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MARKETING PLAN FOR A LOCAL COMPANY TO ATTRACT FOREIGN CUSTOMERS

Case: Kuopion Seikkailukeskus

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>The objective of this thesis was to find ways the case company Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center) could reach foreign customers living in Kuopio. The aim of this thesis was to study whether the foreigners living in Kuopio would be interested in the services and rental products of the case company, and to document a marketing plan process. A marketing plan was prepared for the case company based on the research work, which they can apply to their future marketing planning.</p> <p>The thesis started with a research of the internal and external environments, and examining the marketing plan process. This research was based on online sources and literature. After examining these aspects, a quantitative research was conducted in the form of a survey. The survey was targeted at the foreigners living in Kuopio and the aim was to research their interest in the rental services offered by the case company. The results of the survey were analyzed and used together with the theoretical research to create a marketing plan. The marketing plan also included a situation review of the case company and ideas for further development in order to attract foreign customers living in Kuopio.</p> <p>What was found in the research is that the case company's marketing lacks English language, which results in the fact that most of the survey respondents had not heard of the case company, but are interested in the services offered by them. Few of the development ideas for the case company include investing in active marketing also in English especially at different social media channels, and following new trends on the internet related to wellness and health, in order to attract the target customers.</p>	
Keywords Marketing plan, internal environment, external environment, SWOT analysis	

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to report the study and the research whether foreigners living in Kuopio are interested in the services and rental products of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center). In addition, research will be made on the possibilities of reaching them.

The research in this thesis is in a form of a marketing plan for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, which they can apply to their future marketing planning. The marketing plan includes a study of the situation analysis that includes the internal and external environments and a SWOT analysis. A marketing plan also includes marketing objectives, marketing strategies and the implementation and control of the plan. The marketing plan basis is based on Michael Solomon's book, *Marketing: real people, real choices*, published in 2018.

The idea for this thesis came when in the fall of 2020 I was looking for local Kuopio-based companies for whom I could do the marketing plan. I wanted to connect internationality to the work, because I have been studying in English and I have always been interested in international people. I found Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, and it turned out that they have a longing for foreign customers, so our ideas met.

The methodology used for this thesis includes a theoretical basis from literature and electronic sources on the subject. A quantitative survey was developed and sent to foreigners living in Kuopio to research their needs and wants in terms of summer activities.

2 MARKETING PLAN

Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large. This is the official definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 28.) Marketing is a decision process in which marketing managers determine the strategies that will help the firm meet its objectives and then execute those strategies using the tools they have at their disposal. A big part of marketing process is marketing planning where the "big picture" is thought carefully and strategically. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 48.)

Marketing must be understood not in the old sense of making a sale, but in the new sense of satisfying customer need. If the marketer engages consumers effectively, understand their needs, develops products that provide superior customer value, and prices, distributes and promotes them well, these products will sell easily. Broadly defined, marketing is a social and managerial process by which individuals and organizations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. Marketing is the process by which companies engage customers, build strong customer relationships, and create customer value in order to capture value from customers in return. (Kotler, Armstrong 2021, 24-25.)

Marketing is a process for:

- Defining markets.
- Quantifying the needs of the customer groups (segments) within these markets.
- Determining the value propositions to meet these needs.
- Communicating these value propositions to all those people in the organization responsible for delivering them and getting their buy-in to their role.
- Playing an appropriate part in delivering these value propositions (usually only communications).
- Monitoring the value actually delivered.

(McDonald, Wilson 2016.)

According to Kotler (2021, 25-26), the marketing process can be presented as a five-step model for creating and capturing customer value. In the first four steps, companies work to understand consumers, create customer value, and build strong customer relationships. In the final step, companies reap the rewards of creating superior customer value. By creating value for consumers, they in return capture value from consumers in the form of sales, profits, and long-term customer equity.

The marketing process steps:

1. Understand the marketplace and customer needs and wants
2. Design a customer value-driven marketing strategy
3. Construct an integrated marketing program that delivers superior value
4. Engage customers, build profitable relationships, and create customer delight
5. Capture value from customers to create profits and customer equity

Marketing planning involves deciding on marketing strategies that will help the company attain its overall strategic objectives. A detailed marketing plan is needed for each business, product, or brand. The plan begins with an executive summary, which quickly overviews major assessments, goals, and recommendations. The main section of the plan presents a detailed SWOT analysis of the current marketing situation as well as potential threats and opportunities. The plan next states major objectives for the brand and outlines the specifics of a marketing strategy for achieving them. (Kotler, Bowen, Baloglu 2021, 98.)

Kotler (2021, 98) also states that a well-developed marketing plan is critical to the success of a business. The marketing planning steps are the following: First step is to perform a situation analysis, second step is to set marketing objectives, third step is to develop marketing strategies, and lastly, the fourth step is the implementation and control the marketing plan.

2.1 Internal Environment

According to Kelly and Ashwin (2013, 3), the internal environment includes customers, suppliers, the labor market, financial institutions, local communities, pressure groups, and government intermediaries.

According to Solomon (2018, 95-96), strengths and weaknesses of the firm can be identified by examining the internal environment. Internal environment includes all elements inside a firm that are controllable and influence the firm's operation abilities. Internal strengths could be in the firm's physical facilities, technologies, the firm's level of financial stability, its relationships with suppliers, its production of high-quality products, its corporate reputation, or its ownership of strong brands in the marketplace. Internal strengths and weaknesses often reside in the firm's employees and their skills.

The internal environment is a corporate environment that is in the organization and normally have a direct and specific implications on the company. Owners/managers of companies should look into the company to identify internal strategic factors, namely the strengths and weaknesses that will determine whether the company is able to take advantage of existing opportunities while avoiding threats. (Indris, Primiana 2015, 3.) The key points of internal environment include management, structures of businesses, and the different business functions within the organization such as marketing, production, HRM, or purchasing. (Worthington, Britton & Thompson 2018, 35.)

Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is the marketer's strategic toolbox. It consists of the tools of the organization uses to create a desired response among a set of predefined consumers. These tools include the product itself, the price of the product, the promotional activities that introduce it to the consumers, and the places where it is available. We commonly refer to the elements of the marketing mix as the Four Ps: product, price, promotion, and place. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 29.)

According to Kotler (2021, 73), the marketing mix- or the four Ps-consists of tactical marketing tools blended into an integrated program that actually engages target customers and delivers the intended customer value.

Product

Product is a tangible good, service, idea, or some combination of these that satisfies consumer or business customer needs through the exchange process; a bundle of attributes including features, functions, benefits, and uses. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 30.)

The tactical marketing tools according to Kotler (2021, 73) at the product category include:

- Variety
- Quality
- Design
- Features
- Brand name
- Packaging
- Services

Products are a key element in the overall market offering. Marketing mix planning begins with building an offering that brings value to target customers. This offering becomes the basis on which the company builds profitable customer relationships. A company's market offering often includes both tangible goods and services. Today, as products and services become more commoditized, many companies are moving to a new level in creating value for their customers. To differentiate their offers, beyond simply making products and delivering services, they are creating and managing customer experiences with their brands or companies. (Kotler, Armstrong 2021, 234-235.)

Products and services are thought about on three levels that are augmented product-level, actual product-level, and core customer value-level. The most basic level is the core customer value. When designing products, marketers must first define the core, problem-solving benefits, services, or experiences that consumers seek. At the second level, actual product, product planners must turn the core benefit into an actual product. They need to develop product and service features, a design, a quality level, a brand name, and packaging. Finally, product planners must build an augmented product around the core benefit and actual product by offering additional consumer services and benefits. (Kotler, Armstrong 2021, 235-236.)

Price

Price is the amount of money charged for a product or service. More broadly, price is the sum of all the values that customers give up gaining the benefits of having or using a product or service. Historically, price has been the major factor affecting buyer choice, however, in recent decades, nonprice factors have gained increasing importance. Even so, price remains one of the most important elements that determine a firm's market share and profitability. Price is the only element in the marketing mix that produces revenue; all other elements represent costs. Price is also one of the most flexible marketing mix elements. (Kotler, Armstrong 2021, 296-297.)

The tactical marketing tools according to Kotler (2021, 73) at the price category include:

- List price
- Discounts
- Allowances
- Payment period
- Credit terms

Price is the amount the consumer must exchange to receive the offering. Price is what marketers often turn to increase consumers' interest in a product. This happens when they put an item on sale, but in other cases marketers actually try to sell a product with a higher price than people are used to if they want to communicate that it's high quality. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 31.)

The price the company charges will fall somewhere between one that is too low to produce a profit and one that is too high to produce any demand. If customers perceive that a product's price is greater than its value, they won't buy it. If the company prices the product below its costs, profits will suffer. Between the two extremes, the "right" pricing strategy is one that delivers both value to the customer and profits to the company. (Kotler, Armstrong 2021, 297.)

Place

Place refers to the availability of the product to the customer at the desired time and location. This P relates to a channel of distribution, which is the series of firms or individuals that facilitates the movement of a product from the producer to the final customer. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 30.) Place includes company activities that make the product available to target consumers. (Kotler 2021, 72.)

The tactical marketing tools according to Kotler (2021, 73) at the place category include:

- Channels
- Coverage
- Locations
- Inventory
- Transportation
- Logistics

Promotion

Promotion refers to activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it. (Kotler, Armstrong 2021, 72.)

The tactical marketing tools according to Kotler (2021, 73) at the product category include:

- Advertising
- Personal selling
- Sales promotion
- Public relations
- Direct and digital

Promotion, also known as marketing communication, includes different activities marketers undertake to inform consumers about their products and to encourage them buying these products. Marketing communication takes the form of social media sites, TV advertising, personal selling, magazine advertisements, billboards, and web pages. Marketers today are moving their money and energy to devising and implementing digital marketing communications including location-based marketing, mobile marketing, social media marketing, and behavioral digital marketing. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 30.)

2.2 External Environment

The external environment consists of elements outside the firm that may affect it either positively or negatively. These elements include competitive environment, economic environment, technological environment, political and legal environment, and sociocultural environment. It is essential for the company to understand these features of the firm's external environment to succeed in both domestic and global markets. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 62.)

Competitive Environment

Solomon (2018, 62-65) states, that competitive environment includes competition in the microenvironment and competition in the macroenvironment. Firms must keep abreast of what the competition is doing so they can develop new product features, new pricing schedules, or new advertising to maintain or gain market share. Marketers need to understand their competitive position among product alternatives in their microenvironment and in the structure of their industries, that is, their macroenvironment.

According to Solomon (2018, 66), competition in the microenvironment means the product alternative from which members of a target market may choose. These choices can be thought at three different levels. The first level is the competition for consumers' discretionary income, or the amount of money people have left after they pay for necessities. Second level is the product competition which means that the other organizations offer different ways to satisfy the same consumers' needs and wants. Lastly, the third level is brand competition, where competitors offer similar goods or services.

Examining competition in the macroenvironment means that marketers need to understand the overall structure of their industry. The structure can range from one company having total control to numerous companies that compete on an even playing field. Monopoly exists when one seller controls a market. Because the seller is the only one in the field, it feels little pressure to keep prices low or to produce quality goods or services. In an oligopoly, there are relatively small number of sellers, each holding substantial market share, in a market with many buyers. Oligopolies most often exist in industries that require substantial investments in equipment or technology to produce a product. In a state of monopolistic competition, many sellers compete for buyers in a market. Each firm, however, offers a slightly different product, and each has only a small share of the market. Perfect competition exists when there are many small sellers, each offering the same good or service. In such industries, no single firm has a significant impact on quality, price, or supply. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 66-67.)

Economic Environment

According to Solomon (2018, 62-63), economic environment includes indicators of economic health, level of economic development, and business cycle. Companies need to know about the overall "health" of a country's economic environment before they conduct a more detailed exam. The most commonly used measure of economic health is a country's gross domestic product (GDP): the total dollar value of goods and services it produces within its borders in a year. In addition to total GDP, marketers may also compare countries on the basis of per capita GDP which is the total GDP divided by the number of people in a country. The per capita GDP is adjusted for the population size of each country, which means it is the better indicator of economic health.

An understanding of the national, regional, and global economic environment is essential for business managers primarily because of changes to demand and supply, interest, exchange and inflation rates, pricing, borrowing rates and investment opportunities, costs, competition, employment rates and export opportunities. Such changes manifest themselves in terms of business revenues, costs, and profit margins. (Kelly, Ashwin 2013, 52.)

Kelly & Ashwin (2013, 52) also state, that economic environment is the totality of economic factors which influence the buying behavior of consumers and institutions. Emphasis on the productivity and consumption of goods and services, directs us to consider issues of demand and supply and also of the marketplace where this will happen. The production of goods and services requires such as raw materials; labor, to transform raw materials into goods; capital and enterprise. Economic problems are encountered when such resources are constrained. In some cases, decisions may be made by the government, whilst, in other cases such decisions may be made by the consumer and producers collectively. Consequently, in a capitalist economy, businesses will produce the goods and services, for which resources are available, in the quantities and at the price that consumers want and are prepared to pay, whilst providing the company with a profit margin. In a competitive market, commercial organizations must do this efficiently, offering value for money, or consumers will simply switch to a different supplier.

Technological Environment

Technology is defined as “the sum of knowledge of the means and methods of producing goods and services”. Technology is increasingly science based, encompassing subjects such as chemistry, physics, and electronics, and refers to the organization of production as well as the actual techniques of production itself. Technology has a very big impact upon the world of business in all of these areas and has an important effect on the level and type of investment that takes place in an economy and therefore the rate of economic growth. (Worthington, Britton, Thompson 2018, 168,)

Technology is both an input and an output of business organizations as well as being an environmental influence on them. Investment in technology and innovation is frequently seen as a key to the success of an enterprise and has been used to explain differences in the relative competitiveness of different countries. It has also been responsible for significant developments in the internal organization of business in the markets for economic resources. (Worthington, Britton, Thompson 2018, 8.)

The technological environment profoundly affects marketing activities. Online sales offer consumers virtually anything they want without ever leaving home. External business environment is continuously scanned by successful marketers in search of ideas and trends to spark their own research efforts. Application for patent, which is a legal document that grants inventors exclusive right to produce and sell a particular invention in that country, occurs, when inventors feel they have come across something exciting and they want to protect their exclusive right to produce and sell the invention. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 67.)

Political and Legal Environment

Political and legal environment includes international regulations, national laws of commerce, political stability, regional agreements, regulatory issues, and human rights issues. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 62.)

The political and legal environment refers to the local, state, national, and global laws and regulations that affect business. For many business decision, legal and regulatory controls can be the prime motivators. Firms that choose to remain at domestic have to worry about local regulations only, but global marketers must understand political issues that can affect how they are allowed to do business around the world. (Solomon, Marshall, Stuart 2018, 67.)

Solomon (2018, 68) also states, that global firms know that the political actions a government takes can drastically affect their business operations. A country may impose economic sanctions that prohibit trade with another country. In some situations, internal pressures may prompt the government to take over the operations of foreign companies that do business within its borders.

According to Solomon (2018, 69), what products should be made of, what claims can be made about them, and which products are allowed in the country are regulated by the governments and economic communities. Also, some governments and companies are vigilant about denying business opportunities to countries that mistreat their citizens. They are concerned about conducting trade with local firms that exploit their workers, that keep costs down by employing children or prisoners for slave wages, or by subjecting workers to unsafe working conditions.

Key points of political environments include that democratic government is typified by a system of representative democracy and by political, social, and economic checks and balances which act as a constraint on the actions of government. These checks and balances in the system include the activities of pressure groups which often plays a key role in policy formulation and implementation. Lastly, business organizations are key pressure groups in democratic societies and an important part of external environment. (Worthington, Britton & Thompson 2018, 79.)

The key points of legal environments according to Worthington, Britton & Thompson (2018, 204) are the following: Variety of sources, including custom, the decisions of the courts, and legislation are what businesses affected by law derive from. Contract, agency, and consumer protection are three key areas governing the day-to-day work of businesses. Businesses and the relationship with their customers is governed by a variety of laws, and many organizations operate under agreed codes of conduct.

Sociocultural Environment

Sociocultural environment includes demographics, values, social norms, and ethnocentrism. The sociocultural environment refers to the characteristics of the society, the people who live in it, and the culture that reflects the values and beliefs of the society. Marketers need to understand the characteristics, customs, and practices of its citizens. Basic beliefs about cultural priorities, affect people's responses to products and promotional messages in any market. (Solomon 2018, 62-70.)

Solomon (2018, 70) also states, that the demographics of a society is the first step to look at toward understanding the characteristics of a society. These are statistics that measure observable aspects of a population, such as population size, age, gender, ethnic group, income, education, occupation, and family structure. Cultural values are also part of every society and they are beliefs about right and wrong ways to live and they influence virtually every aspect of our lives. One important dimension on which cultures differ is their emphasis on collectivism versus individualism. In collectivist cultures people tend to subordinate their personal goals to those of a stable community. In contrast, consumers in individualist cultures tend to attach more importance to personal goals, and people are more likely to change memberships when the demands of the group become too costly. Social norms and consumer ethnocentrism are important aspects of sociocultural environment.

Key points of sociocultural environment according to Worthington, Britton & Thompson (2018, 152) include businesses' social context includes factors such as lifestyles, social class, and reference group influences. The consumption of goods and services in an economy can be linked to such factors. The cultural environment of business includes institutions that help to shape society's basic attitudes, values, perceptions, preferences, and behavior. Cultural influences can change over time and can affect organizations. Businesses need to be sensitive to such change.

2.3 SWOT Analysis

The overall evaluation of a company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats is called the SWOT analysis. It is a tool to monitor the external and internal marketing environment. (Kotler, Keller, Brady, Goodman & Hansen 2019, 88.)

According to Kotler (2021, 74), strengths include internal capabilities, resources, and positive situational factors that may help the company serve its customers and achieve its objectives. Kotler also states that weaknesses are internal limitations that may interfere with the company's ability to achieve its objectives and threats include current and emerging external factors that may challenge the company's performance. Opportunities are external factors that the company may be able to exploit to its advantage.

Understanding the business environment is central to a strategic planning process. Among the most important tools to facilitate such understanding is the SWOT analysis. It helps organizations to gain a better insight of their internal and external business environment when making strategic plans and decisions by analyzing and positioning an organization's resources and environment. (Phadermrod, Crowder, Wills 2019.)

Phadermrod (2019) also states, that strengths and weaknesses are internal (controllable) factors that support and obstruct organizations to achieve their mission respectively. Whereas opportunities and threats are the external (uncontrollable) factors that enable and disable organizations from accomplishing their mission. By identifying the factors in these four fields, the organization can recognize its core competencies for decision-making, planning and building strategies. The main advantage of SWOT analysis is its simplicity have resulted in its continued use in both leading companies and academic communities since it was developed in the 1960s. Despite its advantages, there are shortcomings existing in the traditional SWOT approach as it produces superficial and imprecise list of factors, relies on subjective perception of an organization's staff who attended the brainstorming session and lacks factor prioritization regarding the importance of each SWOT factor.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In quantitative research, the major characteristics are the following:

- Describing a research problem through a description of trends or a need for an explanation of the relationship among variables
- Providing a major role for the literature through suggesting the research questions to be asked and justifying the research problem and creating a need for the direction of the study
- Creating purpose statements, research questions, and hypotheses that are specific, narrow, measurable, and observable
- Collecting numeric data from a large number of people using instruments with preset questions and responses
- Analyzing trends, comparing groups, or relating variables using statistical analysis and interpreting results by comparing them with prior predictions and past research
- Writing the research report using standard, fixed structures and evaluation criteria and taking an objective, unbiased approach

(Creswell, Guetterman 2021, 37.)

Creswell (2021, 87-88) also states, that quantitative research can be used if the research problems requires measurement of variables, assessment of the impact these variables on an outcome, testing of theories or broad explanations, and it requires applying results to a large number of people.

The research question in this study has a concise and measurable research problem that requires accurate information from the respondents, the collection of numerical data, and the analysis and reporting of results. Receiving a large number of answers might be difficult due to the small sample of possible respondents, foreigners living in Kuopio, but otherwise the research question corresponds to Creswell's description of quantitative research.

Other methodology methods used in the research includes a theoretical basis from literature and electronic sources on the subject.

4 RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

The purpose of the survey was to determine if the foreigners living in Kuopio have tried any summer activities in Kuopio, if they are satisfied with the offering of summer activities in Kuopio, and if they are interested in the summer activities offered by Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center). The research will be useful when creating a marketing plan for the case company. The findings of this research can be used in communication with potential foreign customers.

The hypothesis is that the reasons that have led to the absence of foreigners living in Kuopio as customers of the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are due to the lack of marketing in both Finnish and English and the lack of a professional vocabulary. Marketing should be clear and active, and information should be easily accessed.

The survey was developed on the basis of the hypothesis and the questions examine the summer activity history of foreigners living in Kuopio, their media behavior, and interest in the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center).

There were a total of 17 questions, of which the first four asked about age, gender, foreign background, and how long have you lived in Kuopio. The following questions concerned summer activities, whether they have been tried and the opinion on Kuopio's summer activity offering. The following questions concerned media behavior, which media channels are used the most and which social media channels are the most used. The last questions concern the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus and the interest in the summer activities they offer.

The responses to the questions were collected with Webropol survey form which was shared to potential respondents via Facebook. The answers were collected from 5th of October 2021 to 16th of October 2021. The audience for the survey consisted mostly of university students at Kuopio, and foreign people at different Facebook groups for international people in Kuopio.

4.1 Research Results and Analysis

The total number of respondents is 30. Because the questions were not mandatory, some questions received only 29, or less, answers. Figure 2 describes the age distribution of the respondents. Over 60 per cent of the respondents are from 18 to 25 years old. The second largest age group was 26 to 35 years old with 21 per cent of the respondents. Third largest group was 36 to 45 years old with 10 per cent of the respondents, and lastly, groups 46-60 and under 18 had one answer each.

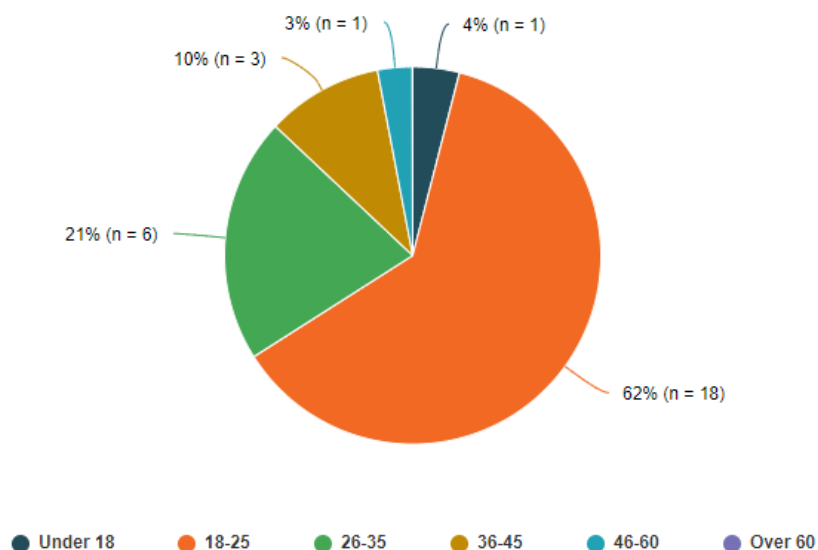


FIGURE 1. Age distribution of the respondents (n=29) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

As can be seen from Figure 3, the gender distribution of the respondents is the following: 62 per cent are female, 35 per cent are male, and one respondent has chosen the alternative Other for gender.

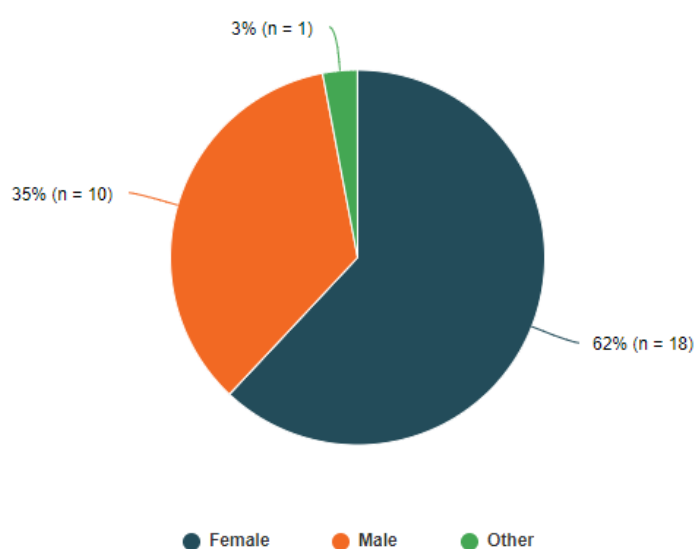


FIGURE 2. Gender distribution of the respondents (n=29) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

The respondents of the survey are from 10 different foreign backgrounds. The biggest groups were Russia (six respondents) and Germany (four respondents), and the rest of the groups consisted of the Pakistan, Sweden, India, British, China, Estonia and French. Couple of the respondents answered Middle East.

According to Figure 4, 43 per cent of the respondents have lived zero to six months in Kuopio, 33 per cent have lived two to five years, 17 per cent have lived one to two years, and lastly, two respondents have lived longer than 10 years in Kuopio.

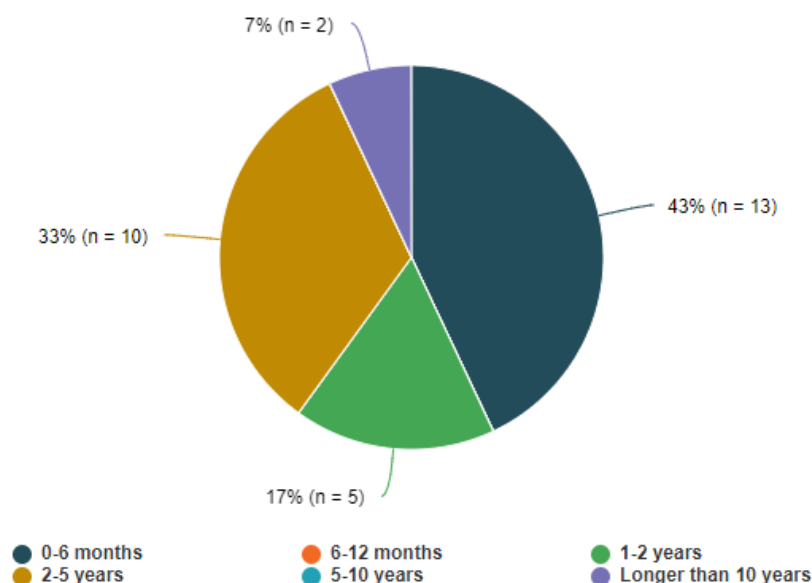


FIGURE 3. How long respondents have lived in Kuopio (n=30) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

53 per cent of the 30 respondents have tried summer activities in Kuopio and 47 per cent have not. The activities the respondents have tried include camping, padel, paddle boarding, jet-skiing, boating, frisbee golf, paintball, kayaking, hiking, swimming, camping, sailing, cycling, fishing, and minigolf.

39 per cent of the respondents have tried these activities once during the summer, 22 per cent two to three times, 22 per cent three to five times and 17 per cent more than five times.

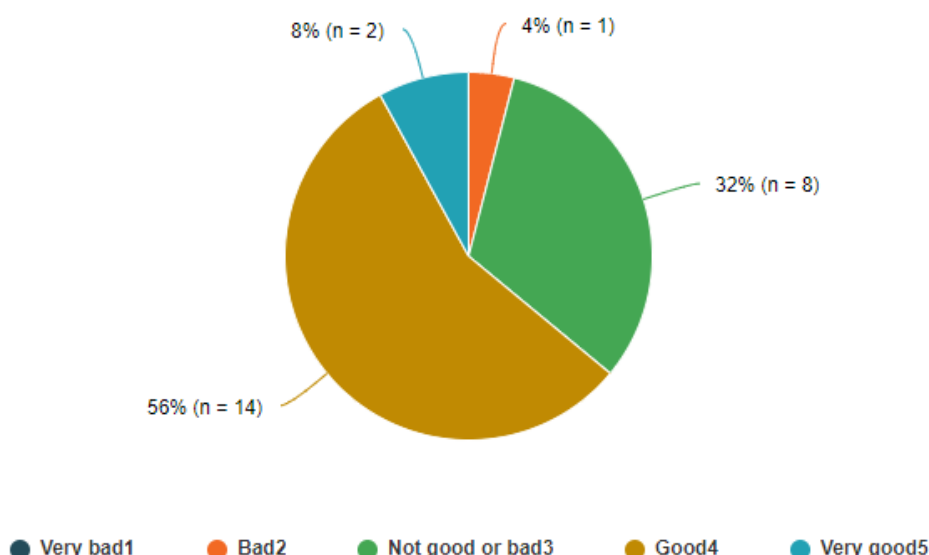


FIGURE 4. Rating of Kuopio's summer activity offering (n=25) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

The rating of Kuopio's summer activity is the following according to Figure 5: 56 per cent of the respondent's rate Kuopio's summer activity offering good, 32 per cent rate it not good or bad, two respondents rate it very good, and one respondent rates it bad.

Figure 6 describes the respondents answers on importance of different aspects when choosing a summer activity provider. 55 per cent answered agree and 31 per cent answered strongly agree on location aspect. Location is therefore an important aspect.

At the recommendations section, 58 per cent answered agree, 17 per cent answered strongly agree and 10 per cent answered disagree. Recommendations is also an important aspect.

Quality of customer service is either important to very important to respondents with 36 per cent answering four and 33 per cent answering five. 30 per cent do not have an opinion on the importance. Therefore, quality of service is important to some respondents but for some it does not matter.

Family or other group activities was the most divided, 13 per cent disagrees, 26 per cent neither agrees or disagrees, 36 per cent agrees, and 23 per cent strongly agrees. Group activities are not necessary for some respondents but important for some.

Accessibility is very important to respondents, 50 per cent answered agree and 30 per cent strongly agree. 20 per cent answered neither agree nor disagree.

Price is also very important, 63 per cent answered strongly agree, 20 per cent agree and only 13 per cent neither agree nor disagree.

	Strongly disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neither agree or disagree 3	Agree 4	Strongly agree 5
Location	0,0%	3,5%	10,3%	55,2%	31,0%
Recommendations	0,0%	10,4%	13,8%	58,6%	17,2%
Quality of customer service	0,0%	0,0%	30,0%	36,7%	33,3%
Family or other group activities	0,0%	13,3%	26,7%	36,7%	23,3%
Accessibility	0,0%	0,0%	20,0%	50,0%	30,0%
Price	0,0%	3,4%	13,3%	20,0%	63,3%

FIGURE 5. What respondents consider important when choosing summer activity provider (n=30) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

In question 10 the respondents were asked to put the medias in order from their most used to least used (one was the most used and six the least). As seen on Figure 7, the most used media platform is social media with average of 2.2. Second most used media is google or other search engine with 2.3. Third most used media is e-mail 3.4, fourth newspapers or magazines 4.1, fifth television 4.3 and lastly radio 4.8.

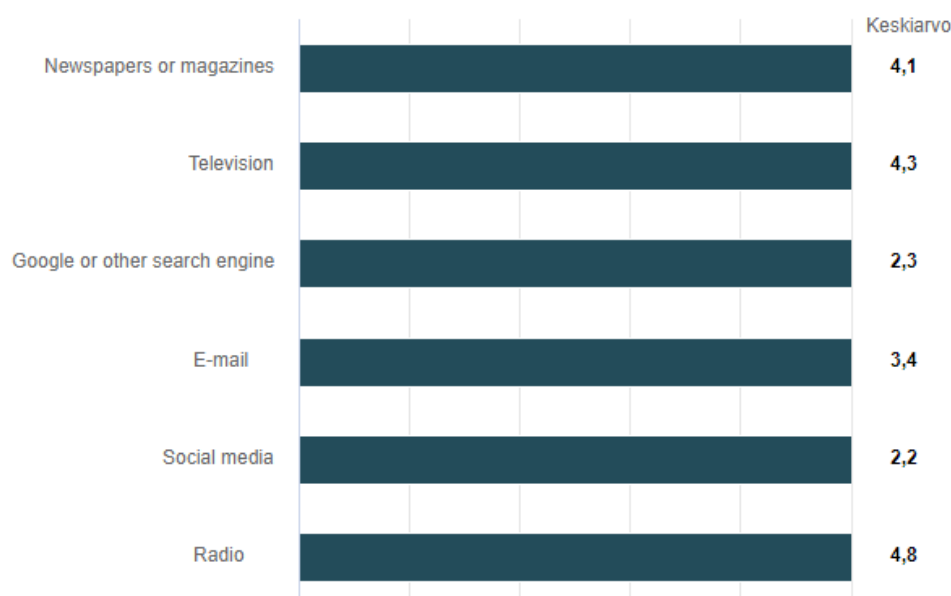


FIGURE 6. Respondents most used medias (1) to least used (6) (n=29) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

The question's most to least used social media platform rating is same to the previous question. There were 29 respondents. The most used social media platform is Instagram with the average of 2.3, at the shared second place are Youtube and Facebook with averages of 3.3, fourth most used platform is Snapchat with average of 3.4, fifth is Tiktok with average of 4.2 and lastly Twitter with average of 4.4.

79 per cent of the 29 respondents have not heard of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus and 21 per cent have heard of them. 57 per cent of the respondents that have heard of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has heard of them from another person, 29 per cent has seen their outdoor advertisements, 29 per cent has seen them on social media and 14 from google or other search engine.

79 per cent of respondents (n=28), would like to see advertisements of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus at social media channels. The social media channels respondents (n=28) would like to see the advertisements on are Instagram with 82 per cent, Facebook with 64 per cent, Youtube with 29 per cent, Twitter with 18 per cent, and lastly Tiktok and Snapchat with both 11 per cent. The other most popular media platforms the respondents would like to see advertisements at including social media are outdoor advertisements with 61 per cent and google or other search engine with 57 per cent. Both newspapers or magazines and e-mail received 29 per cent and lastly both television and radio received 11 per cent of the answers.

The most interesting activities according to the respondents (n=29) were paddle boarding that received 59 per cent of the answers, kayaking with 55 per cent, water-skiing with 52 per cent, camping received 48 per cent, wakeboarding 41 per cent and lastly fat-biking received only 38 per cent of the answers.

	Not at all likely 1	Not likely 2	I don't know 3	Likely 4	Extremely likely 5	Keskiarvo
Paddle boarding	6,9%	17,2%	3,5%	27,6%	44,8%	3,9
Fat-biking	10,4%	27,6%	24,1%	10,3%	27,6%	3,2
Kayaking	6,9%	6,9%	24,2%	31,0%	31,0%	3,7
Camping	13,8%	13,8%	20,7%	37,9%	13,8%	3,2
Water-skiing	17,2%	13,8%	10,4%	20,7%	37,9%	3,5
Wakeboarding	17,2%	6,9%	34,5%	20,7%	20,7%	3,2

FIGURE 7. How likely respondents would try these activities (n=29) (Jääskeläinen, 2021)

In figure 8 can be seen the answers to the likeliness of respondents trying the following activities. The average of paddle boarding is 3.9 which means that the respondents would be likely to try it, second most popular activity is kayaking with average of 3.7, third most popular activity is water-skiing with an average of 3.5, and on the shared fourth place are fat-biking, camping, and wakeboarding with averages of 3.2.

4.2 Reliability and Validity

For the results of a quantitative research to be reliable, the number of respondents must be broad enough and the questions must be very specific. The answers must be accurate and useful for the research as well as for the whole thesis.

The survey was answered by 30 people, which is too small response rate to analyze the results reliably. The small number of answers is due to the fact that the foreigners living in Kuopio is a small group and it is difficult to reach them only through social media.

Most of the respondents are young adults and some of them are students. They may not have had time to get familiar with Kuopio's summer activity offer, which affects the research analysis and reliability of the results.

The respondents are from several countries, which is positive aspect for the research as it brings reliability to the analysis. The questions in this research are accurate, except for question 3. "What is your foreign background?" to which the respondent was able to write the answer. This question was not clear enough, as some of the answers did not become as an exact country. For example, the Middle East includes several countries. The questions were also not marked as mandatory, which resulted in the fact that although 30 people responded to the survey, few questions had less answers than others.

The question "What activities have you tried?" received answers from the respondents that included the same activities Kuopion Seikkailukeskus already offers, such as paddle boarding and kayaking. It is a positive aspect for the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus that their services are similar to those that are already of interest to foreigners living in Kuopio.

Questions about the use of different media platforms were well answered and it is clear which platforms are most used today. The most used media platform is social media, which is credible in terms of research. The question about the use of social media channels also performed well, and it turned out that the most used channel is Instagram. If there had been more respondents from the older age groups as well, it would probably have affected the results of both of these questions.

All in all, the survey revealed that the respondents are interested in Kuopion Seikkailukeskus and their services. There is an interest in their summer activities and respondents would probably be willing to try them. Through this survey, many are likely to leave to try out their services.

4.3 Foreigners in Kuopio

According to the City of Kuopio website, the population of Kuopio has grown slowly, but surely from 2010 to 2020. In 2010 the population of Kuopio was over 112,000 and every year the figure has steadily increased by about 8,000 citizens by 2020. In 2020 the population of Kuopio was 120,210.

According to the City of Kuopio Website (2021), the population of foreign citizenship in Kuopio was 3,250 or 2,7 per cent of the population in 2020. The growth of foreign population in 2019 was 71 citizens. There are 100 nationalities in Kuopio and the biggest groups are Russians, Estonians, and Syrians. The amount of foreign citizens living in Kuopio from 2010-2020 has almost doubled. (1,800 citizens in 2010 and 3,250 citizens in 2020).

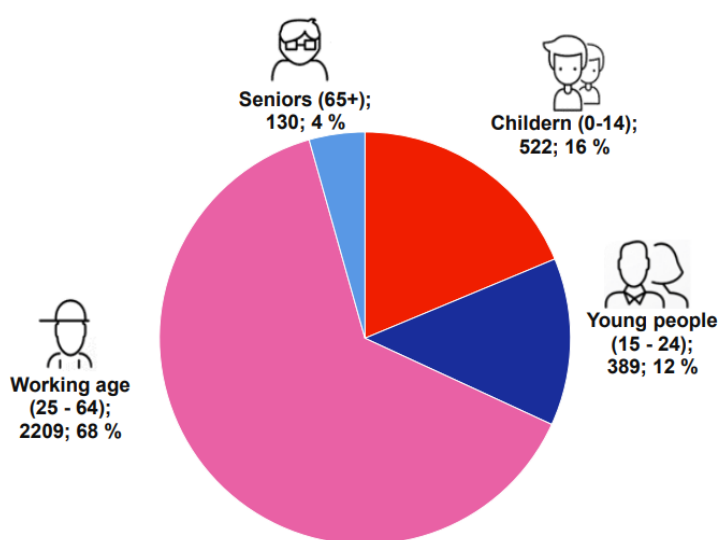


FIGURE 8. Foreigners by citizenship by age groups 2020 (City of Kuopio 2019, CC BY).

As we can see in Figure 1, the majority of foreigners living in Kuopio are of working age, aged 25 to 64. The amount of working age foreigners is 2,209 which is 68 per cent of the whole foreign citizenship population. The second largest group are children aged zero to 14. There are 522 of them, which is 16 per cent. Third largest group are young people aged 15-24. There are 389 of them, which is 12 per cent of the foreign citizenship. Lastly, the smallest group are seniors who are 65 or older. There are 130 of them, which is only four per cent of the foreign citizenship population.

4.4 Marketing Plan

The research done in this thesis is in a form of a marketing plan. Marketing plan requires a situation analysis, setting of marketing objectives, develop of marketing strategies, and implementation and control of the marketing plan. The marketing plan basis in this thesis is based on a Michael Solomon's book, *Marketing: real people, real choices*, published in 2018.

Situation Analysis

The situation analysis performed includes the case company introduction and an analysis of the company's internal and external environments. The internal environment analysis includes mission statement, organizational structure, corporate culture, past and current marketing, current products, current markets, pricing, distribution, and customers/sales. The external environment includes different environments such as competitive, economical, technological, political and legal, and sociocultural. SWOT analysis was created based on these internal and external analyses.

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus was founded in 2000 and offers a wide range of rentable equipment for activities, such as paddle boards, kayaks, canoes, camping equipment, fat-bikes, water skis, and wakeboards. Their target customers consists of active people of all ages and backgrounds who want new experiences. The company is located in the harbor of Kuopio and they have an office in the Kuopio tourist center Saana. They have been marketing mostly on social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram.

The direct competitors of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are located in Northern Savo and they offer similar services as Kuopion Seikkailukeskus. The competitors are Kuopio Water Sports Centre, Rauhalahhti Holiday Centre, SkiMac Tahko, and Kunnonpaikka Spa Hotel. Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has the highest rental prices compared to competitors, but they are still competitive.

The SWOT analysis provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus. After understanding and analyzing the business environment of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, a SWOT analysis can be executed based on the research done. The four aspects of the SWOT analysis will help the case company to gain a better insight of their internal and external business environment.

Analyses of the internal and external environments suggest that the case company's strengths include motivation and attitude towards work in the work community, accessible locations in the harbor and at Saana, updated website, competitive pricing, updated equipment, wide range of services and rentable equipment, and professional staff. Weaknesses include the impact of corona pandemic on the company's profitability and growth, lack of active marketing, lack of professional language on different platforms of media, lack of mission statement, absence of English language on marketing channels, and due to the small number of employees in the company there is not much flexibility at work, for example in case of sickness. Threats include competition in the Northern Savo area, competitiveness, and foreigners not finding Kuopion Seikkailukeskus due to the lack of marketing in English, but the opportunities shows light to the future of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus because the Kuopio area is growing, the health and wellness trends continue to rise, population of foreign citizenship is growing in Kuopio, and after corona pandemic people are starting to use local services again.

Marketing Objectives

The marketing objectives of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus were determined by the writer of the thesis and some of them are based on the interview of Kalevi Puomilahti. The marketing objectives include keeping the financial situation the same as it is currently after the coronavirus pandemic and redesigning the intentions to grow again in the future, keeping the distribution of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus profitable at the two marketplaces: At harbor of Kuopio and at Saana, and gaining more foreign customers living in Kuopio especially in the future.

Marketing Strategies

Target Markets

The target markets were defined on the basis of the company's services, who would be interested in the services, and what kind of people they could possibly be. Because the services of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are activities that require courage, some physical fitness and a sense of adventure, and the majority of the respondents of the survey were young adults, the target market example is created on the basis of these factors.

Demographics:

- Female, male, and other genders
- Ages: All age groups, mostly young adults, and adults
- Lives in Kuopio

Psychographics:

- Interested in healthy lifestyle, adventures, and wellbeing
- Wants to spend money on experiencing new things instead of purchasing products
- Wants to do and experience new things with family and friends or alone

Media habits:

- Uses internet as the primary source of news and entertainment, but casually watches television, listens to radio, or reads newspapers and magazines.
- When they use the social media, they use mostly Facebook and Instagram. Youtube videos are watched occasionally.

Marketing Mix

The marketing mix is a strategic toolbox for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus from which they can use various tools in their marketing planning. The marketing mix includes the four Ps: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.

Product

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus already has a wide range of rentable products, additional product ideas for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus could include roller skates, equipment for Nordic walking, electric scooters, and rowing boats.

Roller skating can be executed alone or with company and it is a challenging but fun exercise method. Roller skating is popular indoor activity in some countries, but in Finland it is known only as an outside activity, which for foreigners especially could be a totally new experience.

Nordic walking, as the name suggests, is only known in the Nordic countries and although it may look special to a foreigner, it is an effective and fun form of walking. Nordic walking requires only the walking sticks which would be easy to rent as it can be practiced anywhere.

Electric scooters have risen to great popularity over the past summer. People are not willing to pay large sums for their own electric scooter, so renting them in the summer would be a good and profitable idea. Kuopion Seikkailukeskus already has an active customer base who could be interested trying the scooters. It could be a fun way to tour Kuopio. The scooter could be rented for 2 hours and it needs to be returned to the rent point in time, or extra fee will be paid. The area of use would also be limited. Logos of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus could be placed at the scooters.

Rowing boats are especially popular with Finns, but they are rented surprisingly little. Although most Finns have sometimes rowed, it would be a new experience for foreigners living in Finland. The rental would include the boat, the paddles and safety vests.

Price

The rental prices of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are the highest compared to competitors. If the rental product manufacturers are expensive, there possibly would be an option to monitor less expensive producers. Lower cost producers could lower the rental prices which could attract more customers. Keeping the rental point at harbor open on Sundays and Saana's rental point all summer would increase the amount of customers that could possibly lead to lower rental prices. Discounts and various campaigns would also increase competitiveness.

All in all, because the current prices are competitive, it is more profitable for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus to focus on investing in other aspects, such as customer service and advertising.

Place

The locations of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are very accessible for the customers, during the summer people like to spend time in the harbor of Kuopio and in Saana and they are easy to access through the eyes of new customers and also people such as foreigners who do not necessarily speak fluent Finnish.

Rental of water skis and wakeboards could also be available at Saana's rental point, as Saana is located by the lake and people arrive there by boat.

Changes could be made to the opening hours: Although people in Kuopio also move a lot during the week in summer, the weekend is the most popular activity time, so it could possibly be worth keeping the rental point open on Sundays as well. For example, the store could be closed from Monday to Tuesday instead of Sunday to Monday.

Saana's rental point is open with advance booking only, which can cause loss to the company. If Saana's point had a full-time employee during the summer, people who arrive without planning could go out to try the different activities. Especially when the lake is right next door.

Promotion

In the past, Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has marketed in social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram, and in official channels such as the website of Kuopio-Tahko. They are also involved in the marketing of their collaboration partners such as at the business mailing of hotel Iso-Valkeinen.

The pages on Facebook and Instagram have gained a good amount of visibility, but content in English is needed to gain more foreign customers. The English posts could be positioned under the regular Finnish post. Here is an example:

"Tervetuloa myymäläämme!"

English below

"Welcome to our store!"

In addition to these posts, promotional videos would be a good addition to the business. They could be made on YouTube and shared from there to other channels. English subtitles would be added to the videos. Lastly, more outdoor advertising with texts in Finnish and English.

Implementation and Control

Action plan was created which includes the action items for the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus and the beginning and ending dates for these actions. The measurement and control strategies, and re-search aspects were developed for the implementation of the marketing plan.

In order for the marketing plan to be successful and to fill the goal, which is that the foreigners living in Kuopio finds the company, it is important and necessary that the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus pays attention to the following issues: the lack of English in different marketing channels, use of professional vocabulary in advertising, addition of different campaigns and discounts, and addition of new rental equipment at the store. Various analyses, such as competitive analysis and customer research, needs to be done to keep the company aware of its customers and the competitors.

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus should actively monitor the different trends on the internet, because it can bring awareness to the company about their target groups and what people are interested in currently. It is worth actively monitor the behavior of competitors on the internet and their advertisements because Kuopion Seikkailukeskus can keep up with current trends through it as well. Monitoring competitor's prices and product developments is also necessary.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this thesis was to find out whether foreigners living in Kuopio are interested in the rental services provided by the case company, to do theoretical research on the marketing plan preparation process, and to focus on the case company's operations and create a marketing plan based on the research.

What was found at the beginning of this study, is that the process of creating a marketing plan requires thorough groundwork. The marketing plan process begins with an assessment of the case company's current situation and an analysis of its internal and external environments. A SWOT analysis is created based on these analyzes and the marketing plan is created as a summary of these topics. The use of the right methodology influences the creation of the marketing plan, as it is important for the research to obtain reliable information from reliable sources and to be able to choose the research method corresponding to the research question, in this case a quantitative method was chosen.

During the research process, it became clear that the case company has several areas for development. These include, for example, the addition of English to marketing, the absence of a mission statement, the addition of new products to the rental range, the addition of products to the tourist center Saana and change in the opening hours both at Saana and at the harbor. It also emerged that the coronavirus pandemic has had a major impact on the case company's operations and therefore the development ideas in this marketing plan are unlikely to be implemented immediately as the company wants to focus on coping with the effects of the pandemic and they are not currently aiming to grow their operations.

The quantitative survey researched the interest of foreigners living in Kuopio in the services of the case company. The survey revealed that the most important aspects for the respondents includes recommendations, location, price, and accessibility. The respondents would like to see the case company's advertisements on social media, especially on Instagram and Facebook. It also emerged that the respondents are interested in Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, but most had not heard of the company before the survey.

I used reliable literature and online sources when doing research. I am aware that the study is not very extensive, and that further research could be done, and with a small response margin to the quantitative survey, the results can only be used to a certain extent in the study. I am familiar with the topic and the contents of my thesis, and I have also made the necessary agreements with the supervisor and the case company and we are in agreement on the content of the thesis. I am aware that the work will be reviewed for plagiarism and I understand that the thesis will be made public.

Previous research has been done mainly on tourists visiting Kuopio, but very little research was found on foreigners living in Kuopio. An example of a study involving foreigners living in Kuopio is Rosa-Maria Häkkinen's thesis "Marketing in a Local Company Targeting Foreign Customers: Case Kalakukkoleipomo Hanna Partanen" published in 2017. This thesis deals with marketing communication strategies for the kalakukkoleipomo Hanna Partanen in order to reach and communicate with foreign customers in Kuopio.

The thesis was successful on most parts. The theoretical work was well prepared, and the sources were selected with care and used enough. All the sources were also reliable. The structure of the thesis is clear, and it is divided into suitably sized parts.

The writing was successfully scheduled and split it to several sections, so the risk of overloading myself with the amount of work was minimal, which was really important. I learned a lot of new things, most importantly, creating and making a marketing plan. It was also the first time creating a survey by myself. Professional growth took place during the process and stepping outside the comfort zone brought a new kind of challenge.

If anything could be done differently, it would be that I would have sent the survey to more places at the beginning, because it would have potentially resulted in a greater number of responses. I also found out that the case company added English pages on their website towards the end of the writing process, which means that I have used slightly different vocabulary on my thesis, due to translating words directly from their Finnish website. I decided not to change the words because the writing process was very close to finish at that point.

My suggestions for the case company is to have further studies done on their financial aspects and adding them to the marketing plan in the future. It was not possible for me to go through them during this project, but it is an important part of a marketing plan.

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APPENDIX 1: MARKETING PLAN FOR KUOPIO SEIKKAILUKESKUS

Situation Analysis

The case company is Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center). They were established in 2000 and their head office is located in the harbor of Kuopio. They also have a side office at the Kuopio tourist center Saana, Kuopio. The CEO is Kalevi Puomilahti, and their company offers customers of all ages and backgrounds extreme services and experiences such as various course and excursions, group activities, first aid training, and they also rent various types of equipment, such as paddle boards, fat-bikes, kayaks, canoes, camping equipment, water skis, and wakeboards.

Internal Environment

Mission Statement

According to Solomon (2018, 95), mission statement is a formal document that describes the organization's overall purpose and what it intends to achieve in terms of its customers, products, and resources. Mission statement should answer to questions such as: What business are we in? What customers should we serve? How should we develop the firm's capabilities and focus its efforts? The ideal mission statement is not too broad, too narrow, or too shortsighted.

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus does not have a mission statement, so I am proposing the following statement:

"We aim to provide wide range of high-quality Finnish adventure services to all customers, regardless of age, background, or lifestyle. With our friendly and professional employees, we aim to grow as a company so that we can serve our customers now, as well as in the future. Adventures belong to everyone and we want to make it possible."

"Tavoitteenamme on tarjota laaja valikoima korkealaatuisia suomalaisia seikkailupalveluita asiakkaille iästä, taustasta tai elämäntyylistä riippumatta. Ystävällisten ja ammattitaitoisten työntekijöidemme kanssa pyrimme kasvamaan yrityksenä, jotta voimme palvella asiakkaitamme nyt ja myös tulevaisuudessa. Seikkailut kuuluvat kaikille ja haluamme mahdollistaa sen."

Organizational Structure

According to Will Kenton (2021), organizational structure is system that outlines how certain activities are directed in order to achieve the goals of an organization. The organizational structure also determines how information flows between levels within the company.

According to Kalevi Puomilahti (2021), the organizational structure of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus is the following: They have two full-time employees during the whole year and the CEO is Kalevi Puomilahti. In addition, there are two full-time employees during the summer and also part-time employees. Last summer in total there were seven people working at different workstations. During the winter there are couple part-time employees.

The chief, who is Kalevi Puomilahti, manages the entire operation. At Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, each employee has very specific job duties, for example one person is solely responsible for running the paintball field.

Corporate Culture

Corporate culture refers to the beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company's employees and management interact and handle outside business transactions. Corporate culture is important because it can support important business objectives. Employees, for example, might be attracted to companies whose cultures they identify with. (Evan Tarver 2021.)

According to Kalevi Puomilahti (2021), the corporate culture at Kuopion Seikkailukeskus is very clear: The work is done properly at once to allow time for recovery and rest, especially during the busy periods. In such a small group of employees, it is difficult to define anything more specific.

Past and Current Marketing

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has been marketing at social media since 2011. Their first posts were made on the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus Facebook site and since then, they have been updating very actively. Facebook is their most active media platform and in the recent years, Instagram has slowly risen alongside it. Their first Instagram post was made in 2016. They have 5,6 thousand followers on Facebook and 536 on Instagram. When comparing the older Facebook posts by Kuopion Seikkailukeskus to current posts, their services have remained fairly similar over the years.

Current Products

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus offers different services, that are divided into summer and winter activities. In this thesis I will be focusing on their summer rental services that includes paddle boarding, fat-biking, kayaking, camping, water-skiing, and lastly wakeboarding. (Kuopion Seikkailukeskus)

Paddle boarding, also known as stand-up paddling, has risen to great success during the last few years. Kuopion Seikkailukeskus offers two types of paddle boards for rent: Regular paddle boards for one person and giant paddle boards that fits 6 people. The rental includes the boards, paddles, floating vests, safety instructions, and a phone bag. Wet suit is included in the regular paddle board rental and it is optional.

The fat-bikes are otherwise regular bicycles, but the wheels are bigger and "fatter" than in other bikes. That is where the name fat-bike comes from. Fat-bikes are really light to tread, and the riding is very comfortable compared to other bikes. Kuopion Seikkailukeskus rents fat-bikes on 4 different sizes, from small to extra-large. The size is determined by person's length and the rent includes the bike itself, a helmet, and a lock for the bike.

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus offers kayaks and canoes on their website. The rentals include kayaks for either one or two persons, Indian canoes, and packrafts. The kayak rent includes the kayak itself, paddle, floating vest, opening cover, safety instructions and maps, and a dry sack for belongings. The Indian canoe can fit multiple people and the rental includes the canoe, paddles, floating vests, safety instructions and maps, and if needed, the dry sack for belongings. The packraft is inflatable, it weighs less than 3 kilograms, and it can be packed into a size of a tent bag. The rental includes the raft, seat, breakable paddle, inflatable kayak vest, and electronic pump.

Camping equipment rented at Kuopion Seikkailukeskus includes different types of tents, such as hiking tent for three persons, tentsile which is attached to a tree for three persons, half team tent that fits 20 people and a sauna tent. Other equipment includes sleeping bags and rucksacks. The earlier mentioned packraft is also part of the camping equipment.

Water-skiing rental includes the skis and a tow rope that is attached to the boat. Wakeboard rental includes the wakeboard, the bands that will be attached to the board, and the tow rope. The boat for these activities must be rented from another place.

Current Markets

The consumer market for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus services is made up of anyone who is interested in outdoor adventures, activities, and healthy lifestyle. According to Kuopio website, promoting well-being is a basic task of the Finnish municipalities. An extensive wellbeing report is prepared once per council term and the annual well-being goals report is prepared every year for the city council. The well-being goals of Kuopio for 2018-2021 are:

1. Supporting healthy lifestyles of citizens
2. Safe Kuopio
3. Early support
4. Active and participating citizenship
5. Promoting employment

Based on the annual report more emphasis is still needed in preventing mental health work and preventive drug work (especially for young people), prevention of violence, prevention of overweight and increasing nutrition knowledge, and reducing loneliness.

Kuopio is a sporty city. It has over 700 sports venues and facilities that provide opportunities for physical activity indoors and outdoors, independently or with an instructor (Liikkuva Kuopio). Exercise and hobby opportunities are limitless and there are everything for everyone. Because Kuopio is such an active city and health trends are still rising globally, Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has a good marketplace in Kuopio.

Pricing

According to Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, the pricing for paddle boards varies. The regular paddle board costs 20 euros per hour and the giant paddle boards are 45 euros per hour. The price of the giant paddle board depends on the amount of people (two is minimum) and the rent cost for regular paddle board is counted per one person. It is also possible to rent the boards hourly or for whole day. If the regular board is rented for 24 hours the price for one person is 50 euros. The giant paddle board for two to six people costs 100 euros.

The prices for fat-bikes are the same regardless of the size of the bike, starting at 20 euros per hour. The price for 24-hour rental for one person is 50 euros.

The prices of both one and two person kayaks are 20 euros per hour. They can also be rented for 24 hours which costs 50 euros per one kayak. The Indian canoe costs 20 euros per hour and 50 euros for the 24-hour rent. The packraft costs 50 euros per one person and 100 euros per two people. The packraft must be rented for the whole day.

The camping equipment prices vary depending on what items are rented.

The price for hiking tent is 20 euros per one person or 40 euros for two to three people. The hiking tent must be rented for three days. The tentsile costs 50 euros per person or 100 euros per two people. The tentsile must be rented for the whole day. The tent for 20 people costs 80 euros regardless of the number of users. The tent is rented for the whole day. The sauna tent costs 80 euros per day. The regular sleeping bag and rucksacks costs 10 euros per person for the whole day.

The water-skis are priced 20 euros for two hours per person. The rent for whole day costs 30 euros per pair of skis. The prices for wakeboard rental are the same.

Distribution

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus places distribution at their two locations that are their main store and office at the Kuopio harbor and their side office at the tourist center of Saana. The company does not offer their services at other locations, except the excursions and courses are held at different places, such as Vuorilampi, Kuopio.

Customers/Sales

According to Finder, a website that includes all the financial information about Finnish companies, the turnover of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus in February 2018 to 2021 has varied. In 2018 their turnover was 303 thousand euros, in 2019 327 thousand euros, in 2020 261 thousand euros, and in 2021 238 thousand euros. Result for the financial year was steady in February 2018 (loss of three thousand euros) and 2019 (profit of six thousand euros). Their result for the financial year in February 2020 was a loss of 26 thousand euros and in February 2021 the result was profit of 41 thousand euros. They have managed to increase their earnings in 2021 despite the loss of the previous year.

Year	Turnover (thousand euros)	Result for the Financial Year (thousand euros)
2018	303	-3
2019	327	6
2020	261	-26
2021	238	41

TABLE 2 Taloustiedot, Kuopion Seikkailukeskus Oy. Finder.

Competitive Environment

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has direct competitors in Northern Savo who offers the same services as Kuopion Seikkailukeskus. The competitors include:

- Kuopio Water Sports Centre
- Rauhalahti Holiday Centre
- SkiMac Tahko
- Kunnonpaikka Spa Hotel

Kuopio Water Sports Centre was established in 2018 and it is located in Väinölänniemi, Kuopio. Their rental offering consists of kayaks, paddle boards, rowing boats, and E-fatbikes.

The kayaks for one person for one-hour costs 18 euros, and double kayak is 25 euros. The company offers two sizes of paddle boards and a large paddle board. The prices are the same for the regular paddle boards: 90 minutes costs 15 euros, two hours 20 euros and four hours 40 euros. The large paddle board that fits maximum six people costs 50 euros per one hour. The rowing boat rental is 25 euros for one hour, and lastly, E-fatbike costs 25 euros for two hours or 40 euros for the whole day. The rental price of E-fatbike includes a helmet and a lock.

Rauhalahti Holiday Centre is a direct competitor of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus. It is located in Rauhalahti, Kuopio. Rauhalahti rent point is open during the summer and they offer paddle boards, canoes, kayaks, rowing boats, and pedal cars. The price is the same for all of these equipment, 25 euros for two hours.

SkiMac Tahko is located at Tahko, Nilsia. It is part of Skimac Ab Oy concept which was established in 2010 in Helsinki, Finland. Skimac Tahko rents different types of bicycles, paddle boards, canoes and kayaks, water bicycles, and frisbees. The rentals for bicycles are for three or six hours, or for one or two days. The prices vary from 14 euros to 48 euros depending on the type of bicycle. The rental price for paddle board is 25 euros for one hour or 40 euros for two hours. The price for one day is 75 euros and it is possible to rent the board for 5 days. Both canoe and kayak rentals are 25 euros for three hours or 40 euros for six hours.

Kunnonpaikka Spa Hotel is located at Vuorela, Finland and they offer bicycles, one or two person kayaks, canoes, and rowing boats. The rental price for paddle boards are 18 euros for one hour and 28 euros for two hours. The rental price for bicycles is six euros for three hours, both one person and two person kayaks are 15 euros for two hours, canoe is 15 euros for two hours, and the rowing boat 10 euros for two hours.

Economic Environment

According to the Ministry of Finance (27.9.2021), the economy has been recovering rapidly from the COVID-19 pandemic this spring. The growth spurt was triggered by the release of pent-up demand in a situation where the vaccination programme is progressing rapidly, restrictions on business activities are eased, and both households and companies are optimistic about the future. Economic recovery will continue in the autumn, especially in the sectors that are currently subject to COVID-19 restrictions. As a result, economic growth will remain strong during the second half of the year and will continue in 2022. Gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to grow by 3.3 per cent this year, by 2.9 per cent in 2022 and by 1.4 per cent in 2023.

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected Kuopion Seikkailukeskus as well. According to Kalevi Puomilahti (2021), the pandemic has been difficult for the company and the company has no growth aspirations at this time. The aim is to keep the activities the same as before. Net sales have fallen by about 30 per cent during the pandemic.

Because the restrictions are starting to open up and people are still not ready for example to travel a lot, the use of domestic services is likely to start growing and it can affect the economic situation of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus positively.

Technological Environment

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus offers adventure services that do not require a lot of technological usage, so the technological advances do not have a lot of impact on the firm's operations. The technological aspects Kuopion Seikkailukeskus benefits from are different medias on different platforms of the internet and the use of current technology, which enables the company to enhance their activities and create competition between the competitors.

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus uses mostly different social media channels, such as Facebook and Instagram for marketing. In addition, they have advertisements on official channels such as on the marketing website of Kuopio-Tahko and they are involved in the corporate mailing of the Iso-Valkeinen hotel that is located in Päiväranta, Finland. (Kalevi Puomilahti 2021.)

Political and Legal Environment

Because Kuopion Seikkailukeskus is a company that sells their services to consumers, rental conditions must be applied. The conditions mentioned on the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are the following:

"The person renting the equipment hereby agrees to the following terms:

I will see that all the equipment that I have rented is given to me. I will make sure that I have been given the instructions to use the equipment correctly and I will obey the instructions. I commit to return the equipment at the same condition that I received them and therefore I will compensate all the damages caused to the equipment during the rental period. I commit to return the equipment when due and in case I fail to return the equipment on time the owner has right to subject to a late fee (full rent from the exceeding time).

All the reclamations regarding renting or activities must be made known to service provider at the location. We will have the possibility to correct all reclamation right away Possible lawsuits must be directed to local court of Kuopio." (Kuopion Seikkailukeskus)

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus also mentions on their website that the order can be cancelled two weeks before the event free of charge. After this, half of the price of the product will be charged. If the confirmed reservation is cancelled 0-7 working days before the start of the event, it will be invoiced in full.

The conditions must be based on laws such as Consumer Protection Act and Sale of Goods Act, but the company may apply them in a way that does not violate mandatory legislation. If they are contrary to mandatory legislation, then the condition becomes null and void. The part "I will make sure that I have been given the instructions to use the equipment correctly and I will obey the instructions" is on the verge of whether it is void, because new customer with no previous experience must be confident that she or he will be given the necessary instructions though she or he might not even be aware of it. Most customers do not usually read the company's terms in advance or ask to read them on the company's premises.

Sociocultural Environment

According to the Kuopio city website, the population of Kuopio is divided into different age groups in 2020 as follows:

Age	0-6	7-12	13-15	16-18	19-24	25-39	40-64	65-74	75-84	85-
Amount	7656	7370	3573	3751	10760	25386	35612	15051	7894	3157

TABLE 1 Kuopion väestö ja ennuste ikäryhmittäin aikasarja.

The largest age group in Kuopio is the 40-64 years old and there are 35,612 of them, second largest group is 25-39 years old with 25,386 people. Third biggest group is 65-74 years old with 15,051 people and fourth biggest group is 19-24 years old with 10,760 people. Other age groups have under 10,000 people.

According to Kuopio city website, Kuopio city's vision is the following:

"Capital of Good Life- Health, vitality and the richness of everyday life"

The mission of the city of Kuopio:

"Kuopio with its partners creates environments for sustainable growth and good life."

The Kuopio line of action is "Freedom to choose". It is transparent, inspiring, and collaborative, for the benefit of the citizen. The line of action should be visible in all activities, be it customer service or work community. Permission to do otherwise entails creativity and employment of bold new ways of doing things and, what is more, ability to critically assess routine action.

The age demographic tells that the largest age groups in Kuopio are working adults, newly retired and young adults. Kuopio city's vision and mission tells that health is one of the top priorities of good life and the environments are an in an important role to succeed in it. Also, the line of action "Freedom to choose" allows people to choose what they want to do in life.

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has a good sociocultural position in Kuopio, because the largest age groups of Kuopio are their target groups, and the values of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, such as importance of healthy lifestyle, meets the values of the city of Kuopio.

SWOT Analysis

The SWOT analysis provides a summary of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus. After understanding and analyzing the business environment of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus, a SWOT analysis can be executed based on the research done. The four aspects of the SWOT analysis will help the case company to gain a better insight of their internal and external business environment.

Strengths:

- Motivation and attitude towards work in the work community.
- Good locations in the harbor of Kuopio and at Saana.
- Updated website.
- Competitive pricing.
- Updated equipment.
- Wide range of services and rentable equipment.
- Professional staff.

Weaknesses:

- The impact of corona pandemic on the company's profitability and growth.
- Lack of active marketing.
- Lack of professional language on different platforms of media.
- Lack of mission statement.
- Absence of English language on marketing channels.
- Due to the small number of employees in the company, there is not much flexibility at work, for example in cases of sickness.

Opportunities:

- Health and wellness trends keep on growing.
- After corona pandemic, people start using local services again when they are not ready to travel yet.
- Area growth: Kuopio continues to grow, and a lot of new residential areas and houses are being built in the area.
- Population of foreign citizenship is growing in Kuopio.

Threats:

- Competition in the Northern Savo area. Multiple companies offer similar services which can be a threat for the company's profitability.
- Competitiveness: What sets Kuopion Seikkailukeskus apart from other competitors so that customers choose their services?
- Foreigners not finding Kuopion Seikkailukeskus due to the lack of marketing in English.

Marketing Objectives

The following are the marketing objectives of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus.

- Keep the financial situation the same as it is now after the corona pandemic and redesign the intentions to start the intention to grow again in the future.
- Keep the distribution of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus profitable at the two marketplaces: At harbor of Kuopio and at Saana.
- Gain more foreign customers living in Kuopio especially in the future after the corona pandemic.

Marketing Strategies

Target markets

These target markets were defined on the basis of the company's services, who would be interested in the services, and what kind of people they could possibly be. Because the services of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are activities that require courage, some physical fitness and a sense of adventure, and the majority of the respondents of the survey were young adults, the target market is created on the basis of these factors. This section was created by the author of the thesis and its intention is to figure for the company who would be their potential customers.

Consumer markets

Demographics:

- Female, male, and other genders
- Ages: All age groups, mostly young adults, and adults
- Lives in Kuopio

Psychographics:

- Interested in healthy lifestyle, adventures, and wellbeing
- Wants to spend money on experiencing new things instead of purchasing products
- Wants to do and experience new things with family and friends or alone

Media habits:

- Uses internet as the primary source of news and entertainment, but casually watches television, listens to radio, or reads newspapers and magazines.
- When they use social media, they use mostly Facebook and Instagram. Youtube videos are watched occasionally.

Organizational Markets

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus is a reseller, which according to Solomon (2018, 205), means that they buy finished goods for the purpose of reselling, renting, or leasing to consumers and other businesses. Kuopion Seikkailukeskus purchases their equipment, such as paddle boards, fat-bikes, kayaks, canoes, camping equipment, water-skis, and wakeboards, in order to rent them to the customers.

Reselling is a good choice for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus because they would not have the resources to manufacture their own rental products, and they can only focus on customers and serving them.

Marketing Mix

Product

- Kuopion Seikkailukeskus already has a wide range of different summer outdoor equipment.
- Ideas for possible product additions are the following:

Roller skates and the equipment for protection:

The popularity of roller skating has slowly started to rise after the early 2000s. Roller skating can be executed alone or with company and it is a challenging but fun exercise method. Roller skating is popular indoor activity in some countries, but in Finland it is known only as an outside activity, which for foreigners especially could be a totally new experience.

Equipment for Nordic walking

Nordic walking, as the name suggests, is only known in the Nordic countries and although it may look special to a foreigner, it is an effective and fun form of walking. Nordic walking requires only the walking sticks which would be easy to rent as it can be practiced anywhere.

Electric scooter and the equipment such as helmet

Electric scooters have risen to great popularity over the past summer. People are not willing to pay large sums for their own electric scooter, so renting them in the summer would be a good and profitable idea. Kuopion Seikkailukeskus already has an active customer base who could be interested trying the electric scooters. It could be a fun way to tour Kuopio. The scooter is rented for 2 hours and it needs to be returned to the rent point in time, or extra fee will be paid. The area of use would also be limited. Logos of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus could be placed at the scooters.

Rowing boat, paddles, and safety vests

Rowing boats are especially popular with Finns, but they are rented surprisingly little. Although most Finns have sometimes rowed, it would be a new experience for foreigners living in Finland. The rental would include the boat, the paddles and safety vests.

Price

- Compared to other competitors, the rental prices of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are the highest in Kuopio.
- If the rental product manufacturers are expensive, there possibly would be an option to monitor less expensive producers. Lower cost producers could lower the rental prices and lower rental prices could attract more customers.
- If the rental point at harbor would be open on Sundays and Saana's point was open all summer, it would probably be possible to lower the rental prices with the additional income.
- Discounts and various campaigns would increase competitiveness.
- Consumers values when choosing a service provider: For example, location and customer service can be the aspects on which the customer makes the choice.
- All in all, because the current prices are competitive, it is more profitable for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus to focus on investing in other aspects, such as customer service and advertising.



FIGURE 9. Considerations in Setting Price. (Solomon, 2018, CC BY)

Place

- The locations of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus are very accessible for the customers, during the summer people like to spend time in the harbor of Kuopio and in Saana and they are easy to access through the eyes of new customers and also people such as foreigners who do not necessarily speak fluent Finnish.
- Rent of water skis and wakeboards could also be available at Saana's point, as Saana is located by the lake and people arrive there by boat.
- Changes could be made to the opening hours: Although people in Kuopio are active during the weekdays in summer, the weekend is the most popular activity time. It could possibly be worth keeping the rental point open on Sundays as well. For example, the store could be closed from Monday to Tuesday instead of Sunday to Monday.
- Saana's rental point is open with advance booking only, which can cause loss to the company. If Saana's point had a full-time employee during the summer, people who arrive without planning could go out to try the different activities.

Promotion

- In the past, Kuopion Seikkailukeskus has marketed in social media channels such as Facebook and Instagram, and in official channels such as the website of Kuopio-Tahko. They are also involved in the marketing of their collaboration partners such as at the business mailing of hotel Iso-Valkeinen.
- The pages on Facebook and Instagram have gained a good amount of visibility, but content in English is needed to gain more foreign customers. The English posts could be positioned under the regular Finnish post. Here is an example:

”Tervetuloa myymäläämme!”

English below

”Welcome to our store!”

- In addition to these posts, promotional videos would be a good addition to the business. They could be made on YouTube and shared from there to other channels. English subtitles would be added to the videos.
- More outdoor advertising in Finnish and English.

Implementation and Control

Action Plan

Action Items	Beginning Date	Ending Date
1. Add the new rental equipment (roller skates, Nordic walking equipment, electric scooters, and rowing boats to the store	May 1st 2022	September 30th 2022
2. Campaign at the beginning of summer and discounts at the end of the summer	Week before the summer season opening in 2022	Week before the summer season ending in 2022
3. Identify low-cost manufacturer options for product developments if needed for the summer 2023	January 1st 2022	December 30th 2022
4. Addition of water-skis and wakeboards to Saana's rental point	First week of June 2022	September 30th 2022
5. Changes in the opening hours at Saana's rental point	At the beginning of summer season 2022	The last day of summer season 2022
6. Addition of English language to marketing	At the beginning of spring 2022	Ongoing
7. Add new advertisements (promotional videos, social media advertisements, outdoor advertisements) for summer season	April 1st 2022	September 30th 2022

FIGURE 10. Action Plan for Kuopion Seikkailukeskus.

Measurement and Control Strategies

In order for the marketing plan to be successful and to fill the goal, which is that the foreigners living in Kuopio find the company, it is important and necessary that the Kuopion Seikkailukeskus pays attention to the issues mentioned in the plan. These issues include the lack of English in different marketing channels, use of professional vocabulary in advertising, addition of different campaigns and discounts, and addition of new rental equipment at the store. Various analyses, such as competitive analysis and customer research, need to be done to keep the company aware of its customers and the competitors.

Research

Kuopion Seikkailukeskus should actively monitor the different trends on the internet, because it can bring awareness to the company about their target groups and what people are interested in today. It is worth actively monitoring the behavior of competitors on the internet and their advertisements there and elsewhere because Kuopion Seikkailukeskus will keep up with current trends through it as well. Monitoring competitor's prices and product developments is also necessary.

APPENDIX 2: SURVEY

Survey

The purpose of this survey is to determine if the foreigners living in Kuopio are interested in the summer activities offered by Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center). This survey is part of a thesis research and was prepared by a student at Savonia UAS. The survey is answered anonymously and takes less than 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for participating!

1. How old are you?

Under 18

18-25

26-35

36-45

46-60

Over 60

2. Gender

Female

Male

Other

3. What is your foreign background?

4. How long have you lived in Kuopio?

0-6 months

6-12 months

1-2 years

2-5 years

5-10 years

Longer than 10 years

5. Have you tried any summer activities in Kuopio?

Yes

No

6. What activities have you tried?**7. How many times during the summer do you try these activities?**

Once

2 to 3 times

3 to 5 times

More than 5 times

8. How would you rate Kuopio's summer activity offering?

1 Very bad

2 Bad

3 Not good or bad

4 Good

5 Very good

9. What do you consider important when choosing summer activity provider?

1 Strongly disagree, 2 Disagree, 3 Neither agree or disagree, 4 Agree, 5 Strongly agree

Location

Recommendations

Quality of customer service

Family or other group activities

Accessibility

Price

10. Put the medias in order from your most used to least used

Newspapers or magazines

Television

Google or other search engine

E-mail

Social media

Radio

11. Put the social media platforms in order from your most used to least used

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

TikTok

Snapchat

Youtube

12. Have you ever heard of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center?)

Yes

No

13. Where have you heard of them?

Newspapers or magazine

Television

Google or other search engine

E-mail

Social media

Radio

Outdoor advertisement such as billboards

You heard about them from another person

14. On which media platform would you like to see the advertisements of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center)?

Newspapers or magazines

Television

Google or other search engine

E-mail

Social media

Radio

Outdoor advertisements

15. On which social media platforms would you like to see the advertisements of Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center)?

Facebook

Instagram

Twitter

TikTok

Snapchat

Youtube

16. Would you be interested in the following activities offered by Kuopion Seikkailukeskus (Adventure Center)?

Paddle boarding

Fat-biking

Kayaking

Camping

Water-skiing

Wakeboarding

17. How likely would you try these activities?

1 Not at all likely, 2 Not likely, 3 I don't know, 4 Likely, 5 Extremely likely

Paddle boarding

Fat-biking

Kayaking

Camping

Water-skiing

Wakeboarding