

# Planning an event: Chrizay live at Hard Rock Cafe

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<p>This thesis was commissioned by Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. The idea of the thesis was a personal interest as well as a plan with the live music coordinator of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki to create an event that was something out of the ordinary for the commissioning company. The planning of the event took place in the end of August 2020 to the beginning of October 2020, when the event was held.</p> <p>The objective for this thesis was to prove the commissioner, that hosting these types of live events are profitable and worth organising in the future because of the gain of new potential customers and visibility in the nightlife and music industry. In addition to that test if the event would enable a possibility to expand the regular opening hours of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki with similar live music events.</p> <p>The thesis starts with the theoretical framework that consists of event management and event planning. After the theoretical part, the commissioner is introduced before the presentation of the product. In the product presentation the event is explained thoroughly. Lastly, the discussion and improvement ideas are presented together with the personal development of the entire thesis process.</p> <p>The results of the event proved that there is a demand for events like “Chrizay live at Hard Rock Cafe”. By following the improvement proposals when creating similar live music events in the future, there is a big possibility for the company to expand their regular opening hours and grow their customer base.</p>	
<b>Keywords</b>	
Event planning, Event management, Hard Rock Cafe, Event planning process	

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# 1 Introduction

When attending events there is a certain expectation, reality and afterthought. That is why in the planning process of an event it is really important to focus on every detail related to the event in question. Live performances are not only created by the artists performing. The venue, marketing and logistics of the whole event plays a big part in creating a smooth and enjoyable event that does not bring any bumps in the participants experience.

The subject of this thesis revolves around the planning process of creating events and shows it in action when creating the event Chrizay live at Hard Rock Cafe. Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is part of the well-known brand that has expanded all over the world. Hard Rock Cafe is focused on American food, merchandise, music and most importantly creating great memories. The restaurant located in Helsinki is well known for its' great food and live music events. The events are usually more rock related and held on weekdays during the regular opening hours. That is why the purpose of the thesis was to create a successful event that would bring diversity into the events held in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, bring more visibility to the company and not only be seen as a place to have dinner as well as try expanding the regular opening hours with a profitable outcome.

The commissioning company for the thesis was Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and the main contact who I worked together with to create the event was the live music coordinator from Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, Nikita Vasilev. Personally, I have been working for the company from 2016 to the end of 2020. That has allowed me to get great insight on how the company operates when creating events and also access to general information about the company. At Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki my work title has been a server and I have a big interest in advancing my career to be able to create similar events in the future.

The thesis is structured into five main chapters. The first part explains theoretically event management thoroughly with general information and examples. Next the planning process is presented as a whole, which is also used when presenting the project. Lastly in the theoretical part of the thesis the commissioning company is presented by first presenting the Hard Rock Cafe brand as a whole and then later on Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is explained in detail. After the theoretical part the product is presented, which goes through everything from the planning process to executing the event and evaluation. Lastly the improvement suggestions are presented in the discussion together with my personal development during the thesis process.

## **2 Event management**

This chapter of the thesis concentrates on the theory of event management. To begin with, the definition of events. Secondly what kind of events there are and lastly the motivation behind people attending events as well as the concept of an experience.

### **2.1 Definition of event**

In human civilisation through history big moments of sporting, spiritual and moments of another nature have been celebrated collectively by people. Countries have in recent decades seen the planning of these celebrations profitable and it has transformed into an industry. (Quinn 2013, 37.)

Events can be defined in many ways depending on what kind of event it is and what its' purpose is. According to Shone and Parry (2013, 6) special events are the spectacle that comes from occasions which purpose is to entertain, celebrate and enlighten and is not part of the daily life's routine. When again Goldblatt (2005) says that an event is a recognition of a certain moment that satisfies specific needs with a ritual.

All events have in common a few factors. Events are temporary, memorable, planned gatherings with a purpose, as seen in figure 1. All events are temporary, which means they have a set length of time. Some events may take place for a few days and some only a few hours. Every event is also memorable, whether it is a family birthday or a big open-air concert. Events can also be good or bad, but usually events that are successful are more memorable. Lastly all events have a purpose, the purpose is different for each event and some gathering may be for entertainment purposes while other gatherings can be for educational purposes. (Dowson & Basset 2015, 3-4.) Bladen, Kennell, Abson and Wilde (2012, 4) adds to the definition that most events have a structure with a start, the main programme and finish. But there are also spontaneous events that don't go along with the structure, that can be for example big gatherings after a sports event celebrating a teams' win.

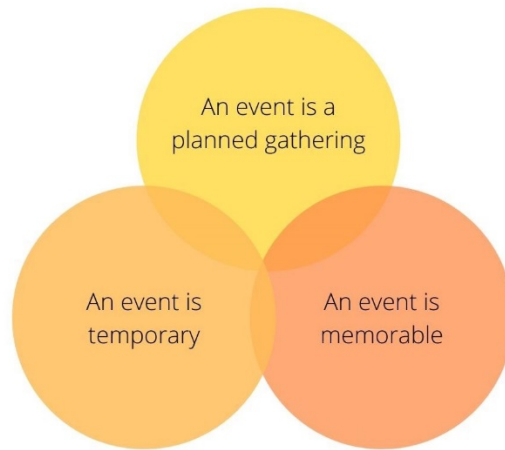


Figure 1. Defining an event (Modified from Dowson & Bassett 2015, 2)

Everyone experiences the event differently and that is why events are unique to every person. Although the same events may occur more than once they are never the same, that is why the nature of every event is also one of a kind. Some events might involve family, friends, co-workers and other gatherings might be just strangers. The purpose of the event might vary, whether it's educational or for entertainment but the important factor is that the event is planned, and it has a purpose. When leaving an event, there is always something that sticks along even after the gathering. That is the memory of the event. It can be a beautiful view at a friend's wedding or the feeling of hearing your favourite song at a concert. Lastly every event has a beginning and an end. It can be a three-hour football match, a two-day outdoor festival or a month-long art exhibition. That means that every gathering has a predetermined start and end which makes them temporary. (Dowson & Bassett 2015, 2.)

## 2.2 Different types of events

When organizing an event, it is really important to know the category of the event to be able to begin the planning process. The events can be categorized by the size, who it's for and if it's a profit or non-profit event and so on. For example, both weddings and family occasions are private events but can be very different. In addition to private events according to Getz typology of events (1997) there are also cultural celebrations, business, arts and entertainment, educational, political, recreational and sports events. (Dowson & Bassett, 2015, 4.) Events that fall into the category of art and entertainment are usually concerts, award ceremonies, performances. The purpose with these events is to bring people enjoyment and entertainment. In Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki most events fall into the entertainment category, because the most common events are concerts and musical performances by artists and bands.

According to Shone and Parry (2013, 7) special events can be divided into four categories: leisure-, personal-, organizational and cultural events. The categories depend on the objective of the event, which are shown for each category in figure 2 below. Personal events are the most common event type because most people celebrate or attend a birthday or anniversary at least once during their lifetime, these kinds of events are usually also the most intimate for the participants. Cultural events can be for example an event that celebrate a local heritage that is targeted for tourists or locals. Events that are organizational can be events with a political objective. The last category, which is leisure events, include different kind of pastime events like football or ice hockey games. It is also important to remember that some events include in more than one category. For example, a graduation is both personal for the family and organizational for the school. Events held in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki mostly fit in the leisure category because the most common events are musical performances for all kinds of people. Concerts and smaller performances held during a regular weekday do not usually cost anything and is a good past time experience for people attending.



Figure 2. Categorization of special events (Modified from Shone & Parry 2013, 7.)

Events and gatherings can also be divided by the size and impact of the event. These can be a local event, which purpose is to engage the local people. An example of a local event can be a local business networking event to support the businesses in the area. Another event type is a major event. Major events usually attract people from outside the local area often in big numbers. These can be major business conventions or festivals. The purpose behind these events is to attract more people to the area and increase the visitors spend. Hallmark events are the events that become really identified with the location

it's held at and it usually shows in the name. For example, if someone mentions Wimbledon it is assumed that the person is going to watch tennis without them saying that because of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships. Lastly from the events that can be categorized by size and impact there are mega events. These are the largest events in size and impact. This can be for example the Olympic Games that brings enormous amounts of people to a certain hosting city and by that bring a lot of economic gain to the location if it's managed correctly. (Dowson & Bassett 2015, 4-5.) All of these categories are important to know in the tourism sector because of the impact of the local area.

### **2.3 Motivation for attending events**

In the research of motivation behind events we seek to understand what drives people to attend events and what benefits they seek to gain from their attendance. (Quinn 2013, 76.)

There are a number of factors that motivates people to attend an event. These include the feeling of togetherness, socialisation, escaping the reality and excitement. The enjoyment behind attending an event or for example a festival makes the event itself a destination rather than just an attraction of the destination where it is held at. A trip to another country or city for a festival can also be seen as a vacation. Meeting new people and being a part of a bigger social gathering makes people feel that they belong. (Quinn 2013, 77.)

According to Shone and Parry (2013, 38-39.) the motives behind a person attending an event can be split into four different categories which are personal, organizational, physiological and social. Personal reasons might be learning something new or benefitting in another way. An organizational motive can be making revenue and new sales for a within a company. Physiological motives might include a dinner or other entertaining gathering. Lastly a social motive can just be a need for social interaction with someone else.

Depending on an event the people attending can be either first-time visitors or returning visitors. Festivals in particular have a high returning visitor rate. The return rate is the best achievement for organisers because the stable revenue they bring, and they are a great reference group for possible first-time visitors. A study made by Grappi and Montanari (2011) showed that social identification plays a big role in repeat visitation. This means that if the person attending a certain event identifies with the other people attending, they are more likely to return. This supports the fact that socialisation is a big motivator in attending events. (Quinn 2013, 79.)

Events are often a display of a ritual and because humans are so socially evolved it can trigger a need in people to attend events. If we dig even deeper to humans needs according to Maslow's hierarchy of needs (1943) we are all on a journey to achieve self-actualisation. This means to fulfil one's ultimate potential. Love and belonging to a social group are usually reached through family and friends but is also said to be the biggest motivating factor in creating events. (Bladen, Kennel et al. 2012, 7-8.)

## **2.4 Experience**

According to Pine and Gilmore (1998) an experience differs from a service as much as a service differ from a commodity. Services are provided for any customer when again experiences are for guests. An experience is set apart from a service because of the dramatization and tailor-made feeling it gives to the guest, which makes it also memorable. To sell better companies include experiences around their usual offerings to make them stand out more.

The experiences can be seen across two dimensions in Pine and Gilmore's (1998) Four Realms of Experience (Figure 3). The first dimension relates to customer participation. At one end is passive participation, which means that the customer does not affect the performance. This can be listening to a symphony orchestra. On the other end there is active participation where the customer has a key role in the performance. This could be a sporting event where the participants coming to watch the game are part of the visuals of the experience. The second dimension is the connection between customer and performance or the event. On one end there is absorption and on the other immersion. For example, if a person is watching a movie at home they are absorbing it, but watching the movie at a theatre is more immersive because of the people around, the smell and sound. (Pine & Gilmore 1998.)

Pine and Gilmore (1998) states that as well as the two dimensions there are also four categories for experiences which are: entertainment, educational, escapist and esthetic and are presented in figure 3 below. Entertainment can be watching TV or attending a concert and is usually absorbed more passively. Taking a class, which is an educational experience, requires more participation but is still not fully an immersive experience. Escapist events can be acting in a play where the person is immersed in the experience. Finally, esthetic events can be visiting an art gallery where the participant is immersed in the environment but at the same time has no effect on it.

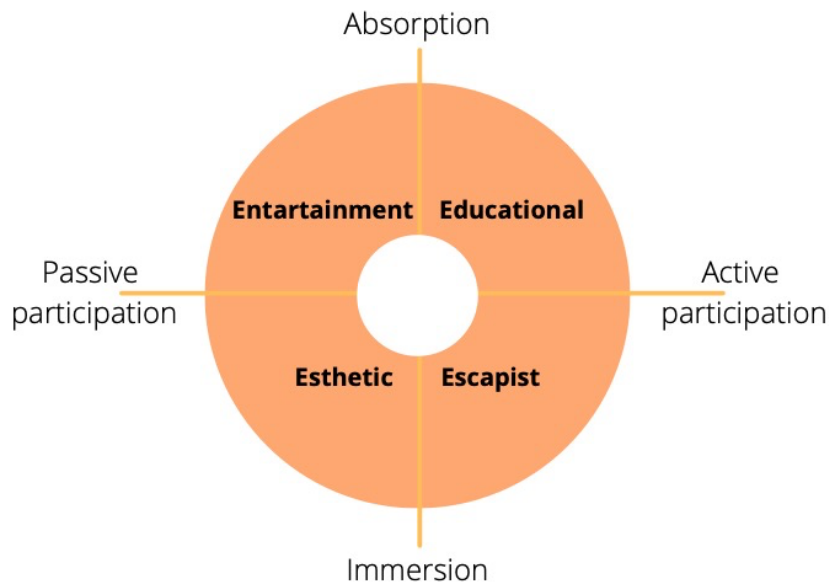


Figure 3. The Four Realms of an Experience (Modified from Pine & Gilmore, 1998)

Another way to view experiences is through the experience pyramid in figure 4. Tarssanen (2009, 11-15) says the model is sort of an ideal type that describes the perfect product. It is also a great analysing tool in finding faults or mistakes in a product and by that develop it even more to create the perfect experience. The pyramid is two dimensional with six levels consisting of the product or, in this case, event traits and customer experience levels. In the figure 4 presented below the product levels are horizontally on the bottom of the pyramid and refers to the products traits. The levels of the experience are presented vertically next to the pyramid. These are really important factors to consider when researching the motivation behind attending events. Starting from the product stages, individuality is quite self-explanatory it means that the product or event is one of a kind and that there is nothing similar already existing. Authenticity measures how real and authentic the product is. This is decided by the customer itself and cannot be globally defined because it is different for everyone. The story is related closely to the authenticity of the product. With the help of the product story the customer will get a social meaning towards the product and it combines all the elements of the product nicely together. Multi-sensory perception means that all parts of the products that includes the senses are designed to go along with the experience and not disturb it. When experiencing a product or an event it needs to be different from the customers daily life and be in contrast with it so that it makes it special. The last part of the six product-oriented levels is interaction. With this the customer gets a feeling of being a part of something when they are interacting with the participating people

or organisers and founders of a product. By making the experience of a product individual and memorable to each participant it will become more meaningful to the customer.

If the experience is good, all the different product traits are included in the customer experience. The first level of the customer experience is the motivational level, this includes waking interest in the customer by for example marketing. This level should already fulfil all the experience criteria in the customer and draw them in. Level two is physical; in this level the experience product is experienced through all senses of the customer. If this level is fulfilled it will guarantee a secure and enjoyable experience for the customer. In the intellectual level the customer will create opinions of what they are sensing and perceiving during the experience. After this level the customer can tell if they are happy with what they experienced or if they would have wanted something more. The emotional level is where the actual experience is experienced. This level wakes emotions in the customer that are hard to define beforehand. If all the levels before have been taken well into consideration when creating an event it is most likely that the customer will experience positive feelings during the experience like, joyfulness, happiness and so on. The last stage of the customer experience levels is the mental level. If this level is reached through the experience product it means that the customer will get an emotional reaction so strong that it can change something permanently in the customers life for example, the person's lifestyle or mentality. Although it is impossible to promise everyone a great experience, there can be elements included to the product that helps build an experience. This way the criteria of an experience is fulfilled, and the service becomes an experience. (Tarssanen 2009, 15-16.)

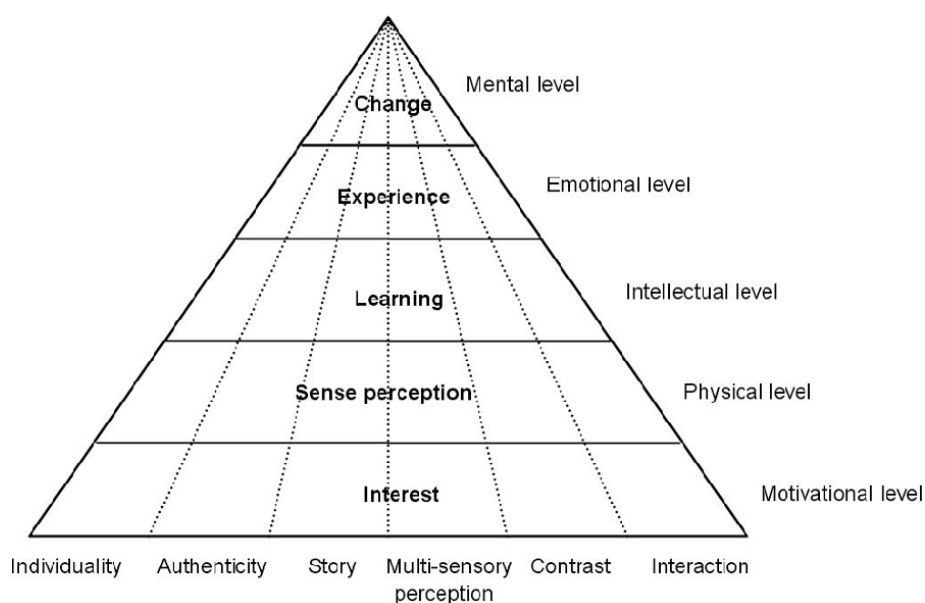


Figure 4. The Experience Pyramid

Musical performances and events that are music-oriented reach usually all the way up to the emotional level of the customer experience levels. Some concerts where the participant for example meets their all-time favourite artist and gets to go on stage the event will reach the mental level.

### 3 Event planning

Events are usually a product of something that happens long before the actual event, which is how well-planned and organized it is in the build-up of the event. (Dowson & Bassett 2015, 21.) This chapter goes through the planning process of an event from start to finish with an in-depth explanation of the different stages and phases of creating an event using Dowson and Bassets (2015) event planning process figure.

#### 3.1 Planning process

Every event is different, and the process can vary depending on the size, format and type of the event. According to Shone and Parry (2013, 118) before starting the planning process the organiser must go through what factors are important to consider for a particular event. The event process can be seen as the event management activities and consists of six stages: objectives, outline plan, detailed planning, preparing the event, the event and then the divestment. The first step is to think about the objectives to get the process started, then draft an outline plan, after which starts the detailed planning before the organising and preparing for the event. The fifth step is the actual implementation of the event. Lastly the divestment and legacy close up the events management planning process.



Figure 5. The Planning process for events management (Modified from Shone & Parry 2013, 120.)

Shone and Parry's (2013, 120) events management planning process is seen in figure 5 above. When establishing the objectives, the stage consists of ideas and proposals that leads to having the main event objective and detailed aims in the beginning of the planning process. Drafting the outline plan is all about gathering as much information as possible. The information consists of competition, risks, venues, staff, cost and dates and so on. After the needed information is gathered the actual detailed planning begins. Everything from financial plans, sponsors, marketing, logistics and operational plans are

planned in these stages very thoroughly after which all the plans are reflected on. When everything is ready and planned the preparing of the event starts. This stage includes preparation, organising, deadlines and development ideas. Then it is time for the actual event that is all about actions and control being taken and when the event is done the divestment and legacy takes place, which consists of a close-down of the whole event. The close-down is an evaluation of the event that is done with the help of feedback and recordings that will help in future event planning processes.

As stated before the planning process can be different depending on the event and organiser. Also, the process can be different to every organiser depending on the time and detail they put into the different stages of event planning. According to Dowson and Basset (2015, 22) when planning events there are still some factors that are always included the process and their event planning process, as seen in figure 6 below, it consists of only three different stages in difference to Shone and Parry's six stage model in figure 5. The planning process starts with preparation followed by detailed planning before the event and a post event after the main event. These stages can vary depending on the event. The stages are also known as phase 1, 2 and 3.

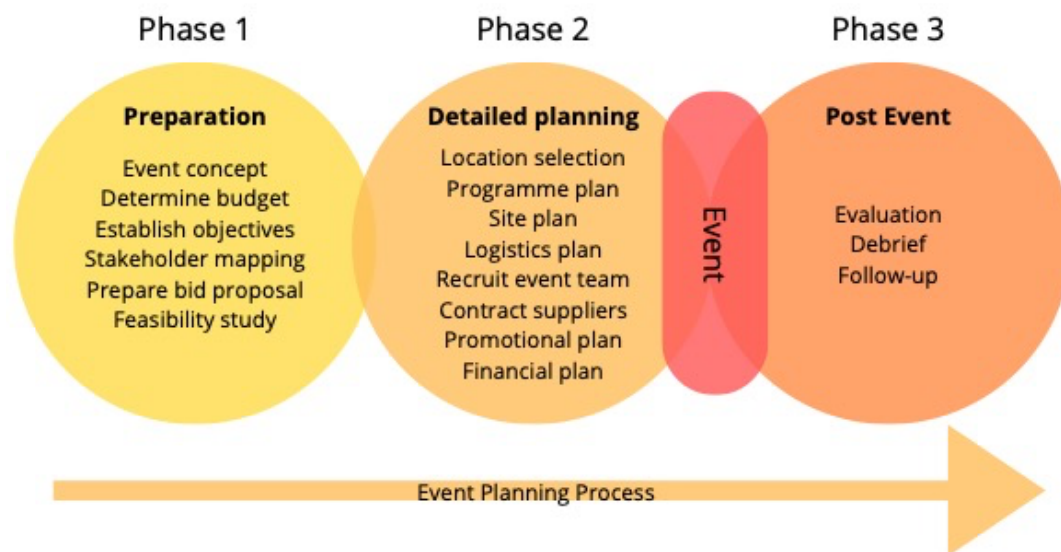


Figure 6. The event planning process (Modified from Dowson & Bassett 2015, 22.)

### 3.2 Preparation

Phase one in figure 6 is the preparation phase. In this part of the planning process the organisers get ready for what is coming up because after the first phase there is no turning back. The idea of the event is the first thing that has to be determined. This helps to know

the type, size and format of the event. The clearer the concept, the less time the organiser spends on issues that are not important for the event. Establishing the concept idea can be made easier with the help of The 5 Ws: why, who, what, when and where. Why determines the purpose and motive behind the event. Who stands for explaining the target audience and number of people attending. The programme and format of the event goes under the third W, which is what. When tells the date and time of the event and can also define the occasion or season of the event. Lastly where explains the location and venue. (Dowson & Bassett 2015, 22-23.)

Next step in the planning process is determining the budget. According to Robinson, Wale and Dickson (2010, 62) when settling a budget there should first be a forecast of expected expenses that there will be and then also have an extra fund for unexpected expenses that might occur in the planning process. Making a list with the main expenses helps the organisers to follow the budget and divide it to every sector of the process.

Dowson and Bassett (2015, 28-29) state that establishing the objective of the event helps the organiser to clarify the concept and understand the important emotional factors of the client. This can be done with the help of SMART, seen in figure 7. It stands for specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely. The first step in establishing the objective is to have a specific goal of what the achievement of the event is and writing it down clearly. Secondly the objectives should have a target that can be measured if it has been achieved during the process. Thirdly the outcomes of the event need to be agreed by the client and the organiser needs to be confident that the goals will be achieved. Also, the objectives must be realistic and relevant, but also challenging. Lastly there needs to be a time frame for all the process to be done within. This system will help in knowing the right direction when moving forward in the planning process.



Figure 7. The SMART Formula (Modified from Dowson & Bassett 2015, 28.)

Stakeholder mapping includes all the parties that are affected by the event. The mapping includes an analysis of the needs and requirements of the people who are going to benefit from the event. This can be investors, employees or attendees but also people who may not be actively participating in the event and still affected by it. (Bladen, Kennell et al. 2012, 35.)

In the last stage of phase one in the planning process the organiser must go through all of the stages before and decide if the event is feasible. This is usually only done with events that are expensive and big because if the event does not succeed it will be a waste of time, money and everything else that goes into the event. (Downson & Bassett 2015, 40-41.)

### 3.3 Detailed planning

When phase one is done the second phase starts. The detailed planning in Shone and Parry's model (figure 5) is very similar to Dowson and Bassett's detailed planning stage seen in figure 6. This stage consists of everything from venue and supplier planning to the promotional and financial planning. As stated by Downson & Bassett (2015, 43.) the location and venue need to be settled early on in the process. In this stage it is important to have the target audience in mind. After choosing the location the next step is to choose the venue. It is really important to think about the format of the event if it suits for a hotel, restaurant, stadium or some other place. Factors that fulfil the attendee's needs is good to have in mind, whether it is the friendliness of the staff or a possibility to get accommodation at the venue.

In phase one it's determined for who the event is for. When planning the program, the organiser plans something that the attending people would like, it can be a particular artist or genre of music. The programme usually consists of both formal and informal activities. The organiser needs to gather all the activities together to an event programme or schedule so that is easy to follow for the people attending and that they know what is going on. The most important thing to remember when organising longer lasting events is that there is free time and time to relax for the people that are participating. (Downson & Bassett 2015, 44.)

The location needs to have a logistics plan. The logistics are usually divided into customer and venue and refers to the movement of resources and products at the event. To the venue it can include the timing of the event, audience movement between the programme, security, VIPs and so on. For the customer it includes for example ticketing and queuing. The logistics is one of most important factors in event planning and brings to whole event together into one piece. (Bladen, Kennell et al. 2012, 93-95.)

According to Bladen, Kennel et al. (2012, 114-116) finding the right personnel makes the biggest impact on service delivery seen from the experience perspective. This also includes the suppliers of the event. The larger the event scale is, the more staff and professional suppliers are needed. The format of the event also effects on the number of staff and suppliers.

### **3.3.1 Risk Management**

Risk is involved in hosting any event and it has to do with uncertainty. It means that negative consequences might happen during the event. With the help of risk management, the risk can be minimized, managed and prevented. (Quinn 2013, 110.)

In event planning, risks usually refer to safety issues that can be threats to the participants. By identifying the possible risks emergency procedures can be made. In risk management it is also important to identify the more holistic risks too that can occur in the planning process. According to Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell and Harris (2005, 347) risk management is as much avoiding possible losses than it is identifying opportunities.

As Shone and Parry writes (2013, 222) risks usually fall into four different categories: Economic risks, performance risks, psychological risks and physical risks. Economic risks might be financial losses, which have been very high during the time of Covid-19 because of sudden restrictions of opening hours and gatherings. Another factor that can be a risk is

if the performer doesn't turn up at all and the event needs to be cancelled because of that and that falls into the performance risk category. This has also been more of a risk during the global pandemic because of possible and sudden quarantines. Psychological risks are more unusual and has to do with a venue or location of the event that might have a bad reputation and by that loose attending people. Lastly physical risks refer to the danger that the event can cause either to the participants or the public. An example of a physical risk can be difficulties with crime and security.

Events can be also put into different levels of possible risks depending on the event type. The levels can be low-, medium- or high risk. Low-risk events are usually indoors and don't involve any specialist required activities, these can be for example banquets or dinners. Medium-risk events can be sporting, competitions or larger indoor events where the activities are more complicated. Events held in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki usually falls into this category. Lastly high-risk events consist of a large amount of people where the activities in the event and location is unfamiliar to the participant. An example of a high-risk event with a high risk can be a festival that is organised for the first time. (Shone & Parry 2013, 228.)

There are many ways of how to identify the risks before the event. According to Allen, O'Toole et al. (2005, 348-350) it is really important to go through possible risks that may occur during an event to be able to avoid them. This can be done in multiple different ways. Knowing the internal and external risks helps identify the origin of the problem and by that it is easier to fix. Internal risks are usually identified in the planning process and can be fixed within the organising staff, when again external risks might include problems from outside of the organisers and venue and are harder to fix. External risks can be for example the same as performance risks where the artist or band are unable to attend the event and by that prevent it from happening. Another way to identify risks is by doing an incident report. The report usually includes the incident, when it happened and who it happened to. Having this report helps to identify the origin of the problem that occurred and it's easy the manage the results to be able to improve in the future. Lastly every event or venue that hosts big participant groups need to have a contingency plan. This includes a detailed plan of decision procedures, related actions and chains of guidelines for the response to an effect of a risk. In case of a fire or other safety risk a contingency plan is important to be clear for everyone participating and especially for the staff and organisers.



Figure 8. Risk management process (Modified from Shone & Parry 2013, 228.)

According to Shone and Parry (2013, 228) risk management that has to do with an event can be divided into different stages as seen in figure 8 above. The first step is the assessment that lets the organiser identify the possible risks that may occur during an event. Secondly the evaluation of establishing what is going to be dealt with. In the third step the control measures are made to reduce the chances of occurring risks. Finally monitoring and reviewing the control measures and identified risk activities that occurred during the event. The last stage is really important because it gives room for improvements when organising future events.

### 3.3.2 Marketing and Promotion

Event marketing consists of promoting, creating and staging event experiences that would satisfy the target audience and so that the customers would choose that over the competitors in the market segment. Finding the target audience and researching the market to find existing and new audiences that would remain in future events are really important when making a marketing plan. (Robinson, Wale et al. 2010, 137.)

A marketing plan for an event makes it easier to coordinate the different actions that needs to be done in order to promote the event successfully. According to Bladen, Kenel, Abson and Wilde (2012, 165) the marketing plan can be split into four main stages which are: setting goals, analysing the current situation, creating a marketing strategy and to assign a marketing budget and evaluate the plan. The most important stage is to analyse the current situation with the help of a market research. This involves for example

SWOT analyses of competitors and the event itself and questionnaires for target audiences to figure out the main motivation in attending the event.

Methods that are used when promoting an event can be everything from placing adverts in a magazine to putting up posters. The main purpose of promotion is to reach the target audience. Events usually have a specific promotional budget because this part of the planning is costly. There is although such thing as free publicity if the event is very popular and interesting, usually magazines or radio stations talk about it. (Dowson & Bassett 2015, 47.)

Lastly in the detailed planning stage of the event planning process is financial planning. As Downson & Bassett (2015, 47-48) states, cash flow is the most important part in any event. More money needs to come in than it is going out. When managing finances possible sponsorships and shortfalls in money need to be considered. In big events sponsors are the key to manage finances. The sponsorships usually don't give any money to the event, but products or supplies in change of promotion at the event site. If the event gets cancelled the organisers should also think about possible insurances that might be needed to create an event.

### **3.4 Post event**

The last phase happens after the actual event and it is called the post event. It includes an evaluation, a debrief and follow-up according to Dowson and Bassett (2015) event planning process in figure 6. The evaluation includes critical observations and measurements of the implementation of the event so that the outcome can be evaluated correctly. The evaluation shows what worked and what did not work in the event. This also shows the organiser if the objectives were reached during the event and if there is room for any improvements. To get the best evaluation possible it includes opinions of all the parties involved in the event. The most common way is to make a survey with questions of the event, what they liked what they would improve and so on. (Allen, O'Toole, McDonnell & Harris 2005, 449.)

According to Dowson and Bassett (2015, 49-50) there should always be a debrief after every event. The Debrief includes insight and feedback from the professionals of the organising team and suppliers. In events, even if it is a success there is always room for improvements. That is why getting this feedback right after the event from the professionals is very valuable and makes it easier to know what to improve the next time when organising an event. The follow-up is the last stage in the event planning process and includes a personal

communication to the attendees of the event. It can be in the form of a promotional or informative email about upcoming events or a simple thank you for their participation.

When creating events, as stated before, every single gathering is unique and that is why the planning process is never the same, which means that there is no right or wrong way of doing it. Depending on the event the planning process might be in a completely different order and the amount of time used to every task is different. That said the event planning process model helps the organiser to not overlook something that might be important in the process of creating the event. (Dowson & Bassett 2015, 50-51.)

## 4 Hard Rock Cafe

In this chapter Hard Rock Cafe will be presented completely. First there will be a general explanation of the Hard Rock Cafe brand alongside with the background of the restaurant, secondly a bit more in detail of the restaurant in Helsinki, thirdly the market environment will be presented with the possible competitors in the nightlife sector and lastly explain the nature of some previous events held in Hard Rock Café Helsinki.

Hard Rock Cafe was founded in 1971 by two Americans, Isaac Tigrett and Peter Morton. They wanted to create a place that brought together the good classic American food and rock n' roll music in their first restaurant, which was located in London. One of the main missions was also to create a place that accepted everyone, no matter of their background.

From the beginning Hard Rock Cafe was just supposed to be a classic American restaurant with good music, the memorabilia and merchandise came along by accident. Eric Clapton was a regular in London and asked one of the owners to hang his guitar over his spot to mark it as his seat. This led to other artist wanting to send their guitars and stuff to the company as well. Now Hard Rock Cafes have over 80 000 pieces worldwide. The merchandise started selling after the restaurant sponsored a local football team and gave out the remaining t-shirts to regulars at the restaurant. The shirts became a hit and the company started to sell it as their merchandise. Paul McCartney & the Wings were the first performers on Hard Rock Cafes stage and after that the company even has venues just for live events all over the world. (Hard Rock, 2021a.)

In 1982 Morton and Tigrett started the global expansion of the company. Through the years the brand has expanded all over the world and today Hard Rock has restaurants, hotels and casinos in over 70 countries as seen in image 1. In 2007 the company was sold to the Seminole Tribe of Florida, who are Hard Rocks current owners. (Hard Rock, 2021a.)



Image 1. A map of Hard Rock Cafe locations. (Hard Rock, 2021.)

The brand is known for its classic American food, memorabilia, merchandise and events. The memorabilia have been collected all over the world from legendary artists and work as the art inside the restaurants, that is why every location is unique. Although the brand started with rock n' roll, nowadays the restaurant has held events and concerts with artist and bands of all different kinds of genres, as well as their regular music in the restaurant is a very wide range of genres.

The main mission of Hard Rock Cafe is to "create authentic experiences that rock". Everything that Hard Rock does follows the mission together with the core values of the company. Love all – Serve all, Take time to be kind, All is one and Save the planet are the core values of the Hard Rock brand. (Hard Rock, 2021b.)

#### 4.1 Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki

Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki opened the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2012. It is located on Aleksanterinkatu 21 in the heart of Helsinki. The restaurant is a part of the Nordic franchise group which includes Stockholm, Oslo, Gothenburg and Copenhagen. There is only one restaurant in Finland. (Janik 14 February 2020.)

The first floor consists entirely of The RockShop that sells the brands merchandise, from classic t-shirts to pins and glassware. The bar, restaurant, balcony and stages are on the second floor where the kitchen is also located. The upstairs area can fit 240 guests and up to 300 guests in special private events. The restaurant side fits 150 of the guests and the bar 80. In the summer the restaurant also has a patio outside the restaurant next to the statue of The Three Smiths. (Hard Rock, 2021c.)

Before Covid-19 Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki had approximately 40 fulltime employees. The staff is split into the front- and back of the house in addition to the managers. The front of the house consists of hosts, bartenders, servers and retail workers and the back is formed by the kitchen staff. When the restaurant has private events or concerts all the staff from the front of the house can participate behind the bar so that no extra staff need to be hired.

As a former employee of the company the guests' all-time favourite dish has always been the Legendary Burger from the entrées, the burger consists of the buns, lettuce, tomato, an onion ring, cheese, bacon and the patty. Of all the desserts the Hot Fudge Brownie has been a guest favourite ever since the Helsinki location opened. It is a warm chocolate brownie surrounded by vanilla ice cream, whipped cream, chocolate sauce, nuts and a cherry on top. Some people even visit the restaurants just for the brownie and a good atmosphere.

The customer base is very wide. Guest visiting can be new-borns to elderly people who have already visited many Hard Rocks all over the world. Before Covid-19 tourists took the biggest part of the customer base. Depending on the events held in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki they either attract younger-, older- or a mix of people not ruling anyone out because the brand welcomes everyone.

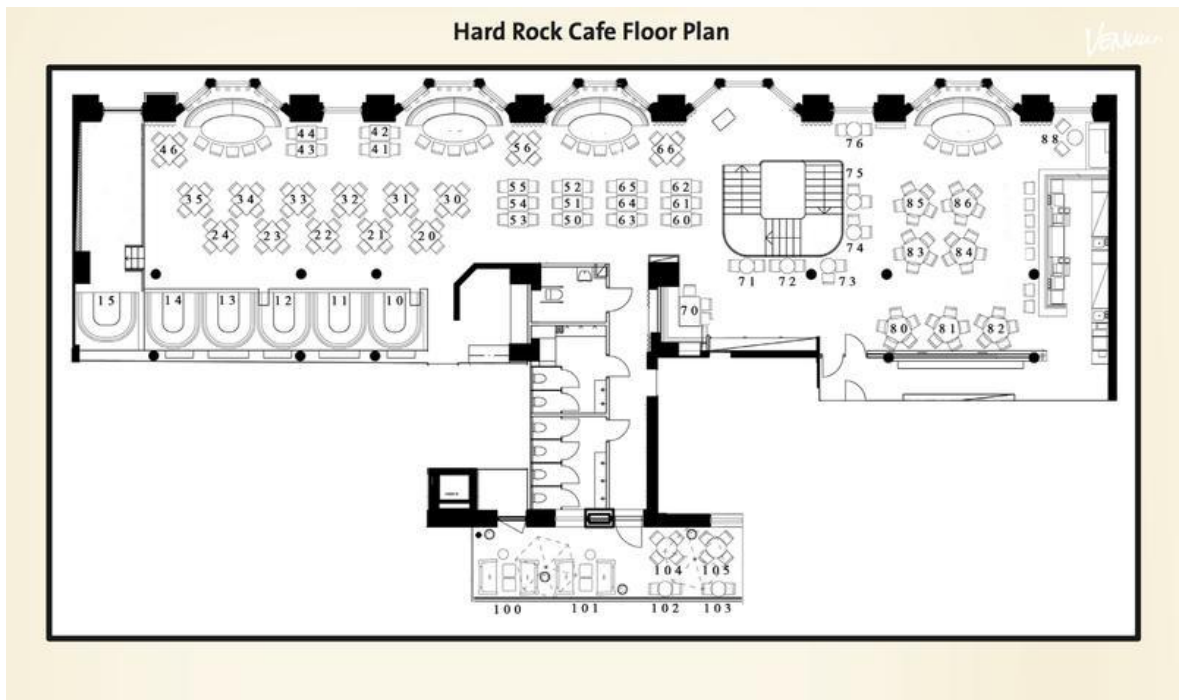


Image 2. Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki floor plan of the second floor, not including the kitchen (Venuu, 2021)

As seen in image 2 the stairs from the RockShop to the restaurant and bar area are slightly on the right side of the floor plan. The bar side consists of everything that is on the right side of the stairs which means from table 70 to table 88 in the upper right corner. On the bar side there is also a little stage for smaller events like open mic night and smaller business events. It is located where table 80,81 and 82 is. The restaurant side starts from table 66 and goes all the way to table 15 that is located on the mainstage and during concerts it works as the artist backstage area. Table 15 can be isolated from the restaurant with a curtain for extra privacy. Lastly in the bottom middle there is a balcony that overviews Citykäytävä, meaning it is an indoor balcony where guest can also enjoy beverages and food. The hallway from the balcony to the restaurant is where the toilets are located.

Music is one of the main pillars in the Hard Rock Cafe brand and has been the first addition to the brand from the start and the company hosts around 15000 live music events every year. (Rautiainen 2018, 18.)

Previously Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki has held a lot of different kinds of events from private events, business events, DJ nights, celebrations, art exhibitions, artist concerts and even different kinds of open mic nights. The biggest success events in the past have been concerts with big names like Andy Mccoy or Metallica tribute night. In addition to that nights like new-years and other holidays have always been a success in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. Some years when there has been DJs playing, the restaurant has held open extending the regular opening hours with a lot of people attending.

When hosting an event, the restaurant can be split into the bar side or restaurant side if there is a smaller event so that regular guests can still be able to come in for dinner or drinks.

The customer base of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is a mix of older and younger people. When it comes to the events that have been held in the past the attending people have always been average age or older because the artists usually have had that fanbase. During 2019-2020 when the restaurant held their first gigs with the artist Danial Hamran the company gained a lot more of a younger audience. This continued in the summer of 2020 when there were DJs playing on the patio gathering younger people walking by. Since the younger audiences to the company events there has also been a lot of new promising potential to host events with artist/Djs that gain a that kind of audience. The sales and turn out of these events have always been great.

## 4.2 Market environment and competitors

In the restaurant industry there is a lot of competition. Especially in the center of Helsinki where a lot of new and trendy restaurants open frequently. Restaurants like Naughty Brgr, Bites Burgers and Friends & Brgrs are foodwise Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's biggest competitors. All of the restaurants mentioned above serve burgers, which are Hard Rock Cafes bestselling products. From a restaurant point of view the advantages that Hard Rock Cafe has, according to the feedback given by customers over the years, is firstly their venue that offer much more than just food and usually all events held in the regular opening hours are free so the guests can enjoy live music or a show while dining. Secondly the service is one of the best in Helsinki and not close to a fast-food restaurant, which the restaurants mentioned above can be categorized to. Lastly the quality of the food is very good, and the food comes out very quick from the kitchen.

In the nightlife industry the biggest clubs and bars that also can provide live events for younger audiences are Apollo Live Club, Tavastia, Maxine, Kuudes Linja, Ääniwalli and Kaivohuone. Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is not known for hosting bigger events after the normal restaurant opening hours. The brands restaurants and hotels in other countries are more known for hosting late-night events with big names as their headliners.

With the help of a SWOT-analysis Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki can figure out the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in creating events like "Chrizay live at Hard Rock Cafe" and in possibly extending their opening hours for similar events.

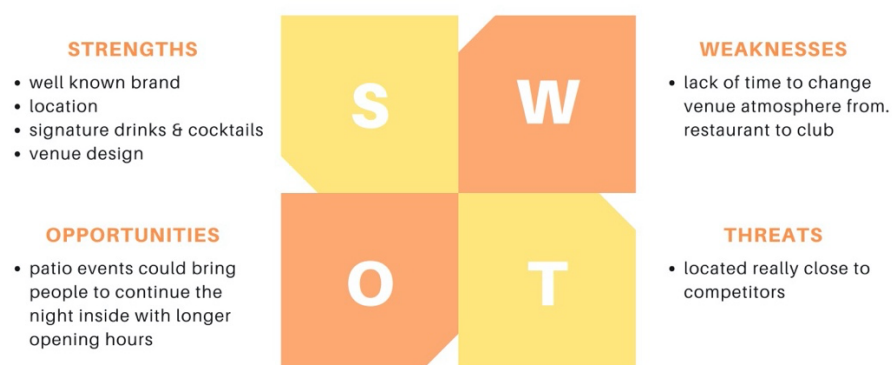


Figure 9. SWOT analysis of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki.

The biggest strength that Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki has is the location. Usually when going out in Helsinki everyone gets off at the Railway Station which is just a few hundred meters away from the restaurant. People walk by Hard Rock Cafe a lot in the night-time. Another strength that the company has is the design of the inner space, where ticket sales and cloak room is easy to provide in the RockShop after its' closing time. With drinks and cocktails the company also has the opportunity to have a broader range of their own signature drinks that other places do not have. Lastly of course the brand is known all over the world, so most people know the restaurant. The biggest weakness for the restaurant is changing the atmosphere from a restaurant to a nightclub and the lack of time to do it. The kitchen is on Fridays and Saturdays open until 23.00 and nightclubs in Helsinki open 22.00. There would still be dining guests when tables are taken out from the restaurant which could bother the guests overall experience. It is still possible to seat guests that want to eat after 21.30 at the bar so that there would be time to create the nightclub atmosphere on the restaurant side and then the eating guests could also move to the club area with a little extra fee after their dinner. (Hard Rock, 2021c.)

Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is still a restaurant so the atmosphere will be different from a regular club or bar. A lot of the competitors also has a great location in Helsinki. Skohan and Apollo live Club which are the leading nightclubs in Helsinki are right around the corner and would be the biggest threat to keep customers at Hard Rock Cafe and not leave to one of those places for the rest of the night. But in the summertime Hard Rock Cafe has held a lot of events with a great success so when the patio closes there would be a lot potential for guests to move inside and continue the night with Hard Rock. That would be a great opportunity for Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki to make a name for themselves in the night-life industry of Helsinki.

When hosting events, a really important factor is to not step on anyone's toes. Before starting to plan any event in Hard Rock Cafe the organizer always researches if there is a free weekend where no one else of the competitors is hosting any live events or something similar. This prevents risks in the lack of turn up in attendees and also shows respect for the competitors and companies in the same market segment. (Vasilev 2021.)

## **5 Chrizay live at Hard Rock Cafe**

This part of the thesis will explain the event from the planning process to the execution of the event and evaluation after the event. The presentation of the product is based on the theoretical framework that helped guide the planning process as well as my own notes, observations and personal communication with the artists Chrizay and 6 BOY and the live music coordinator from Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki Nikita Vasilev.

### **5.1 The product purpose**

The purpose of the event was to prove the company, that hosting these types of live events are profitable and worth organising in the future because of the gain of new potential customers and visibility in the nightlife and music industry. That is why we wanted to make the event reach as many people as possible to prove the potential of similar events held in the future. As stated before in chapter 1.1 Shone and Parry (2013) defines events as the spectacle that comes from occasions which purpose is to entertain, celebrate and enlighten and is not part of the daily life's routine. To the participants that was the purpose of the event, to entertain with live music performances and enlighten with creating a new and fresh atmosphere at a venue they had not been to for these purposes before. For the artist the purpose was to create an open collaboration that would give the artist a possibility to be a big part of the creation process and therefore in the future be a great choice for live musical performances at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, if they are pleased with the results.

### **5.2 Planning process of the event**

The planning process of the event was really quick and lasted roughly one month. The idea of the event came after being a part of planning another event on Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's patio in the summer that was spontaneously planned and organised in two days. The event was called 6 BOY's BDAY Bash and was a birthday celebration of DJ 6 BOY who invited four artists to perform with him. The turn out and sales were great for Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and we wanted to create something even bigger for one of the artists, Chrizay, that performed at the event. Before the event we had already talked together with the live music coordinator of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, Nikita, that I will plan an event with him for my thesis and I saw this as a great opportunity because I had booked the artists myself already to the birthday celebration event. That is why a week later I suggested this to 6 BOY and Chrizay after which we set up meetings with Nikita to make my thesis event happen.

The event was planned as a collaboration between Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and the artist collective called Leija Nuori Nation (LNN) that both 6 BOY and Chrizay are a part of. LNN also promotes everything that they do in forms of gigs, music, merchandise and is managed by both of them. Throughout the whole planning process everyone including me, Nikita, 6 BOY and Chrizay was part of every meeting that we had in person. We also were in contact through iMessage throughout the whole planning process. The end of August we had our first meeting where we wanted to get to know each other more and brainstorm about everyone's visions for the gig and we immediately decided that we will be focused on creating a late-night event and it will be called "Chrizay live at Hard Rock Cafe" and that gave us a direction to work forward from.

### 5.3 Event organising timeframe

The planning process was really quick and lasted little over a month as stated before. The planning process included four general meetings, a soundcheck, the event itself and an evaluation after the event. In figure 10 below, the meetings, dates and most important establishments during the meeting are presented.

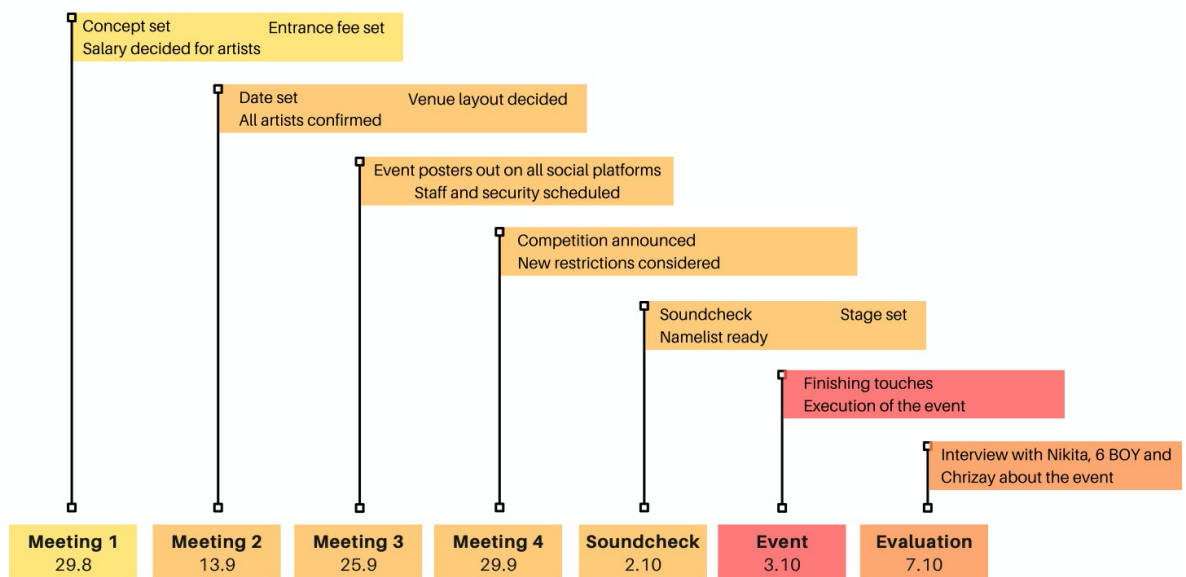


Figure 10. Timeframe of scheduled meetings before and after the event.

During the first ever meeting it was the first time that Chrizay and Nikita formally met and we wanted to take the time to eat dinner at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki to get more familiar with each other as well as brainstorm about everyone's ideas for the event. After brainstorming and coming up with ideas we decided that it was going to be a late-night event held on the main stage. We managed to also talk about the budget and the artists made a proposal of the wanted salary that worked well with Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's monthly

event budget. The size of the event also determined the need of security and the entrance fee price was suggested by Chrizay because he knew that people would be ready to pay to see him perform but it still needed to be lower than the competition to assure participants for the event.

The second meeting was held two weeks later and, in that time, the opening acts as well as the featured artist had all confirmed that they would be able to attend the event. The salary for the opening artists was also decided in the first meeting and the featured artists were able to come and perform for free. During the meeting we walked through the space of the restaurant and decided how we wanted the layout to look and how much room they needed on stage for the equipment and the performance itself. The final date was also set before the meeting so that it could be told forward to the other artists. After the date was set the promotional material could also be started and Chrizay told us about his vision of the posters so that I could start working on them. As well as the promotional material we discussed about having an Instagram competition and Nikita thought it was a great idea and he would be able to provide gift cards to the winners on top of the free entrance. Brainstorming and telling Chrizay and 6 BOY about previous events and what they have included gave them the idea of selling their merchandise that they had just ordered for the event.

In late September when we had our third meeting. We published all the promotional material on 6 BOY's and Chrizay's social media platforms as well as created the Facebook event on Chrizay's page so that Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki could easily repost it as they were the collaborating organiser. Before the third meeting the staff and security had been scheduled so it was easier to discuss the logistics of the actual event so that everyone was familiar with the information if something unexpected were to occur.

The last meeting was held a few days before the soundcheck and right after the announcement of the new restrictions that ordered every bar and restaurant to close 01.00 starting from the 8<sup>th</sup> of October. This meant that if we had organised the event one week later it would not have been able to be a late-night event. This also meant that the competition would be even bigger because of it being the last night to go out to a nightclub in a long time. Thankfully the artists have a big support group and the event was shared multiple times each day the week before the event. As a boost to the exposure we announced the competition that got the event even more shares and interest among people. After seeing the shares, likes and reposts we had a pretty good feeling of the event turn up.

Before the soundcheck, that was held the day before the event, we made sure that the stage was set so that we could go through the program once with Chrizay and one of the featuring artists. The opening acts could not make it to the soundcheck of the event but had already delivered 6 BOY all the music tracks needed for their performances so that he was able to play them during the soundcheck as well. A few days before the soundcheck one of the opening artists cancelled but thankfully Chrizay got another artists to cover the day before the soundcheck, which means that the promoted artist Tokoss was changed to Madboiali in the last minute. The change of opening artists was just promoted on Chrizay's Instagram story that was also shared by LNN, Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and 6 BOY. Earlier on the same day of the soundcheck the winners of the competition were announced so the name list of the VIPs for the event was able to be finalised. After the performance and the stage was set we went through the schedule of the event so that everyone was ready and prepared on the day.

On the day of the event there occurred a few unexpected setbacks that we manage to handle and some of the finishing touches were organised in the setup so that the event was ready to be held.

After the event I gathered Nikita, 6 BOY and Chrizay to do an evaluation and feedback interview of the whole event, where everyone was able to tell their feelings about the event and how it went.

#### **5.4 Preparation**

One of the main goals in creating this event was firstly to create an event that would give me an insight about event management and more knowledge of event planning, secondly prove that the company has potential of hosting similar events in the future with a great turn out and lastly widen the customer range of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki.

When starting the preparation of the event it was clear that we needed answers on the 5Ws; why, who, what, when and where, that were talked about in chapter 3.2. During the first meeting Chrizay told us that he has a new song coming out and from that we got the idea of promoting the event has his single release party where he would perform the song for the first time to his fans, friends and family. This means that originally the event would be the single release event for his new song "Party". Further on in the planning process Chrizay and his producer told us that the song will not be ready to be released in time for the event which is why the name just stayed as "Chrizay live at HRC". Although the purpose of the event changed, the target audience stayed the same because it was his biggest headlining concert in the year 2020. The target audience that included fans, friends

and family also included anyone that had a love for Hip Hop, rap, trap and R&B music. After talking about previous events that 6 BOY and Chrizay had hosted together we knew that it was a main stage concert that we were planning, and we were looking to get around 150-200 participants overall. The program of the event was also roughly decided in the first meeting because Chrizay had ideas of artists that he wanted to invite as opening acts before his performance. In addition to that he wanted to invite artists that he has collaborated with on songs that would be performing with him that night. At last we came to the conclusion that 6 BOY was going to DJ the entire night and also for all the artists. In addition to that there would be two opening acts and the main performance from Chrizay with three features during the concert. In the second meeting we set the date to 03.10.2020 because it would have been the most realistic weekend for the release of the song and the place was already set as Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's main stage.

As all the theories about event planning say, all events need a budget. In this event, because it was Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's own event, the only budget we needed was taken from the overall budget that is meant for the events each month. To the monthly costs of events includes staffing, the artists salary and security. To be able to cut down on the costs we decided to include an entrance fee to the event that was five euros per person and by that get the two security guard's salary paid that was needed for the event. The other thing we thought about in determining the budget was that we could sell out all the promotional wines from the summer period so that the bar would be manageable during the event with fast drinks instead of cocktails and that would also save raw materials in the bar. That is why we made special prices for the wine for people to choose that as their main beverage. In the first meeting we also talked about selling booths with drinks to bigger groups, but the staffing just wasn't enough to manage that. 6 BOY also managed to get a photographer that was his friend and wanted to volunteer to capture memorable moments from the night. With all the savings made in including an entrance fee and promoting the wine as the main beverage, Nikita managed to get a VIP list to maximum 50 people that included all the opening acts, featured artists, competition winners and family.

During Covid-19 the amount of dining guest on a regular evening in the restaurant has been really low, that is why events like this would boost up the sales and make up for the lost profit during the regular opening hours. With a big effort on marketing and promoting the event we thought that it would be possible to have enough participants that will increase the sales a great deal compared to a regular evening's sales.

## 5.5 Detailed planning

In this event, the location and venue were already obvious because it was Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's own event that we were planning. That is why the only thing left in the venue planning was the layout and logistics for the event. During our first meetings it was clear that we wanted to create a small pop-up bar closer to the main stage to manage the crowd better, but unfortunately in the cutting of staff there was just not enough resources to do that. That is why we had to make it easy to create a customer flow that would not pack the bar up too much during the night. To the advantage of the venue the bar is located at the other end of the restaurant from main stage so that the concert is still perfectly seen from there. Some guests also prefer to watch it from a distance where the music is not as loud. To manage the crowd flow we focused on creating a timetable for the event that would give the participants time to get drinks before the live performances and in between them as well.

For guest to be able to dance and enjoy the music both standing up and sitting down we decided to clear away the tables closest to the stage to create a dancing area and rest of the restaurant would remain as it is as seen in image 3 below. This was also because the event was held on a Saturday there was still dining guests until closer to the starting time of the event. The restaurant made an exception and closed the kitchen one hour earlier than normally at 22.00 so that there was time for the dining guest to finish without anyone rushing them out before the event started.

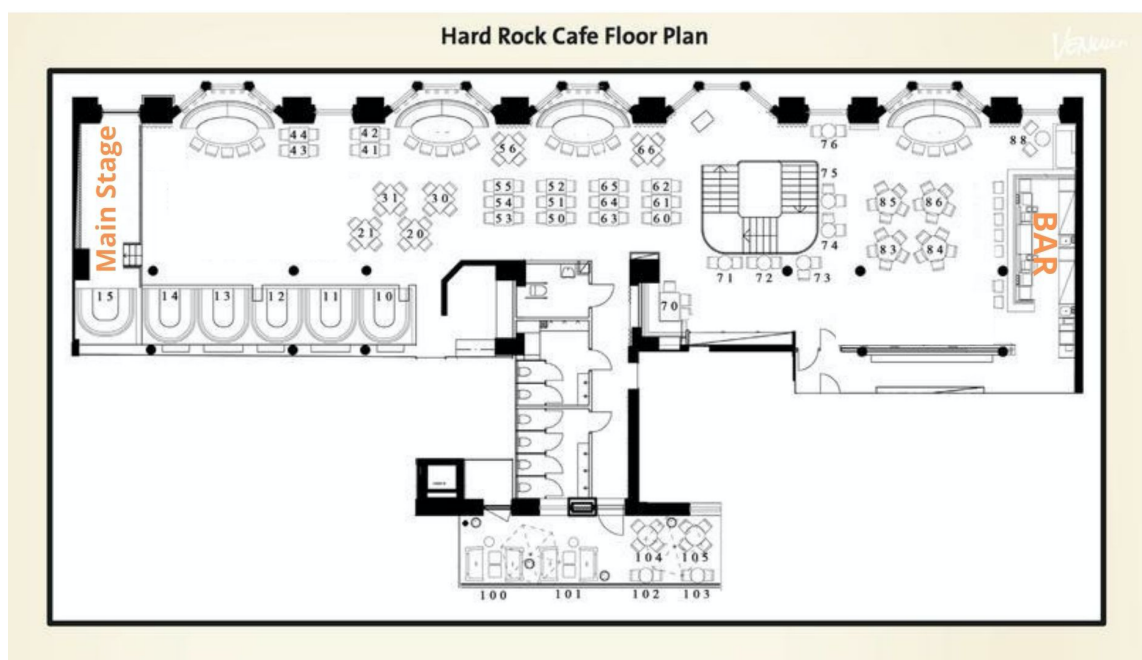


Image 3. Floorplan of the layout of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki during the event. (Modified from Venuu 2021.)

On the day of the event we planned that there would be a curtain that separates the main stage area and a part of the restaurant from the rest of the restaurant so that the dining guest would not be interrupted by moving tables and the setting up of the place. The curtain was set up around 20.00 so that there was enough time to create the space of the event.

When Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki has organised bigger events in the past the security has always the same tasks. The security is needed to keep the place safe, manage the entrance and also be in charge of the cloak room. The cloak room was planned to be held in the RockShop close to the entrance where also the tickets were sold and VIPs welcomed.



Image 4. The RockShop where the tickets were sold and cloakroom located. (MyHelsinki, 2021.)

According to Dowson and Bassetts (2015) event planning process, the needs of the attending people need to be thought of precisely during the detailed planning phase. We already knew that the motivation behind attending this event was the shared music taste among the participants and especially the interest to see and hear Chrizay perform. We still wanted to create something special for the people attending to look forward to and keep it a secret so that it would cause more of an interest. One of the special surprises we already mentioned in the promotional context and it was that during the event some of LNNs limited edition merchandise would be sold. The merchandise has been really popular and it's hard to get because they do not have an online shop or any other place where they can be purchased. The other motivational factor that we promoted was that there was going to be a lot of surprises during the event and those were not revealed before the actual event. These surprises were all the featuring artist that Chrizay has never performed with all together in one concert, which means that it was something never before

seen. Only the opening acts were mentioned in the marketing posters and promotional texts to keep the secret of the surprise features.

### **5.5.1 Risk Management**

The event was held in a venue that already has their own contingency plans and security measurements that all the staff working at the event was familiar with which means that we didn't have to put much time on focusing on that. Instead, the biggest risks were Shone and Parry's (2013) four categories of risks: economic-, performance-, psychological and physical risks. Before the event there was conversations about new restrictions on the news that was set to start around the same time as the event, which would have costed economic risks if the event would have been cancelled last minute. Even though the restrictions were not as strict during and before the event Covid-19 was still spreading. This meant that anytime one of the artists or even Chrizay could have gotten it or been ordered to quarantine by a doctor and not make it to the event. The whole situation of Covid-19 scares a lot of people and if Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki would not follow the restrictions or otherwise are being careless of the situation it can cause the reputation of the company to be negative. When planning the event there is always a chance that someone would carry on the disease and spread it at the event. That is why having clear instructions for attending and health measures so that all of the above risks would be managed.

As mentioned in chapter 2.3.1 about risk management, medium scale events are larger indoor events with relatively complicated activities. (Shone & Parry 2013, 228.) This event as well as most events held in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki fell into that category.

In figure 11 below the possible risks for the event is presented as well as the likelihood of the risk and the impact of it. The likelihood is presented with the colours green, orange and red that stands for not likely, possible and probable. The risk impact is presented with the same colour but with the scale from low, medium to high.

RISK	LIKELIHOOD	RISK IMPACT
PERFORMER CANCELS	NOT LIKELY	HIGH
EVENT GETS CANCELLED	POSSIBLE	MEDIUM
NO PARTICIPANTS	NOT LIKELY	HIGH
UNDERSTAFFED	POSSIBLE	HIGH
GO OVER THE MAXIMUM CAPACITY	NOT LIKELY	HIGH

Figure 11. Risk matrix of the event.

To ensure that the event was able to be held we read the news daily and stayed up to date with the new restrictions so that we would be able to react quickly to a sudden change. As a backup plan to sudden new restrictions we would have just changed the timetable for the event from late-night to evening because the participant numbers were allowed to be the same as before. In addition to that we wanted to also be very strict with the maximum capacity that we were allowed to take in during the night which was 200 people plus staff. We also made sure that in all the promotional content that we put out we mentioned that the participating people should not come if they even feel slightly sick and that we are trying to be as precocious as possible and understand the seriousness of the situation. This would ensure that people would feel safe attending the event.

### 5.5.2 Marketing and promotion actions

In chapter 3.3.2 where marketing and promotion is explained theoretically Bladen, Kennel, Abson and Wilde (2012, 165) states that the four main categories in a marketing plan is; setting goals, analysing the current situation, creating a marketing strategy and to assign a marketing budget. After finding out that no other bars or nightclubs had any events planned the date of the event we wanted to get as much participants as possible for our event. From the competitor view we had an advantage because we had something special to offer the attending people in form of live music. That is why we knew that if we promote the event well enough, we will have a lot of attending people especially when it was the

last Saturday before late-night venues were not allowed to operate normally anymore. The marketing strategy was very clear because we had no budget at all. That is why we decided to use just great effort into creating content ourselves to advertise in forms of posters, pictures and written content that could be shared among the contacts from everyone involved in the planning process and the company itself.

In the planning process my biggest responsibility was marketing. As the live music coordinator Nikita was in charge of most of the venue related planning and I focused more on the external planning. The marketing was led by both Chrizay's and 6 BOY's ideas and then created and finalised by me. It was really important to create something that suit everyone's social media platforms that is why the input of the artists was really important to have in mind. From the company side the most important factor was to include Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki as one of the organisers but otherwise I was given free hands

Both Chrizay and 6 BOY are part of a collective called Leija Nuori Nation (LNN) which they do most of their promotion and marketing through. This means that it was really important to include that into every post made about the event. To make sure that the event would be noticed by as many people as possible we focused a lot on marketing the event. We made an Instagram competition, promoted the event on all social media platforms of Chrizay, 6 BOY, LNN and Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, printed out flyers that we put all over the centre of Helsinki and also got an ad on MyHelsinki's webpage.

For marketing I created a main poster that would be the advertisement for the event on all the social media platforms as well as an artist poster that would also be an addition to the main one with information about the performers. When creating the posters Chrizay and 6 BOY sent me pictures that they wanted to be used in the event posters and otherwise free hands to create something suitable that both fits Hard Rock Cafe and LNN. The posters ended up including the same colour theme as Hard Rock Cafe's logo and suited well everyone's platforms.



Image 5 & 6. On the left is the main poster and the right the performance poster, with both LNN and Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's logos on the bottom.

The competition was meant to bring more activity and shares of the event on Instagram. As a price the contestants would win a free entrance at the event for them and one of their friends as well as a fifty euro gift card to Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. Steps to enter the competition was to follow both @leijanuorination and @hrchelsinki on Instagram, followed by liking the post which was a picture of the main event poster and also sharing the post on the contestants Instagram and lastly tag the person who they want to win with. The post was posted on leijanuorinations Instagram account and the winners were announced a day before the event by Chrizay on Instagram live.

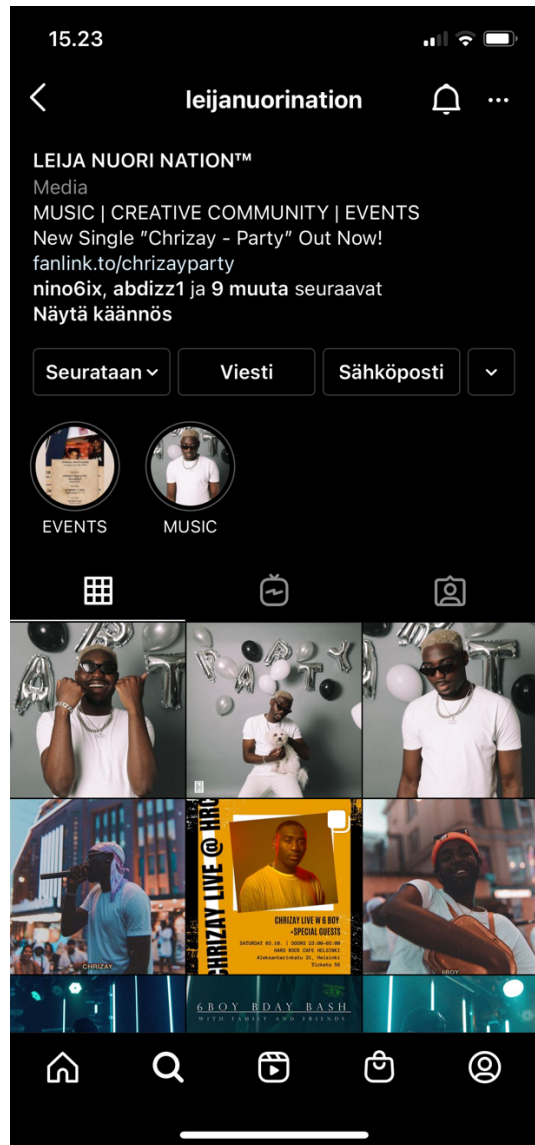
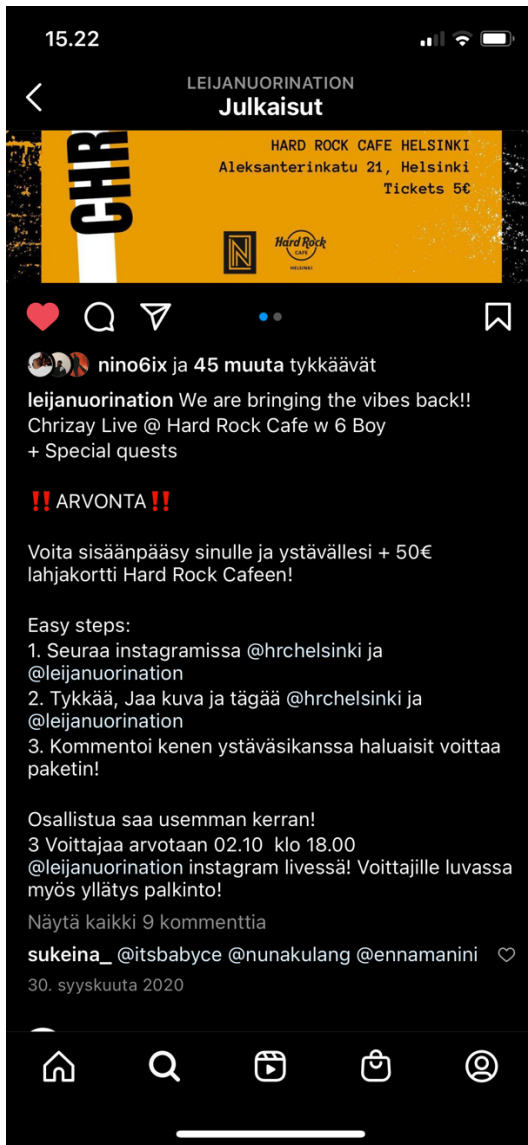


Image 7 & 8. On the left is a picture of the Instagram competition and the right a picture of leijanuorinations Instagram feed where the second row was entirely dedicated to promoting the event with pictures of both Chrizay, the main poster and 6 BOY.

The social media platforms that were used to promote the event was primarily Chrizay's and Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's Facebook pages as well as 6 BOY's, Chrizay's, LNN's and Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's Instagram pages. On these promotional posts and event pages there was general information about the event, the performances, entrance fees and time-tables for the event so that it would be clear for the participants. Chrizay's Facebook event was the one that became most active with 93 people responding that they are either interested or participating in the event.

In addition to all the social media marketing Chrizay liked the idea of marketing the event in a bit more old school way so we ended up printing out flyers at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki

and going out together with 6 BOY to stick the posters everywhere in the centre of Helsinki next to other posters with similar events or similar music's single release posters.

Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki also collaborates with MyHelsinki so it was possible to get an advertisement on their website for free. The announcement included a picture of Chrizay and 6 BOY together with information about the location, the age limit, entrance fee, time and the written content that was posted on all the other social media platforms.

## 5.6 Executing the event

First a summary of the event schedule in figure 11 below:



Figure 12. The event timetable.

Preparing for the event did not take too long because of all the equipment and setup that was already available at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. On the day of the event both me and 6 BOY arrived at 20.00 to set up the finishing touches and help clearing the tables from the stage area. When we arrived there was a lot of dining guests and the curtain was set upon our arrival to start the organizing of the space. Nikita was working as the evening and late-night manager which meant that he had already prepped the staff for the upcoming event in the beginning of their shift. There was supposed to be five servers and bartenders working plus a retail worker to sell the tickets, but one bartender called in sick a few hours before the evening shift. This meant that there was not enough staff to manage the bar, so

the retail worker was moved to work upstairs as a busser because he had the appropriate work attire and I volunteered to sell tickets downstairs for the first two hours of the event because the systems were well-known to me.

When the person who was in charge of selling the merchandise arrived, he said that he was not able to get all the merchandise needed to be able to have an extra stand for selling them. He still arrived with some merchandise and was able to sell them if someone asked. Some people ended up buying merchandise at the end of the event.

When the bar was set for the event and the dining guests that did not join for the event had left the time was around 22.45. At this time we also put the poster pictures on all the screens in the restaurant that usually display music videos to the guests. All that there was left to do was to clean all tables from the previous guests to be able to welcome the new ones.

Around 22.50 6 BOY started playing music and there was no sign of any artists yet which caused some stress. The first guests arrived the same time as 6 BOY started playing and because I hadn't been able to go downstairs yet the security had just let them in. The security was asked to bring the guests back downstairs to pay by Nikita but they refused because they said that it didn't belong in their work description and they were told that people start paying after 23.00. At 23.00 people started rushing in and nobody had the time to solve the situation that occurred before. During the first hour of the event most people arrived and had time to order drinks, take a seat and mingle before the live performances.

Chrizay and the other opening artist arrived little after 00.00 which was nerve racking because the first artist was supposed to start not long after. Before the first opening artist, El Migu, started most of the people had arrived and ordered their first drinks and bottles of wine which meant that the bar was manageable and the retail worker could come and take my place as the ticket seller.

From when the first opening artist started to when Chrizay's performance ended the dancefloor was packed with people and the bar was busy the whole evening. This meant that Nikita was both managing the VIP table together with myself as well as being behind the bar serving drinks the whole night.

In between the performances there was five minutes before the second opening act and after that before Chrizay started performing there was ten minutes. After Chrizay's perfor-

mance that ended around 02.30 most people left to still have time to enjoy at other night-clubs because of the event being on the last night before the new restrictions. Some people stayed to get some merchandise and enjoy the night at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. At 03.00 the place was empty and 6 BOY closed up his set and we started gathering all the equipment away at the same time as the staff started cleaning the tables.



Image 9 & 10. On the left Madboiali is performing with a great view of the participants. On the right Chrizay performing on top of a table among the crowd.

During the event the bar had been really busy so there was constantly three people working plus Nikita behind the bar and the rest were bussing and clearing tables from empty glasses as well as washing glasses to make sure the bar does not run out of them. The whole night was really busy so when the guests had left there was still a lot of clearing up to do and the bar needed to be cleaned entirely as well. In addition to that there was only one closing bartender because one of them had gotten sick, some of the staff members were able to stay longer and the cleaning up was done around 06.00 in the morning.

## 5.7 Post event

After the event I suggested for us all to meet for one last time to talk about the event and how it went. We did this in form of an interview where we first discussed the event and our feelings about it and then I asked some follow-up questions that Chrizay, Nikita and 6 BOY answered.

Firstly, we started discussing of our overall feeling after the event and how we thought it went. Every person involved in the planning process was really happy with the turnout and there were more participants than we thought. The overall ticket sales were exactly 700€ and adding to that there were VIPs, competition winners and guestlist participants which means that the overall turnout was around 200 people. Nikita mentioned that participant wise the event was a success and the goal of the ticket sales covering the security fees had been reached. In addition to the security fees the ticket sales also covered some complimentary drinks for VIPs and artists. When selling the tickets many of the participants were surprised at the entrance that the event ticket and cloakroom together only cost 5€ which made us realise that people are willing to pay more in future events. What the event offers in form of live performances is worth a lot so the price could have been higher. Both Chrizay and 6 BOY were also really surprised and pleased by the great turnout of the event. Because of the great turn out and sales Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki would gladly offer more events to the same artist and are planning on doing so in the summer 2021.

## 6 Discussion

In this chapter the overall results of the event will be discussed as well as my own thoughts about the planning and execution of the event.

### 6.1 Conclusion

As stated before, the goal of the event was to prove the company, that hosting these types of live events are profitable and worth organising in the future because of the gain of new potential customers and visibility in the nightlife and music industry. Overall, the event was a success, both participant and sales wise. As well as the high participant amount and great sales the venue and artists were happy with how the event turned out and how it surpassed everyone's expectations. People who I knew from the event participants all said that they really enjoyed their time at the event because of the great live show, drinks and atmosphere. That also showed that there is a demand for these kinds of events and can be something that would work in the venue also in the future and differ from the regular restaurant evenings.

After the event Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki offered to host events with both Chrizay and 6 BOY in the future when the restrictions are not as strict. The summer of 2021 DJ 6 BOY is planned to have his own gigs at the Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki patio and Chrizay will get the opportunity to return to the main stage whenever.

During the event planning process, the biggest challenge was the situation that we are living in with the global pandemic Covid-19. It made larger events riskier and the effort to put a hundred percent from the venue's side for example, staff wise was not possible. It also made it harder to predict what could happen during the event and how many people would attend. Our goals for the event were still reachable and we managed to firstly prove to the company that there would be a demand for extending the regular opening hours for similar events as well as somewhat widen the customer range since after the event we saw a lot of similar faces as dinner guests. All of this was reached although there were some setbacks at the event and the planning time was limited.

My own input for the event was seen both from the venue and artist side really helpful and creative. Our meetings were held in English so whenever there was something that the artists did not understand, I could tell it to them in Finnish so that we were on the same page during the whole process. I also created our marketing content, helped wherever was needed from the live music coordinator and if the artists had any questions in between our meetings, I was the one to provide information forward. The day of the event it

was also good that I was an employee at the venue so that I could take over the ticket sales, guestlist as well as help in taking care of the backstage VIP table. All in all, it was a very rewarding experience where I got to learn about event management and planning as well as creating experiences.

## **6.2 Improvement ideas**

The overall feeling of the event was great from both the venue perspective and the artist and we saw that there is big potential for similar events in the future. As in every event there is always room for improvements and for this event, we got the confirmation from the number of participants that the improvements and suggestions would work in the future.

Although the overall participant amount was great the event was held on the last weekend before the lockdown of late-night venues. That means that after the performances people started leaving to still have time to go to another place for the rest of the night. But for future events we did not see this as an issue to come up with something to make people stay because the only reason people left was the last night before lockdown. But there should still be a consideration of how to make people stay later if the same would happen in the future.

After thinking about the overall feeling, we went right ahead to talk about the improvements and changes we would do in the future. The first thing that came to mind was the lack of staff and only one bar in use. The flow of the event would have been made smoother with another bar station and more staff. During the night of the event there was a constant line in the bar, although the drinks that were selling were quick and easy. With another pop-up bar, the line would have been reduced and Nikita even suggested that because of the great turn out Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki could collaborate with a company like Absolut Vodka to create a pop-up bar with exclusive drinks in the next event. That would not only reduce the line at the main bar but also expand the sales because the bar area would not be as restricted. Another suggestion was to push the sales of booths for a group of people with ready drinks and mixers at the table which would reduce the lines at the bar. For this idea there should be one staff member in charge of the booths and their orders. That would also reserve money in advance from the venue perspective. For the artists there was only one booth reserved as backstage which was not enough for all the three artist and their crew. In the planning process the backstage table was meant for Chrizay for the whole night and the opening artists and features would come just through the backstage area to perform and then be seated near the stage. But on the day of the event the instructions from our side were unclear and the backstage table was packed

with people the whole night. In the future the venue would put a staff member in charge of the cloakroom together with one security member and then have the other one constantly upstairs close to the performers to manage the backstage table.

For future events that are going to be held in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and similar to our event the planning and organising have to be more detailed. With our ideas to improve future events with pop up bars, collaborations with brands, merchandise and table reservations the company can prove its' place in the nightlife industry as a serious competitor. Another factor to remember is the staff. For the venue to offer the best experience the service and flow needs to be on point and that is why staff is needed to be at the door, the bar, clearing tables, taking care of VIPs and deliver help where needed. After the summer of 2021 it is possible that Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is not only known for the great burgers, but the amazing late-night spot located in the heart of Helsinki.

### **6.3 Personal development**

When I started thinking about what I want my thesis topic to be it was obvious that I wanted to be involved in planning an event. That is something that I have been most interested in during my studies and I have been around as well as working in events during the whole time I was working in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. The collaboration with planning an event together with the live music coordinator of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki was also something that we had talked about before and this was a great opportunity to create something new that had not been seen before at the restaurant. Most of the assignments I've done during my studies have also been related to my workplace, therefore I had a lot of confidence to write and create something big for my final work to showcase my knowledge.

Before planning this event, I had as little as no experience in planning events and the only experience I had was either working at events or attending them. I still wanted to take the challenge of planning one myself and it was made easy alongside Nikita and the big input that the artists made in the whole process of creating the event. During my studies I have been a part of creating some small events that have been mainly food related pop ups, so this was something completely out of my comfort zone, but at the same time a fun challenge.

The whole event was really spontaneous, we only knew that we wanted to create an event with Nikita together for my thesis but did not know who the artists would be or when we were going to organize it. When the opportunity came to work together with Chrizay and 6

BOY I took it and that is why the process became really quick and short, at least for a first-time medium scale event planner.

When writing the thesis the start was the most difficult part. Finding and applying theory that supported the event was not easy and the only thing that was clear was to apply the event planning process into the theoretical framework. After the framework was done the process became easier when writing about the product because it was so well known to me. In the writing process the theory took the longest time and also made it harder to have motivation the process because it was so time consuming. I had not expected the thesis to take as much time as it did, which means that I should have planned my time better in dividing the work. I learned in the process to be more organised, not procrastinate and divide my time clearly using a calendar. The process has given me tools not only in creating events, theory but also time management skills that have been very valuable already.

In the whole process of both planning the event and writing my thesis I have gained more information than any course could give. By doing something yourself and not be restricted to the guidelines of a school project was something that I really enjoyed. Although the event was done for a venue, the live music coordinator Nikita gave a lot of room for creative ideas with the goal of doing something that has not been done before at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. That gave me more confident and ability to showcase my ideas and learnings and taking charge of some tasks. Co-planning an event of this scale has definitely been a great learning experience and will be a great benefit for the future. The literature related to the topic has also been to a great value for future work in creating events and projects of this scale. In the future I hope I get to plan even more similar events and develop to one day even be a part of creating something even bigger.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. The Facebook events reached participants.

20.25

4G

Haku Facebook-palvelusta

Doors 23-03 / K-18

Tickets 5€

For more information contact @leijanuorination

Musiikki

### Järjestäjä



Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki



6 BOY



Chrizay

### Vastaukset

Osallistui

29

Kiinnostunut

65

Jaot

5



+10

Mervi, Josefina ja 14 muuta osallistuvat tai ovat kiinnostuneita



## Appendix 2. MyHelsinki's post about the event.



Photo Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki / Chrizay

[HOME](#) · [SEE & DO](#) · [EVENTS](#) · [CHRIZAY, 6 BOY](#)

# Chrizay, 6 Boy

🕒 3.-4.10.2020

📍 Aleksanterinkatu 21, 00100 Helsinki  
**Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki**

♡ Save to My Helsinki



LNN vibes by Chrizay, 6 BOY +  
Special Guests are performing on  
Hard Rock Cafe's Main Stage in  
October.

[Read more](#) ▾

[#hip hop](#) [#music](#) [#live music](#)  
[#rhythm and blues music](#)

