

Theatre Industry as Part of the Experience Economy

Abstract

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Theatre as Part of the Experience Economy		
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Abstract <p>The thesis researches the role of theatre as part of the experience economy and justifies the creation of a new theatre venture in Finland. The thesis scope is to analyse the business side of the theatre to understand and distinguish the best practices internationally and to analyse the Finnish market in particular.</p> <p>An understanding of the business processes in a theatre enterprise and potential success determiners in the peripheral service area is acquired through literature study. A foundation is provided of potential reasons Finland can be a market for a theatre business and such areas as sustainability and diversity in theatre are researched. To understand the current situation in the theatre and entertainment industry in Finland, existing demand and economic landscape, qualitative research in the form of theme interview is conducted among theatre professionals in Finland.</p> <p>On the basis of the research a business plan is created including the framework for establishing a new theatre venture in Finland. The thesis opens the grounds for discussion of entertainment and culture in Finland.</p>		
Keywords Experience economy, entertainment industry, theatre		

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Appendix 1: Business Model Canvas

1 Introduction

This thesis introduces an approach to modern theatre industry as part of the emerging experience economy. The author suggests that with the economic shift of the paradigm theatre industry is becoming very relevant and important as it offers a holistic experience desired by the consumer. By investigating change and well-established traits in the industry internationally where it is on the rise as well as describing different approaches to promotion, management and sustainability in theatre industry. As Finland's economy is highly developed, sustainable and the country is attracting international workforce, it is researched as a market for theatrical experiences. Apart from that, the thesis also considers entrepreneurship in the theatre industry and potential ways of improving the currently existing practices, researching both commercial theatres as strategic organizations targeted at generating profit and non-for-profit theatres as well. This research also figures out what practices from the industry can be adopted by a start-up and be efficient. Part of the entertainment industry, theatre is historically its foundation. This research is going to explore how and in what forms theatre exists in the age of the emergence of the experience economy and how the modern approaches to globalization, sustainability and inclusivity influence it. The hypothesis is that there is a niche for theatrical experiences in Finland as its economy is highly developed and therefore the demand for experiences can be traced. As research shows, there is a correlation between those factors as illustrated by the progress of the economic value described by Pine and Gilmore (1998). While the existing successful models will be a source of information to understand the best practices, the interview-based research will allow to understand the Finnish market on a deep level, analyse the current situation and then based on that study to adapt the best practices to engage Finnish local communities to create a successful independent theatrical business diversifying the cultural landscape. Therefore, the thesis objectives are to clearly identify the most successful practices of the peripheral service area in theatre that can become a foundation for creation of a new theatrical venue.

Objectives and methods

The thesis scope is to analyse the business side of the theatre to understand and systematize the existing research findings and distinguish the best practices internationally. That is to be conducted through literature study. On the other hand, the Finnish economy and its possible switch towards being experience-oriented, existing cultural projects, special economic, language and cultural conditions are to be analysed to understand the relevance of establishing a new theatre. The research using both theoretical study as well as

qualitative research in the form of theme interviews with theatre professionals is to be conducted to justify the choice of approach and to pick the most relevant best practices which are to be applied. The objective is to identify business opportunities to establish an alternative theatre business in Finland.

Delimitations and limitations

The thesis focuses on the business side of theatre and is only to mention the artistic side of it on a simplified level allowing to understand its attractiveness to the audiences. The social, historical, demographical and cultural factors defining the interest of the potential Finnish audiences towards theatre are only to be analysed through inspection of the existing practices in the country and their attractiveness as directly it is more likely to be a sociological study. Such success metrics as community engagement are very hard to take into consideration and therefore, they can only be roughly outlined. Moreover, another limitation is the ever-changing business landscape and the risk that any findings of this research are largely affected by the economic changes and fluctuations. Therefore, the thesis can only serve as a theoretical basis for any actions and a potential business opening as data becomes irrelevant quickly.

2 The Business of Theatre

This chapter is dedicated to understanding and describing the nature of theatre as a business. It identifies the theoretical framework of the research that will further allow to understand the contributors to the commercial success of a theatrical business and the experiences it offers. The research aims to establish a foundation for the perception of theatre as part of the experience economy.

Boerner et al (2011) have designed a framework that distinguishes the service areas in the arts companies including theatrical institutions to separate them into two large segments: core and peripheral. Core services include all elements of the artistic performance, including the program, performers and technical aspects of the production. Peripheral service area, on the other hand, includes the factors supporting the performance: marketing mix, building maintenance, loyalty programs, customer service, and so on. On a more simplified level, the peripheral level is everything the customer perceives prior to the performance and afterwards: the promotional booklet that advertises the show, interactions with the box office or ticketing websites, the appearance of the venue, Front of House team greeting the customer and executing customer service procedures, catering. It includes any loyalty programmes, post-performance surveys and questionnaires. This is the level surrounding the main part and helping to deliver it by attracting the audiences and facilitating the performance. Meanwhile, the core area is the performance itself, the result of the work of the artists and the creative team. Once this distinction is adapted, the business of theatre that is to be analysed in this thesis and comprises the holistic experience received by the customer can be understood from two perspectives. This research focuses on the peripheral service area as from the author's perspective, it facilitates the creation of the core service area. In order to establish a new theatre venue, the peripheral area shall be identified. As to the core area, this thesis is going to adapt a business perspective and only analyse the elements of the artistic performance through the lens of customer interaction, satisfaction and engagement while also viewing the core service area as a direct outcome of the work of the creatives employed so understand the human resource management methods and the quality of it.

Theatre can be viewed as an industrial practice, but the economic framework facilitating it is complex due to many factors. While theatre is a cultural institution, it is also an experience venue under the influence of such economic factors as costs of raw materials, HR practices in place, management techniques and funding or business practices adapted in relation to procurement and sales. It can be influenced by government policies, censorship and legislation to a degree that can trigger a structural change at the workplace, and that

distinguishes it from many other businesses. But even given the cultural nature of the institution and the sphere in which it operates, theatre is still a business and the economic side of it influences the artistic side and vice versa. While the importance of the quality of the performance is undeniable as it is largely viewed as the main factor in customers' satisfaction (Kolhede & Gomez-Arias, 2016), the business, or peripheral, side is also very important as it is inseparable, and the experience is holistic.

Once the focus of the research on the economic side of theatre is identified, it is also important to understand the ways in which theatre can exist as a business. The following chapter will establish a preliminary framework to understanding types of theatrical businesses.

2.1 Types of theatre businesses

While the service areas are distinguished and the points of interest of this research are identified, it is also important to understand the typology of the theatrical businesses. That will allow to categorise the analysed material and establish a framework for choosing the most successful and suitable practices. In this research, many existing models are to be distinguished into the following categories.

2.1.1 Location: venue-based or non venue-based

Location is important because owning and maintaining a venue or renting it is a significant expenditure. That also defines the audience: whether it is broad and ever-changing or stable or what kind of reputation and meaning for the customer it is going to have. Some venues are traditionally associated with particular types of performances and are attracting particular audiences which defines their marketing mix extensively. The venue capacity, number of performance spaces inside a single theatre and other determinants have a significant importance and define the institution. If the theatre is not venue based, on the other hand, it will need to be a pop-up project or a touring troupe, and in either case that defines the marketing mix and the scope of operations as well. Moreover, the troupe will still need to have some kind of solution when it comes to the rehearsal venue. It shall be noted that there are also practices where the theatre mostly exists as a venue-based team of artists, but also has a touring troupe or project, such as Globe on Tour and Royal Shakespeare Company's touring performances (Globe 2021; Royal Shakespeare Company 2021).

2.1.2 Sources of funding: commercial, non-profit or government-funded

This framework defines the primary source of funding as it is essential to the research of theatre as a business institution as by definition it is an entity engaged in commercial, industrial, or professional activities (Hayes 2021). Theatres usually have significant costs involved and compensate that are to be covered with ticket sales or with additional funding and can generate revenue as well, so they are classified as businesses and therefore are of interest to our research. The source of funding will define all the areas of operation of the theatre, so it is of essential importance. Musical theatre is often perceived as a historically commercial form of theatre and that is something to be taken into consideration (Hillman-McCord 2017). As cash flow is essential to any business, this topic is to be further explored in detail in the theoretical part.

2.1.3 Form of operation: repertoire or project-based

There are two main options when it comes to defining the form of operation. The first option is a stable troupe (ensemble) consisting of performers employed on a permanent basis. In this case, they perform regularly and have a fixed repertoire that might change slightly over time. The second option is a project-based team mostly comprising freelancers who switch projects and are mostly dedicated to one show at a time. In the latter case each show has a run (performance period) and is then either continued in case of success or ended and the venues can also host different shows. This is also crucial as it defines the contracts that the performers have and whether they are committed to a single institution or have freedom as freelancers on a project basis. Moreover, that largely affects the marketing mix and the way shows are promoted: a limited run encourages the demand and allows to work with celebrity creatives without disrupting their schedule which creates additional promotion. Celebrity as a phenomenon in the public sphere and the importance of the institute of celebrity as a promotional channel has been historically established (Vinovrški & van Krieken 2019).

2.1.4 HR: professional, amateur or semi-professional

Theatre can also source creatives in different ways and those ways largely define the ways it operates. Professional actor may or may not have a formal theatrical education, but they identify as actors, receive salary and have experience. They consider theatre a job. ~~But~~ on the other hand, theatre can exist as an amateur recreational activity for different reasons: to engage and build a certain community, to educate people, to give them a space to try acting, to raise money as a charitable project or as a channel for growth and education. In

the first case the business side is more likely to be important as most commercial theatres are professional.

Additionally, best practices are to be recognized in addition to the marketing mix to understand how exactly theatre can possibly attract the audiences. It is hard to identify unambiguous types of marketing mix as there are many determinants and every factor somehow contributes to the promotion, pricing and overall marketing strategy. As the research focuses on the business side of the industry and considers theatre first and foremost a business generating revenue, not an artistic venue, a focus is on the sources of funding and the financial side.

2.2 Sources of funding in the theatre

2.2.1 Non-for-profit theatre industry

One common practice is for theatre to exist as a non-for-profit organization when their directors' or founders' remuneration is not based on the success of the venue in the form of ownership or shares. By definition, non-profit organizations or institutions (NPI) are institutional units that, by law or custom, are characterized by the following traits:

- they do not distribute their surplus to those who own or control them
- they are not compulsory and customarily receive voluntary contributions of time or money, although these contributions need not constitute the major source of income or employment for the entity.

Additionally, non-profit organizations also need to be institutionalised and separated from the government to the extent sufficient for them to be characterised as private and self-governing. (Anheier & List 2005.)

In this case, any profit is returned back to the company and is therefore not distributed, but supports the organization or in rare cases some other charities, so the personal financial ambitions are not met, and the profits are not accumulated by anyone inside or outside of the company (Cochrane 2011). Such theatres can also benefit from government grants though not on a regular basis but in special cases. For instance, during the COVID pandemic many of the British and Finnish non-for-profit theatres have received government support upon the establishment of the Culture Recovery Fund through Arts Council England including awarding support from the National Lottery (Arts Council England 2021). There are also cases when theatre is both a charity as a beneficiary and a supporter of other charities as any surplus income is used to support other charities as in the case with London's Old Vic theatre that has successfully existed for over 200 years and has a

reputation as one of the most popular theatres while being a source of funds for other charities on a regular basis (Old Vic 2021).

2.2.2 Government-owned and funded theatres

The second model is the case where the theatre is regularly government-funded and government-owned, whether on a permanent base where it has a limited budget for each period or on a project basis where each individual performance is supported separately, and the funding of each project is on a competitive or grant basis. In this case the employees of the theatre receive salary from the government funding as part of the expenses involved for creating a play or performance. The revenues received from the ticket sales can be distributed in different ways in this scenario: it can go back to the government and become a source of income for the state budget, or it can go back to the theatre's own budget to support the venue maintenance, staff salaries, future productions or elsewhere.

2.2.3 Commercial theatre industry

Another business model includes private theatres which work as independent institutions and generate profit for their owners and shareholders. Such commercial institutions are not systematically dependent on external financial support (although they can apply for grants) and have to generate revenues to cover the costs. Any surplus is distributed between the owners and/or shareholders like in any other business. Therefore, depending on the type of company, shareholders and owners also bear the risks connected with the business. While this model allows theatre to be an independent venue free from potential government censorship, due to the risks of being unprofitable, theatres are more likely to host shows that would attract the audiences' attention in order to minimise financial risks and maximise revenues. There are many different projects in this category, and although some independent theatres are likely to prioritize the artistic side, use extensive bootstrapping and are not as invested in the commercial success, many commercial theatres prioritize attractiveness to the audiences over the freedom of artistic expression.

Theatre as a commercial project that is attracting customers is a concept which is largely associated with the UK and USA and West End and Broadway respectively (Hindson 2014). Affected by the social, economic and artistic tendencies, it has been changing and evolving throughout the time. However, according to research, pre-pandemic commercial theatre was thriving unlike public theatre due to different factors accusing the change of the patterns of cultural consumption (Klaic 2012).

Commercial theatre is prioritizing attractiveness to the audiences as in many cases generation revenues is its main objective. Therefore, there are historical links with other means of commercial entertainment and elements of gaming, and other means of making the performance appealing to wider audiences can be included (Bloom 2018).

2.3 Entrepreneurship in theatre industry

Theatres can range in size and audiences, and the segment in which we are interested in is the theatres that were established as start-ups by individuals, not the government, though this is likely a case with many of the well-established bigger institutions. Monarchs and other people in power were historically interested in being patrons of the arts and that led to theatres existing off regular funding from the royalty or wealthier people. However, this is not the case that we are interested in.

Entrepreneurship in theatre exists nowadays, as from a cultural perspective artists choose to separate their activity from the existing guidelines and become independent. From a business perspective, in order to do that they need to apply for a certain government grant supporting SMEs, find sponsors or investors or keep the business local and use bootstrapping on the early stages. This paragraph is to identify the potential opportunities existing to fund a theatrical startup.

The topic of entrepreneurship in the arts and the ways to make a cultural institution economically stable and independent is currently insufficient. However, the relevant data exists, and it shows that such projects can be an interesting area of operation where a lot of special conditions and determinants are to be taken into consideration (Rivetti & Migliaccio 2015).

3 Theatre as Part of the Experience Economy

Theatre both as a business and as an artistic medium is a part of the economy. This chapter establishes the connection between the economic conditions in Finland and the business of theatre.

3.1 Experience Economy Outlook in Finland

With the expected GDP growth of 3% right after the economic crisis in 2021, Finland's economy is on the rise, and it is said to be recovering very well with the rise of employment characteristic to the Nordic and a particular trend for growth in the service industry (Nordea 2021). The ongoing crisis is characterized as socio-ecological, and research suggests that communing can be a fitting practice to combat it (Obeng-Odoon 2021; Žalac 2021). The trust in the sovereign ratings and the whole system is going down due to governments' inability to comply with the regulations of the Paris Agreement and other factors (Klusak et al 2021). People seek solutions to the existing climate issues and do their research and the awareness is growing. One of the main problems connected with sustainability is the overconsumption of goods and recycling which is not always effective (Derksen & Gartrell 1993; Sen 2021). Moreover, ecologically aware customers and activists tend to proactively seek ways to be more sustainable on a day-to-day basis, and given the level of ecological literacy in Finland, the offering to substitute harmful environmental consumerism practices with purchase of services can potentially be a fitting and successful solution.

Research exists to illustrate that consumerism is deeply grounded in the modern culture (Kaza 2000; Harsch 1999). It is now associated with all levels of Maslow's hierarchy of needs from the basic needs to self-actualisation. But even though it is rather hard to replace the goods on the basic level, on the top level of self-actualisation the solution can be to substitute goods with experiences. For example, luxury goods and items are a well-known medium of self-actualization, especially in the countries with a high degree of masculinity according to the Hofstede's 6P model (Hofstede Insights 2021).

Accessing and investing in experiences such as theatre and sharing that with your social circle is also associated with luxury but does not require purchasing a material good (White 2014). Therefore, given that the experience is created in accordance with the sustainable development goals following the green events guidelines, it can be promoted using this link and be a replacement of investing in material goods. This is a core idea on which the promotion and establishment of the project is based: providing the customers with an option to self-actualise and invest the money in a meaningful way without contributing to environmental crisis.

Moreover, the idea of experience economy is thought to be the next major change and switch in the global economy overall (Pine & Gilmore 1998). Social-media worthy holistic experiences are more meaningful to the customers nowadays than goods and this is a continued switch, with first discussion of experience economy raised in the end of XXth century as is thought to replace the service economy. The basis for that is the progression of the economic value.

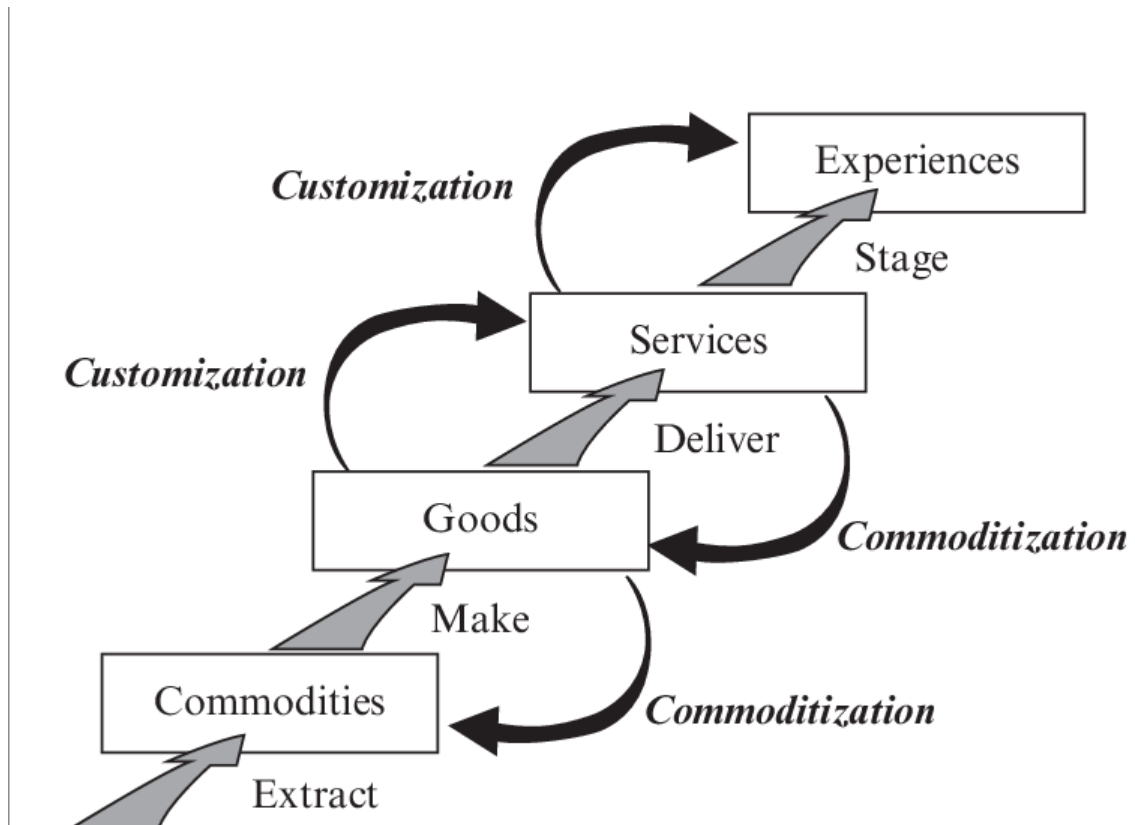


Figure 1: The Progression of the Economic Value (Pine and Gilmore 2013).

That is a foundation for the relevance of theatre in the modern conditions. A service offering and an experience, it is meaningful through the community engagement, self-actualization and cultural perspectives and adds value for the end customers through that. Potentially a tailored and even immersive experience, it is a good offering in the modern conditions, despite the modern trends. With customization and tailored experience options available, theatre has a good potential in the times of modern experience economy. The example is the premium packages in London's courtroom performance of Witness for the Prosecution allowing the spectators to act as the jury and make the final verdict. (Witness for the Prosecution 2021).

3.2 Digital and remote theatre

Recent coronavirus pandemic has opened a new pool of opportunities for remote, digital and recorded performances as a theatre medium. But even long before this, such projects as National Theatre Live have proven high-demand and successful. Digital distribution can help cut performance costs, maximise the availability to the wider audiences and be lasting and non-perishable. The digitalization has changed a lot of processes in the production of the shows as well (Hillman-McCord 2017). Those changes were and are further complicated and carried on by the effects of the pandemic. An interconnectivity between film adaptations and live performances has existed for a long time. One example is Phantom of the Opera, a global hit both in theatre and on-screen with its highly commercialized and high-budget productions. Live recordings of shows like Come From Away on Apple TV+ are recorded and shown via subscription or on-demand though still playing in theatres on Broadway and West End (Apple TV+ Press 2021).

3.3 Sustainability in Theatre Industry

In sync with the sustainable development goals (SDGs), the theatre industry is to try and follow the strict guidelines to cut carbon emissions and compensate the damage caused by the different processes and operations. Green economy is evolving, especially in Finland (Jäppinen & Heliölä 2015) and therefore it is important to identify the possibilities for creating a sustainable establishment adapting the best practices, allowing not to contribute to the global warming and pollution, as well as aligning with the rest of the SDGs.

3.4 Inclusiveness and Representation

The sustainable development goal number 10 is called Reduced Inequalities. That includes avoiding racist policies and boosting representation and inclusivity. Historically, discrimination has existed on-screen and on-stage, and the minorities have been underrepresented because of racist policies and judgments of the decision-makers (Holmes 2013). It is important to give an outlook of the exiting inappropriate practices to understand what is to be avoided to create a theatrical project free of discrimination and inequality. That is also to ensure that the audiences feel represented, and a wide specter of viewers are attracted.

A problem historically exists with the female representation in the theatre. With a dominance of a male perspective such problems as appropriation have taken place as women were not given credit for their work (Canning 1993). Nowadays, the area of discrimination-related problems is very wide and can be evident on many levels: for instance, direct discrimination

on the basis of citizenship or visa status, making it impossible for those not having the relevant work permits to be hired.

To summarise, it is of crucial importance to follow a policy of equal opportunity, representation and non-discrimination. This is especially important for an emerging cultural institution in relation to the establishment of a so-called ethical consumption, a trend for a more considerate consumer actions and choices based on analysis of the ethical side of the product or service available on the market (Bask et al 2013). This modern phenomenon related to reputation and trust is most relevant in countries with a higher level of ethical awareness (Harrison et al 2005). Therefore, such an approach is relevant to the project as Finland has a high level of awareness (TENK 2021).

3.5 Emissions and green experience economy

A debate about the emissions caused by events, and particularly by theatre, has existed for some time now as, because like any other industry, it causes environmental damage. United States of America and the United Kingdom have issued regulations for Broadway and West End to adopt greener policies in 2008. It included advice on cutting electricity consumption, using recyclable materials and re-using the props (Goldblatt 2009).

To evaluate the emissions level, blueprint the impact and give the customers a foundation to make decisions in accordance with the level of sustainability of the different institutions, several certification and evaluation programmes exist both globally and locally. They can increase the attractiveness of the institution to potential clients.

Additionally, initiatives such as the collectively created Theatre Green Book can provide institutions with vital advice on improving the environmental performance (Theatre Green Book 2021). It is essential to act together as a community and share the best practices across the industry, so no matter how big or small the venue is, it can benefit from top expert knowledge. Such certifications and awards are attracting more and more attention with the rise of sustainability awareness.

When it comes to sustainability issues, one of the most important determinants is a holistic understanding of the situation and subsequently a vision and mission that is synced with sustainability. Every strategic decision has to be made with an understanding of its environmental impact. That is why such certification and evaluation programmes as Julie's Bicycle analyse not only the direct impact and carbon emissions, but also commitment and understanding (Julie's Bicycle 2019).

Upon establishment of a business, it is important to have a clear understanding of the sustainability policy. Its publishing helps document the objectives, and existing statistics and management's commitment to it is essential in any decision-making processes to make sure the impact is minimised. With leading theatres' commitment to be greener and more sustainable, their efforts can be analysed to understand the best practices. This is especially important in sync with Finland's commitment to sustainability issues and fulfillment of sustainable development goals (The Finnish Ministry of Environment 2015).

To look at the sustainable side of the theatre holistically, the creative sector's role in increasing sustainability awareness can also be accessed. Theatres can attract attention to sustainability issues through the performances as well as organize collaborations with environmental organisations, host environmentally oriented discussions, talks and panels. No issue or action is insignificant when it comes to sustainability and being creative can boost the impact: from eliminating a pine Christmas tree at The Old Vic to launch a creative competition instead (The Old Vic 2020) to increasing the environmental grade of the building (National Theatre 2021).

4 Marketing in Theatre

To get a holistic understanding of the marketing strategy approaches utilized by theaters and identify the most successful ones, the research uses the 7P Marketing Mix model (Booms & Bitner 1981). This is the most holistic and sophisticated model allowing a more detailed approach to date compared to Kotler and McCarthy's original 4Ps model, and it allows to evaluate service marketing with maximum efficiency possible (Needham 1996; Rafiq & Ahmed 1995). Even though we have previously identified that only the peripheral service area is to be evaluated throughout this research, this chapter is still going to include the Product analysis, as the main characteristic features of the performance offered are of major influence on the decision-making, and the potential artistic performance can be partly evaluated from the business perspective. The research is not going to include the paragraph on People as part of the model as approaching the artists' process requires evaluating the artistic side of the venture. Although business research exists on the practices and measures to boost creativity on the workplace, that is on the core side of the service and is therefore not the main focus.

4.1 Pricing

The issue to be discussed in this paragraph has to do with Revenue Management (RM). To define it, RM is a process that focuses on predicting the customer demand in real-time at the micro-level to optimize the product price and availability (Cross 1997). While generally RM was mainly focusing on travel industry, theatre performance as a product has the same characteristics in terms of perishability, inseparability, intangibility and that the number of resources is limited.

With these complexities the sale of tickets is very much unlike the sale of goods and is to be addressed in a different manner. For clarification, the thesis author has conducted an interview with theatre goers. First off, theatre is considered by many respondents across the world as a premium-priced experience targeted at a privileged audience. Russian citizens have referred in their answers to Mariinsky theater ticket prices averaging at 100 euro while depending heavily on several reasons including the performing cast, while UK nationals were quick to add that a stage stalls seat for a matinée *La bohème* at the Royal Opera House is priced at 218 pounds. This guides us closer to the discussed question; in fact, the research author has had the experience of getting to watch *La bohème* and freely switching a place to the stalls upon theatre representatives' approval as whole rows of the best seats in the house were unoccupied. The primarily reason for that is the lack of dynamic pricing approach in many of the theatre institutions. To avoid that, a model suggested by

Rosen and Rosenfield introducing two seat types can be implemented. The model consists of two stages. The research has found a way to reach the revenue maximizing prices given the quantities of each seat quality in the first stage and subsequently making a decision on the optimal quantity of seats of each quality in the second stage based on the optimal pricing policy (Rosen and Rosenfield 1997).

Furthermore, as Phumchusri suggests in his research, in order to apply the dynamic pricing approach theatres need to identify the main influences: time before the performance when the ticket is bought, day and month of the performance and the realized demand of the tickets in the last period, so the same factors' influence can be traced while analyzing each particular theatre's pricing strategy (Tereyağoğlu et al 2017). With the help of mathematical models taking that data into consideration he analyses the performance theatre's sales through the course of two years' period. He concludes that the day of the week greatly influences pricing as Saturday performances are on average much more expensive. A potential reason for that is that it is the weekend and therefore theatres should consider that while designing the schedule to make sure to offer Saturday matinees. As theatrical season is usually of during summer, that influences the dynamic as well as September shows are frequently bought in advance. Research also finds that in the last month before the performance the price is significantly lower. (Phumchusri 2013.)

Having chosen the premium pricing strategy to maintain the prestige and luxurious feel of the theatre as part of the marketing mix approach, some theatres end up generating less profit as they do not pay enough attention to revenue management, as evident from the thesis author's ROH experience. However, other theatre companies have chosen a different approach. One example is London's Jamie Lloyd Company that focuses on attracting diverse audiences and engaging people that usually are unable to afford tickets. For that reason, a program providing people under 30 years old, key workers and those receiving government benefits with an opportunity to buy tickets for 15 pounds (ATG Tickets 2020).

Furthermore, we are going to discuss some of the popular pricing techniques and policies that are introduced by theatres. Taking the idea at the basis of revenue management that the key influence on the ticket price is the time until the performance and the number of seats left in a way that the more tickets are left at the shorter time, the cheaper they should be, many London theatres are also offering the so-called day seats that are available on the day of performance in the morning from the box office or online as Rush Tickets. It is an opportunity for the theatre goers to access even the sold-out performances, and for the theatre to generate additional profit and encourage lively interest (National Theatre 2020). This is an additional promotional tool as well. From experience, the queues for day seats

can start even before the end of the previous night's performance, and the crowd of people waiting attracts public attention. Preview performances (first few performances closely monitored by the creative team) are also usually priced lower as to still allow some changes, but let the creatives get a live reaction from an audience (Old Vic 2020).

4.2 Product

The product to be offered, without focusing on the artistic side, is a theatrical performance in English of high quality and of entertaining nature. A long tradition exists of commercial theatre offerings, and in many cases the commercial success does not compromise the quality or the freedom of artistic expression and that is the goal. The unique characteristics include impressiveness and contemporary nature as well as dedication to provide a tailored customizable and ever-different experience to utilize the potential of live theatre against the digital recorded versions. English is used as a primary language for several reasons. First, it allows to engage the diverse communities in Finland and make the performance accessible to underrepresented groups without compromising the Finnish people's chances to see it due to high level of English in the country and many films and television shows offered without translation. Second, it can allow to collaborate with foreign creatives and make the landscape richer. Finally, it positions the theatre as a hub for international collaboration and allows to reach a wide audience of tourists and even potentially tour around the Nordics or elsewhere.

4.3 Process

In order to get an understanding of the process as part of the marketing mix, the research needs to explore visitors' satisfaction in theatres. Researchers Kolhede and Gomez-Arias (2017) have identified different customer segments' clusters and the influences and information sources that are more relevant to each segment. Based on the framework by Jobst and Boerner (2011), researchers have also identified that the frequent theatre visitors are less likely to be influenced by the peripheral factors while they are more likely to be important for the infrequent customers or first-time: that provides a foundation for our research's focus on peripheral area as it plays an important role when the customers are to be attracted for the first time. Moreover, the quality of the performance is subjective, making it harder to analyse due to the difference in visitors' past experiences and references (Colbert 2014).

All that provides a foundation for a possible conclusion on the parts of the process that have the largest influence on the satisfaction. The process, beginning from the first point of contact with the information about the production and concluded by the work of the front of

house team employees during the visit, is of essential importance to the customers as it shapes their perception and potential future participation as brand ambassadors.

It is also important to understand that though this research focuses on the business side, theatre is still considered an artistic medium and not just a service offering. Existing on a merge of different media as part of the performance, it is also on the merge of commerce and art and a balance is to be found in terms of delivering a valuable, meaningful, and attractive experience without compromising the artistic value and the freedom of artists' expression in the product offered.

4.4 Promotion

Promotion plays a very important role in theatre business as it cannot exist without the audience. While the more traditional means of advertisement such as billboards and media publications are all valuable information sources, the theatrical experience can also create and add value as a community creation tool. In many cases, the visit to the theatre can be considered in a social context as a way of self-actualisation and a way of communication. Historically associated with a level of luxury, a visit to the theatre can be a way to show social status and a way to engage with the culture. Therefore, a suggestion is made that the promotion shall first utilize the community tools and add value through the shared experiences.

A way to establish that community marketing is to promote not through the usual channels but try and focus on the word-of-mouth as much as possible and convert users into brand ambassadors. A foundation for that is created by ensuring the person enjoys the experience and gets the best possible service and finds it relevant and worthy. Then, that happy user is invited to bring friends and those they know to join too: they can also be offered benefits and discounts through ambassador programmes and referral links. But not only that, they also can voluntarily do that once they are more engaged as users: that can include inviting them to events and networking sessions, workshops and more that surround or act as a parallel program to the performance, awarding them with an official ambassador status and featuring them on the social media.

Carrying on with the topic of social media, this tool is very relevant to the community promotion. Influencers and bloggers are those whom people trust, and paid promotion from them can be valuable. Not only are they a source of information, but they also create a personal connection with the followers and have a reputation through creating a strong connection (Kapitan & Silvera 2015). Through the influencer marketing a feeling of

belonging to the same community united by a shared theatre experience and interests can be created.

4.5 Place and physical evidence

The physical evidence is the confirmation of the quality of the service which the customers perceive through interactions with physical goods and details. In our case, place or venue is the main physical evidence and therefore they are connected. The lighting, auditorium setting, catering features, disposable materials used (i.e. cutlery and glasses) – they are all parts of the holistic experience of going to the theatre.

That sum of factors is equally important for non-venue-based touring projects: a venue they are performing in should still represent and compliment the performance appropriately. Technical features of the stage must accommodate the needs of the performance and, as certain venues have certain reputation and target audience, that, too, must be in sync.

To ensure the sustainability of the overall experience, the sustainability of the venues is to be accessed to ensure the physical evidence shows the mission to comply with the green economy. That in practice means using the biodegradable and reusable cutlery, cutting water and electricity consumption and so on in accordance with the latest industry recommendations, i.e. Green Theatre Book.

5 Empirical Theme Interviews of Theatre Professionals

To enable a deep and comprehensive understanding of the theatre industry in Finland, and especially of the processes connected with independent theatre landscape, the primary source of information is the opinion and outlook of the professionals who have an understanding of the ongoing processes. Hence the justification to pick interviews as the research method and choose a qualitative approach over quantitative is in the nature of the information needed. While a quantitative market research might have been a valuable tool to understand potential demand, it was not preferred as the potential answers, just like the demand for existing projects, are very likely to be largely influenced by the core part of the theatrical performance as a service offering, i.e. the artistic part, and this is not the focus of the research. It could serve well to identify awareness level around the existing theatrical project, but the value of that to the overall research is questionable.

Once the decision to conduct interviews is settled, the framework and guidelines are to be identified in relation to interview methodology. The two most fitting options evaluated were a standardized open-ended interview and theme interview, as these methodologies allow open answers and therefore enable to analyse expert opinions and extract valuable elements from them. The options were evaluated to accommodate flexible dialogue, allow the interviewer to establish a personal connection, and to adapt to the creative professional's style, extracting as much relevant information as possible. Standardised open-ended interview does not allow that flexibility, as the researcher needs to stick to the same script and the set of questions is pre-designed and is not subject to change (Patton 1990). That does not allow to appropriately interview different professionals as their various areas of expertise and approaches may make some questions irrelevant. Moreover, some valuable information may require additional questions from the researchers' side (Patton 1990). But the strong point of that model is the simplicity and clarity it gives when it comes to the analysis of the findings, as the answers can be compared, interpreted, and evaluated accordingly. In theme interviews, the key interest is identified but no exact scripts of questions exist. That allows the desired flexibility to interview different people, and when it comes to the analysis of the body of the interviews, the pillars or themes chosen allow the researcher to evaluate and compare the answers to get an objective outlook as well. In order to get an outlook of the industry, to research the relevance of the thesis and to get a better understanding of the ongoing state of the experience economy in relation to theatre industry in Finland, theme interviews, a qualitative research method, was chosen for the thesis.

5.1 Theme interview topics

The interviewees were chosen to represent different theatrical projects currently existing in Finland which allows them to have a professional perspective supported by vast experience inside the industry. Based on the literature study and the points which are relevant to the proposed business plan, the themes were selected as follows:

Outlook of the existing projects

This theme aims to explore and describe the existing institutions and their relevance in the existing economic, social and cultural situation in Finland. That includes the history of the projects in which the interviewees are or were involved, their basic ideas and working principles, working languages, number of working places offered.

Establishment and growth

This topic is designed to understand the possible growth paths and ways in which a theatrical project can be established in Finland. That includes exploring the various funding options, historical perspectives of the long-running projects, understanding the government's cultural support programs, charity and private options that were used when the venues were established.

Human Resources

In order to understand the ways in which theatre creatives can be trained for their work and later hired by the theatre, this topic explores education options available in the theatrical sphere in Finland. Additionally, it highlights other ways in which actors, directors, sound producers, stage and costume artists and other professionals can be trained on-site as part of an unprofessional theatrical studios' work or hired outside of Finland. Therefore, the different functional recruitment practices to find and attract prospective candidates preceding the selection (Rao, 2009). That also includes exploring the available university programmes connected to theatre in Finland and the potential collaboration between them and theatrical venues. That topic supports the goal of the thesis to understand the potential ways in which a proposed business can acquire human resources, as it allows to get a larger perspective on the current state. The results of the analysis can be broadly used to innovate and improve the educational system and propose potential partnership schemes based on the current needs of the industry.

Audience, community, and engagement

The fifth theme topic explores the audiences that theatres currently engage with and ways in which this connection is created. That includes understanding the marketing strategy as well as the strategic ways of communication essential to secure profitable relationships and create customer value (Kotler 2017). Discussion will also lead to give insights into the customer profiles and segmentation currently engaged and reasons for selecting the existing target groups as well as potential audiences that are currently untapped or excluded and reasons for that. Community practices and the social side is also to be explored to support the hypothesis of the overall positive effect of creating and maintaining a project that allows to create new social groups and allow people to feel included while basing the conversation in the framework supported by the existing community supported theatre practices around the world (Stancato 2010; Kershaw 1983; Franklin 1977).

5.2 Analysis of the interviews

Outlook of the existing projects

Based on the conducted interviews, the theatrical industry in Finland is not currently attracting enough customers, as based on the opinion of theatre professionals across different projects. The listed reasons for that include historical traditions, traces and foundations, marketing approach and general lack of interest towards theatre among the population. Lack of available options is not listed as a reason. This approach can be interpreted in a way that defines current marketing approach of the theatres as non-efficient.

When it comes to marketing, promotion and spreading awareness, interviewees agree that finding relevant information about theatre productions and other cultural events overall can be complicated. There is a need to make information more accessible even to those who do not actively seek to find it: that can be a good opportunity to collaborate with existing communities around schools and universities, work groups and corporate clients. Theatre is an experience which is shared and a big part of the holistic experience of going to the theatre is the community feel. With a trend towards creating and shaping communities evident around the world with the emergence of big platforms such as Locals.org, which can be very relevant. Evidently, now cultural entertainment is not attracting enough attention, but from the critical analysis of the perspectives of theatre makers, actively engaging with people and the users then spreading the word can be a way forward.

As about the venues, there are evidently creative spaces which are open to collaborate with new projects and even engage and invite the audiences that are regular patrons of the

institution, like in the case with VIIRUS Theatre. With lack of stakeholders and low demand listed as a major problem and not enough engaged audiences, a touring project that is not tied to one place and can offer entertainment to a wider audience around the country seems relevant. What is to be taken into consideration is that the theater will have to do additional preliminary work, be interesting and relevant and most importantly engage communities.

Establishment and growth

When it comes to funding and establishment of the new venues, evidently it is a complicated process involving bootstrapping. From the interviews the conclusion can be drawn that having activities and results to show and making sure clear guidelines are identified when it comes to both the objectives and the receivables. It is important to seek advice from those who have experience dealing with grants already and also to have a clear understanding of the goals, values and mission. It does not appear likely to the interviewees that a commercial theatre the main idea of which is to earn money can be eligible for cultural grants, so a deeper meaning and a desire to give artists freedom to create and add artistic value is important.

Human Resources

When it comes to the internationalisation of the scene, there are existing problems, but overall the situation seems to be a foundation for an ongoing debate and change is desired. Most importantly, there are existing successful international projects and gig-economy-shaped patterns meaning that projects constantly change is positively a source of opportunity.

According to the interviews, a pool of appropriately trained creatives exists in Finland and there are appropriate programmed in the universities with a good level of training. Different additional training courses, both professional and amateur, can be found around the country. Professionals are mostly freelancers who are continuously working with different projects, but most of the niche theatres have a small set of in-house employees to ensure smooth operation of the venue, manage day-to-day processes and manage ongoing and future projects.

Audiences, community, and engagement

When it comes to the communities and engagement, several creatives have mentioned that a small, close-tied community around a theatre as its main support platform exists, and in fact the small group of engaged stakeholders is sometimes not unique to a single theatre or even a single creative medium, but like-minded individuals are attracted to all main cultural happenings in the city. That can be considered an example of a community which

is united around an interest in culture. Such a unity of people that have shared values and interests can be key resource for any venture, as they are actively participating in everything that is happening. Such communities create economic and cultural venue and being a part of a community can be a positive influence on the wellbeing of the individuals, especially immigrants and expats who are lacking it.

Local gatherings, cultural institutions and groups are to be engaged and tailored experiences can potentially be offered. For instance, the corporate employees seem like an untouched community, and exclusive performances can be offered to corporate customers. That can help bigger companies create a community feeling and boost wellbeing.

Additionally, a supporting program around the actual performance can be created. In addition to a current production amateur acting master classes based on the play can be offered, public talks with authors and other activities can boost community feel. That is the case with VicArt: the students end up being very active community members, and even though they mostly do acting unprofessionally and as a hobby, they gradually learn about theatre and become engaged. Such programs and master classes can also be offered to school and universities. It would also benefit everyone to make theatre very accessible, potentially also engaging with people with disabilities and alternative needs: interviews provide reasons for concerns that many people are not engaged in the theatre at all, and it can be a very relevant channel for education, culture, entertainment, mental well-being and even sustainability awareness.

6 Business Plan for a New Theatre

The above findings serve as a foundation for a proposal of a new theatre business in Finland. In order to create and ideate a business this study uses the tools and canvases for Lean Service Creation by Futurice (ND) as a foundation. That will allow to create a holistic understanding of the project's goals and objectives and set clear milestones. This technique was chosen from other project creation and management tools for its comprehensive structure, relevance to the experience (service) industry that is characterized by intangibility, homogeneity, perishability and inseparability (Benoit 2010). Finland is identified as a key market for a new venture as with increasing internationalization of the workforce and a highly developed state of the economy there can be a potential for new businesses (Jon Henley 2021).

Additionally, this business plan proposal is a foundation for the future development of the idea. While the theatre is a commercial enterprise that aims to be considered as part of the start-up landscape, the funding options and arrangements are not largely discussed in this chapter. The investment opportunities, crowdfunding and pre-sale options are to be utilised. The government grants available both to new SMEs and to cultural institutions are to be used and a pitch proposition is delivered to facilitate that. To further summarise the findings and the framework and unite it in the form of a business plan, a business model canvas is filled and proposed (Appendix 1).

6.1 Justification and customers' needs

Theatre is all about personal customer experience as it is a holistic customer service. Customers' need is a need to invest in creating lasting memories, not physical objects as they are unsustainable and create additional carbon footprint. Shopping is associated with pleasure and enjoyment (Mihic and Milakovic 2017). While people realise that shopping is not sustainable, they might try and substitute the pleasure gained from impulsive purchases with experiences. That is a model that is yet to be researched as a behavioural pattern as there is insufficient research on the psychological factors behind that, although for a comparatively long time there are studies conducted on ethical consumption confirming that sustainability and ethical reasons are increasingly important in the customers' decision-making (Lewis & Bridger 2001). This way a value is created for everyone and some additional meanings, including education, are gained. With a highly developed economy and high sustainability awareness at the same time, Finland is reportedly heavily experience economy-oriented (Hautamäki 2017).

At the same time, such experiences as theatre are not as highly developed in Finland as, for instance, in the UK, judging from a number of productions that are available. Based on the thesis author's assumption based on the holistic interpretation of the existing market, people are currently choosing such experiences as sports, museum visits and travelling. Theatre is also available, but mostly to Finnish and Swedish-speaking residents, if we look at the repertoire of the main Helsinki theatres: Aleksanterinteatteri, Finnish National Theatre, Swedish Theatre, Helsinki City Theatre.

The public debate certainly exists about the non-Finnish-speaking fracture of the population and how, especially in the big cities with highly developed start-up culture that are attractive for investors many young people are actually non-Finnish-speaking but seeking some creative fulfilment and encouragement.

Moreover, development of experience economy is definitely a point for discussion as it contributes positively to sustainability. Speaking about it, climate emergency and anything connected to it, so possibly contributing to carbon footprint, is very relevant now with the ongoing problems and actual emergency situation that is opposed to current economic development at its unhealthy scale.

On a more basic level, customers' needs in relation to theatre include the need for self-actualisation as a level of Maslow's pyramid model as it is a medium of entertainment (Maslow 1943).

6.2 Related institutions

Modern immersive experiences are a way to combine entertainment, education and art in an experience that is meaningful for the customer. There are several offerings on the Finnish market, and as the research studies those practices the decision is made affecting the core service area that the nature of the performance has to be entertaining and immersive and largely accessible to a larger audience. The artistic ways to make a performance accessible and understandable are down to the artists but there are several projects internationally and domestically which can help blueprint the right direction.

The Center for Everything is a performing arts company existing on the Finnish market since 2015. In fact, its creative agenda was initially developed by two other companies under other names, The Lost City Inc. and Experience Parks. The methods include creating diverse audience relationships, mixing art and technology and developing artistically challenging game design to create performative practices to quote the company website, the artistic actions of the company emerge from performing arts, but they aim to challenge habitual practices of art. (Center for Everything 2021.)

InsideOut, a Helsinki-based startup, offers escape game experiences involving a series of tasks to be completed by a group. The company offers a holistic engaging experience with elements of theatre and entertainment. A format popular in many other countries brought to Finland can help to understand the demand for experiences in the country. Heavily community-engaging and designed for a group of people playing as a team. (Inside Out Productions 2021.)

As the paragraph discusses the immersive experiences not necessarily of performative nature, it's also worth mentioning the success of the exhibition hosted by Amos Rex in Helsinki in 2018 by teamLAB (.ART 2018). Transforming the museum into a participatory space and utilizing the unusual shapes of the building to create a holistic total installation, it attracted a lot of visitors forming the queues outside in central Helsinki. With social media blowing up with the materials from the exhibition posted by users and word-of-mouth marketing and a general buzz around the newly-opened Amos Rex, it has shown that Finnish audiences can be engaged and attracted to cultural experiences.

6.3 Market research justification

The data needed is data regarding the actual demand for English-language theatre and theatre productions at all. Level of English literacy in Finland is rather high, so the target group is not only non-Finnish-speakers, it is broader - but we need to research whether such productions will be of any interest. Shakespeare in original, for instance, might be a great way for people to get familiarised with the classics.

To better understand the demand, we can analyse the available data on the success of any currently available English productions, as well as National Theatre productions with subtitles; research actual demand for NT Live screenings (i.e. *Cyrano de Bergerac* live from Playhouse Theatre in London brought to cinema screens). Also, a questionnaire for people in the target group to find out if they are actually willing to invest in abovementioned experiences. While the research is justified and is essential to minimise risks prior to the establishment of the venue, it is not part of this thesis work as the paper focuses on the professionals' view to get a holistic understanding of the industry less biased by the end users' opinions and marketing influence.

6.4 Concept and value proposition

The concept is one of an English-language pop-up (travelling) theatre based in Helsinki - a home for professional productions, experimental immersive shows and community theatre practices. Its core idea is to make Finland a more vibrant and culturally rich region and

prove that Finnish art is fit for international scale. On the other hand, its main target is to engage with people who now feel excluded from the community - non-Finnish speakers: immigrants, recent graduates, Swedish-speaking families who are unable to enjoy theatrical productions in Finnish offered on the market at the moment. By offering performances around the country where the supply for English-language events is even lower and not having permanent venues in every city a demand is heated as the offering is limited, the venue plans to engage those excluded communities.

With Finnish economy highly developed and therefore showing a high interest in experiences, that concept is very relevant. With high level of English among the citizens, Finnish-speakers will definitely be able to engage both as creatives and as visitors. The field is limitless with ability to present cutting-edge immersive productions, adapt classical heritage and collaborate with artists around the globe with no language restrictions. TV and film actors and stars can also be invited to act to attract wider audiences.

Apart from the main idea, the project has a wide educational agenda. Front of house (FOH) employees (staff on the bar, the doors and in the audience as well as at the box office) will be selected from young local people aged 19-22 to provide them with an opportunity to gain work experience, engage with theatrical community, learn and improve employability skills. Workshops on CV skills, interview improvement and work in creative industry will be offered for free. Young people will also get access to key rehearsals and previews.

The theatre will be focused on attracting diverse audiences. Through community projects such as Christmas carols singing and so on different people will be able to visit theatre and engage and meet and learn during acting workshops and non-professional staged productions. This is of particular importance to older people and non-Finnish-speaking individuals and young people as they all will get a chance to feel included, improve their well-being through interactions and improve their English too.

Talking about what makes it different from other solutions, theatre is a live experience that cannot be fully substituted with film or TV as it creates a feeling of engagement coming from collaborative watching. Acting is a unique and interesting experience and at the moment no one is offering and non-professional theatre productions for people to feel engaged, learn to act and socialize. It is also historically commonly perceived as a token of luxury and the value is maximised as each live show is unique and different every time. To support the live productions upon their launches, it is also possible to adapt a practice of live translations started by National Theatre Live. This means a show can be live streamed in cinemas around the country on the night of the actual event and it gives the watchers a holistic

experience of engagement with live theatre as the advantage – unpredictability and the live nature of it – stays the same for those in the main theatre and in cinema.

As about the value for the end user, the theatre provides a new experience and a chance to make memories, which is relevant with the experience economy development. A core advantage also lies in a chance for the customers to feel included while interacting with the community around the performances, both while visiting the shows and while visiting the other educational or community activities. Coming from that, value also lies in improving the end users' well-being through social interactions. That is very relevant for the Finnish residents who are not Finnish speaking who might possibly struggle from the lack of English-speaking activities and possibilities to come together. Another point especially relevant to children and young people and to those who speak Finnish but are interested in the international activities is the possibility to improve their English competence. This is a possible future competitive advantage for the individuals engaged as they are likely to be more employable in the future and are strategically more adapted in the modern circumstances of the VUCA world and theatre is a possibly helpful educational medium in this regard (Brockett 1968).

Moreover, it adds to the Finnish arts landscape, allows creatives to have another outlet, and gives an opportunity for local arts and artists development as well as collaborations with different artistic institutions (i.e. performances can take place in the museums). Such practices have successfully taken place beforehand and have managed to attract a more diverse audience through combining not only the mediums but audiences too, like in the case with a National Centre for Contemporary Arts' project Art of Being that has included performance practices and offered accessible mediums to its viewers (Art of Being 2021).

6.5 Customer segmentation and users

The customer segments are as follows:

Description by group	Problems to solve	Why?
Finnish-speaking working people interested in contemporary culture experiences, new memories and lasting impressions. Good level of English, interest in	Lack of experiences currently available to invest in. Lack of access to quality theatre production. Climate-related problems with traditional sports to fill	Huge major group with significant resources available and not enough channels to spend these resources on.

<p>contemporary art, theatre and musicals. Passion for good theatre, interest in improving quality of life, level of English, interest in getting the knowledge of classical and modern drama and comedy.</p>	<p>leisure time (skiing, alpine skiing, figure skating).</p>	
<p>Non-Finnish-speaking (including Swedish-speaking) working people interested in theatre, culture and art in general with resources available and no opportunity to get such theatrical experience.</p>	<p>Theatre is currently mostly unavailable to this group.</p>	<p>Increasingly important group as many people choose to relocate to Finland for sustainability reasons, because of the high quality of life, for work or because of other reasons.</p>
<p>Young people and families with children aged 1-18 who are yet to be familiarised with classical theatrical pieces - Shakespeare, Chekhov, Rostand, Coward; people who are actively seeking an opportunity to improve their English level.</p>	<p>Improving level of English as well as getting young people familiar with classical dramatical pieces in order to engage them with culture.</p>	<p>This group is dependent on their parents/guides or other sponsors. The mission to support the education of this group is universally important as engaging with arts and going out in social contexts aids young people's development and the overall cultural level.</p>
<p>Tourists from abroad with no language skills and a need for experiences.</p>	<p>Unsatisfied demand for modern theatrical productions to engage people and support Finland's attractiveness as a tourist destination problem is not enough offerings for the tourists.</p>	<p>The amount of tourists from Russia is relatively high judging from pre-pandemic levels, and the tradition for theatre in Russia is very strong so this group definitely is a customer segment. Many</p>

		other countries are possibly interested in theatre too.
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6.6 User benefits of the venture

To further develop brand strategy and marketing propositions and to understand the unique sales points, user benefits are to be identified. That is essentially an evaluation of ways in which a new venue creates and adds value for the end users. The benefits can include living through new experiences, getting a community feel and subsequently feeling less excluded.

Engaging with culture and with theatre in particular is largely perceived by people as a way of spending spare time in a meaningful way while familiarizing and engaging with culture and that is another benefit. Additionally, through an educational perspective, when performances are offered in English, improving the language level and building a cultural competence is an advantage. Language skills improvement, acquiring international competencies, exploring the culture can all be listed as benefits.

Moreover, the effect of the community on wellness and well-being can be listed as another benefit. From a social perspective, communicating within a community can have a positive effect on the individual. Through workshops and participation groups those less represented can also be invited to collaborate and therefore be engaged. That is also true to language and cultural minorities who will be able to attend the performances as they are offered in English even if they are usually excluded from Finnish-language entertainment.

6.7 Goals of the process of business creation

With this niche for theatre experiences, the goal is to establish an English-language theatre in Finland that will attract broad audiences. It might work on experimental and immersive productions both bringing classics onstage and getting Finnish audience familiar with it. Children and young adults can be a target audience of the new theatre too, and that will help to raise the level of English and hopefully help to engage students in artistic world. A sign of success will be that the theatre is popular among both Finnish and non-Finnish-speaking audiences of all ages, and, even more importantly, noticed by artists and seen as a center for artistic development. Finding a space, staging first productions, launching marketing campaign.

Success metrics: community creation around the theatre, interest from the public, emergence of a new business and its successful operations with the first production. The holistic understanding of the proposed goals and the business model itself can also be accessed through the Business Model Canvas (Appendix 1).

6.8 Participants of the process

With the above discussion of the human resource in the industry in Finland, the proposed tactic is to use collaborations with young aspiring artists in Finland through collaborations with universities and creative hubs. Additionally, there are open databases of non-Finnish artists residing in the country and open for collaboration. That can be a useful resource. Additionally, creatives can be employed on a project basis from overseas, performance can be created featuring a well-known foreign institution as a co-producer or a semi-permanent intercultural link can be established like in the case with New International Encounter theatre, a project based in Norway and the UK (NIE Theatre 2021). Taking the interviews into consideration, Finland provides a good ground for a gig economy-centered business and therefore flexibility to switch and change working patterns including the ones connected to HR. This is related to creatives: playwright, director, actors, lighting and sound designers, stage technicians

The leading ideator is going to be the CEO and a creative director defining the artistic course of the business and its main operating decisions. Helping to identify opportunities and facilitating the establishment on its economic side, project manager with a producer background and cost accountant preferably with experience in startups will be on the permanent team too. The project manager will lead communication with potential venues and rent providers as well as owners of currently unoccupied spaces that are a source of creative inspiration to the artists and a chance to get a space for free or for a reduced price.

A function of essential importance defining the branding and making sure communities are engaged, the next part of the team is a Marketing specialist with a clear understanding of the landscape in the country and preferences of the audiences. As the business is a touring project, FOH is not to be permanently employed but is to be instructed upon arrival and is to be offered additional benefits. Additionally, FOH can potentially act as community connectors and invite people through a referral scheme. That will allow to boost the marketing processes and reach the social potential of the venture.

6.9 Activities and deliverables of the process

To get a clear outlook of the proposed steps of the project and to facilitate future project management, the activities and deliverables that are connected to them are identified.

1. Research the success of any currently available English productions, as well as National Theatre productions with subtitles; research actual demand for NT Live screenings. Also, a questionnaire for people in the target group to find out if they are actually willing to invest in abovementioned experiences. As a deliverable a community of those interested and ready to support the project by pre-reserving the seats is created.
2. Finding appropriate venues or buildings: a loft can be refurbished, especially a factory building with large operating spaces that can be transformed into the stage. As a result, venues are found for a first project, they are fully equipped and ready to host a full-sized theatre with spaces for both relatively small and large performances – and is available to visit.
3. Finding the creative team through collaboration: actors, playwrights, directors. A creative team can be met. Creatives team meeting start and as a result of them a theatre's schedule for the ongoing theatrical season is written down and available to evaluate.
4. FOH workplaces are created and are going to be offered to young people aged 19-22 as workplace experience along with job training courses and employability workshops. The FOH team is employed.
5. Establishing theatre community practices. As a result a theatre is opened and a community starts to emerge round it – with social happenings like Christmas Carols singing, it becomes an attraction.

Without a doubt, the initial stage of sourcing funding and establishing a business is of crucial importance and activities connected with that were practically researched by the author by participating in startup accelerators and ideations. Grant applications, collaborations with cultural institutions, additional marketing research are also in the list. The simplified scheme that is created to allow an easier comprehension of the business for potential investors and stakeholders is available in Business Model Canvas (Appendix 1).

6.10 Risks and Constrains

The research is using a common SWOT model to access risks in a comprehensive for of a table suggested by Valentin (2001). While the model is usually utilised to get a holistic understanding of both the positive and the negative side, this paragraph is using the model only partly to access risks and constraints as the strengths and opportunities were previously discussed throughout the paper. By getting an understanding of both internal and external determinants, the research can gain more strength. It can be a powerful tool in understanding the potential risks.

CONCEPTUAL STRUCTURE OF THE SWOT FRAMEWORK

	Internal Factors	External Factors
Favorable Factors	STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
Unfavorable Factors	WEAKNESSES	THREATS

Figure 2: Conceptual Structure of the SWOT Framework (Valentin 2001).

The main threat is a potential lack of interest from the majority of residents as they might be historically not as interested in theatrical experiences. That can be corrected and changed through the utilization of the right marketing tools, educating people on the matter. Offering additional experiences and creating an engaged community that they will want to be a part of can also potentially help.

Another threat is the lack of appropriately trained people, but they are to be engaged through networking and search through professional databases, hired from universities offering appropriate programmes or even trained specially for the case. Foreign professionals can also be engaged. Yet another threat is that there are competitors and that many relevant projects are already there on the market.

As it comes to the weakness of the project, high costs shall be mentioned as the service of theatre requires extended preparation and rehearsals prior to the first show when a demand can finally be accessed. Pre-sale, crowdfunding and marketing research can help minimise

that risk. Further weakness lies in the fact that the project is directly affected by market demand: if there is no demand for a theatrical experience in Finland now, a project will fail to cover the initial costs. Potential venue hire is a massive investment which has to be covered.

6.11 Scope and Milestones

The scope of the work is very broad. Briefly, the project includes establishing a new theatre from the beginning to the end – so from stage curtains to every location to bartenders. It is not only a production company and a space for developing immersive and interesting live performances, but also a space for community gatherings that helps both Finnish-speaking and non-Finnish-speaking residents engage with culture and spend time in a meaningful way while feeling included. The milestones of the project, in sync with the actions and deliverables, are as follows:

1. A rehearsal venue is found and is ready and the first local partners have signed the agreement to host the performances.
2. A creative team for the first production is found and FOH team is employed.
3. A community is created around the theatre and it is popular among citizens and visitors, shaping the cultural landscape.

6.12 Pitch proposition

As the business plan is a holistic concept of a business plan and investments are to further be acquired, the pitch is included. It is developed within a framework adapted from different sources and aiming to explain the basic idea behind the research and the business in an attractive comprehensive way. It helps outline the unique selling points, summarise the concept and outline the benefits. The numbers used are an approximate amount, but it gives the listener a rough idea and helps to visualise the proposition's financial side.

The pitch enclosed was developed as part of the Lappeenranta Entrepreneurship Society's Forward program 2021 and the performance has earned recognition from South Karelia region, receiving a special prize from the authority.

Do you want to be entertained!?!

We are a professional, English-speaking theatre based in Helsinki traveling around Finland giving performances.

Imagine yourself standing in a center of a crowd with actors flying above your head, and imagine that that is none other than Shakespeare's play in the theatre.

What if you are invited on stage and you get to decide where the performance is going to lead?

So many people move to Finland because it's great, but so many people have absolutely nothing to do as they don't speak any Finnish. Especially outside of the capital: so my theatre is a pop-up theatre, a pill to cure the Finnish boredom.

I know that theatre is something you haven't seen in a while.

English theatre breaks the language border and gives us all an opportunity to come together as a community.

The performances are staged in collaboration with the brightest international directors.

Coollest theatre from all over the world: British comedy to make you burst out with laughter and Russian psychological drama.

It's culture, but it's so good. It's entertaining. It's beautiful.

Consumerism is so unsustainable, but it feels so good. Why not make nights in the theatre your new guilty pleasure?

With no permanent venue to maintain, we cut a bunch of costs. With an initial investment of 15 thousand euro we're going to invite a world-famous director and with just 5 shows in small 100-people venues and a ticket price of 30 euro we will start to be profitable. Each performance is going to be a big, bold and exciting thing because it's only coming to each city once in a while, and we want people to wait for it, look forward to it and get excited.

It's exclusive and different every time.

My name is Tanya Levinson, I'm a business student, head of PR for the Russian Center for Contemporary Arts and an art history student - and last summer I went to see a theatre play in London and I felt in love. It's an addiction, really. Ann and Kate Gladys in my team have been trained in performance arts, and we are the cool girls who know what people like and how they want to be entertained. Even if you've never been to the theatre and are afraid of the arts - just give us a try.

Come on: we're going to come to your city and entertain you by offering the best theatrical experience. Find us on Instagram at [theatre.fi](https://www.instagram.com/theatre.fi) and tell us in which cities in Finland you would like us to perform in!

7 Summary and discussion

The thesis paper provides a literature study combined with qualitative research that serves as a foundation for the design of a practical business plan for a new theatre business in Finland. While discussing the potential of theatre as a service offering relevant in the experience conditions in Finland, it gives preliminary guidelines on the establishment of a relevant and flexible business for the modern conditions. While the focus is largely on the service side and on the peripheral area surrounding the offering as contrary to the core experience's artistic details, it also researches the best practices and current situation in the cultural landscape of niche theatres. As marketing largely defines the audiences and communities as part of the venture's positioning, a special accent is made on that as well as on the sustainability side.

The research can be valuable for anyone researching the service and experience industry and theatre in particular as it can become a theoretical framework for any future research internationally. The framework used for the theme interviews can further be used by researchers to analyse the professionals' view not only on theatre, but on other service offerings on the merge of culture and business.

Additionally, extensive market research can be conducted prior to the establishment of the business to understand the demand for the experience offering in Finland as well as to further understand the social and economic processes in the region. That can be followed by prototyping. While such tools as startup incubators were already utilised in the thesis writing process, applications to and participation at suchlike ventures can further ignite the process of establishing the business and help straighten the project. All following steps are subject to change in the ever-evolving economic conditions and due to the artistic nature of the business.

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Appendix 1: Business Model Canvas

Business model canvas

Project: New English Theatre
Motivation: Need to feel entertained and engaged by living through new experiences in Finland

<p>4. Participants</p> <p>Name all team members, stakeholders and third parties involved in this project. Indicate their names, titles and role on the project. You can also show dependencies.</p> <p>CEO – Tatiana Levinson -main idea creator, board director, creative director</p> <p>Project manager</p> <p>Cost accountant</p> <p>Marketing specialist</p> <p>Rent provider/construction agency</p> <p>HR manager</p> <p>Casting director</p> <p>Director</p> <p>Sound technician</p> <p>Lightning technician</p> <p>Playwrights</p> <p>Community connectors</p> <p>FOH</p>	<p>3. Goals</p> <p>Indicate the primary objectives of the project, including success metrics. Distinguish between program goals and project goals in separate lists if necessary.</p> <p>With this niche for theatre experiences, the goal is to establish an English-language theatre in Finland that will attract broad audiences. It might work on experimental and immersive productions both bringing classics onstage and getting Finnish audience familiar with it. Children and young adults can be a target audience of the new theatre too, and that will help to raise the level of English and hopefully help to engage students in artistic world. A sign of success will be that the theatre is popular among both Finnish and non-Finnish-speaking audiences of all ages, and, even more importantly, noticed by artists and seen as a center for artistic development.</p> <p>Finding a space, staging first productions, launching marketing campaign.</p> <p>Success metrics: community creation around the theatre, interest from the public, emergence of a new sector.</p>	<p>1. Users</p> <p>List the users of the product or service as target groups or segments. Also indicate more specific information about users such as persona names, if available.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Finnish- and Swedish-speaking working people 2. Non-Finnish-speaking working people 3. Young people in education
<p>7. Risks</p> <p>Identify possible future events that could have a negative impact on the project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of interest from Finnish- and Swedish-speaking audiences as they are generally not interested in theatre 2. Lack of appropriately trained people 3. High costs 	<p>8. Milestones</p> <p>List the key dates and events that frame the overall timeline of the project.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A venue is found and is ready 2. A creative team for the first production is found and FOH team is employed 3. A community is created around the theatre and it is popular 	<p>2. User benefits</p> <p>Show the overall value proposition and benefits users will get after the project is successfully completed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Living through new experiences 2. Getting a community feel 3. Feeling less excluded 4. Spending spare time in a meaningful way 5. Familiarizing with culture
<p>5. Activities</p> <p>List the concrete tasks and actions the team will take to reach the project goals.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research the success of any currently available English Theatre productions with subtitles; research actual demand for NT Live screenings. Also, a questionnaire for people in the target group to find out if they are actually willing to invest in abovementioned experiences. 2. Finding an appropriate venue or building: a loft can be refurbished, especially a factory building with large operating spaces that can be transformed into the stage 3. Finding the creative team through collaboration: actors, playwrights, directors 4. Employing the FOH team 5. Establishing theatre community practices 	<p>9. Constraints</p> <p>Identify the limits and conditional requirements that directly affect the deliverables, activities or project as a whole.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project is directly affected by market demand 2. If there is no demand for a theatrical experience in Helsinki now, a project will fail 3. Rent/property investments are likely going to be huge and therefore there is 	<p>6. Deliverables</p> <p>Indicate the outcomes and documents that will be shown to stakeholders or to customers. This does not include working documents, project plans and similar.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. A rehearsal venue is fully equipped and ready to host a full-sized theatre with spaces for both relatively small and large performances – and is available to visit 7. Creatives team meeting start and as a result of them a theatre's schedule for the ongoing theatrical season is written down and available to evaluate 8. A creative team can be met 9. FOH workplaces are created and are going to be offered to young people aged 19-22 as workplace experience along with job training courses and employability workshops 10. Theatre is opened and a community starts to emerge round it – with social happenings like Christmas Carols singing, it