

Active Breaks in Business Meetings: Recreational and Team Building Activities

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<p>The objective of this thesis was to study the market of recreational and team building activities for HUONE, a finish company based in Helsinki. This involved interviewing experts who gave recommendations on how to integrate team building or recreational activities into meetings. Afterwards the commissioners' clients were asked for their preferences in said sectors. The goal was to enable the commissioner to decide which products and services to implement into their portfolio. The paper consists therefore of two research types; a qualitative study and a quantitative survey.</p> <p>The theoretical framework of the paper introduces business meetings and some of their challenges. The challenges occurring inside the meeting created by the participants are focused on. Next to that team building and recreational activities (e.g. yoga, meditation and mindfulness) are presented.</p> <p>The results of the expert interviews showed that the activities are best integrated into meeting breaks. This way the break can contribute to the effectiveness of the meeting. Efficient breaks are known as active breaks. Cooperation exercises, chair yoga, laughter yoga or meditation were found to be the easiest to integrate.</p> <p>The clients clearly prefer chair yoga. Laughter yoga, aijä-yoga and business meditation are of lower interest. Professional massages are welcome and preferred over instructed pair massages. Special private units are more welcome than services running all day. The clients are interested in whole and half days of team building. They are preferred over short integrated units of team building. The most preferred products are healthy snacks. Visual tools such as the LEGO SERIOUS edition bricks are preferred over construction packages and visual brainstorming tools.</p> <p>The recommendation for the commissioner is to take chair yoga, professional massages and whole or half days of team building into the portfolio. Healthy snacks and visual tools should be offered as well. Yoga instructions are of medium interest to the clients but easy to be integrated, so should be considered.</p>	
<p>Keywords business meetings, recreational activities, team building</p>	

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1 Introduction

The following chapter provides an introduction to topic and report. Afterwards the terminology is defined.

1.1 Topic and report

A brief search on the Internet for information about meetings tends to give two main opinions: first, people believe that they spend too much time in meetings and second, people believe that meetings are generally inefficient. Provided are statistics on inefficiency and tips on how to avoid meetings. They list how long people stay focused and when to make breaks or close meetings. They recommend to meet as little as possible for as short as possible. (EM 2004, YAM 2010.)

When searching further meeting trends can be found. Benchmark Hospitality for example states that team building is especially important in 2013. In the year's trend forecast for meetings and conferences, it is considered as one of the top ten trends. (Benchmark Hospitality 2013.) Personal meetings are still important. That is why after this search the following questions emerged:

What challenges make meetings inefficient? Can meetings be made more efficient by integrating recreational and team building activities in breaks? How could they be integrated? What experiences do experts have in that sector? What preferences do clients have in that sector?

These questions led to the idea of writing this bachelor thesis, which is commissioned by HUONE, an event venue from Helsinki. The company provides event space to private and business customers. The meetings and events are held in various themed rooms. The venue opened in January 2013 and is constantly increasing its number of clients. They offer meeting facilities and packages in the business sector. (Ollila 2013.)

Additionally the company is trying to integrate different leisure activities into their offers. The goal is to further extend the range of products and remain innovative. There-

fore they wanted a quantitative survey of their clients to find out preferred preferences. (Ollila 2013.)

After the introduction the reader will find the theory chapters. The theory is split into business meetings, recreational and team building activities. After the theory two research parts will follow: A qualitative study and a quantitative survey.

The qualitative study was conducted among experts on recreational and team building activities. The results are introduced together with the respective theory in Chapter 3. This way of presentation is used because they support the theory. Furthermore they provide additional information about benefits, requirements and execution of activities. They helped to create a quantitative survey for the thesis commissioner.

This will be followed by a chapter about the used methodology. The methodology chapter will cover both research activities. Afterwards, the results of the quantitative research will be presented. This survey was conducted among the customers of the commissioner. The aim was to show client preferences. The survey enables the commissioner to make further marketing decisions.

In the conclusion the main findings are summarized and recommendations for the commissioner are given.

1.2 Key words

In this bachelor thesis two terms are used: team building and recreational activities.

The dictionary Oxford Online is referring to recreation as: “Definition of **recreation**: *noun* - activity done for enjoyment when one is not working.” (Oxford Online 2013a.)

The term ‘recreational activity’ is used in this thesis to describe activities that help to relax and regain energy. These activities are executed in work breaks; not after work.

The online Business Dictionary is referring to team building as:

“team building - Definitions (2):

1. Philosophy of job design in which employees are viewed as members of interdependent teams instead of as individual workers.
2. Ability to identify and motivate individual employees to form a team that stays together, works together, and achieves together.” (Business Dictionary 2013.)

The term ‘team building` is used in this thesis to describe activities that help to improve team work. These activities train the soft skills of individuals. This strengthens the work together in a team.

While the introduction provided clarification on the topic, report and terminology, Chapter 2 will present the theory about business meetings.

2 Business meetings

This chapter presents the theory about business meetings. First, the definitions are cleared. Second, the challenges of meetings are listed.

Meetings in general belong to the MICE sector. The MICE industry is defined by the IAPCO (International Association of Professional Congress Organizers) as Meeting, Incentive, Conference and Exhibition sector. (IAPCO 2012, in ICCA 2012.)

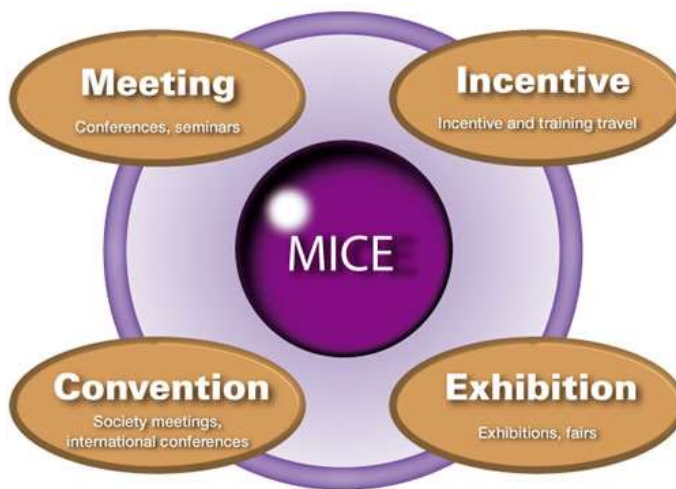


Figure 1 MICE (Hitachi Travel Bureau 2010.)

The MICE market does not only include the business sector. Annual conferences and regular meetings might also be held by private associations and organisations. Incentives on the other hand usually need an employer-employee relation. Exhibitions are held in both sectors: business and private.

According to ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) the new professional term for the MICE sector is the Meetings Industry. It includes the four mentioned fields in the private and business sector. (ICCA 2012.)

2.1 Definitions and characteristics

When talking about business meetings the private sector is already excluded. There are various definitions for business meetings.

According to IAPCO, meetings are a “coming together of a number of people in one place, to confer or carry out a particular activity. Frequency: can be on an ad hoc basis or according to a set pattern”. (IAPCO 2012.)

IAPCO define conferences as “participatory meeting designed for discussion, fact-finding, problem solving and consultation. [...] Though not inherently limited in time, conferences are usually of limited duration with specific objectives”. (IAPCO 2012.)

The Oxford Online dictionary offers similar statements:

“Definition of **meeting**: *noun*

1 an assembly of people for a particular purpose, especially for formal discussion
2 a situation when two or more people meet, by chance or arrangement” (Oxford Online 2013b.)

“Definition of **conference**: *noun*

a formal meeting of people with a shared interest, typically one that takes place over several days” (Oxford Online 2013c.)

From above it can be concluded that all conferences are meetings. Meeting, on the other hand is a general term for situations in which people are coming together. They need special purposes.

Next to the definitions different characteristics can be ascribed to meetings. Fenich names time, place and people as possible classifications. (Fenich 2008, 9 – 12.)

Meetings can be held over half a day or a day. It is also possible to meet only for a few hours. According to Fenich, conferences are usually longer than meetings. In his opin-

ion, time is not the most important factor to define meetings. The time spent depends on the purpose. (Fenich 2008, 9 – 12.)

Besides time, meetings can be categorized according to places. There are different meeting venues. Meetings can be held on or off-site of a company property. If the meeting is not on company property, external meeting venues are involved. Fenich lists different kinds of external meeting venues i.e.: restaurants, hotels, conference centres, specialised venues, etc. He further states that the venue can be in or outdoors. (Fenich 2008, 87 – 124.)

Hartl gives a statement for the categorisation according to people. He defines business meetings as “with customers, clients, colleagues, etc.; often require presentations”. (Hartl 2003, 1.)

This shows that not only the venue can be external but also the participants. External meetings involve external attendants. Internal meetings are with employees of one particular company. The number of participants influences the size, but not the definition of the meeting. This can be concluded based on Fenich and Hartl.

The number of virtual meetings is increasing nowadays. Virtual meetings bring according to experts, advantages and disadvantages. For example, Fenich states that the benefits of face-to-face meetings are still outweighing the ones of virtual meetings. (Fenich 2008, 21 – 22.)

All mentioned characteristics are not essential to describe meetings. The experts agree that the key element to describe a meeting is the purpose.

The reason to hold external meetings can be for sales or promotional reasons etc. This thesis focuses on the company’s inside view. The main reasons to organise a company meeting internally is to inform, consult, solve problems or make decisions. (Skills You Need 2011 – 2013.)

Appleby agrees with that. She adds that the purpose of a meeting can also be the bringing together of members or employees of a company. This applies if they are spread over the country or the world. People from different departments or company positions also fall into this category. (Appleby 2005, 1.)

Meetings can be defined by their purpose. This is mentioned on the Internet platform 'Skills You Need'. There are three elements a meeting or conference has to have to be considered efficient. Having a distinctive purpose is one of them.

“While meetings may differ in size, content and approach, effective meetings all have the following three elements in common: a distinctive purpose or aim, the use of effective communication and a controlled situation”. (Skills You Need 2011 – 2013.)

The remaining two elements are use of effective communication and a controlled situation. This is listed on the platform and agreed on by Fenich, as well as Appleby. They talk about these three factors as the most defining for efficiency of meetings. (Appleby 2005, 1 – 7; Fenich 2008, 9 – 12.)

Now that the definitions and characteristics of meetings have been cleared, the challenges meetings can face will be mentioned.

2.2 Challenges

As mentioned earlier people spend a lot of their working time in meetings. Online platforms show how much: employees up to 25%, middle management up to 40% and executives up to 80%. Problems in meetings may have significant influences on the meeting outcome. Next to that inefficient meetings are expensive and considered as waste of time. (EM 2004.)

With these facts it becomes clear why inefficient meetings should be avoided. Companies should try to make their meetings efficient.

The three already mentioned factors to make meetings efficient are: a distinctive purpose, use of effective communication and a controlled situation. (Skills You Need 2011 – 2013.)

It can be concluded that if these three points are not considered, a meeting is inefficient. It leads to the three main challenges a meeting can face: indistinctive purpose/aim, ineffective communication and uncontrolled situations.

According to the platform, the lack of purpose is a mistake made before the meeting. It is a mistake made by the meeting planners. Ineffective communication and uncontrolled situations happen inside the meeting. They are the fault of the meeting attendants. (Skills You Need 2011 – 2013.)

Other challenges a meeting can face are provided by Mina. He agrees on the above mentioned and names two parties that can make the mistakes: the meeting attendants and the meeting planners. (Mina 2000, 289-305.)

He lists different mistakes that can occur. He calls them “meeting ailments” (Mina). He categorizes them into six fields: agenda ailments, time management ailments, member commitment ailments, disorder and poor decorum, discussion quality ailments and logistical ailments. (Mina 2000, 289-305.)

Agenda and time management ailments are mistakes in the meeting agenda (e.g. no agenda, too many topics, etc.). According to Mina they are the result of weak planning beforehand. Logistical ailments (e.g. broken equipment, poor audibility, etc.) are mistakes due to poor preparation or facilitation. These mistakes are as well made by the meeting planners. (Mina 2000, 289-305.)

Those three ailments are not relevant for this thesis. This paper focuses on the challenges occurring inside the meeting which are created by the participants.

Table 1 below gives a short overview about the three remaining relevant challenges. Categories and problems are named and definitions are provided.

Table 1 Meeting challenges (Schweiger under assumption of Mina 2000, 289-305.)

Category	Problem	Definition
Discussion quality ailments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - predictability - repetition - aimless statements/discussions - setbacks - deadlock 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ thinking in pattern ➤ repeating pattern ➤ stuck conversations ➤ negative progress ➤ stuck progress
Disorder and poor decorum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - chaos talking - barging in/interruption - side conversations 	➤ disrespect of conversational rules and behaviour
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - domination/patronizing - stubborn nagging - verbal abuse - heckling/ insensitivity 	➤ disrespect of other team members
Member commitment ailment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - quiet members - no preparation - broken promises - tardiness/early departure - absences - same volunteers - falling asleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ no interest ➤ no commitment ➤ uncompleted tasks ➤ late arrivals, leave early ➤ no notification ➤ some carry all ➤ afternoon / after meals

Table 1 above leads to the following conclusions:

Mina is agreeing on the previously mentioned statements of the internet platforms. Here, disorder and poor decorum are similar to uncontrolled situations and discussion quality ailments are similar to ineffective communication. Additionally, he adds a third category of challenges: the member committed ailments. The argument of Mina will be now studied more closely.

Discussion quality ailments are ineffective forms of communication. According to Mina the indicators are predictability of solutions, repetition, aimless statements, aimless discussions, conversation setbacks and deadlock of conversation. (Mina 2000, 289-305.)

Disorder and poor decorum are uncontrolled situations. Possible indicators can be chaos talking, barging in/interruptions, side conversations, domination/patronizing of others, frowning, stubborn nagging, verbal abuse, heckling or insensitivity. (Mina 2000, 289-305.)

The new category Mina mentions are the member committed ailments. He indicates that they are directly caused by members. They need direct action or omission of participants. Indicators can be quiet members, unprepared members, broken promises, tardiness and early departure, absence, always the same volunteers and members who fall asleep. (Mina 2000, 289-305.)

Possible explanations for use of inefficient communication can be exhaustion and lack of concentration. Possible explanations for disorder and poor decorum can be disrespect of other team members and conversational etiquette. Possible explanations for member committed ailments are team members who are not dedicated to work and team. This could also be an indicator for lack of team spirit.

These occurring difficulties are leading to bigger issues. They can lead to decrease in productivity or stop forward movement of meetings. Mina agrees with what the internet platforms highlight.

He states that an efficient meeting moves forward with progress. He also points out that meetings are expensive and time is valuable. In order for employees to work harmoniously together he advises to reduce challenges. (Mina 2000, 37.)

There are solutions to decrease these mentioned challenges. Team building for example is a common way to increase team spirit and the work together.

It is common for Swedish companies to organise recreation and health days for employees. It is a way to work against stress and exhaustion. It helps to increase productivity and wellbeing of employees. Finland is nowadays adapting to these ideas, for example with the tykypäivä (company health day sponsored by the government). (Björk 2013.)

Team building and recreation days require time and money. In times of financial crisis, long and time consuming solutions are sometimes not welcome or possible. Breaks need to be considered during the planning stage of the meeting. The best solution would be to make these breaks effective for the company as well.

The next chapter will present some solutions for making meeting breaks more efficient. Those solutions can turn a necessary break into an active break.

This chapter presented the definitions and challenges of business meetings. Meetings can of course suffer from more challenges than the mentioned ones. However these three are under the focus in this thesis.

The next chapter will provide the theory about team building and recreational activities.

3 Active meeting breaks

Chapter 2 listed some challenges that meetings can suffer. This chapter will present the theory of team building and recreational activities. The chapter also includes the results of the qualitative study.

For this study four experts were asked to give their opinions and suggestions. These four experts are introduced below.

Henri Suni is an executive producer of the Finnish companies NiceUp Oy and Hiihoi Oy. They are specialising in event organisation and team building. The company is based in Helsinki and split in two parts: the NiceUp Oy for events and the Hiihoi Oy for team events mainly on water. They produce a variety of events (e.g. social, culture, fun, team building, etc.). (Sunni 2013.)

Maike Hoffmann is a department manager for the German company EventNature. They are specialising in team building events. The company is based in northern Germany and works with adult and youth groups. EventNature has been a supplier for experience based training and development for adults and children for 10 years. The company opened a trainer's academy. The academy is a training place for future team building and nature guides. Next to that they are opening a seminar venue with restaurant and hotel facilities. There they can host and educate big groups of clients (e.g. for meetings). (Hoffmann 2013.)

Both companies are organising team events and have many years of experiences. They both worked with adult groups from a variety of companies. They have experiences with the different ways of integrating team building into the work environment.

Annika Björk is one of the experts for recreational activities. She is working as a freelancer in the health venue Frederikas Fountain in Porvoo. The venue was founded by a number of freelancers with different majors in recreation. They use the economic advantages of working together but independently. The venue is bookable for meetings

with different packages. Not only meeting rooms and catering services are available, but all kinds of recreational activities. She has many years of experience in leading and teaching ways to relax and regain energy. She offers a wide program of activities for private and business groups. (Björk 2013.)

Tommi Lindholm is a corporate coach in a company specialised in individual coaching. J-Impact Oy is a Finnish company based in Helsinki. They train managers and help organisations to become more efficient. They work on the whole organisation to improve it (e.g. finance, social care, team work, etc.). He specialises in the training and communication of leading skills, team building and reflections. He also focuses on mindfulness. (Lindholm 2013.)

During the open interviews, Björk, Hoffmann and Lindholm each mentioned the term 'active break'. They define an active break as something that adds additional value to the meeting. These breaks contain professional exercises and techniques in team building and recreation. They are led by professionals to reach a specific goal (e.g. change of perspective, regain energy, etc.). It benefits the group when continuing work for the day, as certain problems can be worked on. (Björk, Hoffmann, Lindholm 2013.)

Before presenting the results to each topic the terms 'team building' and 'recreational activities' are introduced more specifically.

3.1 Team building

The term team building was referred to as the action of forming a team with individual employees. The expectation of the outcome is a team that works well together and delivers high performance. (Business Dictionary 2013.)

The Dyers mention that the main problems in teams can be because of two reasons: first differences between team members, second differences between team leader and team members. Those differences can cause a low work performance and team building can be a solution to improve this. (Dyer, Dyer & Dyer 2007, 75 – 78.)

They further see team building as an on-going process not a one-time activity. The team reflects on its current function and learns more effective ways of working together. They recommend starting team building for a designated length of time, which is followed by single meetings. The first block should take the longest, these are called 'kick off events'. These events should be followed by single sessions. In the following sessions teams review two things: what changed already and how can they improve. The main goal of team building is to enable the team to see the problems and give them hands on experience how to change them. (Dyer, Dyer & Dyer 2007, 78 – 82.)

The Dyers see team building as a circle; they call it the team building cycle.

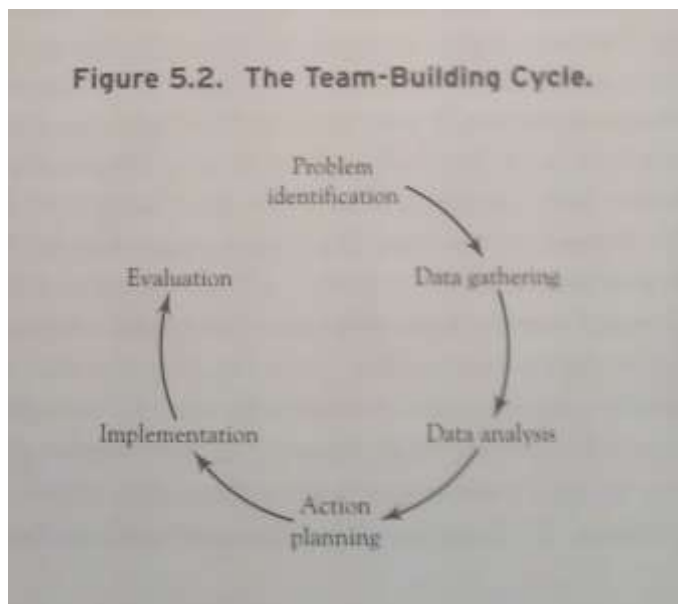


Figure 2 Team building cycle (Dyer, Dyer & Dyer 2007, 83.)

They suggest that every team needs an individual program for their team building process. The individual steps stay the same. Problem identification is when the team discovers that there is a problem. Data gathering is a reflection on why those problems occur. In the data analysis the problems are diagnosed. Here three assumptions will be made: what can be changed together, what individuals need to change and what has to be accepted as unchangeable. In the action planning a strategy is established on how to change these things. The evaluation is the point where they discuss how the change was performed, if goals were met and how the performance improved due to that. The

evaluation is shown as the last point but it can be seen as the start of a new session of development. (Dyer, Dyer & Dyer 2007, 83 – 114.)

The Dyers see the team building process as a circle. Kick-off events are designed to start this process. These events need follow ups. To achieve real goals they recommend a follow up time period over several months or even years.

Lots of companies organise kick-off events. During these events the groups participate in activities. The activities are designed to show the team how efficient they can be if they work together. According to the journalist Heathfield they can include ice breakers, discussion topics, games, cooperative assignments and group brainstorming. (Heathfield 2013.)



Figure 3 Overcoming obstacles together (HSG Volksberg 2013.)

Figure 3 shows a typical exercise in which the whole team has to overcome a barrier. For one person this task would not be possible but together the team can manage it.

There are also a lot of exercises created to raise the trust in one another. Event companies are listing different games where people are lead blindfolded. The following example is also popular. It is called trust-fall. One team member at a time lets him or herself fall backwards from a small height into the arms of the other colleagues. This exer-

cise is meant to show that the individuals can rely on each other. (mein-ausflug.ch 2013.)



Figure 4 Trust-fall exercise (mein-ausflug.ch 2013.)

According to the Dyers, high performing teams are able to recognize the problems that are affecting their performance and initialize change on their own. This would be the ideal outcome of the team building process. (Dyer, Dyer & Dyer 2007, 89.)

Below are the results of the expert interviews. Statements to the requirements and benefits of team buildings can be found. This is followed by the possibilities of combining team building and business meetings.

3.1.1 Requirements

During the interview the experts were talking mostly about team building kick-off events. They listed different requirements that must be fulfilled for efficiency. The requirements are: neutral ground, in depth briefing, guidance through the exercise, clear goals, enough time and reflection. The opinions differ on the time component.

Hoffmann states that EventNature prefers to organise excursions in the natural environment that can last days. During these excursions the participants get to know each other on a whole new level. She specifically mentions how important the preparation

and reflection are. That way the achieved goals can be taken back into work life. She states that the goals need to be set accurately beforehand. (Hoffmann 2013.)

The minimum time Suni spends for those kick-off events is half a day. Firstly he is convinced that this is the most efficient way of team building; secondly because his company typically organises team events on water which takes time. For him the goals that are set decide the amount of needed time. If enough time is taken the participants also get the chance to sit together afterwards on a more casual level. (Suni 2013.)

Lindholm explains that the more time the company spends for team building, the better the results will be. He highlights once more the importance of accurate briefing beforehand and intensive reflection after the single exercises. The absolute minimum of time he suggests is three hours per unit. (Lindholm 2013.)

3.1.2 Benefits

The experts agreed that if executed correctly and according to requirements, team building benefits work groups. The team can work better together. The work can be more harmonious.

Lindholm states that through team building people get to know each other better and it helps them to communicate. Through a change of perspective, they learn to understand each other and are able to sympathise.

Within the team building process colleagues learn about each other so they can grow together. Through his experience work groups with team building experiences grow together faster than those without it. (Lindholm 2013.)

For Suni, the biggest benefit of team building kick-off events is breaking the routine. The colleagues are able to get to know each other in a different context. He highlights how important it is for people to experience something together. This way tension in teams can be released. The work environment can be relieved from stress and therefore function better. (Suni 2013.)

For Hoffmann, team building exercises are witnessing the team process under real circumstances on neutral ground. They also reflect on it. According to her the results of team building benefit the daily work routine. Team building is influencing this routine in a positive way. (Hoffmann 2013.)

3.1.3 Integration possibilities

All experts agreed that the implementation of team building into meetings is complicated. They all believe that team building kick-off events should be held separately from meetings. They conclude that the requirements team building activities are expected to fulfill are not compatible with the meeting environment.

Lindholm additionally mentions that the daily concentration of people is limited. He points out team building exercises and meetings need concentration. Combining both would be too much for the participants. He would only combine work and team building sessions in meetings about the team (e.g. behavior, working together). (Lindholm 2013.)

Suni recommends combining half day team building kick-off events with meetings. In that way there is still space for a meeting during the other half of the day. He states that usually companies combine team building packages with leisure activities. (Suni 2013.)

Lindholm and Suni point out that it is possible to combine team building kick-off events and meetings in half a day, or to allocate a full day. On the other hand they suggest that integrating short segments of team building into meetings is not helpful.

Hoffmann agrees on the time and concentration argument, but mentions a possibility for integration. She sees benefits of integrating cooperation exercises into meetings. This could create active meeting breaks. (Hoffmann 2013.)

Cooperation exercises are exercises in which a team is confronted with a problem that can only be solved by the group. In the exercise people can learn about each other by

fulfilling simple tasks. By implementing those exercises into meetings, active breaks can be created. People are encouraged to change their perspective and try to understand other team members. In the reflection section the change of perspective can be copied to situations from the meeting. This may help to understand specific situations better. (Hoffmann 2013.)

Hoffmann said cooperation exercises have team building characteristics. Kick-off events usually combine many of these exercises. They highlight where there may be weaknesses within the team and how to overcome them. The single exercises on the other hand are shorter than the whole event day. Integrating those activities into meetings is therefore easier. They are not able to solve deep sitting problems, but they are a time and cost saving way to help people focus again on the team. Additionally she points out that they cheer up the mood by giving the people something practical to do. (Hoffmann 2013.)

There are various exercises, one of them being the stone bridge. In this exercise the team has to overcome a certain distance between two fixed points. They are only allowed to step on the given steps, which are limited. All team members have to cross. Nobody can be left behind. The distance and the steps vary with the team size. They cannot jump and there are not enough steps to easily cross. This encourages them to problem solve and work as a team. Only when all members make it to the other side, the task is completed. (Hoffmann 2013.)



Figure 5 Stone bridge exercise (OCT 2013.)

Real team building has many requirements to fulfil and is a long process. It can be concluded that it is possible to combine team building kick-off events and meetings. A day or half a day would be the best time frame for that. Because of this the clients of the commissioner were asked if they were interested in whole or half day team building packages. Hoffmann suggested offering the clients cooperative projects. This suggestion influenced some of the questions in the questionnaire.

3.2 Recreational activities

Recreation was referred to as activity outside of work which is done for enjoyment. (Oxford Online 2013a.)

In this thesis the term is used to describe activities that help to relax and regain energy. When studying the market a variety of these activities can be found. Below the thesis is focusing on yoga, meditation and mindfulness. All these activities clean the mind by focusing on something that allows the brain to rest. According to experts this helps to regain energy.

According to Björk, yoga in its modern form has existed for around 2000 years. Yoga as a lifestyle gives rules on how to live in inner and outer peace within the environment. This contributes to living a healthy life. In the 70's there was a big yoga movement. Since then yoga is part of a whole new lifestyle. There are different forms of yoga all reaching different goals. The form of yoga that helps people to reach a meditational state is called hatha yoga. This meditational state is reached through physical exercises combined with breathing exercises. When performing this form of yoga people go through a meditational phase in the beginning and in the end. The middle part is filled with physical exercises that are a medium level of exertion. (Björk 2013.)



Figure 6 Yoga (Pizer 2013.)

Also the author Pizer follows Björks statements closely. She describes that yoga can have different forms and has a long tradition. She mentions that the modern version of yoga has the goal of uniting mind, body and spirit. A mental and physical balance should be created. For achieving this union the meditation and the physical part go hand in hand. The meditational state is not an easy state to reach so the body needs to be prepared with certain physical exercises. This way the mind can let go easier. The different exercises that are executed are called yoga poses. Through performing yoga poses people will develop strength and flexibility. If the positions are changed in a quick order it creates heat. If they are changed in a slow order it creates relaxation. (Pizer 2013.)

As said, yoga can include meditation. Meditation on the other hand can also be executed separately. It is an activity that allows the mind to rest. In a comfortable position the person tries to reach the meditational state. In this state the outside world is shut out. People try to reach it through breathing within themselves and stopping the outside world for a moment. There are several techniques that can help with this. (Björk 2013.)

According to an author from an Indian newspaper, meditation is typically performed in the meditation position. The person sits comfortably cross-legged on the floor, the

hands are laying relaxed on the knee. The eyes are closed. By increasing the volume of breath the person tries to calm down and concentrate the mind. (Remedios 2013.)



Figure 7 Meditation (Remedios 2013.)

Websites on the other hand mention that mediation can have various forms and position only slightly matters. Meditation is about the activity not the position; it is about focusing on that sole activity. The meditational state can only be reached when the mind is free of all thoughts. This is achieved when all thoughts are focusing only on one activity, e.g. breathing. Controlling that breath and not thinking about anything else needs a high level of concentration. Regularly practiced it will increase the ability to concentrate in daily life. (healthandyoga 2012.)

Where yoga and meditation can be seen as exercises, mindfulness is a complete life concept. It includes and reaches through to all parts of the daily life. Next to yoga and meditation other exercises and concepts are included to live a life of awareness. Experts call mindfulness the concept of being aware of everything around oneself. It helps the people to live in peace with themselves and the environment. (Björk 2013.)

Psychology today describes mindfulness close to the statements of Björk. It calls it a state of active and open attention on the present. They believe that people who are aware of the present will live in the moment. People will more actively be able to live their lives. (Psychology today 2013.)

3.2.1 Benefits

The experts state that recreational activities benefit in general people's health. They both agree that therefore integrating those activities into meeting breaks will benefit the attendants.

Lindholm mentions that the time a person can concentrate is limited. According to him people can be active and creative for 3.5 - 4 h per day. He recommends making breaks after 1.5 h of concentrated work. He sees high benefits in using active breaks in meetings to regain concentration and energy. He highlights that the quality of the break is influencing the attention of the people in the next part of the meeting. (Lindholm 2013.)

Björk believes that in daily work life people tend to concentrate and stress too much. According to her the need for stress releasing activities increased especially over the last few years. She recommends cleaning the mind from time to time. She sees various benefits in allowing the employees to breathe again during the work day, this way people will regain energy and have better concentration. According to her they learn to focus on one thing at a time. They become better in handling stressful situations and stress in general. She has plenty of experience with work groups executing recreational activities. Due to her experience she mentions that after active breaks people tend to be happier and refreshed. She thinks that concentration, work productivity and the ability to solve problems seem to increase. (Björk 2013.)

The experts are convinced that recreational activities which are integrated into meeting breaks benefit the attendants. Their recommendations and suggestions for integration are presented below.

3.2.2 Integration possibilities

Both experts talked about actively using breaks to regain energy.

Lindholm points out that attention is limited and breaks are taken seldom nowadays. He believes that it is important to give the people the needed break, quality refreshments and mandatory fresh air. He highlights the importance of allowing the brain to rest once in a while. He sees recreational activities as better suited for meeting breaks than team building exercises. (Lindholm 2013.)

In Björks opinion combining full and half days of recreation with meetings or conferences benefits the work environment. Integrating those exercises on a regular basis will benefit the work group in the long term. Due to her experience she would recommend short introductions of yoga, meditation or mindfulness combined with practical exercises. This would enable the people to rest actively on their own and use their breaks in the future to regain more energy. (Björk 2013.)

She highlights that the program always depends on the group schedule and the goals the group wants to achieve. If they cannot allow a full or half day of recreation the technics can be led in short breaks during the day. According to Björk, breaks of 30 - 45 min can still be turned into active breaks. (Björk 2013.)

She recommends integrating chair yoga, laughter yoga or mediation.

Typically yoga is done on the floor. The environment of a meeting is generally formal and people usually wear suits. Chair yoga consists of different exercises that are all performed on chairs. This form of yoga is good for the business atmosphere as the attendants do not have to go down on the floor. During the 40 min activity they can take their business jackets off, enabling them to move easier. Making the participants feel more comfortable one-way slippers can be provided. According to Björks experience it is very well accepted among meeting attendants. It perfectly fits into breaks and helps with focusing and concentrating. Additionally it helps to relax the body physically during long days of sitting. (Björk 2013.)



Figure 8 Chair yoga (Chiropraktik Goettingen 2013.)

Laughter yoga is another form of yoga the expert recommends for integration. It is a good icebreaker between people. It is meant to open up the attendants. It warms them up and they can let go of stress and tension. Laughing relaxes and enhances endorphins. It also lowers the stress hormone cortisol. After laughing people tend to feel good and relaxed. By doing different exercises acupressure points in the hands get involved as well. (Björk 2013.)

During the laughter yoga people walk inside the room and do different exercises. One exercise is to establish eye contact with others across the room or clap hands. It is a playful way of laughing together. People smile at each other or laugh together in different ways. During a half an hour break it can be used to relax. If executed for a longer time it is able to release tension between colleagues. It provides a way out for long stored emotions. The expert explains that laughing is close to the emotion crying and opens up people deeply. Usually it is well accepted among people; some may also prefer to do the exercises without laughing. (Björk 2013.)



Figure 9 Laughter yoga (Carlyle 2013.)

Meditation is also a good way to make active breaks. Meditation can easily fit the groups' timetable and breaks can be made when needed. It can be performed on chairs to maintain the business atmosphere. Breaks of 30 – 40 min are a good way to regain energy and clean the mind. (Björk 2013.)



Figure 10 Business meditation (Cuesta 2013.)

Chair yoga, laughter yoga and meditation are the best activities to integrate into work breaks. These results were used to create the questions for the following questionnaire. The comment by Lindholm about qualitative good refreshments was also used.

3.3 Trend forecast

The experts were asked to give a short trend forecast of their sector. This question was supposed to give further ideas to the commissioner.

Hoffmann and Suni agree that the term team building is not handled clearly anymore. They see a trend emerging in the fun sector. According to them team building is becoming less serious. The real team building circle is losing importance to the clients. Mostly kick-off events are held. (Hoffmann, Suni 2013.)

Suni explains that companies nowadays rather want to come together and celebrate. These occasions are less serious than the team building circle. Real team building is still held but separated from the mentioned fun events. The term team building is wrongly used in this context. (Suni, 2013.)

Hoffmann agrees with that, but states that the term team building is nowadays over used. All events that are held off-site are called team building events. According to her the separation between fun events and team building events should be clearer. She sees the future trend in incentives and kick-off events. She agrees that fun and entertainment are focused on nowadays. For her it is not possible to really work on problems in the mentioned environment. (Hoffmann, 2013.)

Lindholm and Björk believe that recreational activities become more important for companies. They agree that this sector is becoming more popular as well.

Björk believes that companies will take more action in the recreational sector. She sees a need for awareness. According to her the mentioned Finish tykypäivä is a very good step to take. She calls it an excellent way to cooperate with companies. She points out that the demand is visible but it is a question of how to sell the offer. Business groups are very demanding and sceptic. Opening the purpose of the exercises might help to sell it. In her opinion business groups are more traditional and not up for current trends. They want recreation but in a settled manner. Explaining exactly what the participants should expect helps to sell the offer. Sometimes giving the things a new name will also help. Calling chair yoga for example business yoga or for male groups Äjjiä-yoga will create familiar associations. They will identify themselves with the exercise. (Björk, 2013.)

Björk offers recreational activities for business groups in the area of Helsinki. The feedback she got about the exercises was always positive. She sees great potential for these activities in the future. Recreation and letting the mind rest becomes more and more important in business life. This can be a good attempt to help prevent stress caused diseases (e.g. burn-out, etc.). (Björk 2013.)

Lindholm additionally states that mindfulness is even becoming more important inside team building.

He points out that a current trend inside team building is awareness. The exercises nowadays are more focused on discussions and communication than the physical part. The team building exercises are becoming more mindful. They raise the awareness of peoples' positions inside teams. They help colleagues to understand each other and create a common ground. (Lindholm, 2013.)

Chapter 3 presented the results of the qualitative study. It showed experts' opinions about team building and recreation combined with the respective theory. The chapter summarised suggestions and possibilities for integrating activities into meeting breaks. Additionally it provided a trend forecast. The next chapter will present the research methodologies of this thesis.

4 Methodology

This chapter presents the research methodologies of the thesis.

According to Silverman, the problem and the aim of a research define the research methodology. He points out that different types of data requires different approaches to be collected. (Silverman 2010, 5-16.)

Rosnow and Rosenthal state that a research can have two basic methodologies: quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative research focuses on the quality of data. It is asking how things are done and what they are like. Quantitative research focuses on the quantity of data. It is asking for percentages or numbers. (Rosnow & Rosenthal 1999, in McLean 2012, 308.)

In this thesis both methodologies have been used. The nature of the questions required this. A qualitative study was conducted to get expert opinions on recreational and team building activities. The study also showed ways of integrating them into meeting breaks. The results of the study helped to create questions for the following quantitative survey. This survey aimed to show the preferences of the commissioners clients. Below both are discussed.

Combining both methodologies is called triangulation. (Cooper & Schindler 2006, 219.)

4.1 Qualitative research

Qualitative research answers the questions how or why. Silverman additionally points out that for those questions the quantitative approach would be limited. The qualitative methodology should be used if the objective is to study the human experience in depth. (Silverman 2010, 118 – 119.)

McLeod adds that qualitative research is used to generate new theories and hypotheses. It is used to get a deeper understanding of the object and its details. (McLeod 2008, 2-3.) Qualitative research according to McLean comes along with in depth data collection. It produces rich and meaningful results. (McLean 2012, 309.)

The aim of the study was to gain a deeper understanding of the activities and their benefits. The opinions and experiences of experts were collected. Individual recommendations for integration were asked. The subject of the study was human experience. That is why the qualitative approach was used.

According to Silverman the success of research is depending on its' strategy. After the topic is set, the methodology has to be defined adequately. Then the method of data collection can be chosen dependent on the used methodology. (Silverman 2010, 121 – 125.) Different qualitative data collection methods are: observation, textual analysis, transcripts and interviews. (Silverman 2010, 123.)

McNamara agrees with that and adds that for business research case studies and analysis of focus groups are used. He names them as popular research methods in the qualitative methodology. For Silverman they are only subcategories. (McNamara 2013a.).

Silverman points out that these different methods are used in quantitative and qualitative research. According to their different nature they have a different appearance in both methodologies. (Silverman 2010, 123.)

4.1.1 Qualitative interviews

Qualitative interviews have been used in this thesis to collect the data for the qualitative research section. According to Silverman, interviews in qualitative attempts have open ended questions and a small sample size. He points out that the research protocol is a set of preformed open ended questions. They are seen as guidelines throughout the interview. Modifying them during the interview is possible. Qualitative interviews should in general be audio recorded and then written down accurately. (Silverman 2010, 189 – 200.)

McNamara again agrees with that. Interviews are used to collect data. That data is used to understand the extent and intensity of the human experience being studied. These interviews are flexible in their execution. (McNamara 2013a.)

In-depth interviews were conducted. The sample consisted of two experts from each field. Two different sets of questions were established; one for recreation experts, one for team building experts.

The questions were used as guidelines. The interviews were conducted in a conversational way. The questions for recreation experts were listed as Appendix 1. The questions for team building experts were listed as Appendix 2.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed down for analysis. Table 2 gives an overview about the details of the interviews and the interviewees.

Table 2 Expert interviews (Schweiger 2013.)

Name	Institution	Position	Date & Time	Via
Henri Suni	NiceUp Oy/ Hiiohoi Oy Helsinki	executive producer in event organisation – team building	15.05.2013 00:18 min	phone interview
Annika Björk	Frederikas Fountain Porvoo	independent trainer for recreational activities	17.05.2013 00:39 min	personal interview in Porvoo
Tommi Lindholm	J-Impact Oy Helsinki	research director & company coaching, mindfulness	21.05.2013 00:28 min	phone interview
Maike Hoffmann	Globetrotter/ EventNature Germany	department manager of team building organisation	20.05.2013 00:19 min	phone interview

4.1.2 Research quality

Guba and Lincoln point out that the traditional model of reliability and validity in qualitative research is not fully respecting the nature of data. Qualitative data is mostly non-numeric, subjective and not repeatable. It is depending on the context and researcher. Both McLeod and Silverman are considering this objection. McLeod is justifying the adoptability of the traditional concept. Silverman is offering a different concept to evaluate the quality of qualitative research. (Guba & Lincoln in McLeod 2008, 3-5; in Silverman 2010, 275 – 291.)

For this concept Silverman cites Spencer. He lists indicators which help to evaluate the quality of the research. These indicators are: adequacy of methodology, reliability of data conduction, verification of theory, clarity of findings and the proof for wider appearance. (Silverman 2010, 293.)

For this part of the research the qualitative methodology can be seen as adequate. The main question was how things are done. The data collection can be seen as reliable as the interviews were recorded and written down accurately. The findings of the research are supported by theory. The used theory is verified by quotations. Experts from different companies and countries came mostly to similar conclusions. This is evidence that the facts are widespread.

According to Silverman, a well-used method to analyse qualitative data is the combination of positivism (facts) and emotionalism (feelings). This happens through the interpretation of the data by the interviewer. The research quality is highly depending on this analysis. (Silverman 2010, 225.)

All findings of the qualitative study were presented in Chapter 3. The results are introduced together with the respective theory. This way of presentation is used because they support the theory. Furthermore they provide additional information about benefits, requirements and execution of activities. They helped to create a quantitative survey for the thesis commissioner.

4.2 Quantitative research

Cooper and Schindler describe quantitative research as an attempt to measure. The mostly numeric data allows statements about consumer behaviour, knowledge, opinions or attitudes. This methodology focuses on describing, explaining and predicting. The nature of the data is made for computerised analysis. Statistical and mathematical analysis methods are dominating. The nature of the question in quantitative research is how much, how often, how many, when or who. Late changes in the research protocol are not welcomed, as consistent data from the respondents is desired. There are several methods, but surveys are dominating. (Cooper & Schindler 2006, 198 – 199.)

The second research part of the thesis uses the quantitative methodology. The commissioners' clients' preferences were researched. The results of the prior study helped to form the questions for the questionnaire.

The survey aims to predict the consuming behaviours of their customers for the mentioned products and services. With the results of the survey the commissioner is able to decide which products to take into the portfolio.

The possible methods of data collection are observation, textual analysis, interviews and transcripts. (Silverman 2010, 123.).

McNamara agrees on that and adds additionally the section of surveys, questionnaires and checklists. This is for Silverman a subcategory of interviews. (McNamara 2013a.).

4.2.1 Requirements of the survey

The commissioner of this thesis offers meeting and conference facilities in a new comfortable atmosphere. It is important for the commissioner to be up to date on trends. They plan to integrate recreational and team building activities into their portfolio.

In the earlier study, experts listed possible products and services that could be integrated into the commissioners' portfolio. These findings were discussed with the commis-

sioner. The commissioner added requirements (Ollila 2013.), which the products and services had to fulfil. In the following these requirements are listed.

The services should have low purchasing costs for the commissioner. On the other hand they should bring high benefits for the customers. The best option being a one off purchasing cost, with a high return on investment. That means that the customers see high value in them and are willing to pay a good price. Outside parties (e.g. professional trainers) should be involved as little as possible. The products should be storable (at least overnight). They should be passively integrated into the room and reachable for the customer at any time. The products should be suitable for all themed rooms. They should bring the same benefits but come with a different appearance.

The commissioner wanted two additional questions. The first was asking for the service to collect notes for the attendants and the second was asking for team building theme days.

The results should be conducted anonymously and in a non-threatening way. It should reach the broad audience of the commissioner's business clients. (Ollila 2013.)

A web-based self-administrated survey was chosen for data collection. All requirements needed to be considered to create the survey. The questions should reflect expert suggestions, as well as commissioners' wishes. Through this it was found which activities are worth implementing into the commissioner's concept.

4.2.2 Self-administrated survey

Cooper and Schindler name two approaches for business research: observe people without their contribution or communicate together with the people. (Cooper & Schindler 2006, 243 – 259.)

Surveys are a method based on the second approach of communicating together with the people. There are self-administrated surveys, surveys via the telephone and personal interviews. (Cooper & Schindler 2006, 243 – 259.)

The first type does not include an interviewer. The interviewee is carrying out the survey alone. The questionnaires for this approach can be distributed via three ways. They can be delivered in questionnaire form via mail, fax or courier. They can be provided in computer format on the internet/intranet. They can be administered in a common place in paper form (e.g. hotel, restaurant, etc.). In this way they can be answered whenever it is convenient for the participants. Furthermore, it is an anonymous, time and cost saving method. Next to that, they allow access to a great amount of data. (Cooper & Schindler 2006, 243 – 259.)

McNamara agrees with the above mentioned advantages and points out that in the digital age, findings from surveys are easy to compare and analyse. (McNamara 2013a.)

This way of data collection has been chosen for the second research section due to its advantages. It was best suited to the commissioners' orders.

The questions have been formed in a simple way. Short definitions have been provided next to the questions. This way the interviewee was able to do the survey alone, without further explanation.

Cooper and Schindler categorise three different question types: administrative, classification and target questions. Administrative questions are identifying the participant. Classification questions help to classify or filter the results. Target questions are the main questions of the survey, about the subject. Questions can be structured (closed questions) or unstructured (open-ended questions). (Cooper & Schindler 2006, 363 – 364.)

For this thesis the questions were divided into three main categories: classification questions, target questions to services and target questions to products. Administrative questions were left out as the respondents were handled anonymously. These categories were selected to create cross-tabulations later on.

The cross-tabulations should have been formed according to the classification questions. The target questions were handled separately from each other to clearly detect differences between services and products.

Generally structured questions were used. Open-ended questions were only used when absolutely necessary (e.g. further information, feedback, etc.). This should simplify the analysis.

For the classification questions, different selection options were used. Single or multiple-selection options were provided. For the target questions mainly the matrix structure was used. The matrix questions consisted of a simple ordinal scale with one selection possibility per matrix option. Definitions and clarifications were provided as additional text. No question was mandatory to answer.

The questionnaire can be found as Appendix 3. It was created via the web-based tool Webropol, which is used to conduct surveys on the Internet. Via Webropol an anonymous data collection was possible. The survey was sent as a link within an email. After testing the survey was sent to business clients of the commissioner. All 80 email addresses on this list belong to meeting and conference planners. Three reminders were sent after distribution.

4.2.3 Validity and reliability

According to Ferguson as well as the UNT a survey has to be reliable and valid to be scientific. Both agree that reliability in surveys show how a consistent measurement reaches the same results under all possible circumstances. Validity indicates if the measurement specifies what it is supposed to measure. Ferguson additionally points out that validity is indicating how relevant the collected data is for the research. (Ferguson 2007; UNT 2012.)

He continues that in order to be reliable, a survey has to use standardised data collection tools and procedures. They are made for reaching consistent results. Next to that

the interviewees have to be as suitable as possible. If a fault occurs in data collection, validity and reliability of the survey are poor. (Ferguson 2007.)

For this thesis it can be assumed that the results are reliable and valid. The above mentioned facts are fulfilled. For collecting data, standardised collection methods were used. The process of collection was consistent for all respondents. No changes in the research protocol were made after the collection started.

The survey was supposed to measure preferences. The respondents were answering independently and according to their own preferences. The focus group were the customers of the commissioner. They can be seen as the best possible sample.

4.2.4 Analysis of the results

In McNamara's opinion data analysis contains: commentary information, tabulations of the data, statistical ratings, rankings or comparisons. (McNamara 2013b.)

Cross tabulations are one way to express data for statistical reporting. In general they show in matrix form, a minimum of two variables dependant of each other. This way the user is able to summarise data which is depending on another. It is possible to express this dependence in a clear format. (GeekInterview 2012.)

For analysing the results cross tabulations should have been used. They should have been formed according to some classification questions. In general the preferences show a clear direction through all possible criteria. Additionally the number of respondents makes it difficult to apply cross tabulations and still have enough respondents in each category to allow valid statements. Webropol has efficient reporting tools. The user is able to compare results with the help of filters. Therefore the Webropol report function was used to create the data report.

This chapter presented the methodology of both research sections. Chapter 5 shows the results of the quantitative research.

5 Results of the quantitative survey

The second research in this thesis was a quantitative survey among the commissioners' clients. The customers were asked to give their preferences about team building and recreational activities in combination with business meetings. Therefore a web based self-administrated survey was conducted via Webropol. The link to the survey was sent to the clients in an email. The questionnaire was influenced by the results of the qualitative study. The questions were divided into three main categories: classification questions, target questions to services and target questions to products. The combined results from survey and study can help the commissioner to decide which products and services to take into their portfolio.

This chapter will present the results of the quantitative survey, while the chapter is divided into three sections. Section 5.1 will introduce the clients who answered to the survey (analysis of classification questions). Section 5.2 and 5.3 include the results about the preferences to products and services (analysis of target questions).

5.1 Respondents of the survey

The first category of questions was the category of target questions. They were supposed to give an overview about the structure of the commissioners' clients.

The respondents were asked in which sector their company works, the frequency in which they organise meetings for their company and how often they organise them at external venues. The respondents were also asked to specify why external venues are selected and if the attendants are members of the company or members and external attendants. Further they were asked for the most common purpose of the meeting and if the attendants are representing one gender or if they are CO-ED.

The commissioners' client list contained 110 email addresses. All email addresses that the survey was sent to belonged to meeting planners. Around 80 of them were valid; from those 23 people responded to the survey.

Most of the respondents are working for companies from the trade and service sector. The majority of them organise weekly meetings for their companies. Meetings at external venues are organised each month or each year. Yearly meetings are a bit more common. The main reason they meet in an external venue is to offer the participants something special during important meetings, or to provide a change to the attendants. The majority of the meetings are organised for company members only. The main meeting purpose is to plan or make decisions. The respondents rated sales as a meeting purpose with medium to high importance. The importance of consulting and problem solving as purpose was rated low. The groups usually consist of male and female attendants.

For analysing the results cross tabulations should have been used. They should have been formed according to some of the classification questions. The commissioner was mostly interested in the different preferences from male and female groups. As the groups are generally mixed groups, this tabulation could not have been used. (Ollila 2013.)

Other cross tabulations should have been formed for preferences that were depending on the sector of operation and the meeting purpose. By previewing the report according to these criteria, no significant differences could be found. This information would have helped to create special meeting packages. Offers for female or male groups, as well as packages for meetings with special purposes could have been formed.

In general the preferences show a clear direction through all possible criteria. Additionally the number of respondents makes it difficult to apply cross tabulations and still have enough respondents in each category to allow valid statements.

Below the preferences of the clients are presented. They generally were asked to rate their interest in different products and services on an ordinal scale. The scale reached from one to five where five represents a high interest and one no interest.

5.2 Service preferences

The questions about services were divided into two categories. The first category asked for preferences in the recreation sector, the second asked specifically for the interest in the team building sector.

The questions asked the participants for their general interest in shorter units of recreational activities integrated into meetings. The clients were also asked if they are interested in services that run during the whole day where the participants join in when they want. In general the clients are more interested in specially organised services than ones that run throughout the whole day. They rate short units of recreation as interesting from three to four.

Further they were asked for special preferences inside the sector of recreational activities. Different services that can be integrated were given as possible solutions. They were asked for their interest in business meditation, professional massages or guidance in pair massage. Here the meeting attendants would be led by a professional massaging each other. The respondents showed overall low interest in the offer of business meditation. Different massages performed by professionals on the other hand are considered as interesting to highly interesting. They are also clearly preferred over the guidance in pair massage.

Next the interest in three different forms of yoga was asked. Possible options were chair yoga, laughter yoga or aijä-yoga. The most preferred option was chair yoga. Laughter yoga reached low to medium interest and aijä-yoga is rated with low interest to no interest at all. This could be explained due to the fact that aijä-yoga is directed at men and the groups are mixed gender groups. An interesting customer request was stretching exercises.

The next questions were asking the participants for their preferences in the team building sector. Questions asked for their interest in half days, whole days or short integrated units of team building. The most interesting option for the clients is the half day team building. Whole day team building packages are rated as overall interesting as

well and preferred over the short integrated units of team building. In general the team building sector seems to be more interesting than the recreational sector.

The commissioner requested the participants be questioned on the stress-less note service. This service offers a convenient way for participants to collect and distribute all notes from the meeting in computer format. This service was rated with an overall interest of three. The majority of respondents would at least consider thinking about it.

Presented were the clients' preferences in the service section. Those services always require professionals (e.g. trainers, masseuse, etc.). In this section the customers clearly prefer half days of team building, chair yoga and professional massages.

5.3 Product preferences

Product preferences are presented here below. Those products would always be there, ready to be integrated into the meeting whenever they are needed. In that way professionals would not be required.

The clients were asked for their interest in accessible mediation music, massage instruments, chair yoga instructions and healthy snacks. The interest in meditational music and massage instruments is pretty low. Yoga instructions are considered of medium interest, the clients would consider thinking about it.

Healthy snacks such as fruits, yoghurt and sugar free refreshments are considered as highly interesting. The respondents rate them with an overall interest of 4.61. This is the highest interest of all questions from the survey.

The survey also asked for their interest in integrating visual tools that inspire creative thinking, for example the LEGO SERIOUS edition bricks. These bricks can be used to express specific ideas by visualising them for all the others. The respondents rate these products with an average of 3.38.

The commissioner requested some questions on specific products. The interest in karaoke facilities, entertainment facilities (i.e. game consoles) and alcohol free sparkling wine were requested for research from the clients. The respondents rate these products in general as not very interesting.

The clients were further asked about their preferences to specific products that could create unique team experiences and inspire working together. Options were cooperation exercises in which the team is encouraged to problem solve; construction packages such as reassembling something together and visual tools for efficient team brainstorming (e.g. balls, ropes etc). The average interest here is a bit lower than in the team building services. In general the most interesting option would be the cooperation exercises. A client suggested that it would be more interesting to reassemble something in relation to the company or the meetings' topic. Other interesting requests were ergonomic chairs or Pilates-balls to sit on during the meeting.

Presented were the clients' preferences in the product section. Here the customers clearly prefer the healthy snacks. Visual tools are also welcome. The products that are designed to increase creativity and team spirit were rated higher than the recreational products.

This chapter presented the results of the quantitative survey. It summarised the main findings in the end of each section. The Conclusion will combine the results of both researches and specify recommendations for implementation.

6 Conclusion

The conclusion will summarise the results of both research sections and combine them to provide recommendations for the commissioner. It will also reflect on the thesis writing process.

6.1 Recommendations for the commissioner

For this paper two researches were conducted: first, a qualitative study among experts of recreation and team building and second, a quantitative survey among the commissioners' clients. The clients were asked for their preferences of products and services for this sector. The experts were asked for integration suggestions of these mentioned activities. Combining expert's opinions and clients preferences enables the commissioner to make further marketing decisions. This way they can decide which mentioned products and services to take into their portfolio.

Recreational and team building activities do have various benefits. Integrated into work life they can benefit the health and team behaviour of employees. This can possibly increase productivity. Experts recommend integrating them into meeting breaks. They came to the conclusion that this way active meeting breaks can be achieved.

According to experts the best suitable recreational activities for integration are chair yoga, laughter yoga or business meditation. Even in short breaks good results can be achieved. Due to active recreation techniques, energy can be regained and concentration can increase. Meeting attendants could work more efficient afterwards. The customers clearly prefer chair yoga in this sector. Business mediation and other forms of yoga on the other hand are not very popular.

During the interview Björk mentioned the guidance in pair massage which shows social benefits, by pairing up colleagues. In the questionnaire the clients were also asked for their interest in professional massage during breaks. These appear to be more interesting for them than the first option. When it comes to integration the clients prefer pre-organised and timed appointments over open services that run all day.

Team building on the other hand proved to be difficult for integration. The respective theory found for this thesis talks about the long process of team building and its requirements. The experts specified those requirements and mentioned that combinations of team building and meetings are possible. Half days of team building were the most suitable to integrate, then the other half of the day can still be dedicated to the meeting. Another good way of integration can be team building days, for example in combination with conferences over the span over few days. Cooperative exercises as mentioned by Hoffmann are ideal to be integrated in short units of 30 – 40 min. The clients on the other hand are not particularly interested in the integration of these exercises. They prefer whole or half days of team building.

Next to the services the clients were asked for their interest in specific products. Lindholm for example highlighted the importance of healthy snacks. This was the product in which the clients showed the most interest in. They also showed medium interest in yoga instructions that would be accessible for them without the involvement of a trainer. Therefore the group would not be depending on an outside party and the meeting would flow without any disturbance.

Other products the clients were interested in are visual tools that encourage creativity. Tools such as the LEGO SERIOUS edition bricks are a welcome change for the participants. They are rated with a higher interest than for example construction packages. Again an understandable choice as the bricks can be used in different situations inside the meeting and would not force the group to stop working. The offer of using objects that related directly to the company and therefor creating more meaning might have led to different results.

The recommendation for the commissioner is to take chair yoga and professional massages as recreational activities into the portfolio. In the team building sector whole or half days of team building should be offered.

Healthy snacks such as yoghurt, fruits and sugar free refreshments should definitely be taken into the portfolio. Investing into visual tools such as LEGO SERIOUS edition

bricks could be considered. The mentioned yoga instructions are easy to be implemented in a cost saving way. That is why they should be taken into the portfolio, although the clients only show medium interest.

Above the recommendations for the commissioner can be found. In the future a market research could be conducted about the offers in the team building and recreation sector around Helsinki. Services, products and their prices could be compared. The best suiting offers could be found and presented.

After that a marketing plan for the actual integration of specific products and services into the commissioners' concept could be established. The complete marketing plan could include pricing, advertisement and sales components. This could help the commissioner to enlarge the portfolio and remain innovative.

The customer preferences and expert opinions from this paper could give direction for both.

6.2 Reflection

In the beginning of the thesis writing process some challenges occurred. Only during the writing those difficulties could be solved. The thesis itself developed during the research process and by solving the mentioned problems.

One challenge was that subject and content of the thesis were set too wide, especially the subject. During the conduction of expert interviews the main finding was that recreational and team building activities are not easily combined with meetings. The experts gave a possible way of integration, which was originally not considered. Due to this the main direction of the thesis changed a lot. Instead of combining the meetings with recreational team building activities, it was better to focus on the creation of active breaks. The theory, my arguments and the title all changed. This way the subject and content could be set adequately.

The next challenge that occurred was based on the logic of my arguments and the academic English language. In the class 'English Writing Clinic', and with the help from outsiders the language improved and the arguments became stronger.

The biggest challenge in the quantitative section was the low respondent rate to the survey. A list of around 100 email addresses from the commissioner showed only 80 valid ones. From those 80 the respondent rate was not really high so several reminders were sent. The main problem was that no reward could be offered for taking the survey. Regardless of all efforts, the respondent rate could only be increased to 23. The answers at least showed clear preferences. That is why no further step was taken. In reflection this fact should have been changed and in cooperation with the commissioner a reward should have been offered. Shortly after our last personal meeting, my supervisor Ollila left the company. The project was regardless of that fact finished. The results can still be of importance to the commissioner.

Personally I see this thesis as a great success for myself. During the writing process I developed a lot in the academic English language. I achieved success by bringing more structure into my arguments. This would not have been possible without the helpful and critical comments from all different outside parties.

Next to that, new and interesting findings from the research influenced the theory and the focus of the thesis. It was a challenge but also a great experience to integrate these emerging ideas. It gave the paper a clearer focus. This helped to make the report more fitting for the commissioner. Writing this thesis has challenged me and my attempts. It gave me the opportunity to recognise failure and improve myself to become better.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Questions for experts of recreational activities

1. Short statement to institution, person and experiences in the field of recreational activities?
2. Benefits of recreational activities?
3. Recommend recreational activities?
4. Possibilities/experiences with the integration into meeting breaks?
5. Recommendations for integration?
6. Benefits of integration?
7. Trend forecast?

Appendix 2 Questions for team building experts

1. Short statement to institution, person and experiences in the field of team building?
2. Requirements of team building?
3. Duration of team building packages?
4. Benefits of team building?
5. Possibilities/experiences with the integration into meeting breaks?
6. Recommendations for integration?
7. Benefits of integration into meeting breaks?
8. Trend forecast?



Recreational and team building activities

1. In which sector does the organisation you work for operate?

- Trade
- Tourism
- Public Sector
- Services
- Other

2. How often do you usually organise meetings for your company?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

3. How often do you organise meetings on external venues for your company?

- Weekly
- Monthly
- Yearly

4. Why do you normally use external venues?

- Provide neutral ground to attendants
- Get new impressions for attendants minds
- Provide a change to participants
- Offer the participants something special (e.g. in important meetings)
- Other _____

5. Are the meetings you organise usually...?

- For company members
- For company members and external attendants

6. For what purpose do you usually organise meetings?

- Sales
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Planning
- Consulting
- Other

7. Which gender do the attendants usually represent, in the meetings you organise?

- Female
- Male
- Mixed groups

We would like to get an overview of your needs and wishes concerning the services offered by HUONE for meetings and conferences.
 The services would be carried out according to your specific wishes and in detail arranged with you beforehand to guarantee a smooth event.
 Please rate the following questions according to your interests.

5 = highly interesting 4 = interesting 3 = consider thinking about it 2 = not so interesting 1 = not at all interesting

8. Would you be interested in the offer of short units of recreational activities, integrated in meetings and conferences? (e.g. 40 min, or according to arrangement)

Interest 5 4 3 2 1
 ((((((

9. Would you be interested to find recreational services running during the day, where your meeting attendants can join in when the need occurs?

Interest 5 4 3 2 1
 (((((

10. Please rate the following variety of services according to your interests.

Please note that all exercises are executed on chairs and fully preserve business atmosphere!

Business Meditation (Meditate to relax)	5 4 3 2 1 ((((((
Different massages (Head-neck-shoulders, performed by Professionals)	((((((
Guidance in Pair massage (Head-neck-shoulders, guidance by Professionals, for close together working teams)	((((((
Stress-less Notes (All taken paper notes provided for you in Computer format afterwards, without stress, privacy guaranteed)	((((((

11. Please rate the following variety of yoga forms according to your interests.

Please note that all exercises are fully preserving business atmosphere!

Chair Yoga (Trainers lead yogic exercises on chairs)	5 4 3 2 1 ((((((
Laughter Yoga (Trainers lead exercises to open up by laughing)	((((((
aijä Yoga (Trainers lead yogic exercises for true man on chairs)	((((((

12. Would you be interested in the offer of whole team building days?

Team building is able to create team spirit and help the participants to succeed by working as a team, thus benefits the work productivity.

Interest 5 4 3 2 1
 ((((((

13. Would you be interested to combine half day meetings with half days of team building?

Interest 5 4 3 2 1
 ((((((

14. Would you be interested in the offer of short units of team building activities fixed in the meeting agenda? (e.g. 30 min, or according to arrangement)

Team building activities offer some of the values of team building in shorter duration.

Interest 5 4 3 2 1
 ((((((

15. Do you have any services which you would like to have offered by your external meeting venue?

We would like to get an overview of your needs and wishes concerning the products offered by HUONE for meetings and conferences.
 The products would be reachable for meeting attendants according to the own agenda. No external part is involved and your meeting would not be disturbed.
 Please rate the following questions according to your interests.

5 = highly interesting 4 = interesting 3 = consider thinking about it 2 = not so interesting 1 = not at all interesting

16. Please rate the following products according to your interested of finding them in meeting rooms for your attendants to regain energy.

	5	4	3	2	1
Meditation Music (Relax music with instructions on group meditation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Yoga Instructions (Instructions how to perform yoga exercises on a chair on your own)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Healthy Snacks (Snacks such as fruits, yoghurt, sugar free refreshments, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Massage Instruments (Massage balls, Head massagers, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Please rate the following products according to your interested of finding them in meeting rooms for your attendants to lighten their mood.

	5	4	3	2	1
Visual Tools (Inspire creative thinking, e.g. LEGO SERIOUS EDITION bricks, to visualise peoples' ideas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Karaoke Facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Entertainment Facilities (Game consoles, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Alcohol-free Sparkling Wine	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. Please rate the following products according to your interested of finding them in meeting rooms for your attendants to inspire team spirit and create unique team experiences.

	5	4	3	2	1
Cooperation Exercises (Problem solving exercises with instructions, which require participation of each member of the team to reach success)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Construction Packages (Team is reassembling something together according to instructions, e.g. bike, clock, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Methods for efficient Team Brainstorming (Visual tools to inspire creative discussions and team brainstorming, e.g. ropes, balls, etc.)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. Are there any products you would like to find in meeting rooms of your external meeting venue?
