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A CANOEING PACKAGE THROUGH THE ARCHIPELAGO
Product Development for 7 Bridges Archipelago

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ABSTRACT

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<p>This thesis was aimed to result in a quality canoeing product for the tourism organization 7 Bridges Archipelago. The motive for the product extension was based on the geographical potential and customer demands in the Western coastal region of Finland. Therefore 7 Bridges Archipelago acted as the commissioning party for this thesis, as the organization will be provided with a completely developed tour package for canoeing.</p> <p>This was a practice-based thesis. The first section of this work analyzed the current situation of canoeing tourism, based on existing resources. The introduction to the theoretical framework and step for product development was presented in the later following case study. The theoretical part presented the different layers of tourism and their significance in the development process. Furthermore the stages of the product development process were explained in detail to provide a base for the development of canoeing product in the future.</p> <p>The case study introduced the tourism organization 7 Bridges Archipelago and the Ostrobothnia region as the location of the canoeing tour, before developing the actual product. In this section, detailed description of the product development process was provided on the foundation of theoretical framework. This provided the final canoeing tour package for 7 Bridges Archipelago which is meeting its customer demands.</p>		

Key word

7 Bridges Archipelago , canoeing , Ostrobothnia region , Product development

ABSTRACT

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1 INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this thesis is to create a new tourism product for the 7 Bridges Archipelago. 7 Bridges Archipelago is located in western Finland in the Ostrobothnia region. It consists of six municipalities: Kokkola, Kruunupyy, Luoto, Pietarsaari, Pedersöre and Nykarleby. 7 Bridges Archipelago implies the number of bridges that are crossed when travelling down the coastal road between Kokkola - Pietarsaari. This region is a combination of beautiful towns joined by seven bridges (Häggman 2011). The practical part of this thesis consists of the development of a canoeing package for 7 Bridges Archipelago. The 7 Bridges Archipelago region has all the possibilities for the development of canoeing as the region lies in the western part of Finland that consists of numerous lakes and islands.

This thesis also consists of the theoretical framework which concerns product development and nature tourism. The theoretical part also includes the definition of the product development process in the field of tourism, as well as general information on related fields of tourism. Furthermore, the theory of the product development process for 7 Bridges Archipelago is described.

The commissioner of this thesis is 7 Bridges Archipelago. 7 Bridges Archipelago is a promotional, not a selling organization, which represents the western coastal region Ostrobothnia, and its tourism and marketing. In the beginning 7 Bridges Archipelago started as a European Union project in 1998. The main objectives of 7 Bridges Archipelago are to market towns, businesses, events and destinations, as well as to develop tourism products through various projects. There are members and participants in the organization that are helping it economically and helping to develop the organization. (Häggman 2011.)

The thesis will conclude with a summary of the product development process and its effects. Moreover the conclusion will include a discussion of the whole tourism product development process for the tourism organization, and the application of the theoretical models to this practical case study.

2 SPECIAL FEATURES OF TOURISM

Today there is a growing interest in how people spend their leisure time travelling from one place to another. Travel and tourism is a leading global economic activity that takes place in destinations around the world. This reflects an increasing interest in what people prefer during these leisure periods. This interest is becoming a global phenomenon known as 'tourism': the use of leisure time to travel to different places. All the countries and cities are investigating to attract tourists. (Page 2009, 3-4.)

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries or economical sectors generating trillions of dollars yearly to the global economy, creating jobs, booms in investments and increasing taxes. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), till 2011 nearly 260 million jobs worldwide are supported by the travel and tourism industry directly or indirectly. According to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), international arrivals worldwide have more than double since 1990, increasing from 435 million to 675 million in 2000, and to 940 million in 2010, and these figures do not count domestic arrivals. In 201, 4.5 % of the total capital investment will be generated by the travel and tourism industry. The last ten years have observed strong global economic growth because of rapid growth of the high-tech industry, such as banking and global finance in the service industry, but it is forecasted that they will have slow performance. In brief, travel and tourism will become an even more important industry to the world economy in the next decade. (WTTC 2011.)

It is therefore clear that tourism is playing an important role in the global economy. The travel and tourism business is becoming a powerful force affecting all parts of the globe. Every country does its best to attract more tourists from all over the world. The travel and tourism industry has a capacity to impact both positively and negatively on the environment, culture and tourism products of the destination.

2.1 Nature tourism

The relationship between nature and tourism may be seen as a form of symbiosis. Nature tourism consists of land with scenery, native plants and wildlife. The relationship between

the environment and tourism should be grounded in the concept of sustainable use of natural resources. Tourism should be developed with a of resource management process, which requires an idea or concept about resource management values as well as the more traditional development. The success of resource sustainability requires an understanding that environment protection and expansion are prerequisites for the realization of tourism potential. (Douglas & Derrett 2001, 284-287.)

Simply said, ecotourism is responsible travelling. As tourism takes its place as the world's largest growing industry, ecotourism has been known as the fastest-growing segment of this changing global industry. The concept of Ecotourism was developed during the mid-to late 1980s. Since that period it has become a major guideline for both developed and developing nations around the world. (Fennell 2008, 32.)

The main purpose of ecotourism is to protect nature. Ecotourism may relate to ecologically and socially conscious individuals. Ecotourism focuses on helping, self-realization and environmental responsibility. Ecotourism typically involves travel to destinations where the flora, fauna and culture heritage are fresh, untouched at the main attraction. Ecotourism is important for those individuals who are responsible and think that the future generation will respect nature if it is left untouched. So the most important part of ecotourism is promoting recycling, energy efficiency, water conservation and the creation of economic opportunities for local communities. (Fennell 2008, 32.)

The most common feature of natural resources is that they are generally fixed in supply and are able to provide only limited services in a limited amount of time (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert & Wanhill 2008, 315-317). Tourism based on the natural environment is an old and large international industry on both a local and global scale. Sustainability with nature in focus is an important concept while developing tourism.

2.2 Socio-cultural tourism

Socio-cultural tourism is one of the oldest forms of travel and still continues as one of the main reason for travel in most parts of the world. Cultural tourism refers to forms of tourism that focus on the cultural, heritage or artistic aspects of a destination or experience. Many locations in the world are now actively promoting their tangible and intangible

cultural assets as a means of developing comparative benefits in an increasingly challenging tourism marketplace (Richards & Munsters 2010, 1-3).

Socio-cultural tourism has been explained in many ways, but a common theme of these definitions is the focus on learning about, experiencing or understanding cultural activities, resources and other cultures (Douglas & Derrett 2001, 114-116). The socio-cultural impact of tourism is noticeable through an uncountable range of aspects from the arts and crafts through to the fundamental behaviour of individuals and collective groups. The impact can be positive, such as the case where the tourism is the main reason for preserving the craft skills, culture or religion of the local region by the distinct population. The impacts can be negative also such as commercialisation of arts, culture and rituals of the host community. (Burns, Palmer & Lester 2010.)

As tourism is growing rapidly, tourists can be found in practically every accessible part of the world. In some cases, the presence of tourists is gradually changing the livelihood and culture of the host society. Tourism management is essential for the development of tourism. Tourism is not bad but it is simply badly planned and managed. Some studies demonstrate the positive impact on tourism in the host community and its culture especially by increasing the economic level, well-being and by focusing attention on the nature of the host community. (Singh, Timothy, & Dowling 2003.)

Socio-cultural tourism gives tourists the opportunity to experience the remains of history, ideals of cultural life of past and present of the community. This may occur in cultural area theme parks, heritage sites or centres, museums, galleries, performing arts venues, festivals and even in normal street life. (Douglas & Derrett 2001, 114-116.)

2.3 Adventure and water-based tourism

Adventure tourism is a generous term that consists of all types of commercial outdoor tourism activities with some amount of excitement. It is proximately related to nature tourism, with some overlapping. Nature tourism is based on seeing, while adventure tourism is based on activities in nature. Water-based tourism as part of tourism is interrelated with many other forms of tourism. (Buckley 2010, 3-6.)

There are wide ranges of packaged outdoor activities in the form of commercial adventure tour products, from short rafting trips to expensive skydiving and scuba-diving that requires various equipment and training. Adventure tourism is sometimes also defined as individual or independent travels that provide various adventurous experiences. Adventure tourism is a growing tourism sector that involves exploring or travelling to remote areas, where traveller should be prepared to expect the unexpected. The development of unusual holidays, different from typical beach holidays, has increased the popularity of adventure tourism rapidly. Water-based tourism is mostly related with nature tourism and adventure tourism because water resources are in nature and activities with water creates adventure to some degree. Rafting, bungee jumping, rock climbing trekking and mountaineering expeditions are some examples of adventure tourism. (Prideaux & Copper 2009, 41-44.)

Adventure tourism provides much of its excitement by allowing tourists to step outside their comfort zone. This may happen through getting a cultural shock or through the performance of acts that involve some extent of risk or physical danger. From the perspective of the individual tourist, adventure tourism is anything that they personally consider as adventurous. Different individuals or even single persons at different ages may have different points of view on how to define how adventurous particular activities are, depending on prior experience, culture, skills and interest. From the supply point of view, wide commercial tourism activities are marketed as the adventure tourism. Like other components of the tourism industry, adventure tourism consists of accommodation, transportation and activities. Water-based tourism is also related with adventure tourism in many ways depending on the type of activities carried out in relation to water. (Buckley 2010, 21-23.)

In order to create a marketable adventurous package various things should be taken into consideration. Tourists might want excitement, but they generally do not want to get terrified from the activities, and the balance between those must be carefully managed. They want some limit of risk but they do not actually want to lose their equipment, or suffer from illness, injury or worse. The management of limiting risks is thus a key component of an adventure tour package.

2.4 Tourism in Finland

Finland is a land of wilderness, interesting natural contrasts, such as the four seasons, the midnight sun and the winter darkness, and both urban and rural life. Finland is ranked 19th among the world's top international meeting countries in 2010. The result was published in Union of international association's international meetings. Finland attracted over six million tourists in 2010 coming from all over the world. (Matkailunedistämiskeskus 2011.)

The nature of Finland is pure and untouched by the modern world. The summer is marked by long days especially in the northern part where the sun does not set at all in the months June-August. Tourists enjoy their stay through fishing and canoeing. Finland is famous for its 200,000 lakes (Lew, Hall & Timothy 2008, 35-36.) The country is also known for its excellent water quality, forest and spotting of reindeer or moose. The national parks are famous for their unique natural sights, such as rapids, rift valleys and eskers. There are thirty- seven national parks in Finland which are preserved to also provide opportunities for recreation, hiking and similar outdoor activities. (Finnish Tourism Board 2011.)

Finland has an image as one of the world centres of ecological tourism. Big cities like Helsinki, Turku, and Tampere offer various attractions, activities, high-class hotels and good shopping opportunities for tourists. Finnish cities are located in pleasant distance that can be easily reached by public transportation that is one of the best in the world. Finland hosts more than 2.5 million visitors a year. The beautiful nature of Finland offers many opportunities of quiet and exciting pastime both in summer and winter time. Finland offers attractions and various activities throughout the year. (Go Finland 2012.)

2.5 Tourism in the Ostrobothnia region

The Ostrobothnia region is located in the western part of Finland. The Ostrobothnia region is one of the Finnish regions with a Swedish-speaking majority. The Ostrobothnia region has charming wooden cities, unpolished beauty, narrow coastal roads, unspoilt nature and peace. There are small, charming towns and a peaceful countryside. Nature is an important part of this region and it is cared properly for all around this region. A number of tour services, hiking trails, nature trails, good condition roads, bridges and ferries that offer

3 7 BRIDGES ARCHIPELAGO

There are various activities offered by the tourism organization 7 Bridges Archipelago and to some extent the municipalities are included in the organization. 7 Bridges Archipelago as an organization is working to develop tourism on the western coast of Finland.

3.1 Presentation of the organization

7 Bridges Archipelago is a promotional organization, which represents western coastal region the Ostrobothnia and its tourism. In the beginning 7 Bridges Archipelago started as a European Union project in 1998. After several good experiences from the EU projects with cooperation with municipals for tourism development, they anticipated possibilities to combine the scattered business of the area into a single place for regional tourism development. These possibilities to combine businesses led to the formation of the 7 Bridges Archipelago as an organization. 7 Bridges Archipelago was founded in 2004 as an association. (Häggman 2011.)

The main objectives of 7 Bridges Archipelago are to market towns, business, events and destinations, as well as to develop tourism products through various projects. There are members and participants in the organization that are helping economically and helping the development of the organization as well. The companies who pay some sum of money to 7 Bridges Archipelago are members of the organization and are added into the tourism directory of the region. 7 Bridges Archipelago also wants to strengthen the role of entrepreneurs and increase their visibility so that the entrepreneurs themselves would participate in the fairs together with 7 Bridges Archipelago. (Häggman 2011.)

7 Bridges Archipelago's mission is to promote products in the tourism industry together with experiences, events, attractions, accommodation and restaurants/cafes. All the services and information are mentioned in the official website of 7 Bridges Archipelago which is updated annually in Swedish, Finnish and in every second year in English and German. All the members of the organization are included in the directory. (Häggman 2011.)

3.2 Area presentation

7 Bridges Archipelago is located in western Finland, in the Ostrobothnia region. It consists of six municipalities: Kokkola, Kruunupyy, Luoto, Pietarsaari, Pedersöre and Nykarleby. 7 Bridges Archipelago are the seven bridges that are crossed when travelling down the coastal road between Kokkola and Pietarsaari and the surrounding archipelago. This region is a combination of beautiful towns joined by the seven bridges. To get a clear picture of the area here is the map of the region:



GRAPH 2. Map of 7 Bridges Archipelago (adapted from 7 Broars Skägård r.f. 2012)

The graph above shows the area and location of 7 Bridges Archipelago. The graph also indicates the location of all the seven bridges with black dots and numbers.

The Swedish King Gustav II Adolf founded the city of Kokkola in September 1620. Kokkola, with a population under 50000, is located in Central Ostrobothnia in Western Finland with the area 1444km². There were approximately 104,100 overnight stays in Kokkola in 2008. A large amount of tourists came from Sweden and Germany. (Kokkola kaupunki 2010.) The important feature of this town is its rich cultural base, music and

theatre. The city's bilingualism provides a rich ingredient that has played its part in promoting the internationalisation of the city and its business life. The region hosted Housing Fair in the summer of 2011. (7 Broars Skärgård r.f 2012.)

Kokkola's old town area, Neristan, is one of the most cohesive and extensive areas of preserved wooden buildings in Finland. The old wooden house downtown area used to be a district inhabited by the city's craftsmen and sailors. In the 21st century, Neristan has placed its status as a vibrant traditional town, and a nationally renowned area of cultural-historical significance, in which one can still sense the Kokkola of the old days. Kokkola is the financial, administrative and cultural centre of the central Ostrobothnia region. In a few decades, Kokkola has become an increasingly industrialized city of trade, services, education and research. The major sectors include chemicals, metal and engineering industry, boat building industry and the newest information and communication technologies. (Kokkolan Kaupunki 2010.)

Jakobstad or Pietarsaari is an important port located in western Finland, on the Gulf of Bothnia. The people of Pietarsaari highly appreciate their culture, art and history. Living in Pietarsaari means enjoying life in both a small and a big town, the neighbouring towns are bigger in comparison and nearer. (Jakobstad kommun, 2012.) The town has a remarkable number of museums. The national poet of Finland, Johan Ludvig Runeberg, was born in the town. The region is part of the Swedish-speaking coastal strip and Swedish is the main language. (Jakobstad kommun 2012.)

This town is also known as the city of gardens. The school garden counts among the world's northernmost botanical gardens that contain around 1,000 species of plants. The two main train stations of 7 Bridges Archipelago is located in Pännäinen (nearby Pietarsaari) and Kokkola. Pietarsaari is a town rich in culture and history. There are various activities and festivals in this town. The most famous festival of this town is Jakobsdagar/Jaakonpäivät that is a weeklong annual celebration in every July. (Jakobstad kommun 2012.)

Larsmo/Luoto has a land area of about 143 km². Larsmo is also known as "the pearl of the archipelago". Larsmo was founded in 1867. This town provides mind blowing natural views. Due to the unique land rise in this town there are around 360 isles and islands with a shoreline that is almost 500 km. The city is surrounded by Lake Larsmo in the east, Gulf of

Bothnia in the west, the city of Karleby in the north and the city of Pietarsaari in the south. (Larsmo kommun 2009.)

Kruunupyy is the gateway for air transportation for seven bridges of archipelago as the regional airport is situated in Kruunupyy. In 2009, there were approximately 98,000 travellers going through this airport. Kruunupyy has a strong tradition of handicrafts. Kruunupyy is a true cultural district where choirs and music from classical folk music to rock can be enjoyed. (Kronoby Kommun 2012.)

Pedersöre has lot to offer for those who are interested in history, past events and countryside life. Pedersöre has a long tradition of boat manufacturing and agriculture. Swedish is the mother tongue of about 90% of the inhabitants. Pedersöre has plentiful of flora and fauna. Hiking in the village offers experiences as close to nature as possible. (Pedersöre Kommun 2011.)

Nykarleby is a small town situated at the mouth of the Lappo River. This town is also the hometown of the writer of fairytales, Zacharias Topelius, and is also known as “The fairytale town”. Nykarleby has gained a big name in the international market. This is the hometown of KWH Mirka, which is the second largest producer of sandpaper and grinding material for the car industry in the world. This town is also the world leading producer of fox and mink furs. (Nykarleby Kommun 2009.)

3.3 Regional marketing and distribution

7 Bridges Archipelago develops a tour directory where all the member companies are mentioned and used as important material for marketing. The participants and companies themselves, act as the marketers. The organization develops the brochures and catalogues and distributes them through their own official website, other websites and participants in different tourism fairs and programmes. The Comma Group Ab, Wesander Marketing Ab and Ostrobothnia Tourism are three of the 7 Bridges Archipelago’s main distributors. The Comma Group Ab is a Finnish private-owned company specializing in marketing the travel and tourism industry. The Comma Group Ab distributes 7 Bridges Archipelago’s tourism directory to hundreds of places from Helsinki to Rovaniemi. (Comma Group 2010.) The Wesander Marketing Ab travels around Sweden and acts as a marketing channel for 7

Bridges Archipelago across the country. The Ostrobothnia tourism and other similar organisation do common tours for distribution, under an umbrella project, a formal association named FinWest.

Fine West is also another important distributor of 7 Bridges Archipelago that is located in the western part of Finland. The organization is free for members who can participate on MEK's (Matkailun edistämiskeskus) website. 7 Bridges Archipelago also acts as a distributor and participant in various fairs around Europe that are arranged in Finland, Sweden, Russia, Holland and more. The organization also takes part in the annual tourism exhibitions in Helsinki such as the Travel Fair and more. (Häggman 2011.)

Marketing is the strongest tool in the tourism business. 7 Bridges Archipelago organization works hard to reach out to tourists and market themselves through different fairs and exhibitions. It is also good to define the territory of the tourism attraction destination as local tourists barely know anything about 7 Bridges Archipelago. There are many local tourists who have a notion that 7 Bridges Archipelago is only a road on the west coast, which is a myth. (Yle 2009.)

The member municipalities of 7 Bridges Archipelago are Kruunupyy, Kokkola, Nykarleby, Luoto, Pedersöre, and Pietarsaari. Kokkola Tourism and Pietarsaari Tourism are also the member organizations of 7 Bridges Archipelago. These are the parallel organizations that promote their municipalities and the 7 bridges archipelago. There is an information desk in Pedersöre at hotel Poraris which is arranged together by Pietarsaari and Pedersöre. (Häggman 2011.) 7 Bridges Archipelago is not a package-selling organization but a market operator. The organization has designed tourism catalogues, brochures, canoeing maps, fishing maps, city maps and more. They have recently published their new catalogue of 2012 and updated their official website. In addition, 7 Bridges Archipelago is marketing itself in virtual and social medias such as YouTube videos, Google plus and Facebook pages. (Häggman 2011.)

4 PROCEDURES IN TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

Product development improves the profitability of tourism businesses and tourism destinations by increasing the number of products and services available for tourists as well as increasing the number of visits, length of stays and visits by the tourists. Tourism product development focuses on a portfolio of activities for visitors to see and do, for example sports, water-based activities, hiking, nature and cultural heritage activities, festivals, events and more.

A destination's tourism resources are based on the location's tourism appeal. Tourism resources in any form draw people to a destination. Tourism resources represent the supply side of the supply and demand equation, which should match with the market demand side to develop a perfect tourism destination. Tourism resources in a destination are the pulling power that serves to attract tourists. A thorough knowledge of supply and demand is an important element of any successful tourism development process. Pre-evaluating tourism supply is an important step in the development process. It helps destinations to analyse product gaps, exposes weak links in services and develops priorities. (Godfrey & Clarke 2000, 64-66.)

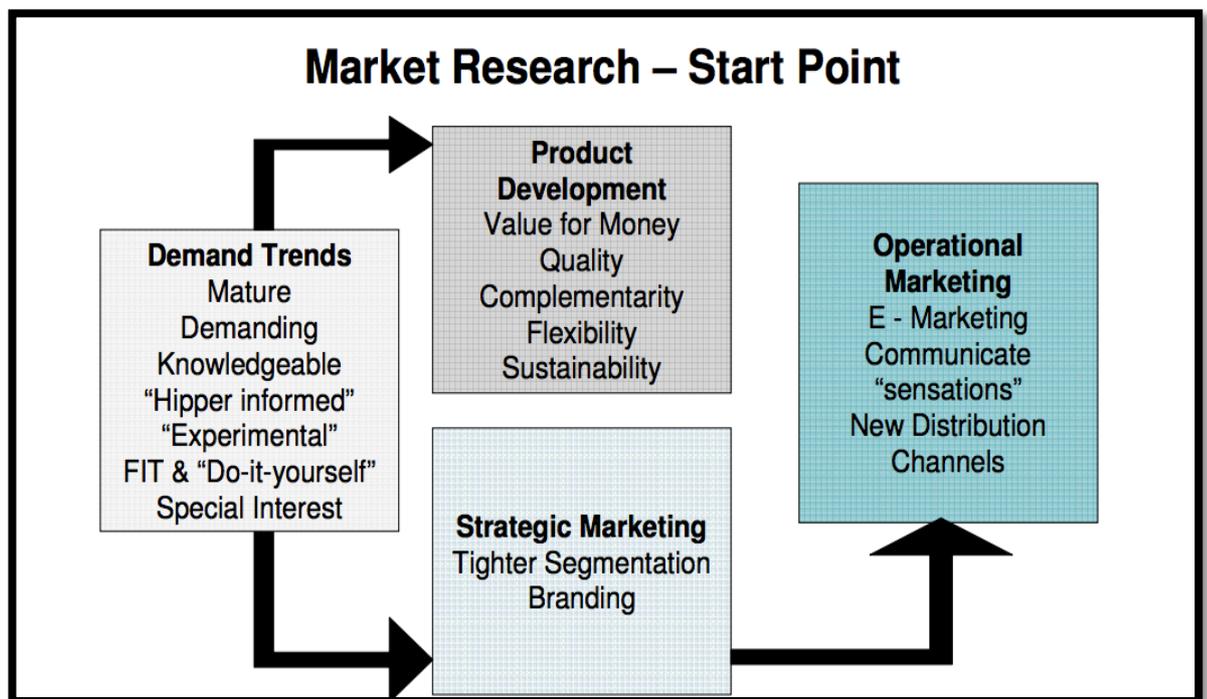
Planning and setting the tourism policy is the main stage in the tourism product development process, and one of the vital first actions that any tourism group should take into consideration. The destination's tourism policy is meant to guide between subsequent dos and do not's in a way that the destination feels comfortable with. It represents the managerial framework through which future and present issues are analysed. (Godfrey & Clarke 2000, 53-58.)

4.1 Market research

The concept of planning is connected with the organization of some future events in order to achieve the pre-planned objective. Market analysis is clearly a crucial component of a sound development plan. Tourism product development organizations should analyse industry trends in travel and tourism globally, including in-depth data of market share and

market size. Market researches advance the knowledge of the industry and its competitive environment, ensuring systematic and focused strategies for the business. (Cooper et al 2008, 510-512.)

The main aim of the marketing concept is to provide visitors with a product that satisfies their needs and requirements. Therefore, the first priority for a tourism product developer is to learn what potential tourists need and desire from the visiting experience. The only possible way to receive all this information is by conducting a research. Market research can help organization development by answering the question of what consumers want or desire from the organization. (Kolb 2006, 155-160.)



GRAPH 3. Market research- Start Point (adapted from Tourism development international 2011)

Graph 3 shows the steps of market research before developing a tourism product. Demand trends should be analysed and studied carefully before developing the product. After researching demand trends, market strategy and product development should be started. While developing a product, money value, complementary, flexibility and sustainability should be taken into consideration. Operational marketing is the key to success in the current world. Development of E-marketing, communication, new distribution and channels are important to be researched before developing the product.

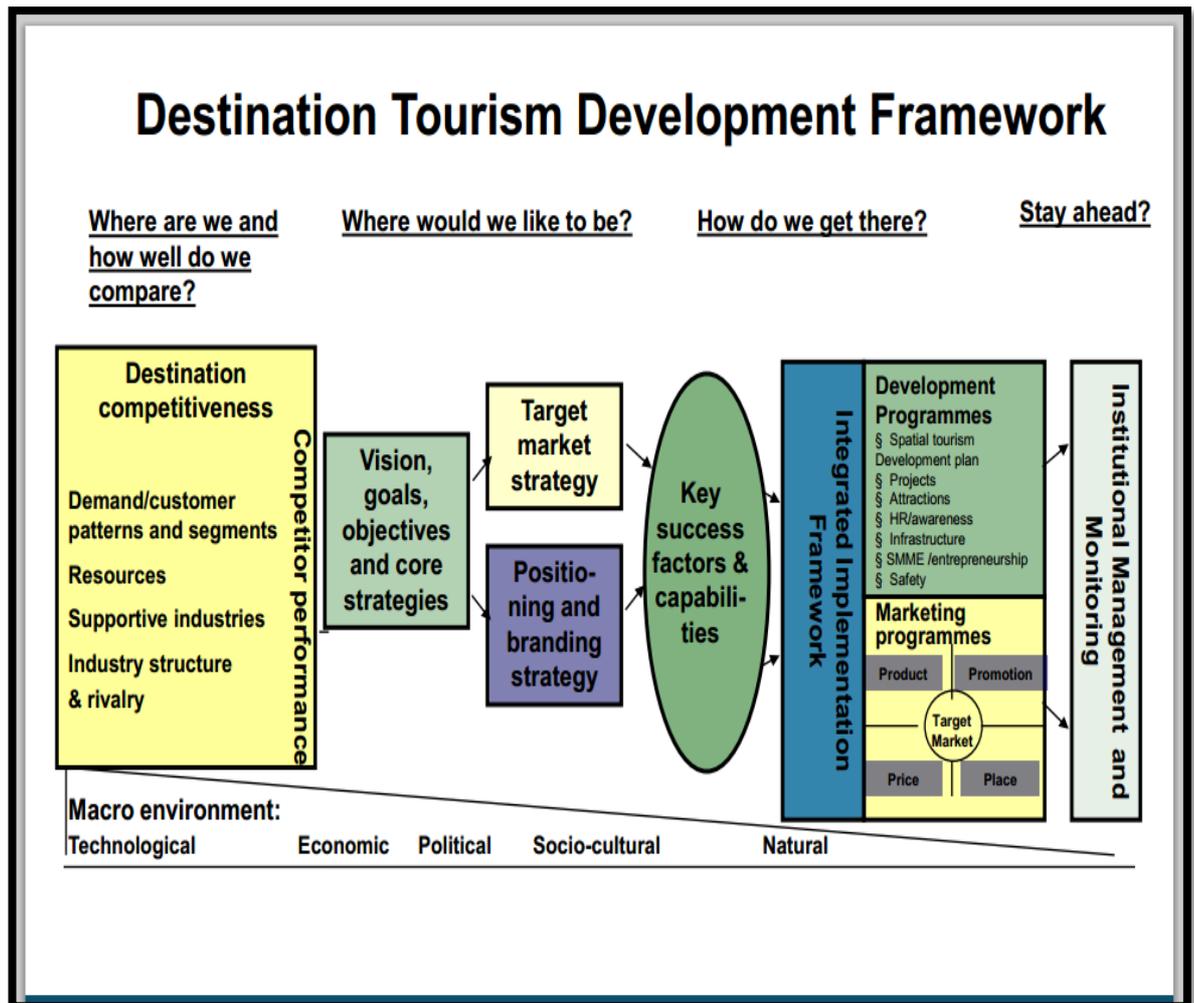
The first actual process in the development of a new product is the idea generation, which can be systematic and technical search of new ideas or data. Typical and traditional sources of development ideas may be brainstorming, solicitation of ideas from employees and customers, researchers and learning from competitors' offerings etc. More than half of the new tourism product ideas derive from within the company, one quarter comes from customers and the rest comes from competitors. (Kolb 2006, 155-160.)

Tourism organizations should conduct a research about the core products and tourism services of tourists' needs and desires so that they will not lose their visitors to competitors. The tourism product development group should consider a research on current and potential tourist segments, travel motivations, tourist desires and wants, product acceptability and the effectiveness of their promotional material. Researching current tourists can help to identify the current desire and external characteristics of market segments and researching the entire tourism market place can help to learn about potential tourists. (Kolb 2006, 155-160.)

4.2 Product development and planning

A successful tourism product will not simply happen on itself, it must be realised. Tourism products require time and effort from both public and private sector interests based on policy, goals and objectives. Co-ordination and cooperation is a key to success that generally means forming a tourism association or committee, advice of experts to lead the tourism development activity in a particular destination. The main objective of tourism products is to create profit for the organization. Satisfied customers and potential customers are the source of profit and continued business. Successful business has the right product, in the right place, at the right time, to the right price and with the right quality. (Cooper et al. 2008, 245-248.)

The concept of planning is concerned with creating some new activities or events in order to reach the objectives. Tourism planning is critical at the destination level if the host communities are not cooperating to provide visitor satisfaction at a certain level. If destinations cannot provide a positive experience of a place, people, events and activities, then the visitor will not be satisfied with the service and the outcome will tend to be less than satisfactory for all concerned. (Godfrey & Clarke 2000, 107-110.)



GRAPH 4. Destination tourism development framework (adapted from Tourism development international 2011)

Graph 4 is showing the framework for destination tourism development. The first phase of developing a tourism product is to analyse the position of the organization or a destination. A tourism product is more complicated as many of its features are intangible. So the initial phase of developing a tourism product is to research the customer demand, patterns and segment. After that, the analysis of the resources of the destination can be done. Supporting industries are important for the success of the tourism development such as accommodation, transportation, communication and more. Analysis on competitors' performance is important before developing a tourism product. A proper vision and goal is a key to success for every organization. There should be specific strategies for developing a tourism product. There should be a target market strategy and branding strategy. These components are important in order to accomplish the desired position.

Proper planning and strategy leads the organization towards success. A development plan is essential for developing the image of an organization. Annual projects and surveys should be taken into consideration to update the organization's vision and principles. A tourism product can be successful if the framework is done properly and the institution's management is flowing smoothly and the monitoring is effective.

4.3 Tourism product quality analysis

The main objectives of the marketing concept are the process of matching the features of the tourism product and receiving the benefits from these features by matching the needs and desires of the customers. A new tourism product can be developed by first researching the needs and desires of its target group. As a result of the product analysis, the tourism marketer may discover that the service provided by the organization offers the features and benefits desired by the tourists. But on the other hand, attracting tourists may not be sufficient to maintain a tourism industry. All in all, a product analysis may be useful in order to modify the product by determining more additional features, which are desired by a larger segment of potential tourists. (Kolb 2006, 51-55.)

All tourism products guarantee ensuring satisfaction for the consumers, which is not quite easy to achieve. Expectation of quality varies from one client to another as every individual has different points of view on service quality, so it does not have the same importance for both the purchaser and the provider. In the end the quality of a tourism product is valued by the customers who compare their expected service and their received experience while consuming the product. It is considered that when purchasing a tourism product, the final decisional factor depends mainly on the promotion, word-of-mouth, review of the product. The purchasing decisions of customers are influenced by a different range of non-touristic elements that may decrease the selling amount of a product. On the other hand, tourism organizations must focus on the quality of the offered services because this is a defining element, specific for the tourist product. (Kolb 2006, 51-55.)

4.4 Travellers' motivations and needs

The factor affecting the demand for tourism products is closely linked to models of consumer behaviour. It is difficult to understand the factor that shapes tourism consumers' behaviour in relation to the consumption of the tourism product. Many variables of the market will influence the consumption patterns. The variation is complex and difficult to study and therefore it is more practical to deal with general behaviour principles. (Cooper et al. 2008, 43-46.)

An understanding of the key factor regarding why people choose to travel and become tourists, seems like a very simple issue at first sight. Unfortunately, it is a very complex area and we can only assume that people choose to go on a holiday because they have enough money to do it. Motivation is a state of mind or a condition that pushes the individual towards certain action that could bring satisfaction. The development of a tourism product should be prepared so that it creates maximum motivation for the customers. Tourist motivation is yet a complex area dominated by socio-economic and psychological behaviour, attitudes and thoughts of people as consumers of tourism. (Page 2009, 81-88)

The Oxford dictionary definition of motivation is derived from the word 'motivate' which is to affect people to act in a certain way to get satisfaction. This is a reason in tourism; tourism experts take motivation as a major influence upon consumer behaviour. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is probably the best-known theory to analyse customers' motivations because of its simplicity. The theory of motivation proposed by Maslow (1970) is arranged according to the individual's needs. Maslow introduced two types of motivation. They are deficiency or tension-reducing motives, and inductive or arousal-seeking motives. The most important needs of an individual are the basic needs and when these are satisfied, there is no longer a motivator so the second need will act as a motivator. (Cooper et al. 2008, 43-46.)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs consists of five layers (Graph 5). Maslow's hierarchy of needs is made in the shape of a pyramid, with basic and fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top. The most important individual need is located in the bottom surface. The levels of human needs are shown clearly in Graph 5 on the next page.



GRAPH 5. Maslow's hierarchy model (adopted from project management 2009)

Physiological needs (hunger, thirst, rest, activity) should be satisfied before safety needs (security, freedom from fear and anxiety) act as motivators. After physiological needs and safety needs are fulfilled, the third layer of social needs (love, belonging, affection, giving and receiving love) comes as a motivator. A human being needs to love and be loved by others. In the absence of this need, a human being experience loneliness, social anxiety and depression. All human beings need to be respected and to have self-esteem and self-respect. When social needs are fulfilled then esteem becomes a motivator for human beings. Esteem is a normal human being's wish or desire to be accepted and valued by another human being. Maslow defined two different types of esteem needs; a lower one and higher one. The lower need is the need for respect, status, fame, prestige and attention from others and the higher one is the need for self-respect, self-confidence and strength. When the esteem need is fulfilled then the top of the needs, self-actualization, becomes a motivator. Maslow defines this need as the desire to move higher than one can go, to become everything that one is capable of becoming. (Cooper et al. 2008, 43-46.)

5 PLANNING PROCESS OF CANOEING PACKAGE

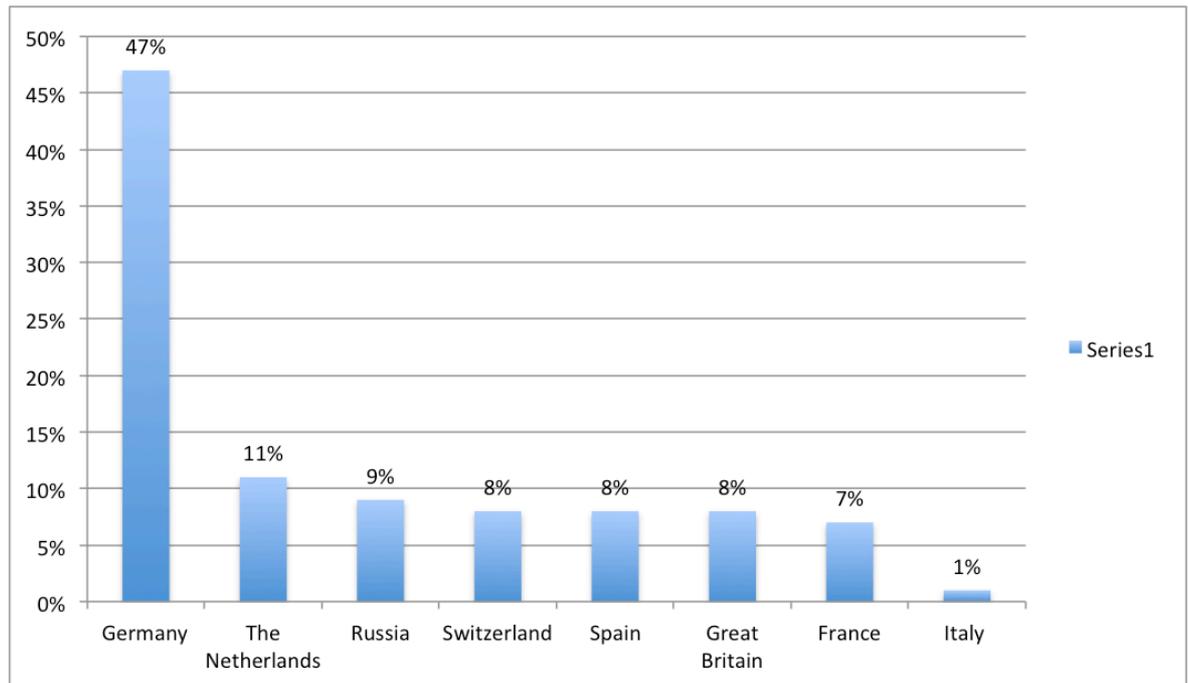
The following chapter introduces the present situation of customer demands and the potential for developing a canoeing package in the Ostrobothnia region. Apart from the general description of the organization and its operations, the importance of co-operation between other tourism service providers in this region will be highlighted. Furthermore, the region as a tourism destination will be presented and networks between service providers of the region will be emphasised.

5.1 A description of the present situation

Canoeing tourism has been selected as one of the themes to develop as the outdoor summer activities in Finland. Finland has a good geographical potential for developing canoeing activities as there are a lot of water resources. The number of foreign tourists using the Finnish canoeing tourism products is still very low. The reasons behind this might be because of poor product availability and the low level of recognition as a canoeing country. So there should be a wide range of canoeing products with combination of other tourism service operators to develop paddling tourism in Finland. This work will help to develop a qualitative and sellable canoeing package for the organization in this region.

5.1.1 Customer demand of canoeing packages

According to The Border Survey Interview conducted by FTB (Tilastokeskus 2011) barely one percentage of foreign visitors participated in paddling tourism while being on a holiday in Finland in 2008. The most popular destination for water tourism is Central Finland. The reason behind this problem could be the distance between urban and rural areas. Tourists prefer to receive facilities nearby them. They do not want to travel a long distance for an activity. However, the well-developed infrastructure of Finland is contributing to the development. Thus the Central Ostrobothnia region and the Ostrobothnia region of Finland with their ingenuous water resources are not popular for water tourism due to their lack of development in tourism infrastructure and nearby towns. (Tilastokeskus 2011.)



GRAPH 6. Home countries of the paddlers (adopted from: MEK 2004)

In Graph 6 above the percentage of visitors coming to canoe in Finland is presented. The tourism organization of Finland, RAJA, conducted interview surveys in 2004 and 2005 on summer tourists and out of them canoeing was practised by 17%, and out of them almost half (47%) are from Germany. The second largest canoeing group comes from the Netherlands (11%), among whom canoeing and paddling is the most popular recreational activity. Then comes the neighbouring country Russia (9%), Switzerland (8%), Spain (8%), Great Britain (8%), France (7%) and Italy (1%). These countries are the potential customers for the canoeing package and they are the target group of our canoeing product. (MEK 2004.)

According to the Appalachian Mountain club, generally paddling tourism customers can be scaled from level I to level V.

Level I. - Beginner. Is familiar with the basic strokes and can balance the canoe competently from the bow or stern in flat water.

Level II. – Amateur. Can handle more advanced and balance the canoe. Knows how to read water; can handle easy and regular rapids of water.

Level III. – Intermediate. Can negotiate with the rapid of water; understands and can use tide turn and basic bow-upstream techniques.

Level IV. – Expert. Has the ability to run into difficult rapids and weather conditions; can canoe solo in a properly equipped canoe or kayak and can handle heavy water.

Level V. – Leader. Is an expert canoeist; possesses the experience, judgement and training to lead a group of any level of skill on any navigable waterway and in the wilderness. (Paddling.net Inc 2012.)

Generally, canoeing tourists in the Ostrobothnia region are no regular or expert canoeists; hence paddling is rather a part of holiday activities. A simple and common motivation for canoeing is to seek thrills and adventure. Nevertheless the level of need for adventure differs between individuals. Solo paddlers are considered having much experience, preferring calm water and peaceful environment, whereas group paddlers are considered to look for adventure and spending good time with friends. Nearly one third of canoeing tourist in Finland prefers self-organized tours. Tourists prefer a combination of several types of activities in the tour packages in Finland. Those typical paddling tourist prefer a combination of hiking, biking, gastronomy and culture tourism. (Visit Finland 2009.)

5.1.2 The Finnish supply of canoeing packages

Finland's tourism by the year 2020 is in accordance with the co-ordinated development of specific topics in order to ensure national development programs. Development passes through the values of the strategy of profitable and productive year –round economic activity, sustainable tourism, safety, customer promises and Finnish culture. Canoeing Travel has been selected as one of the themes that will develop the national outdoors improvement activities. The amount of foreign tourists using the Finnish canoeing tourism products is still very low. This is because of poor availability of products, but also Finland's low level of branding as a canoeing country. (Visit Finland 2009.)

Demands on canoeing in Finland from international tourists are growing every year. The canoeing can be categorized into two main groups of customers: the true enthusiast customers and the experimenting or holiday customers. It is important to make a target market before creating any tourism product. The target market is important for the marketing of the tourism product. It should be a specific country, place, gender, age group or organization. (Visit Finland 2009.)

There are various canoeing packages all over Finland on the international market, mentioning paddling areas, routes, companies and their products, accommodation, events, safety and other services but it seems they did not find the market. This is probably due to the fact that the operators are acting individually and there are many small companies whose resources have not been combined. This reflects the fact that Finnish tour operators do not know the expectations of their customers and therefore are not qualified to supply demanding services and products. (Visit Finland 2009.)

International travel and tour operators offering paddling tourism in Finland are mainly from Germany or from Russia. These tour operators offer solo paddling holidays in Finland, whereas tour operators from central Europe offer paddling tourism as part of multi-activities holiday. Most of the paddling tour packages offered by central Europe are on an easy or moderate level to attract more customers in the market. The main competitors of Finland in terms of paddling tourism are Sweden and Norway due to the distinct variation in the landscape, especially in Norway. (MEK 2004.)

5.2 Future challenges and opportunities

Entrepreneurs, creativity and the location of networking are essential for development paddling. Paddling can also be used to get the desired additional capacity. Service packaging requires the construction of functional cooperation, especially in an area like the 7 Bridges Archipelago and also between other tourism service providers. Development of new paddling packages will be beneficial to the organization and it will make the organization achieve win-win situation for administrative boundaries. (Twin city daily alliance 2008.)

Many canoe tourism development activities require strong public and private sector cooperation. 7 Bridges Archipelago's strengths are in wilderness areas and sparse population. These should be utilized for the development of canoeing tourism. Product development is in many places still in its infancy. The level and quality of the products are uneven. Safety issues have been largely assimilated very well, but their maintenance should be paid more attention to. Customer-oriented products are the basic conditions for the development of canoeing tourism in this region. Seasons may be extended, for example, through product diversification, by offering shorter tours, the weather conditions

that take account of the products, as well as networking with other activity providers. Finland and the 7 Bridges Archipelago both are missing a large scale of summer activity centres, which should be developed as a new opportunity. Activities like fishing and canoeing could be combined in a package. (Finwest 2009.)

Customer research and feedback from product development through knowledge base creation is also an opportunity to increase business profitability. Both consumers and specialized tour operators should work for the development of products. Finnish nature and diversity of water resources of this region will make better use of the product development and marketing. Marketing should be systematic and should reach the right target group. Additional impetus for the marketing is implementing it in cooperation with other tourism service providers and companies. The marketing of canoeing packages should emphasize strengths, uncongested waters, many islands and pristine waters. Internationally successful Finnish racing paddlers could work in marketing as figureheads of the regional canoeing products. Marketing should be more product-specific, not site specific. (Fojt 2005, 16-19.)

Changes in trends as well as current and emerging competitor countries' functions should be monitored. In many places of the 7 Bridges Archipelago, the canoeing infrastructure is functional and in good condition. On the other hand, a part of such landing places requires improvement. Also, routes should be added to the selected areas, taking into account the different customer groups. In addition, attention must be paid to the condition of the existing route network maintenance. Agreement about who is responsible for the maintenance of the place and municipal commitment to maintaining the routes should be clarified before planning the paddling routes. Quality should be constant over the entire service and related environment. Existing and future technology-related applications should be developed and made a better use of in their operations and thus increase further the customers' satisfaction. (Wilson 2007, 983-985.)

6 THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS OF THE CANOEING PACKAGE

The actual canoeing product development process starts at the stage of concept development. The idea was generated before starting this thesis to develop a canoeing package for the tourism organization 7 Bridges Archipelago. The concept was developed as the region has potential and resources to develop canoeing tourism. Hence the process of canoeing product development is supply driven and certain features of the product are predetermined.

The construction of a proper canoeing product process makes it relevant for the tour operators and suppliers to provide sufficient information to the customers. Therefore more focus is given on right and proper customer information in this development process. Base and research is essential to study beforehand for the development of the tourism product. The other important issue is the name of the product as it has an important effect on the customers and selling success, thus it will be included in the product development process.

6.1 Product idea

The product idea is to develop a fully sellable single and multi-day paddling tour. As the 7 Bridges Archipelago operates mainly in six regions of the Ostrobothnia region, the location of the paddling tour is set there as well. In addition, the organization has developed strong and valuable networks with the local tourism and tourism service providers over the years, and as the paddling tours will strongly rely on those tourism service operators' networks, it adds benefits to both the organization and the local service providers. The service providers' networks help the organization to sell the new canoeing package products without great investment, as the required equipment and facilities are available from the network partners. The nature and diversity of water resources make better use of the product development and marketing. (7 Broars Skärgård r.f 2012.)

Before starting to develop the product process, different product levels should be studied clearly in order to completely understand the whole framework of the product. When developing a canoeing package it is most important that the all product elements are taken into consideration, as they all are part of the final product and should run smoothly for it to

be a quality product. A tourism service package requires the construction of a functional cooperation, especially within and between organizations and other tourism service providers. Canoeing product development requires strong public and private sector cooperation. Since the canoeing product is a multiday package, it should consist of various tourism services, which is impossible without the cooperation with the local tourism service providers. (Annacchino 2007, 101-106.)

6.1.1 Product portfolio

According to Hundekar, Appannaiah, & Reddy (2010, 33-35), the real product is what customers are paying for and they are expecting a quality product. In case of the canoeing package tour, the core product is the activities and services received by the customers in the Finnish wilderness. The reason behind developing a canoeing package for this organization is because the usage of canoeing tourism in the region is still very low, even though the region has good potential for canoeing.

6.1.2 Travellers' experience of canoeing tour

Local canoeing tourism demands in other regions of Finland are growing like in Lapland: Muonio river, Koillismaa, Kuusamo etc., but 7 Bridges Archipelago canoeing opportunities and products are not yet known. Canoeing can be identified with two main groups of customers: the true enthusiasts and experimenters. Both of the customers are equally important for the development of canoeing for the organization. Determining the main market is based on various criteria; such as leisure stays, canoeing tourism products for consumption, regional interest in the business and strategies, accessibility and general trends. (Visit Finland 2009.)

As previously mentioned, the main market area of Finnish canoeing tourism products in international markets is in German-speaking Europe (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland), and other European countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, the UK to name a few, so the marketing strategy should focus on these countries to attract customers. Another strongly growing market of the region is Russia. Around half of the paddling tourists in Finland come from Germany. The second largest canoeing groups come from the Netherlands. The

key factors to evaluate the canoeing product by customers are infrastructure, equipment, and company's quality of service and the price of the service.

Another aspect for the visitors is that they can experience new activities in the wilderness of the region. The canoeing package provides an excellent opportunity to involve in such activities. The tourism industry product, which is sold to the customers, is an intangible product which means the customers cannot see it until they receive the service. In the case of a canoeing package, the customers are able to experience the holiday only if they are willing to cooperate and participate actively in the activities. This is done by participating in the tour itself and experiencing something new, like preparing the food at an open fire, barbequing or setting up the accommodation each day in a new place. These experiences are a part of the overall experience that the customer gains from this package. (Annacchino 2007, 333-335.)

The last part of a package experience is to provide a memorable holiday experience. These features allow the customers to keep a long-lasting memory of the package and help to develop loyal customers. It is a fact that the customers who receive quality service and memorable holiday experiences are likely to return to take part in another tour package offered by the same company. So it would be better to provide the memorable holiday experience to all customers. A suggestion would be to provide some special gift to all the customers, such as a Moomin mug or Santa Claus key rings or some other thing so that customers would remember the package for a long time. These gifts would represent the Finnish culture as well as be a memory of the canoeing package. (Kahn 2006, 40-44.)

6.2 Product development areas

The idea of a product is to create one day or multi-day canoeing tour packages in 7 Bridges Archipelago area of Ostrobothnia region for the 7 Bridges Archipelago organisation. The 7 Bridges Archipelago region has a well-developed infrastructure and the organization has good cooperation with the local service companies and municipalities. The region has good potential for developing a canoeing package since it is full of natural resources and wilderness. During an interview with Gunvor Häggman, the tourism manager of the 7 Bridges Archipelago organisation, she suggested to create a canoeing tour package since the region has potential. The canoeing tour package will be single day or multi day self-

guided or guided, according to the request of the customers and budget, and it should run along the waterways of the Ostrobothnia region. It is possible to arrange a professional canoeing guide according to the request of customers. It is a fact that the options in the tour package are a valuable tool to reach different target groups and to fulfil the expectations of customers. A canoeing tour package will also include various activities like camping, barbequing, sauna, hiking and more, which help the customers to discover the area from yet another perspective. (UNWTO 2011.)

Since the organization has maintained sound and valuable cooperation with the municipalities and local service providers, the canoeing tour package to be developed will mainly be based on these networks. All the required equipped materials like canoes and kayaks, tents, accommodations, caterings and other services will be arranged and included in the package. Depending on the wishes of the customers, cooperation with the local tourism service providers in the area will be undertaken. (7 Broars Skärgård r.f 2012.)

Another foundation of the product development involves testing the product. The testing will be conducted only after a complete development process. The canoeing tour package is a seasonal product since it is impossible to canoe in winter season because the water is frozen. It is only possible to canoe from April to September. The canoeing tour package does not involve high budget so the risk is minimum. A low level of package demand will not result in great losses to the service providers because the package will be organized in cooperation with other tourism service providers. However, the testing of the tour package would be conducted with some voluntary group from Centria University of Applied Sciences in the beginning of spring 2013.

6.3 Marketing and promotion

The product development task is a demand-driven process. In the case of the 7 Bridges Archipelago organization, the target group is already set as well as the new canoeing product has potential to attract other new customers too. Our main target group for the canoeing package are people from Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Russia and other European countries. Specific target groups are those people from these countries how want to have a sound and relaxing holiday in the wilderness of Finland (Visit Finland 2009). The canoeing package has to set the limits of

the suitable target group according to the levels of difficulty. There are different canoeing packages for different target groups, for example, one day canoeing trips for the beginners or those paddlers who have little experience, and three or five days canoeing packages for experts.

The second important task of product development is to set sales goals. Since the canoeing product is developed in cooperation with the service provider and the municipalities of the Ostrobothnia region, there will not be great losses. Product activities are a combination of the existing sources from locals so it does not cost more to launch the product. Hence it will be manageable to sell 20-50 packages in one season in the beginning. The packages could be developed more after receiving feedback from the customers. Planning the sales activities is another important part of the product development such as selling the product directly to the customers through a website, travel agents or via craft shows. The marketing and selling plan should also include the accounts we want to sell to, for example, if we have target customers we should plan how we are going to reach them (UNWTO 2011). Since our main customers are from German-speaking countries (Austria, German, and Switzerland) and the Netherlands and Russia, the 7 Bridges Archipelago representatives should promote the product in different events and fairs in these countries.

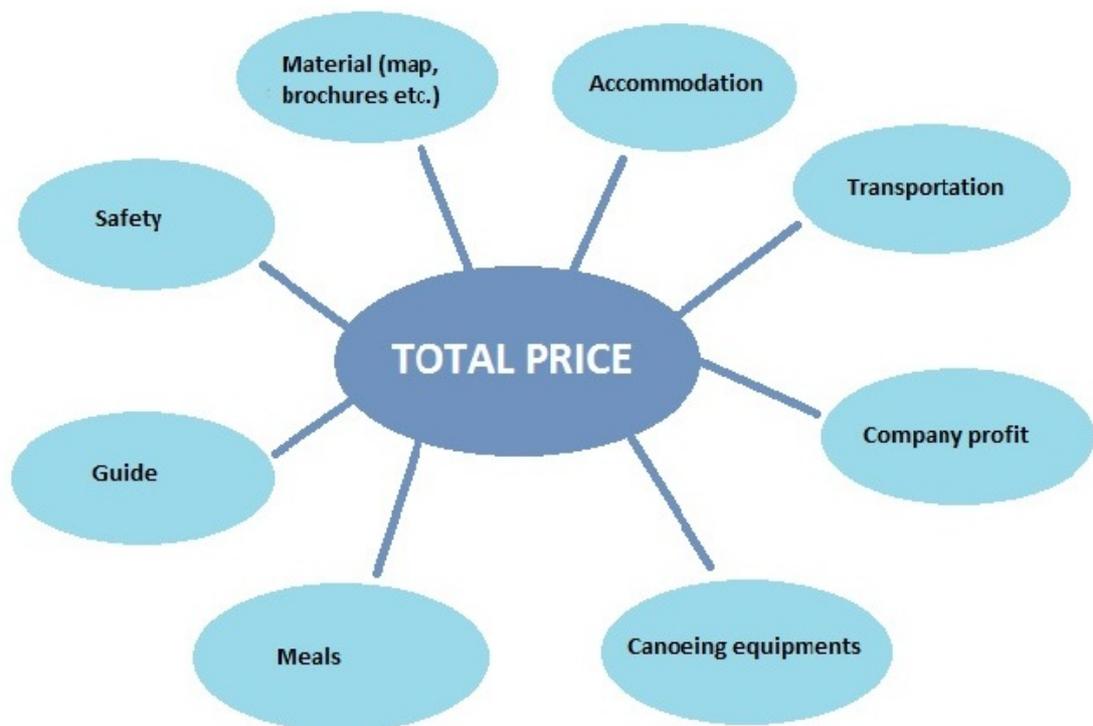
The Ansoff matrix (Ansoff 2010) provides a valuable and useful means for the organization to monitor whether the product fulfils its purpose of the new product or if it needs modification. However, the market position in terms of competition is evaluated in the product matrix. The following matrix illustrates the marketing matrix of canoeing packages.

		Product	
		Existing product	New product
Market	Existing market	Market penetration	Product development
	New market	Market development	Diversification

GRAPH 7. New product marketing matrix (adapted Ansoff 2010)

In Graph 7 presents that the marketing matrix market penetration is a product that seeks to achieve growth in existing market with the already existing products. Marketing development is a product that seeks growth by targeting the existing products to new market segments. The diversification product is that new product which is a new market segment. The canoeing package belongs to the product development. The canoeing package is a new canoeing product in the existing market. A product development strategy is appropriate for the canoeing package since the strengths of the package are related to the specific customers rather than to the specific product itself.

The marketing and promotion strategy depends on the pricing of the product. It is the most important and the most difficult part of the product development to price a product. Product pricing depends on all the expenses during service. Human beings want to receive quality service at a low price, but also the pricing of the competitors should be taken into consideration. Therefore, the content of pricing has to be set first. The following graph will illustrate the different contents of pricing a canoeing package. (Tourism New South Wales 2001.)



GRAPH 8. Product price structure

As illustrated in Graph 8 above, the total price of the product depends on the segment of all the categories, such as meals, canoeing equipment, profit etc.

Transportation means all the expenses which occur during transporting customers such as pickups from and drops to train station or airport. Meals mean all the food and beverage expenses of the customer during the canoeing package. Canoeing equipment means the rent of the kayaks and all the necessary equipment for canoeing. Materials are all the expenses for the canoeing maps, brochures and other important materials for canoeing. Safety refers to the expenses that are necessary for the safety issues for canoeing, like life jackets. Guide refers to the possibility to rent a guide for the canoeing tour. Accommodation refers to all the accommodation expenses for our customers such as hotel room, rent for tents and renting cottages and finally some surplus amount from selling all the segments of a product is a profit for the company.

Marketing and promoting the canoeing package is relying on the 7 Bridges Archipelago organization's connections and good linkages with other tour operators and service providers. Since the main target groups are from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland and other European countries, 7 Bridges Archipelago representatives should participate in different events and fairs for promoting the package.

Another important task is to discover a new target group that is helpful for developing the canoeing package (Visit Finland 2009). It is important to illustrate the new target group and targeted distribution channels to find for example, the right web sites, where enthusiasts exchange their opinions on blogs. The canoeing package should publish marketing supporting material too, such as electronic and printed maps and other materials in different languages (portal language Finnish, English, German, Russian, Swedish, Italian, Spanish and French). The quality of a product should also be maintained, taking into consideration the competitors. The canoeing package should hold the image of being reliable, creative and high qualitative in the international and national market.

6.4 The development of the canoeing package

The canoeing tour will be conducted on the waterways of the western seashore of the Ostrobothnia region. There are three types of canoeing packages i.e. one day round trip to Larsmo, another one is a three day round trip to Nykarleby, and the third one is a round trip to Tankar island of Kokkola, covering approximately 15 kilometres to 60 kilometres. All the canoeing products' starting point is from the Svanen camping site which is located in

Pietarsaari since all the canoeing equipment is located there. The types of waterways used in these routes have occasional rapids. The rapids are classified according to the Appalachian Mountain club water classifications and do not exceed the level III. The canoeing package is suitable for beginners as well as professionals. The phase of the choice of routes is to match the demand of canoeing tourists of Finland; hence it is suitable for a large target group.

In order to minimize the cost of the canoeing product, the package has selected low but qualitative accommodation services, such as camping sites with cottages, or sleeping in the canoeing points. Customers are suggested to bring their own camping equipment but there will always be a possibility to rent tent equipment which will help to decrease the price of the product. All the accommodation services are designed with the quality services. Food and soft drinks are included in the canoeing package. Furthermore, it adds a different and special experience to the customers to discover the wilderness and pure nature of this region. There is also a possibility to hire a well-trained guide but it will cost extra since it is not included in the package.

The best time for canoeing depends on the natural seasonality. Usually the water is frozen till March and is navigable with canoes by the end of March, so the canoeing package is usable from the end of May. However, the season for this canoeing package will be from the beginning of June till the middle of October. As the natural seasonality changes every year, the organization is able to adjust the canoeing tour according to the expected weather conditions and customers will be advised to check the weather conditions too. (Outdoors Finland 2011.)

In the canoeing package of the round trip of Larsmo, the customers will arrive to Svanen camping site. The briefing of the tour will be provided, and if necessary, instructions for paddling will be given. The starting point of the canoeing is located in the Svanen camping site where all the equipment is provided to customers. Customers are served with a healthy and light breakfast in Svanen camping site and a lunch box and drinks will be provided for the breaks. Customers are recommended to have their first break in Fagernäs. Each break will last about one hour, where they can rest and have a drink and food. The second break will be recommended in Gertrudin silta, however, they are encouraged to adjust the breaks to their own likings. The third break will be recommended in Fiskehamn and then back to Svanen camping site where dinner, sauna and cottage will be arranged for customers.

In second canoeing round trip package to Nykarleby, the customer will arrive at Svanen camping site. The starting point and ending point of this trip is the Svanen camping site. Basic information and briefing and training will be provided to the customer about the trip and sites. All the nights will be under the open sky in tents in the canoeing points along the way. Customers will be served a good breakfast in Svanen camping site. They will be provided with a lunch box, food and soft drinks. Day one will consist of three hours of break, one-hour break in each of three different places. The first day accommodation could be in tent at Bådan. It will be a camping night where dinner has to be arranged by customers. The second day accommodation is suggested to be arranged at Pörkenäs. There is a camping centre in Pörkenäs and traditional Finnish food could be ordered beforehand so it is possible make reservations for accommodation and food if the customers are interested to spend their second night in Pörkenäs camping centre. Otherwise camping will be done in Pörkenäs outside. On the third day the customers will return back to Svanen and accommodation will be arranged on the camping site. Different activities will be organized to the customers on the camping site, such as grilling, sauna, and other sports activities.

The third canoeing package, trip to Tankar Island consists of five days and four night's trip. The starting and ending point of this trip is the Svanen camping site. Basic briefing and training will be provided to the customers. All the required equipment for paddling trip is received in Svanen camping site. All the nights will be spent in a tent. The customers will receive a good and light breakfast in the Svanen camping site. Food and beverage will be provided to the customers. The first overnight stay will be in Larsmo Kalasatama, where camping will be arranged. The second day overnight stay will be arranged in the beautiful lighthouse of Tankar Island. On the third day the return back is started and the overnight stay is in the beautiful place next to the sea called Villa Elba. The customers can also camp outside Villa Elba. The fourth overnight stay will be arranged in Uimaranta/Simstrand and on the final day the Svanen camping site will be reached. There is a possibility to enjoy a traditional Finnish dinner. Different activities for relaxing, such as sauna, camp firing and barbequing are organized.

The customers will receive the basic equipment such as kayaks, handles, paddles, life jackets, compasses and maps in the beginning of every trip from Svanen camping. All the camping equipment will also be arranged for the customers but they are asked to bring along their own sleeping bags and blankets.

A simple demo and instructions will be provided before each trip, such as how to paddle plus safety instructions. The equipment is controlled and maintained regularly. A description of the tour will be included in the information material as well. The customers will receive a list of emergency numbers in case of accidents. Finally, they will be informed about the trip and they conduct the tour on their own risk.

6.5 Product information

Customers will receive significant information of the canoeing product. The canoeing package also includes all the required information about paddling hence the information has been carefully gathered and presented. The information will be divided into two different parts. The first part of the information will consist of important items of the package i.e. itinerary, group size, price contents, duration and levels of difficulties.

There is a detailed plan for the journey in the itinerary. The trip to Tankar Island requires a group because it cannot be conducted by only one single customer. The price of the product for a single person as well as for a group will be mentioned. There will be information about the suitable season for canoeing in the region with rough information about the weather and also the duration of the canoeing package. There are three different canoeing packages of one day, three days and five days duration. There are different levels of difficulty in canoeing. All the levels of difficulty will be mentioned in the first part.

In the second part of information the customers can also find extra documents that provide them further details about the canoeing tour procedures and requirements. The document consists of the following issues: journey briefing, accommodation, age criteria, equipment and clothing requirements, food and beverages, dos and do not's, time zone, travel insurance, terms and conditions, cancellation process, safety instructions, practical instructions for canoeing, and weather.

The canoeing package will be presented to the potential and new customers. Hence it is important to ensure that the customer receives the same quality and information as when purchasing the package. In the canoeing package, a key to success is the quality of the product. Improving the quality increases customer satisfaction and satisfied clients communicate their experience positively. Another important aspect of the canoeing package is safety of the customers which is possible through properly maintained and

functional canoeing equipment and supplying functional information about canoeing, responsibilities and levels of difficulty. The quality of the canoeing product should be developed by the organisation. The organization must also be able to demonstrate that it has an effective customer satisfaction monitoring system that has been in use for at least one year, and that the quality has been developed with the help of the customer feedback, as required.

6.6 Branding and naming the canoeing product

Travel and marketing activities will be emphasized more and more in the Ostrobothnia region's creation. Branding in a short is a simple element that helps to recognize a product. A brand could also be defined as the sum total of all the customers' experiences with a particular product or service, building both good or bad reputation and future expectation of benefit. Reputation and expectation must be based on something particular if customers are going to put their trust in the brand. The canoeing package should also establish its brand in the national and international market for development. Positive branding is possible when customers receive the promised service. Keeping the promise is one of the key factors in branding the product. So customers should receive all the quality service that has been promised during the marketing of the product. Like people, brands also need to have their own personalities. The brand's personality helps to create that emotional connection that attracts in a target market. Unique selling proposition is another important element that makes any company's product or service different from any other companies' products or services. It could be anything different such as a colourful brochure or official dress. Whatever it is, every brand needs to provide at least something unique of quality that makes it unique on the market. So while branding the canoeing package, a unique selling proposition by distributing some special moments in a photograph for them could be made so that they could remember their time during their holidays or provide some special gift from Finland. (Miletsky & Genevieve 2009, 3-4.)

The naming of the product also has an influence on the success of the product as it helps to attract customers to participate in the canoeing trip. The name of a canoeing product should be related and realistic to the actual product so that the customer does not get an incorrect image of the canoeing package. To create a suitable name for the canoeing package the destination and its wilderness could be used, but it is still recommended to

focus on the product itself rather than on the destination. In this case the canoeing tour's highlight is to paddle through the archipelago of the Ostrobothnia region in the Finnish wilderness, as stated before. So the name of a product should represent the core product which the customer is purchasing, and thus provide a valuable image through a suitable name. The suggested names for the three different canoeing products are the following:

“Round trip to Larsmo – canoeing tour through Finnish wilderness”

“Round trip to Nykarleby - canoeing tour to Kvarken”

“Round trip to Tankar Island – canoeing tour through archipelago”

The mentioning of the canoeing tour is important for the marketing reason because for those people who are looking for a canoeing trip to Finland could easily find it on the Internet among the numerous search results. These are the suggested names for the canoeing packages; however the 7 Bridges Archipelago has all the rights to change them to other suitable names if desired.

7 CONCLUSION

The main intention of this thesis was to develop an effective canoeing product for the Finnish tourism organization 7 Bridges Archipelago. The product development is based on the active demand of customers for canoeing products in Finland. In addition to that, new products add to the organization's product range and therefore offer more opportunities to attract more customers to the Ostrobothnia region.

In order to create a good canoeing tour package the theoretical aspect of product development and tourism in Finland have been addressed. Product development is a difficult and complex process that has been studied and explained throughout in order to get a valuable product. Therefore the different levels of procedures of tourism product development were illustrated and on that basis the process of developing a new canoeing product has been implemented. Then later the canoeing tour product was founded on these theoretical backgrounds.

Adventure tourism provided the theoretical part of this type of water tourism in the whole tourism industry. Therefore all the essential elements of water-based tourism were given. The subsequent introduction of 7 Bridges Archipelago has been described in the theoretical part. All the marketing strategies and distribution channels have also been discussed since the canoeing package needs to be marketed internationally.

The survey conducted by the Finnish tourism board of canoeing tourism in Finland illustrates that canoeing tourism is considered as a growing form of tourism in this country. Various surveys proved that Finland has good potential as a canoeing tourism destination. The demand of canoeing tourism, which Ostrobothnia region is receiving, further supports the development of a canoeing package for 7 Bridges Archipelago. There are a few existing canoeing trips but they are not organized and do not have a sufficient market on the international market. This project provides valuable organized canoeing trips for 7 Bridges Archipelago. Therefore this project provides a significant foundation for good networking among tourism service providers in the Ostrobothnia region and enables them to enlarge their market for their potential customers.

The product development process began with the presentation of the product area. It is important to present the background information on which the product was going to be

developed. The introduction of 7 Bridges Archipelago was introduced in the third chapter of this thesis which is benefiting from the final paddling tour product. The area presentation of 7 Bridges Archipelago helps to provide the image of the place where this product will be used. The available facilities in the region served as the framework for product development as the intention of the canoeing tour is the combination of various tourism service agencies and companies. The well-developed and sound network immersed this fact with different service companies and the organization. Marketing policy, distribution and links with tourism service providers of the organization were also studied in this thesis, which is one of the important parts of the product development.

During the process of developing the canoeing tour package, frequent co-operation and exchange with the 7 Bridges Archipelago organisation were conducted to ensure that the result of the process would meet the demands and expectations of the organization. Even though the canoeing package is now a complete package, the organization could still carry out modification according to the necessities. The organisation has the full right to make changes and modify the canoeing tour package.

In conclusion, the thesis process provided the researcher with different challenges to select proper and suitable theoretical background information that is applicable to the practical case study of developing an actual product. In the theoretical research part it was difficult to set the limits for the research and theoretical aspects to be covered. As canoeing tours are correlated with various elements of tourism like adventure tourism, water based tourism and more it was complicated to select the limitation during the theoretical build-up. The same challenges applied to the theoretical framework of product development process since many different approaches have been introduced over the years regarding the development of a new tourism product. The focus on development of new tourism product enabled the writer to choose a suitable background theory approach, which was later adjusted with the choosing of important elements for product development.

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TIME TABLE OF THIS THESIS PROCESS

The product development process was conduct from November 2011 till October 2012.

November 2011 – February 2012	Concept development Planning for product development Create contacts with teachers and commissioner Study background information
March 2012- June 2012	Production of theoretical framework Detail planning Collection of background information
July 2012- July 2012	Production of information material Collection of route maps for canoeing package Development of package Documentation
September 2012	Documentation Development of canoeing package process Development of canoeing package Follow-up Assessment
October 2012	Drawing route maps Developing final canoeing package Final editing the canoeing package Accounting Reporting

Round trip to Larsmo – Canoeing trip through Finnish wilderness

One day canoeing package

Offered: May – August

Length: 1 day

Skill Level: New paddler – Intermediate

Region: Ostrobothnia, Finland

Group Size: 5-10 Persons

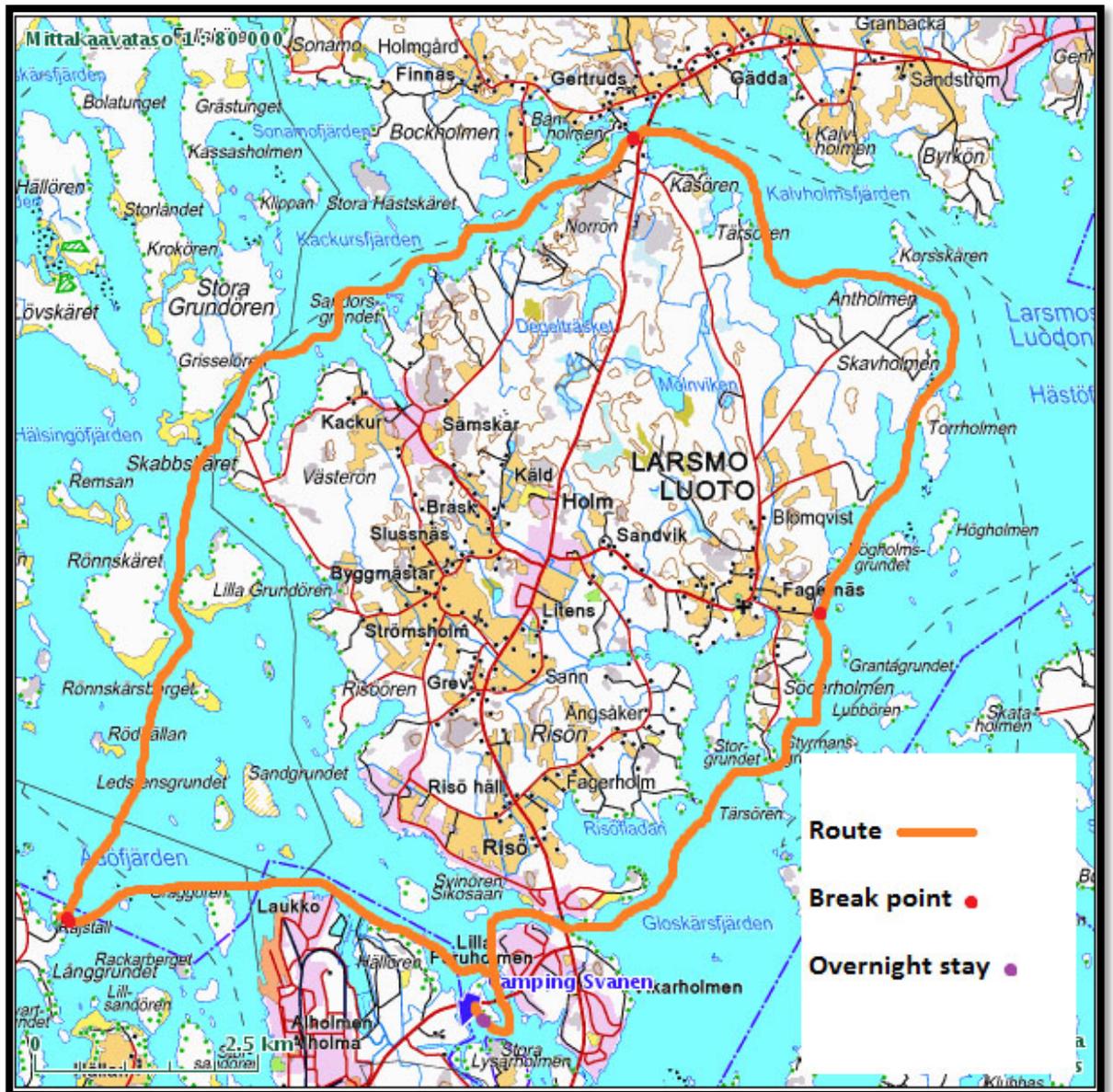
Package Description

This self-guided/ guided canoeing tour will take customers to the untouched wilderness of Ostrobothnia region of Finland. The tour leads along sea shore of Larsmo region where customer can enjoy the typical Finnish landscape with small islands. Along the route small rapids, which are also suitable for new paddler, offer adventure and diversity. In the evening customer will be able to enjoy campfire and sauna with Finnish traditional food before sleeping in traditional Finnish cottages. This tour is particularly suitable for new paddlers and small groups.

Prices
<p>Price of package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayak/person = 20 € • Food/person (Breakfast, Lunch box, and Dinner) = 35 € • Sauna/ hour = 10€ <p><i>One person: 65 €</i></p> <p><i>Total price: 65€ x 5 person = 325€</i></p> <p><i>Selling Price: 400€</i></p> <p><i>Profit: 75 €</i></p>

	Tour information
Day 1	<p>Arrival at Joutsen / Svanen camping site, Pietarsaari</p> <p>Upon arrival customers will be welcomed by the staff and receive first introductions to the equipment and safety issues. Accommodation will be in cottage of camping site where sauna will be heated up.</p> <p>After breakfast customer will start canoeing from the starting point i.e. Svanen camping site. Basic briefing, map and demonstration will be provided to customers.</p> <p>The several fireplaces along the shores invite you to have a break for frying sausages in the traditional Finnish way over an open fire. You will get chance to travel through Finnish wilderness</p> <p>Suggested place for breaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (50) Fagernäs N63°44.971`E022°48.475` (1st Break) • (44) Gertrudin silta Pohjois N63°47.785 `E022°45.75`6 (2nd Break) • (55) Ådö kalasatama N 63°43.313`E 022° 37.734 (3rd Break) <p>(Each break will be around one hour)</p>

Route Map of Round trip to Larsmo



Round trip to Nykarleby - Canoeing tour to Kvarken

Three days canoeing package

Offered: May – August

Length: 3 days

Skill Level: New paddler – Intermediate

Region: Nykarleby, Ostrobothnia, Finland

Group Size: 5-10 Persons

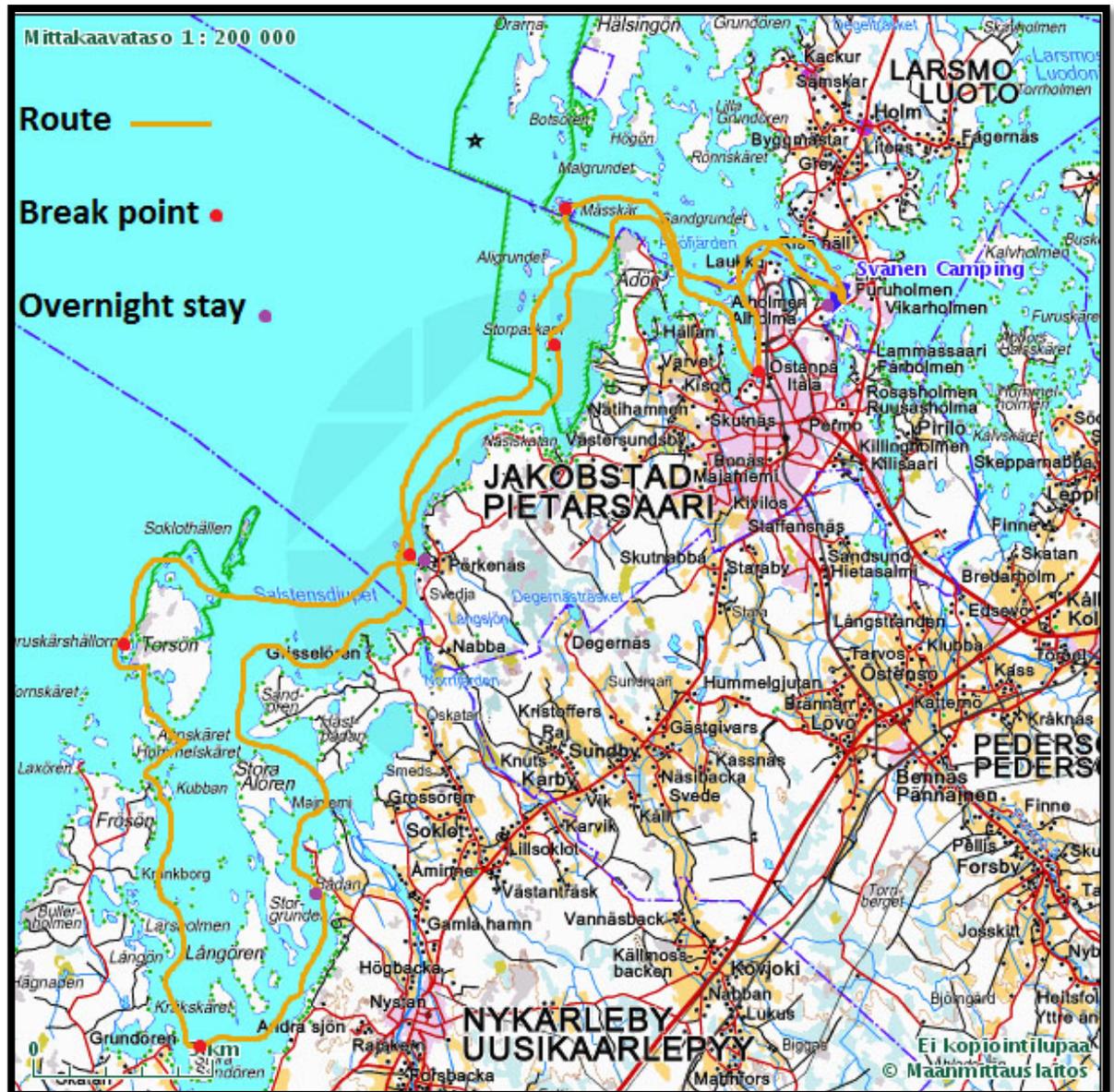
Package Description

This self-guided/ guided canoeing tour will take customers to the untouched wilderness of Ostrobothnia region of Finland. The tour leads along sea shore of Nykarleby region where customer can enjoy the typical Finnish landscape with small islands. Along the route small rapids, which are also suitable for new paddler, offers adventure and diversity in a trip. On the evening of the last day the customer will be able to enjoy campfire and sauna with Finnish traditional food before sleeping in traditional Finnish cottages. This tour is particularly suitable for groups.

Prices
<p>Price of package includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayak/person = 20 € • Food/person = 30 €/ per day • Food = 30 x 3 days = 90 € • Cottage/ person = Shared cottage 4 person/ per cottage 65€/ per night • Sauna/ hour = 10€ <p><i>Total price per package: 176€/ three days</i></p> <p><i>Total price: 176€ x 5 person = 528€</i></p> <p><i>Selling price: 625€</i></p> <p><i>Profit: 97 €</i></p>

Tour information	
Day 1	<p>Arrival in Joutsen / Svanen camping site, Pietarsaari</p> <p>Upon arrival customers will be welcomed by the staff and receive first introductions to the equipment and safety issues.</p> <p>After breakfast customer will start canoeing from the starting point i.e. Svanen camping site. Basic briefing, map and demonstration will be provided to customers. This is six hours canoeing trip including three hours break in different places per day.</p> <p>Suggested places for breaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (63) (First break) Stugupaskarn N63° 41.5655 `E022° 34.747` • (72)(Second break) Pörkenas Länergård N63° 37.987` E 022°30.820` <p>Overnight stay (camping) at (77) Bådan båthamn N 63°33.761`E 022°27.903</p>
Day 2	<p><i>Canoeing</i></p> <p>After breakfast customer will be brought to the starting point of a tour together with canoeing equipment. Today's route crosses various small islands around Nykarleby area. There will be two breaks during paddling in islands where customer can rest and have some drinks and food. Customer will camp for overnight stay at Pörkenäs where traditional Finnish dinner will be served.</p> <p>Suggested places for breaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (81)(First break) Loppan N 63°31.141` E 022°27.711` • (75) (Second break)Torsö lagun N 63°37.025` E 022°21.849 <p>Overnight stay at (72) Pörkenäs N63° 37.987` E 022°30.820`</p>
Day 3	<p><i>Canoeing</i></p> <p>On this day customer return back to the ending point of the trip i.e. Svanen camping site paddling through untouched nature and Finnish wilderness. There will be two breaks for one hour each in two different places along the way where customer can relax and take drinks and food. There will be a cottage booked for our customers in camping site where they can have sauna and barbeque.</p> <p>Suggested places for breaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (53)(First break) Mässkär N63° 43.698` E 022°34.852` • (64)(Second break) Pavis N63°41.380` E 022°41.448` <p>Final destination (58) Svanen camping site N 63°42.257 E 022°43.982</p>

Route map of Round trip to Nykarleby



Round trip to Tankar Island – Canoeing tour through archipelago

Five days canoeing package

Offered: May – August

Length: 5 days

Skill Level: Advanced

Region: Kokkola, Ostrobothnia, Finland

Group Size: 5-10 Persons

Package Description

Lasting five days, this wilderness expedition by canoe or sea kayak accesses remote natural wonders and wildlife habitats of Ostrobothnia region of Finland. We offer trips for adventurous souls and wilderness seekers that accommodate all paddling skills and fitness level. The tour leads along sea shore of Kokkola region where customer can enjoy the typical Finnish landscape with small islands. Along the route small rapids, which are also suitable for advance paddlers, offer adventure and diversity in a trip. In the evening of the last day the customer will be able to enjoy campfire and sauna with Finnish traditional food before sleeping in the traditional Finnish cottages. This package is particularly suitable for groups.

Price

Price of package includes:

- Kayak/person = 20 €
- Food/person = 30 €/ per day
- Food = 30 x 5 days = 150 €
- Cottage = Shared cottage 4 person/ per cottage 65€/ per night
- Sauna/ hour = 10€

Total price per package: 277€/ Fives days

Total price: 277€ x 5 person = 1382€

Selling price: 1550€

Profit: 168 €

	Tour information
Day 1	<p>Arrival in Joutsen / Svanen camping site, Pietarsaari</p> <p>Upon arrival customers will be welcomed by the staff and receive first introductions to the equipment and safety issues.</p> <p>After breakfast Customer will start canoeing from the starting point i.e. Svanen camping site. Basic briefing, map and demonstration will be provided to customers. This is around six hours canoeing trip including three hours break in different places per day.</p> <p>Suggested break places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (49) (First break)Öuran Sandstrand N 63°46.117' E 022°33.718' • (37) (Second break)Orrskärs Sandviken N63°49,140' E 022°38.386 <p>Camping could be organized in (31) Larsmo fiskehamn N 63°50.724' E 022°43.015 where customer can eat dinner make open fire in Finnish traditional firing place.</p>
Day 2	<p>After breakfast customer will be brought to the starting point of tour together with canoeing equipment. Today's route crosses various small islands with moderate rapids. There are several resting points along the way.</p> <p>Suggested breaks places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (12)(First break) Olasören N 63°54.921 E 022° 43.152 • (16)(Second break) Remmargrundet N 63°54.464 E022° 50.145 <p>Customer could enjoy Finnish wilderness along the way before they reach the campsite at (5) Tankar N 63°56.974' E 022°51.027 in tents. Customer could enjoy Finnish dinner in the Finnish wilderness. They can make open fire in fireplace and have some grilled sausage.</p>

Day 3	<p>On this day customer paddles to the untouched nature as sea shore of Ostrobothnia region. Here customer will find total peace and silence only interrupted by the sound of seawater.</p> <p>Suggested break places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (17) First break: Långskäret N63°54.402' E 022°53.805 • (18) Second break: Södra Trutklippan N63°54.259' E 022°01.738 <p>Accommodation will be at (24) Villa Elba where customers are near to one of the biggest city of Ostrobothnia. They have chance to visit Kokkola city. Dinner will be in the camp place where customer can make fire and enjoy.</p>
Day 4	<p>After breakfast customer will be brought to the starting point of tour together with canoeing equipment. Today's route crosses various small islands with moderate rapids. There are several resting points along the way.</p> <p>Suggested breaks places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (32) First break: Potti/ Pätten N 63°50.232' E 023°02.590' • (46) Second break: Skatören N 63°46.511' E 022°56.006' <p>Customer could enjoy Finnish wilderness along the way before they reach the campsite at (45) Korsskären N63°47,384' E 022°49.208' in tents. Customer could enjoy Finnish dinner in the Finnish wilderness. They can make open fire in fireplace and have some grilled sausage.</p>
Day 5	<p>On this day customer return back to the ending point of the trip i.e. Svanen camping site paddling through untouched nature and Finnish wilderness. There will be two breaks for one hour each in two different places along the way where customer can relax and take drinks and food. There will be a cottage booked for our customers in camping site where they can have sauna and barbeque.</p> <p>Suggested places for breaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First break: (50) Fagernäs N63°44.971'E 022°48.475 • Second break: (56) Strandis N 63°43.069' E 022°45.368 <p>Final destination (58) Svanen camping site N 63°42.257' E 022°43.982' where customer could relax in front of warm fireplace.</p>

Route map of Round trip to Tankar Island



Tour information

Location

The tour package does not include transfers to and from Pietarsaari. The closest airports are Pietarsaari - Kokkola airport (approx. 34 km), Vaasa airport (approx. 138 km), Oulu airport (approx. 218 km) and Vantaa airport (approx. 436 km). There are buses going from all the city and airports to Pietarsaari during the week. Bus schedules and information and prices can be found here: <http://www.matkahuolto.fi/en>.

Customer could reach Pietarsaari and Kokkola by train. Information on train schedules and prices could be received from: www.vr.fi/en.

The distance from Helsinki to Pietarsaari is approximately 475 Km, from Tampere to Pietarsaari is approximately 295 Km and from Turku to Pietarsaari is approximately 426 Km.

Food and Beverage

Food and beverage is included in the tour package. Participants will receive food box for the lunch and soft drinks for breaks. Traditional Finnish will be provided to participant for the dinner such as rice pie, sausage, and other food. There are open fireplaces in almost all the resting point during the canoeing trip. Customers could enjoy grilled sausages in the open fireplace, which is one of the common Finnish traditions.

NOTE! There are small restaurants and camping sites in some of the resting point of canoeing route where customer could buy some extra food and drinks. .

Drinking Water

Customers could bring their own drinking water and water bottles. There are fresh water supplies along the route also.

Accommodation

Accommodation will be in tents and open wilderness during whole trip except in three days canoeing package in *Round trip to Nykarleby - Canoeing tour to Kvarken* and five days canoeing package in *Round trip to Tankar Island – Canoeing tour through archipelago* where customer will receive a cottage in the last day of their canoeing package

at Svanen camping site in Pietarsaari. More information about Svanen camping site could be received from <http://pkol.cop.fi/svanen/indexen.html>. As camping gear is not included in the price customers have to manage their own tents, mattress and sleeping bags. Accommodation will be in wilderness in tents. The spots are all equipped with campfire places and toilets. Customers should take care of waste disposal.

Level of difficulty

The seawater of Ostrobothnia includes number of small waves. According to the Appalachian Mountain club classification the waves of this package tour does not exceed than level III. Therefore the tour is suitable for new paddlers and advance paddlers except five days tour in *Round trip to Tankar Island – Canoeing tour through archipelago*, which is designed for advance group of paddlers.

Before every trip the customers will receive all the important instructions on handling canoe and safety issues in written form. It is highly recommended to read the safety issue form and wear a life vest all the time when on the water.

ATTENTION! Customers participating in a canoe trip are on their own risk and responsibility.

Weather

The weather in Finland is warm during summer. Summer days are long and short nights are short in Finland. The average temperature is about 20°C during summer time. Summer starts from middle of April and end of August. At night and rainy days temperature could even drop under +10°C. Rains are possible throughout summer. In the end of August and early September over +20° are barely and at night temperature can drop to 0°C.

Weather forecast can be received from: <http://en.ilmatieteenlaitos.fi/local-weather>

Equipment

When packing for canoeing package customers are recommended to be prepare for cold weather and rainy weather. Waterproof clothes are necessary for rainy days. Clothes and small electronic stuff like camera and music players could be transported in waterproof barrels in the canoes. Customers are recommended to pack electronic stuffs in a plastic bag.

Equipment not provided by the organizers:

- Tents
- Sleeping bags
- Mattress
- Cooking equipment
- Water bottles & camera
- Compass & torch
- Shoes and slippers
- Jackets and waterproof clothes
- Innerwear & toiletries
- Blankets & plastic bags
- Outerwear and swim wears
- Gloves, sunglass and Insect repellent

Equipment provided by organization

- Canoes
- Life jackets
- Map
- Safety information
- Paddles
- Storage barrels
- Paddling instruction
- Route description

Time zone

Time of Finland is +2 Greenwich Mean Time (GMT)

Travel insurance

Organization is not responsible for travel insurance therefore customer should take care of insurance by themselves. We recommend having a European health insurance card that is available for the citizen of EU/EEA and Switzerland. More information about the insurance is available in: <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=559&langId=en>

Emergency call:

112

<i>Terms and Conditions:</i>	<i>Cancellations:</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kayak and safety jackets are available in Camping site • Not allowed under 18 years of age • Person have to know swimming compulsory • Well educated and experienced guides are available • Full Board meal plan and coffee are available in Svanen camping site • Soft Drinks and Water Camping and Cooking gear in every rest point have to manage • All people have their own responsibility (Ability to paddle in more difficult conditions) • Alcohol is not allowed beforehand it can be tested and during canoeing • This includes a failure to disclose any serious medical condition or disability. <p>Should any of the above occur, our cancellation policy applies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you cancel a trip, the following schedule applies from the day we receive written notice of cancellation. • Over 15 days: No cancellation Charge • 10 to 15 days: 10% of booking • 3 to 9 days: 20% of booking • Under 3 days: 100% of booking

<i>Safety instructions for canoeing</i>	<i>Practical instructions for canoeing</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer has to be able to swim. • Wear life jackets and have a whistle. • Wear good shoes so in accident it is easy to get out of canoe • Use colorful clothes or reflector. • Have a phone in waterproof bag. • Don't use alcohol. • Protect yourself from the sun. • Have a torch or headlamp. • Have some kind of rope. • Have a water bottle with you. • Have a compass and map • Have first aid-bag • If accident happens stay calm, yell help, whistle, raise your hands and put them down on the sides • Try to get out of the water and make yourself seen for the rescuers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before starting canoeing checks that there are no insects or animals for example a snake in your canoe. • Put heavy staff on the bottom. Balance the canoe so that the weight point is behind the person • Check that your staff are not able to move in canoe • Put those staff you need during the trip on the top. Transparent and different colour of bags eases you to find them fast. • Put everything in waterproof bags if the canoe goes around while paddling • Go to toilet before canoeing and check you have everything with you • Check that you can paddle freely without bother of your bags etc.