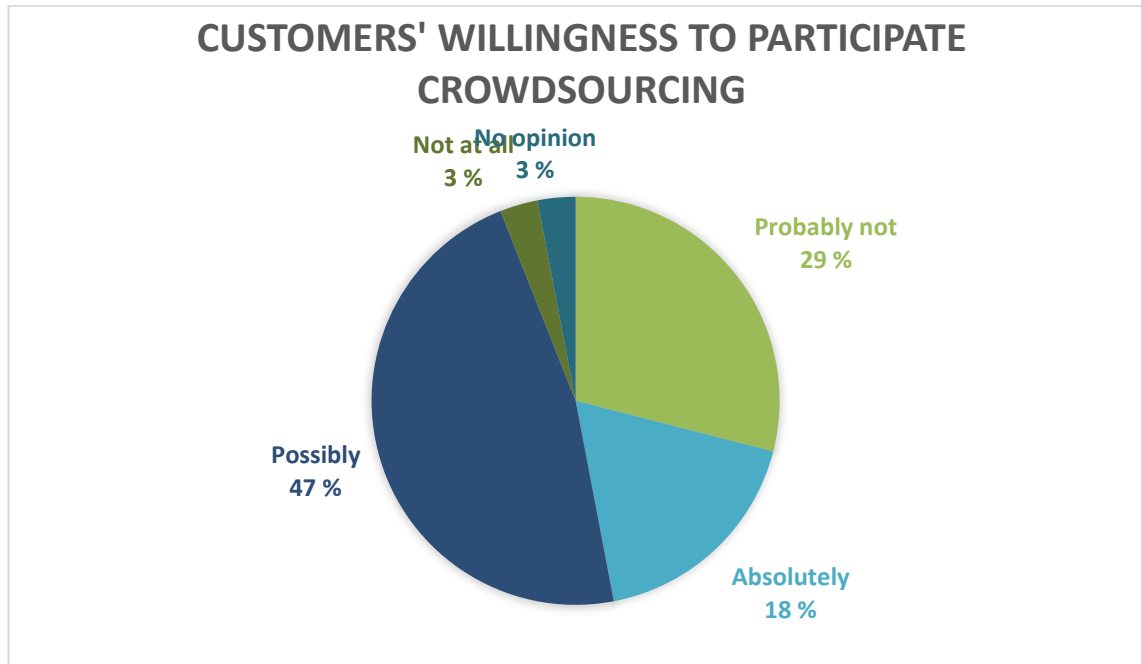


Figure 4: *Customers willingness to participate crowdsourcing*

Crowdsourcing marketing activity “Idea generation” also interested the majority of respondents (Figure 4). 18% would absolutely share their development ideas, and 47% would possibly like to participate the airport’s development. Overall 63% considered Copenhagen airport’s crowdsourcing method of Idea platform as a positive influencer. In addition, 29% of the respondents doubted by answering probably not, while 3% would not like to participate Helsinki-Vantaa’s development at all. The author interprets that such opportunity would have a positive influence on customer experience and would engage the customers with the airport product, as the majority of respondents got interested in it. In addition, the 3% responding no opinion, would not at least defend it and no negativity was risen against the marketing activity.

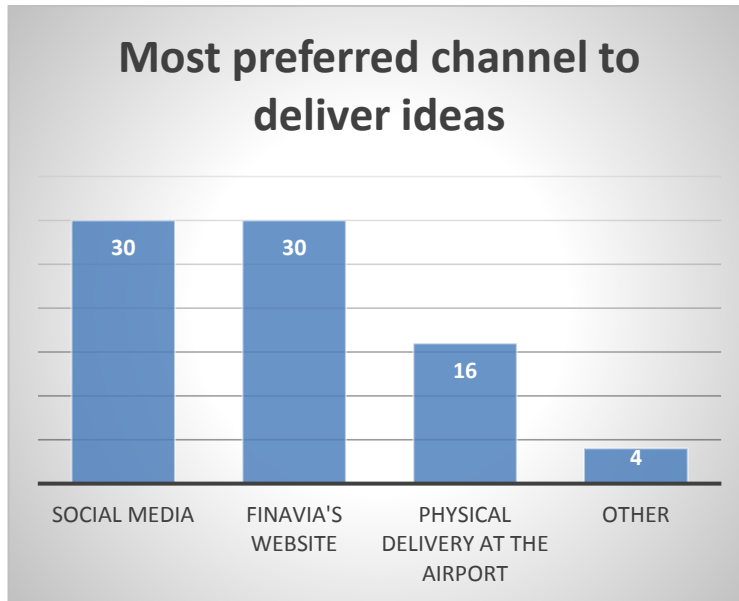


Figure 5: *Most preferred channels to deliver ideas*

30% of the respondents would like to share their ideas on social media, while another 30% on the airport's official website (Figure 5). Also, 4% suggested additional online channel, email, to deliver their development ideas. This 64% indicates high preference of online channels in such marketing activity, and the passengers' willingness to connect the airport through them. Thus, the online environment becomes part of the airport experience, and could be reached before or after the physical visit at the airport. Maintaining the online customer platforms sets additional standards and demands for services, which also must be considered by customer experience team.

However, physical solutions, such as black board and idea box, were supported by 16% of the respondents (Figure 5). These methods are less efficient and less instant, and only minority of the passengers would prefer them today.

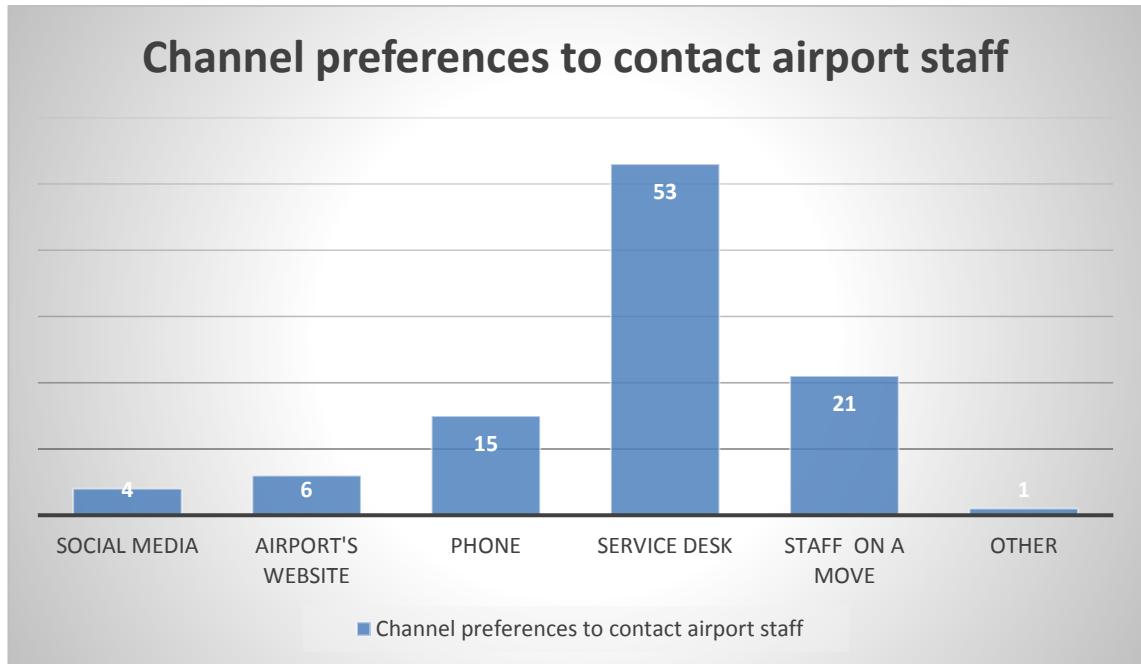


Figure 6: *Channel preferences to contact staff in unexpected situations*

Another finding was that when it comes to unexpected situations at the airport, 74% of respondents would like to have a human-to-human service, while only 10% would prefer online services, and 15% phone services (Figure 6). These results indicate that passengers still require personal service despite the online era. Helsinki-Vantaa passengers experience the service desk and mobility staff the most preferable service models for necessary issues. When it comes to social care as part of the marketing strategy, it is valuable to understand which services should be delivered online, which offline. The distinct supports the customer experience team and the implementation of social care can be directed to the most valuable setting. With these findings of customer preferences, the customer experience team should be able to determine the value and need for personal and impersonal services in different situations at the airport.

In addition, the respondents were asked if they feel like they would find service in case of any issues. This refers to social care, and the author examined whether the passengers experience it's execution at the airport. 86% of respondents would find information if needed, which indicates that customers experience that there are enough staff and available information with an easy access. The author also interprets that those customers find Helsinki airport organised and clear airport, as they are confident finding information even in unexpected situations. Thus, they most likely trust the airport.

However, the 7% with the no - and 7% with no opinion answers shows that there is still some work to do with social care.

Helsinki Airport advertises its smooth travelling and variable connections, so it would be ideal that every customer would find information when needed. In a marketing perspective, Helsinki airport performs well with its social care activities, however, the experience of 14% of the passengers root to a basic lack of the service and information awareness. Also, it may be, that the respondents with no opinion answers could not identify themselves to an unexpected situation, and thus had no opinion, which could be interpreted as a positive result.

In recent years Helsinki-Airport's marketing has had a specific focus on Chinese passengers, referring to the Red Carpet marketing activity. The questionnaire examined how passengers experience the special services targeted to certain passenger group. Red Carpet has specific marketing objectives, however, according to the survey it has also a positive impact on customer experience. 21% found it positive that there are services and additional marketing activities for Chinese passengers, while only 1% found it as a negative factor on passenger's airport experience. The marketing focus on Chinese passengers does not influence on the majority, 44%, of the respondents, while 30% had not even paid attention to it. The results indicate that Red Carpet marketing activity and a specific focus on certain target passengers does not have negative impacts on the other airport passengers, and is rather experienced as a positive feature. According to the author's interpretation, these results encourage the airports to focus on serving also the passengers with the most divergent needs.

Innovative air service development is another strongly marketing based activity with profitable objectives. The author examined whether it influences on the customer experience and found out that 39% of the respondents have not paid attention on it, while 29% responded that it does not have any effect on their experience. Most of the innovative service development is implemented in B2B sector or through advertisement which does not directly appear to the airport passengers, according to the author. However, 3% of the respondents found it negatively confusing to deal with many different operators, but 22% thought it increases the service quality, delivers more destinations to choose from and enhances the competition. Thus, the author believes that air service development does not have to consider individual airport passenger on decision-making process and can focus on financial factors and potential airline customers.

The author examined certain service factors in more detailed. The top three factors with the most positive influence on customer experience at Helsinki Airport are the available services (85%), staff availability (80%) and payment options (78%) (Figure 7). These appear directly to the customers and thus are well acknowledged and executed at the airport. Also, these refer to the social care marketing, innovative service development and shopping trends, which seem to have, in their current existence, positive impacts on customer experience. Most of the listed factors had a positive impact on customers (Figure 7), and only two of them reached less than half of the audience; Adverts at the airport (41%) and online reviews (39%). This means that these two factors are the least likely to generate positive impacts on customers. The author believes that this is caused by the indirect influence of online reviews and advertisement, and their impact on customers is the least acknowledged. Overall, the high positive percentages indicate that Helsinki Airport's service factors are seen often positively by the customers, and the marketing activities referring to them are not causing any harm for customers.

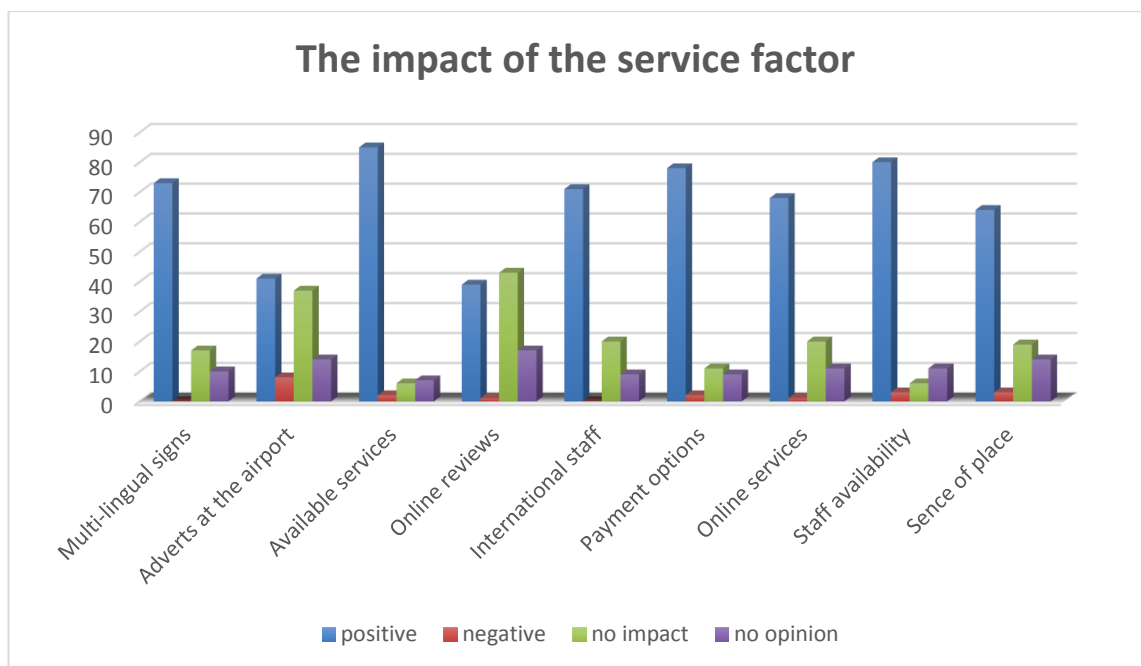


Figure 7: *The impact of the service factors*

However, adverts at the airport generate some negative experiences to the examined customers (Figure 7). 8% of the respondents replied that they have a negative impact on them. In addition, 3% felt that staff availability and sense of place cause negative experiences at Helsinki Airport. These percentages are, however, relatively small and based on subjective experience, of which contexts cannot be explained. ASQ examines

these factors in a monthly basis at the airport. When it comes to the least impactful factors, online reviews (43%), adverts at the airport (37%), international staff (20%) and online services (20%) were the most named factors. The author believes that the direct impact might not be seen by the passengers, and very likely not all the customers deal with online services and international staff during their airport visit.

The implementation of advocacy marketing and its effectiveness depend a lot on customers' willingness to recommend the airport. The author examined whether customers would recommend the airport (Figure 8), based on their experience at the airport today. Unfortunately, 7% had no opinion on this, which can refer to mixed feelings about their experience. The most named feature affecting on this choice was airport transportation, with 29%'s support. Overall, 79% of no opinion respondents did not list any features in the following questions, which makes it impossible to analyse.

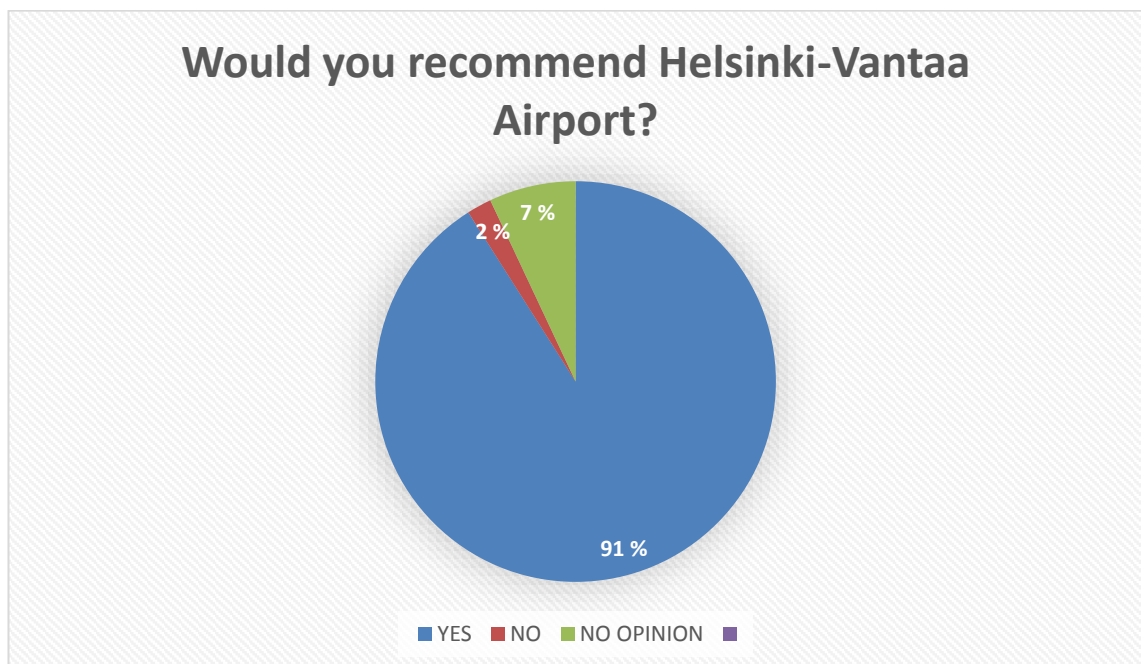


Figure 8: *Would you recommend Helsinki-Vantaa Airport?*

However, the majority, 91% of the respondents, would recommend the airport based on their today's experience (Figure 8). Such high result on positive responds refer to great opportunities to display advocacy marketing by persuading the positively influenced customers to share their experiences. However, the questionnaire did not examine whether customers have already recommended the airport, but it indicates the capacity that advocacy marketing activities would have based on existing customer satisfaction.

The most named reasons to recommendations were overall tidiness, service quality, atmosphere and decoration, free wi-fi and airport transportation, while the least named were transfer time and services for kids and disabled people (Figure 9). The author analyses that the top five features are the most crucial part of the airport process and thus are most appeared and paid attention to, while the least named are visible mostly for transfer passengers, families with kids or disabled passengers.

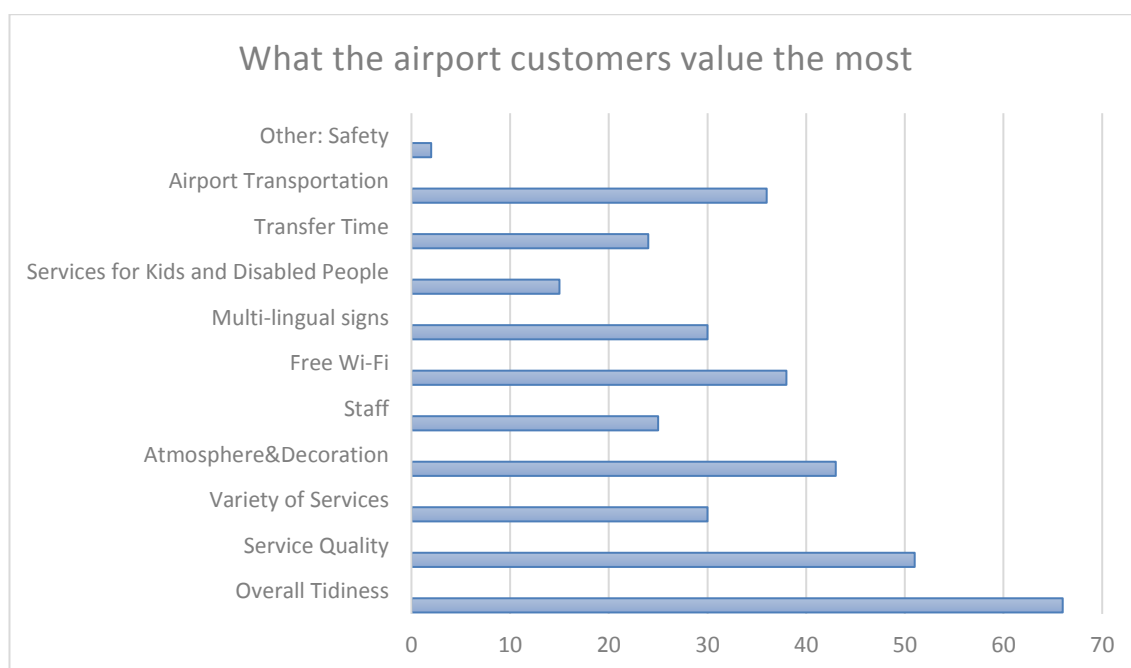


Figure 9: *What the airport customers value the most*

In addition, 2% of the respondents would not recommend the airport based on their experience (Figure 8). These responds were based on delayed flights and problems with airport transportation. According to the author, these are great examples of how public transport of the area and airlines operating at the airport are linked to the airport. The airport process for the passenger is a mixture of these three, and any disrupt of the process will impact on the overall airport experience. That is why the airport should actively co-operate and communicate with transportation companies and airlines to prevent unsatisfied customers.

The questionnaire also examined how the passengers see Helsinki-Vantaa airport brand. The question was designed to give a vision of how strong identity the airport has from passengers' perspective (Figure 10). The following question measured the potential

of implementing storytelling campaign at Helsinki-Vantaa, and how it could be executed in order to be successful.

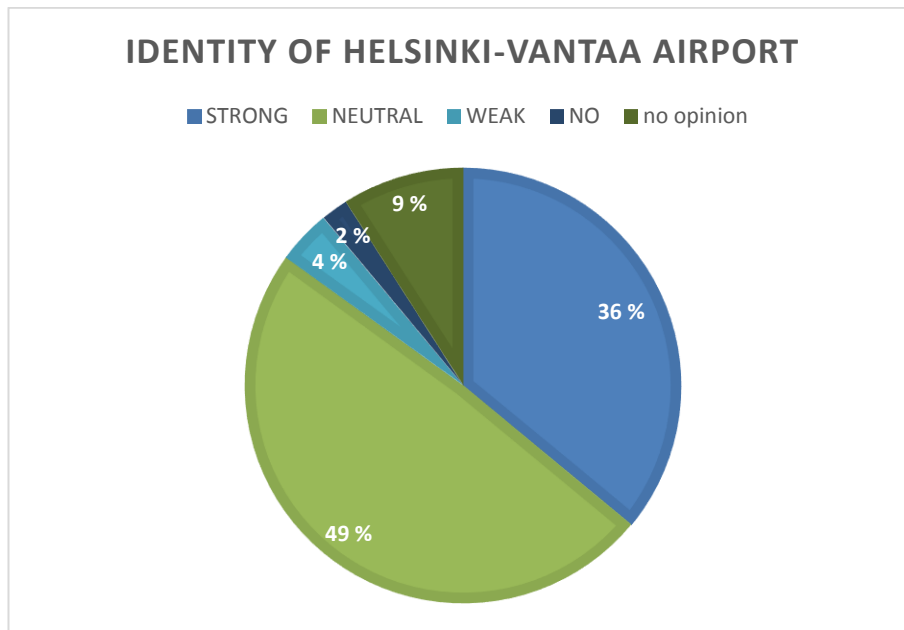


Figure 10: *Identity of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport*

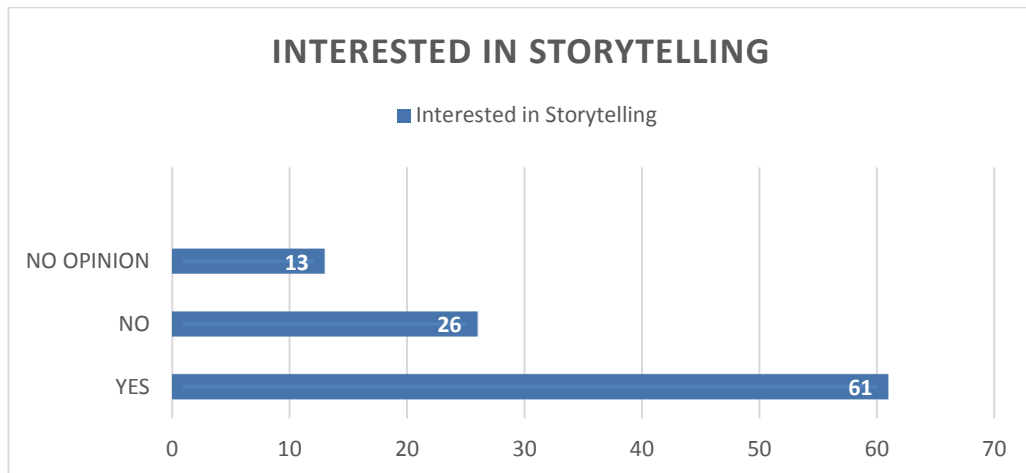


Figure 11: *Passengers interested in storytelling*

9% of the respondents had no opinion whether Helsinki-Airport has an identity (Figure 10). Probably this refers to lack of evidence, whether the airport has identity as an enterprise. The suggested activity, storytelling, was supported by 56% of those respondents, and they would like to hear, see or read stories about airport customers and employees (Figure 11). In addition, 2% of respondents thought that the airport does

not have an identity, and they would not support storytelling activity either. The author believes that certain amount of audience would not consider companies having identities at all, as it is a growing concept and has been invested and adapted more in recent years.

When it comes to the respondents thinking that Helsinki-Airport has an identity, there were some dispersion in the responds (Figure 10). The minor 4% consider Helsinki-Airport having a weak identity. However, 75% of them would support the storytelling activity to boost the identity building (Figure 11). These results indicate that there might be a need for visible activities to connect with customers by content marketing concepts, such as storytelling. In addition, 49% responded that Helsinki-Airport has a neutral identity as an airport. Again, majority of 59% of them would be interested in storytelling. The overall support for storytelling was 61% of all the respondents, which indicates a great potential for such marketing activity and its implementation at Helsinki Airport, the author interprets.

Finally, the author examined which airport have provided the best overall experience to the customers. 80% of the respondents answered this open question. Overall, 29 airports were mentioned all over the world, both domestic and international airports. In addition, 38% named Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, 5% Changi Airport (Singapore), and another 5% John F. Kennedy International Airport (New York City). Those are the top three airports based on respondents' experience. Helsinki-Airport was described as spacious, fast and organised, having a good service quality and friendly staff. JFK International Airport, instead, was praised for the restaurant and fast services. When it comes to Changi, respondents said it is a modern airport with good variety of activities, having a nice decoration and a fast immigration process. These comments show that services, their efficiency and the overall atmosphere and decoration makes the airport standing out in comparison.

The author estimates that Helsinki-Vantaa's advantage is the size of the airport; it can easily compete with fast services and short transfer times, as its relatively smaller airport. Thus, the social care and advocacy are easier to manage. In addition, the author thinks that it was a good thing that Copenhagen, Arlanda (Stockholm) or Oslo airports were not in the top 3, since they compete closely with Helsinki Airport in general basis. However, the author thinks that since the questionnaire was held at Helsinki airport, the popularity of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport as an answer might be partly biased. On the other hand, it was beneficial to let the respondents come up with their favourite airport without restricting

them with multiple choices, and read their comments and most valuable factors. However, more dispersion on this question would have brought more chances to analyse the question, because with these answers the percentages stayed very low in most of the airports, and cannot be effectively compared and interpreted.

## 7.4 Research Analysis

The questionnaire results indicate that marketing activities at Helsinki-Vantaa airport have mainly positive impacts on customer experience. The marketing activities implemented at Helsinki airport have gained a global, commercial success (Finavia, 2015), and the questionnaire results prove that they also generate customer satisfaction. Airports have struggled measuring the authentic benefit of their new innovative market approaches (ACI, 2014) that have other than financial objectives, and this research have been one approach to measure their value to the customer. In addition, airport customers seem to be interested in participating in the development of the airport, the results indicate. Therefore, the author believes that Helsinki-Vantaa Airport should use more customer-involved marketing in order to benefit from their happy customers.

In addition, results of the questionnaire provide sources to develop more innovative marketing activities at the airport, and indicate the potential of using customers' networks as marketing channels. The examined customers are potential advocates to the Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, as 91% of the respondents would recommend it. This indicates the high potential for an advocacy marketing campaign, which would benefit the connections and network of satisfied customers. In addition, 65% of the respondents would be interested in participating in airport development through crowdsourcing, mostly through Finavia's website or their personal accounts on social media. This is further evidence of the potential use of customers' personal channels. Furthermore, 61% would be interested in hearing authentic stories of the airport customers and employees. The main finding of these results is that Helsinki-Vantaa Airport's passengers are willing to communicate more with the airport, not only in service, but also in commercial context. Therefore, the positive customer experiences can be used as a commercial advantage, which is a link between the airport marketing and customer experience.

The main precondition to connect with the customers is that the airport has something to be connected, such as identity. Majority (49%) thought that Helsinki-Airport has a neutral

identity, while 6% finds it has a weak identity, or no identity at all. According to the author, this is the shortage that must be improved in order to connect with the passenger and implement customer involved marketing.

When it comes to consuming the airport product, the author refers to virtual shopping, air service development, red carpet and social care, which maintain the service supply at the airport. The main finding is that the more service opportunities they have, the more satisfied customers are. For instance, 51% of the respondents would find virtual shopping wall as a positive factor, and 21% are positively influenced by the services for Chinese customers. However, these were the marketing activities that were the least paid attention to. The author believes that while consuming the airport product, customers do not have the need of connecting to the airport. Therefore, it is more important to the airport to influence the customers' consumer behaviour.

The questionnaire also examined the communicational impact. The main finding is that even though airports focus on their social media services, the customers value the human to human service more in the airport environment, with 74% support. This result highly refers to the customer experience operations. However, in marketing activities, the online communication was more preferred. Therefore, there should be a distinct use of communication channels in customer experience - and marketing activities.

As a conclusion, the positive impact that Helsinki-Vantaa Airport's marketing has on its customers evolves their willingness to communicate, connect and consume the airport. In order to enhance the current marketing strategy, the airport must focus on branding and identity building activities, such as storytelling. With a stronger identity, the airport can connect to its customers and implement interactive marketing activities, such as crowdsourcing - and advocacy campaigns. This is how airport marketing and customer experience can be related to each other, and they can generate more engaged customers and increase profit, but also share their customer needs and participate in service development.

## 8 CONCLUSION

Airports are excessively developing enterprises, and their unique operation environment has allowed the industry to create innovative approaches to their marketing activities. The main research question of this thesis referred to the relationship between airport marketing and customer experience, and how these fast developing marketing activities impact airport customers. As the airport product delivers a complex service chain to its customers, airport operators must build an attractive community and standardised service processes. In addition, airports must attract not only passengers, but also employees and the best service providers in order to compete in the global level. However, every airport has its own, unique customer base and location, but international standards of safety and services. Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, used as a case environment in this thesis, has established customer experience team to develop the service quality, and conduct continuous, primary research of its customers, in order to keep track of the vibrant airport environment and its customers.

In the current decade, the seven globally recognised marketing trends have developed the airport industry significantly. Due to technology and new research techniques, the airport customers can be reached and their needs, habits and expectations can be recognised more efficiently. Social care has become a crucial concept in almost every international airport, and the service focus on Chinese passengers has increased significantly. Some airports are launching virtual shopping malls while some compete with the luxury airlines and haul destinations. In addition, crowdsourcing activities, storytelling and advocacy marketing aim to engage the customers and make the airport more connected. These marketing activities have not just been implemented and recognised, but they have stabilised in many industry leading airports. For instance, social care is part of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport's daily operations.

The author struggled in reaching the industry expert from Finavia's Commercial Department, and eventually interviewed the Customer Insight Manager, Sanna Vatjus, from Finavia. Vatjus highlighted the importance of the customer satisfaction and how it is constantly searched. She also refined the author's passenger questionnaire and gave her a permission to conduct the questionnaire at the airport. Manually conducted questionnaire was an obvious but time-consuming decision, and finally generated 100 respondents' point of views on her thesis research.

The questionnaire results indicate that majority of the Helsinki airport customers are positively influenced by the marketing, and interested in the new marketing approaches that the author hypothetically suggested. Enthusiastic and satisfied customers generate lots of potential to Helsinki-Vantaa Airport, not only to meet its objectives, but also to develop its operations and commercial activities. According to the results, Helsinki-Vantaa Airport should focus on brandbuilding by establishing content marketing campaigns. In addition, Helsinki-Vantaa Airport's satisfied customers are useful base to implement other customer involvement marketing activities, such as crowdsourcing and advocacy campaign.

Successful airports have customers who consume, communicate and connect with the airport. These are the shared values of customer experience and airport marketing. However, in order to fulfil those customer needs, airports require innovative and differentiated marketing activities. As this thesis presents, most of the globally recognised marketing trends necessitate customer involvement in order to function. This indicates the complex relationship of the airport marketing and customer experience. The contribution of this thesis is the understanding of the customer involved marketing activities, and which requirements it has. By analysing the decade's most significant activities and their relation to the airport customers, the author is able to present some crucial improvements and focus points that Helsinki-Vantaa Airport could possibly consider in their marketing.

In addition, as the results of this thesis provide an evidence for potential improvements, there are also many opportunities for further research. Possible research topics could refer to customer-involved marketing, airport brandbuilding or advocacy marketing possibilities at Helsinki airport, to name a few. As a personal goal, the author was able to gain a profound knowledge of the industry and its passenger insights, enhance her analytical competences, and finally develop her proficiency in a dimensional level.

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## Interview with the Customer Insight Manager Sanna Vatjus

Finavia Head Quarter, Lentäjätie 3, 01531 Vantaa, 12<sup>th</sup> September, 2017

The author: Mitä työnkuvaasi kuuluu Customer Insight Managerina?

Sanna Vatjus: Vastaan Finavian, sekä Helsinki-Vantaan että meidän verkoston asemien osalta kaikista asiakastutkimuksista. Tietysti B2B tutkimukset kuuluu siihen yhtenä osana, todella laajasti meillä täällä (Finavialla) tutkitaan.

The author: Millainen tutkimustiimi teillä on Finaviassa?

Sanna Vatjus: Minä "istun" tavallaan markkinoinnissa, mutta vastaan yksin koko tutkimuspaletista. Me ei itse tehdä tutkimuksia Finavialla, vaan meillä on yhteistyökumppaneita, jotka tekevät tutkimukset. Itse vastaan niiden suunnittelusta ja siitä mitä tarvitsemme, sekä siitä että saamme mitä haluammekin saada, sekä tietenkin tutkimusbudjetista. Monelta eri toimialalta ja niiden kanssa yhteistyössä teemme tutkimuksia, ja vastaan myös tulos-puolesta. Varsinaista työtäni on analysoida tuloksia ja mitä ne tarkoittavat liiketoiminnan, tuotekehityksen tai asiakaskokemuksen kannalta. Tavallaan jalkautan, tai käännän, tulokset bisnekseen, jotta osaamme niitä oikealla tavalla hyödyntää.

The author: Mitä on viimeisimpiä tutkimuksia, joita Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä on tehty?

Koko ajan on jotain. (Vatjus näyttää lukuja ja tutkimuksia tietokoneelta). Strateginen tavoitteemme on tyytyväiset asiakkaat. Tehdään jatkuvasti Airport Service Quality tutkimusta, eli joka kuukausi kerätään tietoa siitä, miten lentoasema pystyy tuottamaan ja suoriutumaan palveluista, joita matkustajan polulla on, esimerkiksi turvatarkastuksen nopeudesta, tai miten löytää portilta toiselle, millaisia ostos-mahdollisuuksia on ja millainen on hinta-laatusuhde, siinä on paljon erilaisia osa-alueita, joita pitää tutkia jatkuvasti. Samaa tutkitaan myös kaikkialla verkostossa. Nämä ovat meidän jatkuvia tutkimuksia. Lisäksi on lentomatkustajatutkimus, jolla saamme profiilitietoa keitä matkustajat ovat, mihin he ovat menossa, paljon he käyttävät rahaa lentoasemilla ja mihin segmentteihin he kuuluvat. Meillähän on tehty segmentointitutkimus, ja saamme matkustajat aika hyvin neljään eri segmenttiin, ja ne (tulokset) keskustelevat sitten muiden tutkimusten kanssa (Vatjus näyttää tuloksia tietokoneelta neljästä eri

segmentistä). Tarpeen mukaan tutkimme myös esimerkiksi kiinalaisia tai paljon matkustavia liikematkustajia, myös esimerkiksi vaihtomatkustajia on tutkittu erikseen, perheitä, jotka matkustavat lasten kanssa, sekä pysäköintiä, ... Uusin, mikä on tulossa, on landside puoli ja sen asiakkaat, kun nythän (lentokenttä) aluettamme uudistetaan, on hyvä tietää, keitä sillä puolella liikkuu, ja mitä tarpeita heillä on, mikä tukee sitä, että ymmärrämme nykytilan, mutta myös tulevaisuuden kehityksen. Tulokset siitä valmistuvat muutaman viikon sisällä. Sitten on tietysti trendi skenaarioita, joita vähän harvemmin tutkitaan. Jatkuvasti teemme kuitenkin turvatarkastuksen mysteerishoppausta ja kaupalliselle puolelle vastaavaa. Sitten on tehty porttialuetta, aplikaatioita, kiinaoppaita on myöskin tutkittu. Sitten olen tänä vuonna uudistanut B2B tutkimuksen (lento-yhtiöt). Nyt valmistuu myös hinta-mielikuva -kama ja sekä konseptintestaus tutkimus. Kaupalliselle puolelle teemme joka vuosi heille jonkun ajankohtaisen tutkimuksen. Kuten näet, isossa kuvassa on jatkuvaa mittausta, ad hocia, palvelutason mittausta ynnä muita, eli todella monipuolisesti tutkitaan.

The author: Vertailetteko tutkimustuloksia usein muihin kilpailijoihin (lentokenttiin) vai keskittykö tutkimukset enemmän kehittämään omaa lentokenttä "tuotettanne"?

ASQ (Airport service quality) on globaali benchmark tutkimus johon eri lentoasemat ympäri maailman osallistuvat ja sitä kautta saamme kvarttaalitason tietoa, miten menestymme suhteessa muihin. Olemme määritelleet oman paneelin, tai kilpailuryhmän, johon vertaamme omia tuloksiamme.

The author: Teetkö Customer Insight Managerina tutkimuksia kaikille Finavian tiimeille?

Kaikki tiimit saavat hyödyntää ja ammentaa tutkimustuloksia. Käyn aina kaupallisessa tiimissä kertomassa kuukausituloksista, ja tarpeen mukaan muissa tiimeissä, mikäli tulokset ovat tekemisissä heidän tiimensä tekemisiin. Esimerkiksi passenger processes tiimissä ja myöskin lentoasemapäälliköiden kokouksessa. Kaikki tieto on avointa ja intranetissämme kaikilla on lukuoikeus tutkimukseen. Meillä on sillä tavalla "hyvä imu" että ihmiset ovat kiinnostuneita tutkimuksista ja millaisia tuloksia niillä on. Välillä tuntuu, että pitäisi saada itsensä kloonattua, jotta voisi olla kahdessa paikassa kertomassa tuloksista, että siinä mielessä todella hyvä tilanne (kun ihmiset ovat kiinnostuneita).

The author: Oma opinnäytetyöni liittyy markkinointiin ja asiakaskokemukseen, ja aiheena on oikeastaan niiden keskinäinen suhde, niin millaisia markkinointiin tai asiakaskokemukseen liittyviä tutkimuksia teillä tällä hetkellä on? Tai tutkitaanko

Finavialla, esimerkiksi miten markkinointitrendit vaikuttavat asiakkaisiin ja millaisiksi he kokevat ne?

Ei meillä olla tuolla tavalla tutkittu. Nyt kun maailma on mennyt digitaalisemmaksi, olemme enemmän läsnä eri kanavissa, näymme siellä ja samalla kasvatamme tunnettavuuttamme. (Vatjus refers to the benefits that digitalisation allows to the companies; they can get customer insights from social media channels and study their passengers' preferences and see their opinions and reviews online, which is valuable research method). Olemme tietysti pieni maa, niin olemme verkostoituneet myös Kiinaan päin ja olemme tehneet työtä kiinalaisissa some-kanavissa. Meillä on WeChat tili uusimpana.

The author: Mitä teknologiaan tulee, kuinka suuri osa tutkimuksistanne on digitaalisesti tai netissä toteutettua, ja kuinka paljon teette tutkimuksia fyysisesti asiakkaiden parissa?

Keräämme paljon tietoa kyselytutkimuksilla, pääsääntöisesti lähtöporttialueella eli fyysisesti mistä matkustajat lähtevät ja ovat itse tilanteessa. Siten saamme tietoa nopeasti ja kustannustehokkaasti. ASQ on määrätty tehtäväksi juuri sillä tavalla. Emme oikein muulla tavoin tavoita matkustajiamme, emme saa heidän sähköpostejaan tai muutenkaan tavoita heitä muuten. Mutta uutena meillä nyt alkuvuodesta on tullut NPS (net promoters score), reaaliaikainen väline, jolla saamme matkustajan välittömän palautteen, esimerkiksi heti turvatarkastustilanteen jälkeen. Asiakas voi siis antaa heti palautteen menikö (turvatarkastus) hyvin vai huonosti, ja tieto kerääntyy meidän alustamme. Sieltä tulee todella paljon vastauksia päivän aikana. Tulokset ovat hyvin erilaisia riippuen mikä turva(tarkastuspiste) on kyseessä, mutta sillä tavalla pääsemme tilanteeseen nopeasti käsiksi ja tieto on reaaliaikaista. Toinen on porttialueilla, kahdellakymmenellä vilkkaimmalla portilla, on vastaavanlainen laite, jos olet kuullut Net Promoters Scoresta, joka kysyy, suosittelisitko lentokenttää tämänpäiväisen kokemuksesi perusteella asteikolla nollasta kymmeneen. Sillä saadaan myös reaaliaikaisesti tietoa, joka on laitettu suoraan intraan niin että kaikki näkevät paljon meidän suositteluasteikko tällä hetkellä on. Se on uutta nykyaikaista tutkimista, ja myös verkoston asemilla käytössä. Se on koettu hyvänä operatiivisena työkaluna. Olin juuri viime viikolla ASQ forumissa, jossa oli eri maiden lentoasemien tutkijoita niin heillä ei ollut vastaavaa reaaliaikaista välinettä, vaan tekevät sen (tutkimisen) ihan eri tavalla. Täytyy olla ylpeitä, että meillä on tällaisia järjestelmiä ja systeemeitä käytössämme.

The author: Kuinka paljon teillä on kvalitatiivista ja kuinka paljon kvantitatiivista tutkimusta?

Se menee yleensä ihan sen mukaan, mihin haluamme saada vastauksen. Usein miten paras ratkaisu löytyy sillä, että haluamme ensin ymmärtää asia eli tutkimme kvalitatiivisesti, jonka jälkeen se sitten kvantifioidaan, jotta nähdään missä mittasuhteissa ne (tutkittavat asiat/tulokset) ovat. Eli todella usein se (tutkiminen) on niiden yhdistelmää. Mutta tietysti tarpeen mukaan, sanoisin kuitenkin, että ehdottomasti eniten yhdistelmätutkimusta. Tietysti esimerkiksi ASQ on täysin numeerista tutkimista.

The author: Onko Finavialla tiettyä sesonkia, jolloin tutkimuksia tehdään enemmän, esimerkiksi ruuhka- ja lomakausina, vai minä aikana tutkimuksia yleensä tehdään eniten?

Tutkimuksilla on tietyt säännöt, tutkimusten on pyörittävä kaikkina viikontpäivinä ja kaikkina kellonaikoina, mutta en ole muuten ajatellut että keskittäisimme tutkimista tietyille ajankohdille.

The author: Millaisia tutkimussääntöjä on ja kuka ne määrittää?

ACI:n säännöt, siellä ne on määritelty niin että kaikkien lentoasemien data on vertailukelpoista, tieto pitää olla kvarttaalissa kerättyä kaikkina viikontpäivinä kaikilta lentoasemilta.

Next, the author and the interviewee started to talk about the thesis and the passenger questionnaire related to it, but the interview part ends in here.

## APPENDIX 2: Airport passenger questionnaire and results

Dear Sir / Madam

Thank you for your participation to this questionnaire. I am an international business student from Turku University of Applied Sciences, and this questionnaire is part of my research of Global Airport Marketing Trends and their effect on Customer Experience at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport. It will take approximately 5-8 minutes to fill this anonymous questionnaire and the results will be possibly used in marketing - and customer experience development.

**I hope you will answer the questions truthfully. Please circle the most preferable option.**

*At Copenhagen Airport -website there is a platform called "CPH Ideas" which allows the customers to suggest development ideas for the airport and vote for the best ideas to be executed.*

1a. Would you be interested in sharing ideas and participate the development of Helsinki-Vantaa Airport?

- Absolutely 18%
- Possibly 47%
- Probably not 29%
- Not at all 3%
- No opinion 3%

1b. If yes, would you prefer to deliver your ideas...

- on social media 30%
- on Finavia website 30%
- on black board at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport 7%
- on a physical idea box at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport 9%
- other? \_\_\_\_\_ 4%: email

*Many airports, including Helsinki-Vantaa, deliver specific services for increasing number of Asian passengers in order to consider the cultural differences and enhance the customer experience.*

2. Does it affect on your stay at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport?

- Yes, positively 21%
- Yes, negatively. How? 1%: unequal
- I haven't paid attention 30%
- No, it doesn't affect 44%
- No opinion 4%

*Airports aim to deliver the best possible services from the best service providers in the market. Thus, there are many different companies operating at Helsinki-Vantaa airport, for example Swissport, Airpro, ISS and SOL.*

3. How does it affect on your airport experience when you are served by different companies and service operators?

- Positively, because \_\_\_\_\_ 22%: many diverse service and companies, better competition
- Negatively, because \_\_\_\_\_ 3%: confusing, shared responsibility
- I haven't paid attention 39%
- It doesn't affect 28%
- No opinion 8%

*At Frankfurt Airport there is a virtual shopping wall where customers can buy duty free goods by scanning the QR code with their smartphones, and the product is delivered at the pick-up point in less than 15 minutes. This is faster a way to purchase duty free products without queuing.*

4a. How would a similar opportunity to buy products virtually at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport affect on your stay?

- Positively 51%
- Negatively 5%
- It wouldn't affect 35%
- No opinion 9%

4b. Would you use this kind of virtual shopping wall at the airport?

- Yes, I would 51%
- No, I wouldn't 39%
- No opinion 10%

*Airports aim to take care of their customers as soon as any issues appear and provide real-time information on any special circumstances. Helsinki-Vantaa has service desks, screens and several social media platforms to communicate with their customers.*

5a. In case of any issues, do you feel that you are able to find information or service at Helsinki-Vantaa airport?

- Yes 89%
- No 7%
- No opinion 7%

5b. Which would be the most comfortable way for you to contact the airport staff in case of any issues?

- Through social media 4%
- Through the airport website 6%
- By phone 15%
- On a service desk 53%
- By finding a staff member on a move 21%
- Any other? \_\_\_\_\_ 1% : email

*As commercial enterprises, airports use branding to build their identity in order to create unique atmosphere and enhance the customer experience at the airport. For example, London Heathrow airport had a storytelling campaign where they shared customer and employee stories to strengthen their identity and engage with their customers.*

6a. In your opinion, Helsinki-Vantaa airport has...

- STRONG identity 36%
- NEUTRAL identity 49% → 29 of them would like storytelling
- WEAK identity 4% → 3 of them would like storytelling
- NO identity 2%
- No opinion 9% → 5 of them would like storytelling

6b. Would you be interested in reading/seeing/hearing stories about people at Helsinki-Vantaa?

- Yes 61%
- No 26%
- No opinion 13%

*Helsinki-Vantaa aims to give a positive experience to all of the different customers visiting the airport, for example by providing multi-lingual signs and good service quality.*

7. Please cross whether the listed factor has a positive, negative or no impact on you.

	POSITIVELY	NEGATIVELY	NO IMPACT	NO OPINION
Multi-lingual signs	73%	0%	17%	0%
Adverts at the Airport	41%	8%	37%	14%
Available services	85%	2%	6%	7%
Online reviews	39%	1%	43%	17%
International staff	71%	0%	20%	9%
Payment options	78%	2%	11%	9%
Online services	68%	1%	20%	11%
Staff availability	80%	3%	6%	11%
Sense of place *	64%	3%	19%	14%

\*the feeling that you are specifically in Helsinki, Finland

8. Which airport has provided you the best customer experience so far? Why?

80% answered this question: Helsinki 30 customers, Changi Singapore 4 customers, JFK 4 customers, Copenhagen 3 customers, London Heathrow 3 customers, Hong Kong 3 customers, Oslo Airport 3 customers, Dubai airport 2 customers, Paris Charles de Gallo 2 customers, Bangkok 2 customers, Munchen Airport 2 customers, Dublin 2 customers, Narita (Tokyo) 2 customers, Brussels 2 customers, Doha 2 customers, Frankfurt 2 customers etc. Altogether, 28 airports were mentioned!

According to studies, every third transit passenger chooses the airport based on recommendations, which are very important to any businesses.

9a. Based on your experience at Helsinki-Vantaa today, would you recommend it to others?

- Yes 91%
- No 2%
- No opinion 7%

9b. Which features affected on your answer in 9a?

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| • Overall tidiness 66 votes (1.)                                 | • Multi-lingual signs 30 votes (6.)                    |
| • Service quality 51 votes (2.)                                  | • Services for kids and disabled people 15 votes (10.) |
| • <u>Variety of shops, restaurant and services</u> 30 votes (6.) | • Transfer time 24 votes (9.)                          |
| • Atmosphere and decoration 43 votes (3.)                        | • Airport transportation 36 votes (5.)                 |
| • Staff 25 votes (8.)  | • Other: 2 votes: safety (11.)                         |
| • Free Wi-Fi 38 votes (4.)                                       |  |

**Please fill in the general information**

Gender: FEMALE / MALE 51%/49%

Age:

- Under 20 years old 5%
- 20-30 years old 22%
- 31-40 years old 29%
- 41-50 years old 19%
- 51-60 years old 12%
- 60+ years old 13%

From:

- Europe 72%
- Asia 13%
- Middle-East 2%
- South-America 1%
- North-America 7%
- Oceania 3%
- Africa 2%

What is the purpose of your trip?

BUSINESS / LEISURE

23% / 74% + 2% family

Including this trip, how many trips by air have you made in the last 12 months?

- 1-2 30%
- 3-5 33%
- 6-10 24%
- 11-20 9%
- 21 or more 4%

Are you a transfer passenger at this airport?

YES / NO 47%/53%

Is this your first time at Helsinki-Vantaa Airport?

YES / NO 22%/78%

How long time do you spend at Helsinki-Vantaa airport today?

- less than 2 hours 28%
- 2-4 hours 52%
- more than 4 hours 20%

Would you like to answer a similar questionnaire at the airport in the future? YES / NO 80%/20%

Thank you for your time! I hope you enjoy your stay at Helsinki-Vantaa airport 😊

## APPENDIX 3: Asiakaskysely lentokenttämatkustajille

Hyvä kyselyyn vastaaja,

kiitos osallistumisestasi tähän asiakaskyselyyn. Olen kansainvälisen liiketalouden opiskelija Turun ammattikorkeakoulusta, ja tämä kysely on osa opinnäytetyötäni globaaleista lentokenttämärkinointitrendeistä ja niiden vaikutuksesta asiakaskokemukseen Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä. Tämän nimettömän kyselyn vastaamiseen menee noin 5-8 minuuttia, ja tuloksia tullaan mahdollisesti hyödyntämään lentokentän markkinoinnin - ja asiakaskokemuksen kehittämisessä.

**Toivottavasti vastaatte kysymyksiin mahdollisimman todenmukaisesti rengastamalla teille sopivimman vaihtoehdon.**

*Kööpenhaminan lentokentän kotisivuilla on alusta nimeltään "CPH Ideas", joka antaa asiakkaille mahdollisuuden jakaa kehitysideoitaan, sekä äänestää parhaiden ideoiden toteutumista lentokentällä.*

1a. Olisitko sinä kiinnostunut jakamaan ideoitasi ja osallistumaan Helsinki-Vantaan kehittämiseen?

- Erittäin todennäköisesti
- Mahdollisesti
- Todennäköisesti en
- En lainkaan
- Ei mielipidettä

1b. Jos kyllä, jakaisitko ideasi mieluiten...

- sosiaalisen median kautta
- Helsinki-Vantaan nettisivujen kautta
- lentokentälle tuotavalla liitutaululla
- lentokentälle tuotavalla "Ideat" laatikolla
- muulla tavalla? \_\_\_\_\_

*Monet lentokentät, mukaan lukien Helsinki-Vantaa, tarjoavat erilaisia palveluita kasvavalle määrälle aasialaisia matkustajia, ottaakseen huomioon kulttuurilliset erot ja parantaakseen asiakaskokemusta.*

2. Vaikuttaako se sinun oleskeluusi lentokentällä?

- Kyllä, positiivisesti
- Kyllä, negatiivisesti. Miten? \_\_\_\_\_
- En ole kiinnittänyt asiaan huomiota
- Ei vaikuta minun oleskeluuni
- Ei mielipidettä

*Lentokentät pyrkivät tarjoamaan parhaita mahdollisia palveluita markkinoiden parhailta palveluntarjoajilta. Siten Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä asiakasta palvelevat useat eri yritykset, kuten Swissport, SOL, Airpro ja ISS.*

3. Miten tämä vaikuttaa sinun lentokenttäkokemukseesi, kun sinua palvelee useampi eri yritys?

- Positiivisesti, koska \_\_\_\_\_.
- Negatiivisesti, koska \_\_\_\_\_.
- En ole kiinnittänyt asiaan huomiota.
- Sillä ei ole vaikutusta.
- Ei mielipidettä.

*Frankfurtin lentokentällä on virtuaalinen ostosseinä, josta asiakkaat voivat ostaa verovapaita tuotteita skannaamalla QR-koodin älypuhelimellaan, ja tuote ilmestyy noutopisteelle alle viidessätoista minuutissa. Tämä on nopeampi tapa ostaa verovapaita tuotteita ilman jonottamista.*

4a. Miten vastaava virtuaalinen ostosmahdollisuus vaikuttaisi sinun kokemukseesi Helsinki-Vantaalla?

- Positiivisesti
- Negatiivisesti
- Se ei vaikuttaisi kokemukseeni
- Ei mielipidettä

4b. Käyttäisitkö itse virtuaalista ostosseinää Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä?

- Kyllä käyttäisin
- En käyttäisi
- Ei mielipidettä

*Ongelmien ilmetessä lentokentät pyrkivät huolehtimaan asiakkaistaan ja informoimaan reaaliajassa mahdollisista poikkeustilanteista. Helsinki-Vantaalla on palvelutiskejä, näyttöjä, sekä sosiaalisen median kanavia, joilla he kommunikoivat asiakkaidensa kanssa.*

5a. Mikäli mitään ongelmia ilmenee, uskotko löytäväsi tietoa ja saavasi palvelua Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä?

- Kyllä
- En
- Ei mielipidettä

5b. Mikä olisi sinulle mieluisin tapa ottaa yhteyttä lentokentän työntekijöihin mahdollisten ongelmien ilmetessä?

- Sosiaalisen median kautta, kuten: \_\_\_\_\_
- Lentokentän nettisivujen kautta
- Puhelimella
- Palvelutiskin kautta
- Löytämällä lentokentällä kiertävän työntekijän
- Jokin muu tapa? \_\_\_\_\_

*Kaupallisina yrityksinä lentokentät käyttävät brändäystä rakentaakseen identiteettiään ja luodakseen ainutlaatuisen ilmapiirin, sekä parantaakseen asiakaskokemusta lentokentällä. Esimerkiksi Lontoon Heathrow lentokentällä järjestettiin "tarinankerronta" kampanja, jossa matkustajat ja työntekijät jakoivat lentokenttäkokemuksiaan. Kampanjalla oli positiivinen vaikutus Heathrown brändiin.*

6a. Mielestäsi Helsinki-Vantaan lentokentällä on...

- VAHVA identiteetti
- NEUTRAALI identiteetti
- HEIKKO identiteetti
- Ei identiteettiä lainkaan
- Ei mielipidettä

6b. Olisiko mielestäsi mielenkiintoista lukea/nähdä/kuulla tarinoita Helsinki-Vantaan ihmisistä? (ympyröi vastauksesi ja tarvittaessa valitse yksi tai useampi alleviivatuista vaihtoehdoista)

- Kyllä, haluaisin lukea/nähdä/kuulla tarinoita lentokentän matkustajista/työntekijöistä/lentokentästä itsestään
- Ei
- Ei mielipidettä

*Helsinki-Vantaan lentokenttä pyrkii tarjoamaan positiivisen kokemuksen kaikille kentällä vieraileville asiakkailleen päivästä riippumatta, esimerkiksi monikielisillä opasteilla ja laadukkaalla palvelulla.*

7. Merkitse kunkin osatekijän perään, onko sillä positiivinen vai negatiivinen vaikutus sinuun matkustajana, vai vaikuttavatko ne kokemukseesi ollenkaan Helsinki-Vantaalla.

	POSITIIVINEN	NEGATIIVINEN	EI VAIKUTUSTA	EI MIELIPIDETTÄ
Monikieliset opasteet				
Mainokset lentokentällä				
Saatavilla olevat palvelut				
Nettiarvostelut				
Kansainvälinen henkilökunta				
Maksutapavaihtoehdot				
Nettipalvelut				
Henkilökunnan saatavuus				
Paikallisuus *				

\*tunne, että olet erityisesti Helsingissä ja Suomessa.

8. Mikä lentokentistä, joissa olet tähän asti vierailut, on tarjonnut sinulle parhaan asiakaskokemuksen? Miksi?

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*Tutkimusten mukaan joka kolmas vaihtolentomatkustaja valitsee vaihtolentokenttensä suosituksen perusteella. Suositukset ovat todella tärkeitä minkä tahansa alan yrityksille.*

9a. Tämänpäiväisen kokemuksesi perusteella, suosittelisitko Helsinki-Vantaan lentokenttää muille?

- Kyllä, netissä ja/tai kasvotusten
- En
- Ei mielipidettä

9b. Mitkä tekijät vaikuttivat vastaukseesi kysymyksessä 9a? Voit valita useita

- Yleinen siisteys
- Palvelun laatu
- Kauppojen, ravintoloiden ja palvelujen monipuolisuus
- Tunnelma ja sisustus
- Henkilökunta
- Ilmainen Wi-Fi
- Monikieliset opastekyltit
- Lapsille ja liikuntarajoitteisille suunnatut palvelut
- Vaihto-aika
- Lentokentän kulkuyhteydet
- Muu, mikä: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Täyttäsittkö vielä perustietonne**

Sukupuoli: NAINEN / MIES

Ikä:

- Alle 20-vuotias
- 20-30-vuotias
- 31-40-vuotias
- 41-50-vuotias
- 51-60-vuotias
- Yli 60-vuotias

Mistä olet kotoisin:

- Euroopasta
- Aasiasta
- Lähi-idästä
- Etelä-Amerikasta
- Pohjois-Amerikasta
- Australiasta
- Afrikasta

Mikä on lentomatkohteesi tänään?

\_\_\_\_\_

Mikä on matkasi tarkoitus?  
TYÖMATKA / LOMAMATKA

Tämä matka mukaan lukien, kuinka monta lentomatkaa olet tehnyt viimeisten 12 kuukauden aikana?

- 1-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 21 tai enemmän

Oletko vaihtolentomatkustaja tällä lentokentällä?  
KYLLÄ / EN

Onko tämä ensimmäinen kertasi Helsinki-Vantaan lentoasemalla?  
KYLLÄ / EI

Kuinka kauan vietät tänään aikaa tällä kentällä?

- alle 2 tuntia
- 2-4 tuntia
- enemmän kuin 4 tuntia

Haluaisitko osallistua vastaavanlaiseen kyselyyn myös tulevaisuudessa vieraillessasi lentokentällä?  
KYLLÄ / EN

Kiitos ajastasi! Toivottavasti viihdyt Helsinki-Vantaan lentoasemalla! 😊