PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT IN HUNTING TOURISM
German hunters as a target group for a Finnish service provider

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Työn nimi TUOTEKEHITYS METSÄSTYSMATKAILUSSA: Saksalaiset metsästäjät kohderyhmänä suomalaiselle matkailuyrittäjälle
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Tiivistelmä

Tämän opinnäytetyön aiheena oli metsästysmatkailu, joka on vähemmän tutkittu matkailun osa-alue. Sitä ei usein edes tunnisteta osaksi matkailualaa. Työn pääasiallinen tavoite oli kehittää uusia tuotteita suomalaiselle matkailuyrittäjälle, joka tarjoaa metsästysmatkailupalveluita. Hänen tavoitteenaan taas oli saada uusia ulkomaalaisia metsästäjiä asiakkaiksi. Koska saksalaiset metsästäjät ovat potentiaalisin metsästysmatkailun asiakasryhmä, heidät valittiin kohderyhmäksi.

Tietoperustaksi kerättiin tietoa useista eri lähteistä. Ensin määriteltiin metsästysmatkailu matkailun viitekehyksessä ja sen tunnusomaisia piirteitä verrattiin muihin matkailun osa-alueisiin. Seuraavaksi tuotekehitysprosessin eri vaiheet käytiin läpi ja kohderyhmän profiili luotiin hakemalla tietoja useista eri tutkimuksista ja kyselyistä. Myös palvelun tarjoajan palvelut, tuotteet ja resurssit arvioitiin. Lopuksi vielä tutkittiin matkailua palvelutuotteena.

Teorian soveltamiseksi käytäntöön tuotekehitysprosessi kuvattiin käyttämällä kerättyä tietoa kohderyhmästä ja palvelun tarjoajasta. Tällä tavoin oli mahdollista kehittää uusia tuotteita. Tärkeimmiksi asioiksi nousivat metsästyksen eettiset asiat ja kestävän käytön periaatteet riistanhoidossa. Lisäksi paikallista metsästyskulttuuria tulisi korostaa saksalaisille metsästäjille.

Pohdinnassa kävi ilmi, että kun tuotekehitys perustuu asiakkaan tarpeisiin, tuote tulee todennäköisemmin menestymään. Kyseessä olevalla kohderyhmällä on mahdollisuuksia mutta vaatii myös erikoishuomiota. Suomella on myös runsaasti mahdollisuuksia metsästysmatkailukohteena. Maamme puhdasta luontoa ja erikoisia riistakantoja tulisi pitää tärkeimpänä resurssina ja myyntivalttina etenkin tulevaisuudessa.

Avainsanat (asiasanat) Tuotekehitys, metsästysmatkailu, saksalaiset metsästäjät
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Abstract

The topic of this thesis is hunting tourism, one of the less studied forms of tourism. In fact, often it is not even officially recognised as part of the tourism business. The main purpose of this thesis was to develop new products for a Finnish service provider offering hunting tourism services. The objective of the entrepreneur was to reach foreign customers in the future. Since German hunters are one of the most potential hunting tourist groups in Europe, they were chosen to be the target group.

The theoretical framework was created by collecting information from different researches and literature. First, the position of hunting tourism was defined and its characteristics were compared with other forms of tourism linked with nature based tourism. Second, the product development process was studied and information of the target group was gathered from surveys concerning hunting tourism. Also the service provider's existing services, products, and resources were evaluated. Finally, the specific features of tourism as a service product were researched.

To implement the theory in practise, the product development process was described and followed by using the information of the target group and the service provider. Through this process it was possible to create suggestions for these particular products. Moreover, new product examples were created based on the suggestions. The most important issues seem to be hunting ethics and sustainable use of natural resources. Furthermore, the service provider should emphasise the local hunting culture.

The conclusive discussion points out that through product development based on the customer's needs, the finished product is likely to be successful. The target group has potential but does also have specific requirements. Finland has plenty of potential as a hunting destination, and the clean nature and unique game populations should be considered as a competitive advantage.

Keywords

Product development, hunting tourism, German hunters

Miscellaneous

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Hunting has its important role as a method of survival in the history of mankind. Originally, all humans were hunters, and it was also a way of life. In the modern society hunting is no longer a matter of survival and it is no longer part of everyday life. In fact, hunting has become a recreational sport or a hobby, and the nature of hunting has changed. However, hunting still reminds us of the relationship of man and nature and bears a lot of emotions. Since hunting in today's society is bound to land ownership, not all hunters have the possibility to hunt near their place of residence. Especially the people living in cities have very few possibilities to hunt without travelling long distances. Due to this fact, the need for hunting tourism has increased. Furthermore, hunters with better hunting possibilities in their home region also have the need to experience new hunting environments and cultures.

Hunting tourism is rather small in the field of tourism, and has not gained much attention in the tourism literature. In fact, many authors do not even mention it as a form of tourism. However, there are few researches concerning hunting tourism and it is mentioned in some books concerning natural tourism. This thesis is a continuation of and paying homage to another thesis called "Opening channels for hunting travel: a research on Finnish providers and German customers" (Techam & Langi 2005). The purpose of that thesis was to research Finnish service providers and German hunters and to compare the hunting cultures of both countries. The thesis already produced some general improvement suggestions for the Finnish hunting tourism sector and proved German hunters to be potential customers in the future. Another useful source was a research concerning German hunters travelling to Finland (Lämsä & Hietala 1996). This research was concentrating to the potential of German hunters as customers for service providers in the Kainuu region. This thesis, however, is assigned by a particular service provider in the municipality of Hankasalmi and focuses on product development. The idea was to develop hunting products that would be attractive to foreign customers. Since German hunters bear the most potential as tourist hunters in Europe, they were chosen to be the target group.

Hunting tourism is a special niche market with a relatively homogenous target group and very specific characteristics. Hunting creates strong feelings in public because it includes firearms and killing of animals, which reminds some people of terror. Others, however, see hunting as a method of game preservation and as usage of natural resources. In Finland, hunting tourism is a small business and lacks professional approach. Mainly the hunting tourism services are provided by small businesses or private entrepreneurs. However, the resources for hunting tourism are plentiful and Finland has a competitive advantage in pure, distinctive natural environment and unique game species.

This thesis consists of the theoretical framework concerning hunting tourism and the product development for the service provider, who assigned this thesis. The theoretical part includes the definition of hunting travel in the field of tourism and general knowledge of service products in the field of tourism. Furthermore, the theory of the product development process is described. In the actual product development part, the characteristics of the target group and the service provider are described. Moreover, the process of product development is followed by using the gathered information. The final results of the thesis are the improvement suggestions concerning product development and new products. Furthermore, there is a new product example as an appendix to present the results on a practical level.

2 DEFINING HUNTING TOURISM

Since there are few studies concerning hunting tourism, it is inevitable to define its place in the field of tourism. Hunting tourism is complex because it combines characteristics from several different forms of tourism. In order to define hunting tourism, we need to understand these different characteristics and place hunting in the field of tourism.

2.1 Tourism

In order to define hunting tourism, one must first understand what tourism is. The tourist and tourism has been described in many different ways since the early 1900´s. For example, the Council of the League of Nations in 1937 recommended a definition of international tourist (WTO & UNSTAT 1994, 3). This definition is not very precise, since it lacks the domestic tourism and does not include any purposes of travel. One very precise definition is described as follows: First of all, the definition of tourism can be divided to two different parts: demand- or supply-side definitions (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2005, 12). According to Cooper and co-workers (2005), the demand-side definitions have evolved to encapsulate the idea of tourism into conceptual definitions and through the development of technical definitions for measurement and legal purposes. From the conceptual point of view, the World Tourism Organization (WTO) has defined tourism as: "Tourism comprises the activities of persons travelling to and staying in places outside their usual environment for not more than one consecutive year for leisure, business and other purposes."(WTO & UNSTAT 1994, 5). Another similar description of tourism is by the Tourism Society of Britain: "Tourism is the temporary short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work, and activities during their stay at these destinations; it includes movement for all purposes, as well as day visits or excursions" (Sharpley and Sharpley 1997, 7). On the other hand, the demand-side definition can be looked from the technical point of view. It requires tourism trips to be isolated from other forms of travel and further develops the definition of tourism. Since, in this thesis, we are not concerned with

the technical point of view, the previously mentioned WTO´s definition of tourism is adequate.

Like the demand-side definition, the supply-side definition has also two approaches: the conceptual and the technical. From a conceptual point of view, Leiper suggests that the whole industry consists of all the firms, organisations and facilities that exist to serve the specific needs of tourists (Cooper et al. 2005, 15).

Through these mentioned definitions, we can now understand the broad definition of tourism from the demand side and the supply side points of view. The more precise elements of tourism will be discussed later. Next, some tourism models will be described to understand the field of tourism as a whole.

2.2 Tourism models

In order to understand the field of tourism it is useful to have a model of the tourism system. Cooper et al. (2005, 8) describes the tourism system by using Leiper's model. The model consists of three basic elements: tourists, geographical elements and the tourism sector. Of these elements the tourist was already described in the previous chapter. The geographical elements by Leiper are the following: traveller-generating region, tourist destination region and transit route region (Cooper et al. 2005, 9). The traveller-generating region is not only the area where the tourists come from but also the generating market, which stimulates and motivates travel. The traveller-generating area can also be described as the push factor. On the other hand, the tourist destination region creates the pull factor and it is the area where most of the tourism activity happens. What is left in between is the transit route region. Leiper describes it as the interval in a trip when the traveller feels they have left their home region but have not yet arrived. Finally, the third basic element of the model is the tourism sector, which we can think of as the range of businesses and organisations involved in delivering the tourism product (Cooper et al. 2005, 9).

By combining the definition of tourism and the tourism model we can create a general picture of the tourism business. In order to place hunting tourism in the field of tourism, some characteristics of certain tourism forms will be described in the following chapter.

2.3 The position of hunting tourism

Tourism comprises either mass or alternative tourism (Newsome, Moore & Dowling 2002, 10). Since mass tourism has hardly anything to do with hunting, it is useful to further divide the alternative tourism and look at its characteristics. Newsome et al. (2002) suggest that alternative tourism is of specific interest or responsible tourism. Moreover, they have divided alternative tourism into natural, cultural, event and other tourism. Natural tourism is of most interest in this case, since hunting tourism shares many characteristics of it. Natural tourism, or tourism in natural areas, is further divided into four different types: adventure, nature based, wildlife and ecotourism. Another interesting type of tourism, in this case, is rural tourism, which falls in the "other" category of alternative tourism. Rural tourism is, by definition, tourism, which occurs in rural areas (Sharpley & Sharpley 1997, 22). Since the definition of rural areas (or countryside) is not very precise, we need to describe it a bit further. Moreover, the scope of rural tourism should be defined. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states: "Rural areas comprise the people, land and other resources, in the open country and small settlements outside the immediate economic influence of major urban centres. Rural is a territorial or spatial concept. It is not restricted to any particular use of land, degree of economic health or economic sector" (Sharpley & Sharpley 1997, 12-13). Since rural areas are described as opposite of urban, the scope of rural tourism appears to be broad. Like stated earlier, all tourism, which occurs in rural areas, can be considered rural tourism. On the other hand, all tourism activities are not typical to countryside or rural in character. Sharpley and Sharpley (1997, 6) suggest also that the scope of rural tourism is restricted by individual perceptions of what is tourism and what is rural.

Basically, hunting tourism shares characteristics of both natural tourism and rural tourism and has also some unique features. One should also remember that none of the tourism type descriptions fits perfectly in hunting tourism. The typical characteristics of hunting tourism will be presented, compared and analysed in the following chapters.

2.4 Hunting tourism vs. natural tourism

According to the Finnish Hunting Act, hunting means the capture and kill of wild game and bringing home the bag. Furthermore, other actions done in order to capture game, for example, tracking, stalking or tracing with a dog are considered as hunting (Metsästäjän Opas: Metsästys- ja aselainsäädäntö 2003, 15). Hunting tourism, by definition, means a hunter travelling to another municipality or country in order to hunt game for recreational purposes and to explore new hunting grounds (Hemmi 2005, 374). The word "hunting" divides peoples opinions clearly in the natural tourism context; some think of it as a part of natural tourism and others do not approve it at all. Those, who support hunting see it as a part of game preservation. For example, hunters are considered to support the sustainability of desired game populations through restricting predator populations and by improving the natural habitat of game. Practically, hunting in sustainable way is similar to other usage of natural resources like, for example, picking mushrooms and berries. In fact, game preservation, hunting and nature preservation have several common interests, although the used methods are different. All parties have positive attitude towards improvement of game populations, habitat and the ecosystem of forests. Those who see hunting and hunting tourism as a negative aspect are criticizing the killing of animals, which is considered unnecessary and unethical in modern society (Hemmi 2005, 374).

Hunting tourism shares many of the characteristics of natural tourism. Natural tourism is further divided to adventure, nature based, wildlife and ecotourism. Adventure tourism focuses on the activity in a natural area (Newsome et al. 2002,12). Hunting is also based on activity, but the motive for hunting trip is not the action. The most important motives of hunters are: experiencing natural en-

vironment, viewing nature, relaxing and being together with friends (Hemmi 2005, 375). Nature based tourism happens in natural settings and focuses on understanding and conservation of the natural environment (Newsome et al. 2002, 13). Thus, the primary objective of nature-based tourism is viewing the nature. Like stated earlier in this chapter, according to Hemmi (2005), one of the main motives of hunters is viewing nature, too. Basically, hunting includes nature viewing. Nevertheless, hunting differs from nature-based tourism quite dramatically in the amount of interference to the local ecosystem. Wildlife tourism consists of exploring new ecosystems and viewing the wildlife. Many of the wildlife tourists seek for education and information about the wildlife and some merely to be entertained (Newsome et al. 2002, 14). Hunting tourism does not represent entertainment but wildlife is close to the core of hunting; a successful hunt requires comprehensive knowledge about wildlife and its habitat. Yet, hunting tourism is much wider concept than viewing wildlife. Like in the case of nature viewing, hunting includes wildlife viewing but differs in the interference level. The last form of natural tourism is ecotourism, which also shares characteristics with hunting tourism. According to Newsome et al (2002), the objectives of ecotourism are the sustainable use of resources, cultural revival, economic development and diversification. Sustainable use of resources is one of the cornerstones of hunting in Finland. It is managed by Metsästäjäin Keskusjärjestö, a hunting organisation working under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. Furthermore, sustainable use of resources is also included in the Finnish hunting etiquette (Metsästäjän Opas 2003, 330).

2.5 Hunting tourism vs. rural tourism

Hunting was an important factor for the emergence of rural tourism; one of the first forms of rural tourism was the British aristocracy's hunting trips to the countryside in the eleventh and twelfth centuries (Sharpley & Sharpley 1997, 48). These days, rural tourism is available for the majority of people and the range of activities has expanded. Still, hunting remains as one of the activities of rural tourism (op. cit. p. 60). Although hunting is listed as one of the rural activities, hunters can hardly be counted as typical rural tourists. For example, half of

the population of UK goes driving or outing in the countryside annually, but hunting and shooting altogether with conservation work and horse riding interests only five percent of the population (op. cit. p. 59). However, the motives for hunting are partly the same as for rural tourism and the actual hunting usually occurs in rural settings. In fact, one of the main motives of both, hunting and rural tourism is experiencing the natural environment.

Hunting tourism seems to share many characteristics with all the forms of natural tourism and rural tourism. Furthermore, both seem to have some similar goals and objectives. Still, hunting tourism does not fall straight into any of the given types of natural or rural tourism. The hunters form a unique group of tourists with distinct motives, separating hunting tourism from natural and rural tourism.

3 SERVICE PRODUCT IN TOURISM

Tourism, among other things, is connected to consumption. In order to consume tourism, it has to be made into a product, a commodity that can be bought. (Borg, Kivi & Partti 2002, 122–123). In tourism, hospitality and leisure people are dealing with a service product, which is different from the general goods sold in the markets. The service product is complex, because service can be anything from personal service to service as a product (Cooper et al. 2005, 574). Tourism product is usually considered as a package, which consists of attraction, services, accessibility, images related to the destination and price (Hemmi 2005, 531).

A service product has three major characteristics: intangibility, perishability and inseparability. Intangibility basically means that a service product is hard to evaluate or demonstrate before the purchase. Selling of tourism often is based on only a promise of timely delivery or comfort and good service. There are some aids to increase the tangibility of the product before purchase, such as printed literature, videos and branding. Perishability means that a service product cannot be stored to be sold in the future. This particular characteristic creates the high-

risk nature of tourism industry. For example, perishability is strongly linked to the season-based demand in the field of tourism. Inseparability means that consumption and production of the service product happen simultaneously. Both, the service provider and consumer are present when the actual service happens (Cooper et al. 2005, 574-575).

In order to understand the customer's point of view of the product, one should consider their needs and motivations. The customers have become more and more demanding through the competition in the industry. The modern tourist's fundamental need is memorable experience. Thus, the core product is the experience and other elements, for example destination, surroundings and staff, are supporting the core product (Borg et al. 2002, 123).

4 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

There are several different models to identify product development. In the context of tourism, the basis of product development is the customers' needs and motivations. The service provider needs to understand both, the basic and social needs of the customer (Borg et al. 2002, 129). Product development is often connected to developing the events, programs and activities of a tourist destination. However, this is not the case because finished product consists of all the services of the trip including travel. Often service providers are offering different possibilities to do something instead of a product. Product development basically means that the different possibilities of destinations are formed into products, which have a certain core of value and price. Product development should be based on researched knowledge about the customers' needs, not on the provider's own preferences (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 93-99).

4.1 The process of product development

In tourism, the process of product development follows the steps of any universal product development model. However, the customers' participation in the

different parts of product development creates the uniqueness of the field of tourism. The ideas that start the product development often come from the needs of the customers.
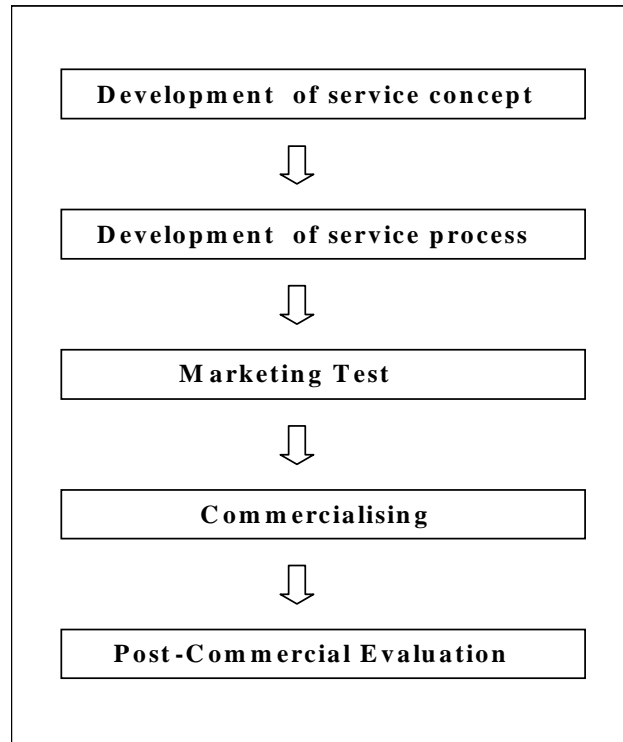
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FIGURE 1. The process of product development in tourism (Komppula & Boxberg 2002)

4.1.1 Development of the service concept

The service concept basically means the core idea of the tourism product, which is the value expected by the customer and how this expectation is fulfilled by the service provider. The service concept is based on the needs of the customers. Thus, it is crucial for the provider to understand the needs and value expectations of the customer. Another important aspect is that all the new products should be developed for a certain target group and particular purpose (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 99-100).

In addition to the value perceived by the customer it is also useful to evaluate the customers' willingness and ability to participate to the service process. The par-

ticipation is affected by the resources of the customer group, such as time, money, physical and emotional resources (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 101). Once the customer's values, needs and participation level are known, it is time to evaluate the provider's resources. These resources consist of tangible and intangible resources, for example, the know-how of the staff, equipment, place and co-operation companies and people (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 102).

Finally, the service concept is finished off by creating different activities. These activities bring content to the core idea and they are based on the provider's resources and customer's values, expectations and participation level. These activities and ideas can then be gathered into different products. The management of these activities will be described in the following chapter.

4.1.2 Development of the service process

Basically, the service process includes the actual service product. When the product is described to the customer, usually in a brochure or offer, it includes the factors only visible to the customers. For the provider, the product includes all the actions needed to deliver the expected value to the customer. The actions can be, for example, accommodation, dining, transportation and activities. The service provider should see these actions as modules linked to each other, forming the service chain. All these modules should be linked together naturally and fulfil the customer's expectations of quality (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 103).

In order to manage all the modules in the service chain, the service provider can use, for example, blueprinting. This chart describes all the parts of the service chain where the customer is in contact with the service organisation. Furthermore, the blueprint includes the actions connected to the customer service and also background work. Basically, the whole service process is described in a chart, which includes all the customer's actions and both, the visible and non-visible production of services. Blueprinting is especially useful when the modules are produced by different providing companies (op. cit. p. 104-105).

From the service providers' point of view, the blueprints of a service chain already form the prototype of the final product. Before the product can be marketed, it should be tested, analysed and described. All the modules should be tested by company's own staff, especially if it includes arranged activities. This is done to check safety issues, schedules and other possible problems or risk factors in the service process. When using the company's own staff, there is a risk that some of the problems will not be discovered. For example, factors depending on the customer's own abilities or cultural background might not be noticed. Thus, it is common that companies use friends or relatives to test a new product (op. cit. p. 108).

Another important step before marketing is the financial analysis. A good tourism product should be financially profitable, easy to sell and have a long lifespan. The lifespan of the product is especially important, since product development requires time and money. The pricing should cover the expenses and, at the same time, be competitive among other service providers. The financial analysis should also cover matters concerning group sizes, safety, quality and the buying potential of the target group. Finally, the tested product can be described to the customers. This is usually done using brochures or other written forms, such as offers. The description should create images that fulfil the customer's expectations. Furthermore, it should clearly point out which needs the product fulfils and what kinds of experiences are possible. On the other hand, the product description often includes the different modules of the service process and their technical and functional quality factors (op. cit. p. 110-111).

4.1.3 Marketing test

When the service provider feels that the product is ready it can be tested in the market. This marketing test can be divided into two phases: the attainment of potential testing customers and the actual testing. Attaining the test group can already be concerned as marketing. Often the test group consists of tour operator staff or managers from future customer organisations. However, the main focus

of the marketing test is to find out the possible suggestions for improvement before the final launching of the product.

It should be remembered that the product must be well planned and ready made before the test group's arrival. Especially the technical and safety issues must not fail. If the product has major faults during the test, the service provider may loose its reputation in the market. On the other hand, if the possible improvement suggestions are taken into consideration and the changes are being made, the chance of selling the product increases dramatically (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 112).

Often, the actual product test turns out to be a cross section of the company's services. The problem then is that none of the activities or services can be fully carried out. Instead all the services and activities are being introduced shortly. This way, the actual product will not be tested properly. From the service provider's point of view, the optimum testing situation equals to the product's intended usage. The provider should make sure that the test group is motivated to use this particular type of services. This way the feedback will be realistic and instructive (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 113-114).

4.1.4 Commercialising and evaluation

The last step of the product development is the launching of the product. At this point, the marketing expenses are relatively high because all the potential customers need a written offer or a brochure. Other marketing material, such as websites, video or cd-rom presentations create expenses as well. Furthermore, some additional promotional occasions might need to be arranged in order to sell the product.

If the product is not a success, it is often dropped out and forgotten. However, it is very important for the service provider to find out why the product did not succeed. This way the ideas from the product development process may be used

in another form or for another target group (Komppula & Boxberg 2002, 114-115).

5 PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FOR ERÄ'S PETE

The main goal of this thesis is to suggest and develop products for a certain hunting tourism provider. The idea was to reach foreign hunters as future customers. In order to receive the full advantage from the theory presented in the earlier chapters it is implemented into practice. The product development is based on the collected research information about a specific target group. In this chapter, the process of product development is followed using the specific information or the target group (German hunters) and the service provider (Erä's Pete). However, only the first steps of product development are implemented here. Since this thesis focuses on the service product, it is not useful to discuss the latter steps, such as marketing or commercialising. Furthermore, those steps are difficult to realise before the service concept and service process are developed.

5.1 Presentation of the target group: German hunters

In Germany, there are about 338 000 hunters. According to a German hunter survey, almost half the respondents (48.7%) have been hunting abroad and 38% are doing so once or several times a year (Hofer 2002, 23-24). Altogether this adds up to more than 160 000 potential customers for hunting service providers. Another survey, carried out three years later shows similar figures. According to this survey, approximately 40% of German hunters are hunting abroad annually or more often (Techam & Langi 2005, 61). Furthermore, Germans who are hunting abroad are spending an average of 1250-3000 euros per hunt, which is higher than the European average of ca. 1200 euros per hunt (Hofer 2002, 25). It seems to appear that German hunters form a potential group of tourist hunters and their characteristics are presented in the next paragraphs.

Typical German hunters hunting abroad are middle-aged or older, wealthy, highly educated and experienced. Most of them have been hunting for several decades and do have hunting possibilities in their home country. For accommodation, they usually prefer a cottage in the wild, farm accommodation or inns

(Hemmi 2005, 375). Most of German hunters prefer to travel with their own cars to the European destinations. This is due to the amount and type of luggage (including firearms). However, the level of interest towards air travel increases among the older hunters (Lämsä & Hietala 1996, 17). Language skills of the host do not seem to bear much importance. When the importance of German language of the service was surveyed, the respondents found it rather neutral or unimportant. The distribution remained the same in all age groups of the survey. From the respondents, 26% were interested in an all-inclusive package and the rest were willing to organise some parts individually. The most popular self-arranged components were the flight to the destination (64%) and catering (23%) (Techam & Langi 2005, 70-73). Mostly, German tourist hunters prefer European destinations, especially neighbouring countries and other Eastern European countries. About 24% of the hunting trips are made to Scandinavia and Greenland (Hofer 2002, 24).

The German hunters prefer to hunt the same species as in their home country. The three most popular species groups are cervids, wild pigs and small game and waterfowl. Moreover, when choosing a destination, the most important criteria seem to be the certain desired game species. Other popular criteria are attractive destination country and a good chance of hunting success (Hofer 2002, 25-26). However, another survey gives slightly different results. According to Techam & Langi (2005, 66-67), the most important criteria are costs, available species and sustainable hunting possibilities. The chance of hunting success, which was an important criteria according to Hofer, was only the fourth most important (44%) in this survey. The desired species of German hunters in Finland have also been surveyed in more detail. According to Lämsä & Hietala (1996, 20), the most desired species are moose and forest fowl, which includes capercaillie, black grouse, willow grouse and hazel grouse. Despite the criteria, one should not forget that the motives for hunting trips are more of social character. Hemmi (2005, 374-375) states that the most important motives for all hunters are experiencing natural environment, viewing nature, relaxing and being together with friends.

In addition to the basic characteristics mentioned in the previous paragraph, there are some distinctive characteristics about German hunters that should not

be overlooked. First, the background of the target group should be clarified. In Germany, hunting is a sport of a small portion of the population; with the percentage of only 0.42 it is the third lowest in Europe (Techam & Langi 2005, 20). Because of the small and distinguished hunter population, they apparently raise quite a lot of criticism in Germany. Other reasons for this are, for example, people's attitude towards firearms and the necessity of hunting in modern society. The criticism has lead to a situation where German hunters have to put a lot of effort to maintain their image positive in the public. Thus, German hunter finds important and is very much aware of hunting ethics (op. cit. p. 57). Furthermore, sustainable hunting methods are considered very important. According to the previously mentioned survey 90% of the respondents found sustainable hunting either very important or important. In addition to the fact that German hunters find sustainable hunting and ethics important, they would seem to appreciate a certification system concerning the sustainable use of natural resources (op. cit. p. 68-69).

In Techam & Langi's survey, German hunters show a great amount of interest towards the hosting country's hunting culture. This might be a reflection of the importance of sustainable hunting and ethics; the person wants to make sure that the hosting culture does not support any unethical methods of hunting. Nevertheless, German hunters seem to be interested in new kind of hunting experiences that the hosting country has to offer. In addition to the general level of interest of the host culture, German hunters' knowledge and interests about Finland was particularly surveyed. Whereas the level of experience of hunting in Finland was low, the level of interest was high. From the respondents, 98% showed interest in Finland as a destination but only 12% had been hunting there. Moreover, only 2% had visited Finland more than once for hunting purposes (op. cit. p. 62-64).

In conclusion, one could say that German hunters form a potential target group for hunting tourism in Finland. In Germany, there are lots of hunters who like to go abroad for hunting purposes and are willing to spend relatively high amount of money for that. Since German hunters are a somewhat closed community with rather similar backgrounds, they form a unique target group. There are many distinctive characteristics of German hunters and their criteria of hunting tourism. They do not seem to search for exotic species but do show a great amount of in-

terest in the hunting culture of the destination. What should be highlighted is the fact that German hunters find hunting ethics and sustainable hunting methods very important. They would not take part in a hunt if they doubted any unethical or unsustainable actions.

5.2 Presentation of the service provider: Erä's Pete

This thesis was assigned by a service provider called Eräspete. The premises are located in Central Finland in the municipality of Hankasalmi, which is one of the neighbouring towns of Jyväskylä. The main activity takes place in the rural village of Kärkkäälä by the Rautalampi waterway. The company provides memorable and relaxing outdoor experiences in the form of hunting, fishing, canoeing and other outdoor activities. Furthermore, they offer different tailor-made options for dining and accommodation, both themselves and through outsourcing. They have been networking with other service providers in the area to be able to offer full service packages. According to the entrepreneur, most of the customers of Eräspete are Finnish but they already attract few foreign customers. The aim is to reach more foreign customers in the future; he finds German hunters especially interesting as a new target group (Korhonen 2006).

In this thesis, the main focus is on the hunting tourism and the hunting product. Naturally, the finished product will have to include other components, for example accommodation and transportation, but the core of the product is hunting itself. Eräspete is mainly providing small-game hunting in the surroundings of the village of Kärkkäälä. Moreover, they arrange hunting trips to Latvia for some larger game, such as boar and deer. Their already existing hunting products include hare, fox, duck, pigeon, grouse and pheasant hunting. A typical hunting product is all-inclusive package, including refreshments and snacks in the wild, dinner, a hunting guide and transportation. Furthermore, the package includes different options for accommodation. The package also includes some additional services. For example, the company takes care of the needed hunting permits and offers a possibility to rent a firearm. The customer is required to have a valid hunting license and the licence to carry a firearm either in Finland or the cus-

tomers' country of origin. The customer is also supposed to bring his/her own camouflage clothing. In the end of the hunt, the customer can have his/her game meat treated by the hunting guide (Korhonen 2006).

There is an example of an existing product as appendix 2. As can be seen from the example, it is not an actual sales offer. In fact, it only presents shortly some of the main qualities of the product and nothing in depth. It should be noticed that the package does not include additional services, for example accommodation or transport. However, the company does provide both, but it has to be agreed and purchased separately. At the moment, there are plenty of different services available and all products are tailor made for each customer individually. This type of product may not appear to be interesting because it might leave many questions to the customer. Furthermore, the customer has to approach the service provider to receive a proper offer with all details about the product.

5.3 Product development suggestions

The core of the service concept is the needs and value expected by the customer and how they are fulfilled. The basic motivation of hunting is of social character, for example, experiencing natural environment, viewing nature, relaxing and being together with friends. However, the need for a hunt abroad for a German hunter should also be determined. According to the German hunter profile, most of the hunters who are travelling abroad do have the possibility to hunt in their home country as well. Furthermore, they show great interest towards the hosting hunting culture. Thus, the need seems to come from the desire to experience a new hunting environment. In practise, this need can be fulfilled by offering the possibility to experience the local hunting culture. In the sense of hunting culture, Finland has got some unique features and game species that distinguish it from competitors. The customer could be offered a traditional method small group hunt with certain Finnish hunting dogs or a moose hunt with larger group and dogs. The image should be that it is a real hunt instead of a tourist hunt.

When developing the service concept, it is also important is to evaluate the customer's willingness and ability to participate to the service process. The resources to be evaluated are, for example, time, money and physical and emotional resources. In general, the role of the hunter in the service process is quite active. Since the customer is supposedly very interested in the local hunting culture and hunting in general, the expected willingness to participate is rather high. The target group mainly consists of wealthy, elderly men who have great interest in hunting. Thus, they possess plenty of the resources mentioned earlier. However, the rather high age of the target group should be considered when evaluating the physical resources of the customers. The majority of the target group is also willing to arrange some components of the trip individually. Thus, it might be important to have different possibilities for transport, accommodation and catering.

Before developing the activities suitable for the target group, the service providers' resources should also be evaluated. Since the company has been offering all-inclusive hunting products for Finnish hunters the resources should be generally sufficient. The staff already has know-how of hunting and hunting culture, especially on local scale. Furthermore, the needed establishments, services and hunting grounds already exist. For example, cottage and inn accommodation and transportation services are sufficient to host small hunting groups. In my opinion, the only missing resource is the experience of German hunters and culture. Perhaps the service provider should hire some person with German language skills to serve the customers better and to avoid possible misunderstandings. Moreover, the staff should familiarize themselves about German hunting ethics, which the hunters find very important. Finally, the co-operative companies and people should also be informed about the specific requirements for the target group. This way, it is secured that the value perceived by the customer remains on the same level throughout the service chain.

Since the target group is rather homogenous, there are some important factors to be taken into consideration. Some of these matters might be crucial concerning the attractiveness of the product for the target group. One of the most important issues is hunting ethics. German hunters are very aware of the ethics concerning hunting in modern society and would not take part in any kind of unethical hunt.

For example, shooting a roe deer with a shotgun is legally and ethically appropriate in Finland but German hunters find it unethical. Hunting in sustainable way is also highlighted by the target group. This is closely linked to the hunting ethics and should be given special attention. It could be useful to publish the Finnish hunting etiquette translated in German. Furthermore, the service provider should familiarise himself the German hunting ethics to avoid unnecessary doubts by the customers.

The next step is to create the different activities included in the product. These activities should be based on the knowledge about the target group and the service provider's resources. In this case, the main activity is obviously the actual hunt. Thus, it should be given the most attention. According to the findings presented in this thesis, German hunters mostly prefer to hunt cervids. Furthermore, they showed particular interest towards moose and Finnish forest fowl. Moose, together with white-tailed deer are the two most common cervids found in Finland. These two species do not appear in the middle-European fauna and the forest fowl species of Finland can not be hunted there either. Thus, they could bring competitive advantage. It could be recommended that there would be two separate products, for example, a moose hunt and a forest fowl hunt. The hunt should include elements of the local hunting culture. Such activities are, for example, open-fire gatherings during and after the hunt and the usage of Finnish hunting dogs. Furthermore, the hunting methods should support the local hunting culture and its history. For example, hunting grouse with a Finnish Spitz, an old Finnish bark pointer dog breed, is very typical to traditional Finnish hunting culture.

In addition to the actual hunt there should be other activities. These activities could also support the local hunting culture and wilderness theme. For example, a little ceremonial toast after catching the prey could be included. Furthermore, the customer could be offered a possibility to take part to the game preparation with the hunting guide. The preparing of game for cooking is very typical feature of Finnish hunting culture. In Germany, hunters do not necessarily treat or eat the game they have caught. Thus, it might be interesting for them to join the hunting guide to prepare the meat. However, it should remain optional because the customer does not necessarily want to do that. Another additional service is

the possibility for trophy. Germans are often trophy hunters and would be interested in having the trophy as a souvenir from the successful hunting trip.

The Finnish hunter's relationship with the forest could also be emphasized by offering the refreshments and dining in the hunting grounds, by the open fire or in a hunter's hut. After the actual hunt, the activities should be relaxing but still follow the wilderness theme. In addition to the relaxation these activities could focus on the togetherness of the group, which is one of the basic motivations of hunting in the first place. For example, sauna and a feast with game dishes and local beverages would continue the group's experience during the hunt.

For accommodation, a traditional Finnish cottage is preferred by the target group. Furthermore, cottage accommodation suits the package supporting the wilderness theme. In addition to the cottage accommodation it might be useful to offer the possibility to stay at an inn because it was the second option of the target group. The need for transportation varies depending on the customer, because many of them should travel to the destination with their own car. Thus, it is useful to provide detailed driving instructions including additional information about travelling in Finland. However, the service provider should also be prepared for transporting some customers from the airport. Since the group size is limited, a sport utility vehicle (SUV) should be sufficient for transportation to the hunting grounds.

German hunters are willing to spend relatively large amount of money. Generally, they spend an average of 1250-3000 euros per hunt and many of them even up to 5000 euros per hunt. This is useful knowledge when planning the components of the product. At the moment, the products are aimed for Finnish customers who do not seek for luxury or services during a hunting trip. Often the case is that Finnish hunters are merely seeking for hunting grounds and accommodation. Moreover, they are not ready to spend thousands of euros for hunting. Thus, the prices are low and the amount and quality of services are limited. When aiming for German hunters, it might be useful to aim for high quality, even if it raises the price of the final product.

The idea is to offer an all-inclusive package with one price. This way, the pricing is clear and the customer will find the product easy to purchase. However, there should also be the possibility for tailor-made services to better serve all customers. If the potential customers do not receive all the needed information without contacting the service provider themselves, they might search for another service provider. When the product is all-inclusive and all the components are clearly presented the customer is more likely to be interested.

6 CONCLUSION

Through the process of writing this thesis it became clear that hunting tourism is quite complex and different from many other forms of alternative tourism. It has distinctive features and a very limited customer group. Thus, the service provider has to plan and manage the products carefully in order to be successful, especially when trying to reach foreign customers. Moreover, the knowledge about the target group's special characteristics seem to bear great importance. The general state of hunting service providers is still unprofessional in Finland although the chances for success are good. The natural resources for hunting are plentiful in Finland and there are many unique features compared to other European countries.

In order to reach a new customer group, the service provider should develop new products specifically for the target group. The product development should always be based on the customer's needs and not the service providers own ideas. Proper knowledge about the target group is very important and should be given attention. It is useful to follow a product development model during the process. When all the steps of a model are followed, the product will more likely be a success. Moreover, with the help of a model all the important aspects will be taken into consideration. It is important that the product is well planned and safe when the first customers arrive. Product development is also important for the attractiveness of the company. When the product is clearly presented and suites the customers' needs, it is easier to purchase.

In this thesis, the product development was for a certain Finnish service provider using German hunters as a target group. German hunters proved to be potential customers, although they have special requirements. For the service provider, it is crucial to understand and meet those requirements. The most important issues seem to be hunting ethics and sustainable use of nature. Fortunately, Finnish hunting culture supports ethical and sustainable hunting. For example, the basic purpose of hunting clubs is to control the game preservation by hunting and other actions. The clubs often establish quotas for certain species and the annual fees gathered from the hunters are mostly being used for preservation purposes. In addition to ethics and sustainability, the service provider should emphasise the local hunting culture and the hunter's relationship to nature. For example, the usage of Finnish hunting dogs and open fire gatherings would help to create the right atmosphere.

In general, the future for Finland as a hunting destination seems to be bright. The large forest areas with natural game populations are going to be more and more valuable in the future. The Finnish nature and unique hunting culture should be considered as competitive advantages. Finland can not compete with the high chance of hunting success with, for example, eastern European destinations but it has the cleanest and most unspoiled forests. However, the forests require constant attention to remain resourceful. The service providers should invest the money from the tourist hunters to the improvement of game populations and habitat. In fact, hunting tourism can be beneficial for the local ecosystem and also to the rural communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. New product example

Finnish Grouse Hunt

General info

- All inclusive package
- Transport from airport and from accommodation to hunting grounds
- Accommodation in high quality cottage with sauna
- Catering includes a feast with game dishes and drinks. Also coffee and snacks on open fire during the hunt
- Service provider takes care of hunting permits, insurances and other paperwork

Hunting

- Unique species: Capercaillie, Black Grouse, Hazel Grouse
- Rifle or shotgun hunting
-Hunting methods: still hunting and stalking
- Professional hunting guide with a bark pointer dog (Finnish Spitz)
- Experience the natural environment of Finland and local hunting culture
- Game preparation with the guide
- Trophy possibility

Other

- European Firearms Pass required
- Possibility to rent a firearm
- Ethical hunting methods and no unnecessary kills
- Sustainable use of natural resources
- Emphasis on the relationship of man and nature

Appendix 2. Existing product example

Hare hunt

The customer should possess valid hunting card and licence to carry a firearm. It is possible for the customer to rent a firearm from Erä's Pete.

The length of the hunt is approximately six hours

Season 1.7 – 28.2

The price includes VAT

1 person	160€
2 persons	280€
3 persons	360€
4 persons	400€
5 persons	450€
6 persons	492€

The package includes guidance, hunting permits, scent hound, insurances and dinner prepared on open fire and coffee and snacks.
Proper clothing is an outdoor outfit, preferably camouflaged (Korhonen 2006).