



**Creating a manual for the role of coordinator at Lapland Safaris
Hetta**

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Abstract

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<p>The purpose of this functional thesis was to create an introduction manual for a specific role in the commissioning company where pre-existing material was not readily available in a quick to find fashion. The goal was to create a manual where general introductory material can be found and accessed easily in a single place. The manual can be used as an onboarding tool and/or as a fallback guide to easily find the description of a given task.</p> <p>The theoretical framework explored the process of training new employees, the benefits and restrictions of manuals and the characteristics of seasonal work.</p> <p>The resulting product is a digital, written manual in which a person working in the role can find the core basics and instructions to do their job in an efficient way. It describes the journey from the beginning of employment to the end of season, giving insight on company resources, expectations and self-awareness on the job.</p>
Key words Manual, Training, Job Satisfaction, Leadership

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1 Introduction

The aim of this thesis is to create a handbook/manual designed to help anyone working in the job of operator/coordinator at Lapland Safaris Hetta. The role has previously been fulfilled by personnel who have been with the employer for extended periods of time, and therefore have gained practical and theoretical knowledge and expertise in regard to the position from experience without specific training or up-to-date documents. This thesis focuses only on the specific role within the organization and does not take into account other positions of the same name within the company nor is it applicable to other roles as it is. The outcome, a manual, will not on its own be a sole resource to take into account everything regarding the position, but rather an additional supportive document where general information may be found from. The author of this thesis has worked in the role, without having specific material to derive information from, leading to the idea of creating a manual.

The author has worked in the topic role for a season as well as in other duties within the commissioning company. The job includes onboarding of other employees, which have more streamlined guides and practices already in place, but the role in particular is lacking clear written instructions itself. During the authors employment in the company, he has gained practical hands-on experience on the role and its specifics. Some other tasks besides onboarding that are a part of the job are resource planning, scheduling, customer service, sales and invoicing, all of which have their own intricacies that someone completely new to the role may find challenging.

The authors own onboarding process for the role was largely based on word of mouth and live on-site coaching, which brought up the idea of having a written manual as a supportive resource. While a manual will not completely replace all the other types of onboarding/training methods, it could prove to be useful when no other people are present to answer questions. As shift schedules vary from employee to employee, times when no one else is present occur from time to time. During the authors employment there was always someone to contact even outside of office hours, but as time goes on that situation is prone to change and is not sustainable in the long run.

If deemed useful, the manual can be used starting from the next applicable season. It can be used to give a new employee an idea of what they are expected to do in their job and also utilized along the way as a reminder of the processes. It describes the methods of work used previously, but does not limit the reader to follow it religiously. To further enhance the product, notes should be taken during its use and those be applied as corrections or additions to the existing manual. It could also be embedded in already existing training materials to have all such information together in one place.

1.1 Thesis content

This thesis explains the theoretical background behind the product and its content. Chapter two introduces the reader to the commissioning party and its operations, chapter three focuses on the theoretical background in the process, chapter four describes the process and execution itself, chapter five gives the reader a look at the results and thoughts on future considerations, and finally chapter six shares the authors thoughts of the process.

2 Commissioner introduction

This thesis is commissioned by Lapland Safaris, the employer, at the time of writing, of the thesis author. Lapland Safaris is the largest and most experienced program services provider in the Nordics, being founded in 1982 in Muonio, Finland. Nowadays Lapland Safaris operates in several destinations in the Finnish Lapland offering experiences and excursions for adventure-seekers from all over the world. The operations are heavily based around the winter season, but summer activities are also organized, be it in less capacity than during winter. The core products and services during winter are guided safaris on snowmobiles and snowshoes, husky-safaris, and other similar excursions in the nature. Lapland Safaris is a part of the same organization together with Lapland Hotels and Lapland Ski Resorts. (Lapland Safaris 2023.)

The Lapland Safaris destination in Hetta is based in Lapland Hotel Hetta, where the largest clients in the wintertime are travel organizers, such as TUI and its subsidiaries. The core of the operation in Hetta is centered around serving clients traveling with said organizers on package holidays but serves individuals as well. The Hetta destination, at the time of writing, is focused on British clients traveling with TUI UK during the Christmas season in December, and on Dutch clients traveling with TUI Netherlands (TUI NL) from late December to late March.



Figure 1. Hetta on a map

The excursions offered in Hetta are organised within close proximity of the client's accommodation in the hotel. These excursions include snowshoe hiking, husky- and reindeer tours and rides, as well as various kinds of safaris on snowmobiles. In Figure 2. an example of a typical week of activities can be seen. Cells marked in yellow indicate the departure and arrival times of a group clients, from which the reader can infer that per week there are two separate groups of which one stays for three days, while the other stays for four days. Green cells in the figure indicates activities that require the direct involvement of the coordinator in some capacity. Red cells show the times where the coordinators stake is not directly necessary.

Time/Date	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
08:00	Arrival/departure at the airport	Taster activities		Arrival/departure at the airport	Taster activities		
10:00	Arrival in Hetta	Taster activities	Day Snowmobile safari	Arrival in Hetta	Taster activities	Day Snowmobile safari	Day Snowmobile safari
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
14:00	Kids' activities			Kids' activities			
16:00	Kids' activities	Husky sleigh ride	Reindeer sleigh ride	Kids' activities	Husky sleigh ride		Reindeer sleigh ride
18:00	Dinner	Dinner	Christmas dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Christmas dinner
20:00		Night Snowmobile safari	Visiting Santa		Night Snowmobile safari		Visiting Santa
22:00		Night Snowmobile safari	Fireworks display		Night Snowmobile safari		Fireworks display

Figure 2. An example of a typical week of client activities.

Within the municipality there are other service providers which offer similar types of services, some of which are also suppliers for Lapland Safaris. As Lapland Safaris does not, at the time of writing, have their own husky or reindeer farms in Hetta, collaboration with these suppliers is vital to ensure clients do not have to travel long distances to other destinations to experience all the activities. Some of these suppliers are independent entrepreneurs, transportation providers and other local businesses. Tight cooperation between other Lapland Safaris offices and locations is also necessary as some tasks cannot be completed in Hetta due to lack of resources, snowmobile maintenance for example.



Figure 3. Snowmobile activity being prepared before clients arrive. (Päivärinta 2023)

Clients travel from abroad to enjoy the pristine nature and clean air, to visit Santa Claus during Christmastime and scratch seeing the northern lights off their bucket lists. Christmas sees lots of families with children traveling to the north, meaning that the offering should account for the needs of the children as well. Outside of the Christmas season, travelers are often couples or small groups of friends who come to enjoy the same things, albeit with a little less festivities.

A new season often brings new employees as well, creating what some might call a bit of a hassle already before the tourists arrive. These new seasonal employees are most often employed by an employment agency which is a part of the same organization with Lapland Safaris. The agency handles the recruitment and other human resource tasks in close cooperation with Lapland Safaris, but daily matters and questions are seldom forwarded to them and therefore the coordinators responsibility.

Visit Finland (2023) says travelers are becoming more and more vary of the impact their journeys have on the climate and some choose their next destination based on the actions taken to combat that. Lapland Safaris is accredited with the Ekokompassi -certificate, which is an externally audited program carried out by the Finnish Association for Nature Conservation, proving its commitment to a more sustainable future. (Lapland Safaris 2023) Currently the snowmobiles used in the activities organised by Lapland Safaris are market leaders in terms of their emission levels and all carbondioxide-emissions are compensated by funding destinations holding the Gold Standard -certificate by the World Wildlife Foundation. With the advancements in electric vehicle technology, fully electric snowmobiles will begin operating in some Lapland Safaris destinations from the 2023-2024 season onwards.

Lapland Safaris also hold the Sustainable Travel Finland (STF) -label, which is granted to travel-related businesses in the forefront of leading the industry in environmental, socio-cultural and economic development. The criteria to receive the STF-label are:

- Commitment
- Increasing know-how
- Development plan
- Responsible communication
- Certification & Auditing
- Verification and measurability
- Agreement & Continuous development.

(Visit Finland 2023)

3 Training & work environment

This chapter focuses on the theoretical framework surrounding the process of new employee training and the reasoning behind the usefulness of a guiding manual. Seasonal work and its characteristics are also touched upon.

3.1 New employee training

According to the Occupational Safety And Health Act (23.8.2002/738), an employer is responsible for the introduction and training regarding work itself, the workplace, work- and production methods and the safe use of all related processes and methods. The law also states that, especially with new hires and new roles and responsibilities, the training is to be taken care of thoroughly and according to the skills and experience of the employee.

When preparing to train a new employee, the manager should start preparing for that prior to the scheduled first day on the job to save valuable time. Training usually begins with an introductory period before moving into more detailed aspects, and in some cases, depending on company policies, training material may be provided already before the first day on the job. (Hyppänen 2017)

When training a new employee, it is important to consider that it is also more than just obeying the law and going by the book. With proper training, employees get familiar with the people they work with, get to see their part in the big picture of the organization and create a positive mentality towards their surroundings. (Kangas & Hämäläinen 2007)

3.1.1 Onboarding

Onboarding is the process of making a new employee acquainted with their new employer, its ways of working and the work community. For the employer, a successful onboarding process helps in getting the new employee more productive in a shorter period of time, thus returning the costs of recruitment sooner as well. (Kjelin & Kuusisto 2003, 9-10) Costs of onboarding may include all the material and equipment needed, such as computers and accessories, training days and the work hours used during the process by managers and any other employees involved. (Anderson 2019)

According to Michael Armstrong (2009), premature resignations may be lessened with onboarding when the employee knows the workplace, its habits and their own role well, as opposed to someone who feels unsure about their place in the company. When an employee is comfortable with their work setting, they tend to be more motivated to perform up to high standards and stay

with the company for longer, which means new recruitments are not as frequent, which in turn reduces costs.

Onboarding itself can be divided into two: general onboarding and role-specific onboarding. In general onboarding, an employee gets acquainted with the company and the culture within. In role-specific onboarding, an employee is introduced to more specific matters regarding their own role with the goal to perform efficiently in their new position. (Dávila & Pina-Ramírez 2018)

Employees' experience and knowledge are assets to hold on to as the knowledge can be transferred to new employees through direct training and observation of pre-existing employees. Adequate guidance and support is vital for an employee to be on the top of their game, and when an onboarding system can function effectively in different situations, it helps. (Stein & Christiansen 2010)

3.2 Manuals, their benefits & restrictions

An employee manual is a document providing the reader with information about the company, definitions, expectations and the like. Providing a new employee with a manual early on gives them clear written instructions that help prevent misunderstandings, familiarize them with the company and steer them on the right path. (Guerin & Delpo 2015)

According to Lawson (1998, 3-9), an employee manual has several benefits to both employee and employer. Lawson states that a manual promotes the understanding of company policies, credibility and employee obligations. Providing a new hire with a copy of the manual creates a favorable impression and gives a framework of expectations that lets the employee get off to a good start in the company. A manual can prove to be an effective time and cost-savings method as it may help avoid lengthy periods of time where information is searched for. The manual can also be effective in convincing prospective employees to join the company when handed to them, as it provides a clear path of what is expected of them and what kind of processes are used.

Employees spend nearly 20% of their time looking for information to do their jobs in an effective way. A manual can be helpful in reducing the time, when done in an easy-to-use way. (Bersin & Zao-Sanders 2019)

3.3 Seasonal work

According to the Finnish Immigration Service (Migri) (2023), seasonal work is defined as work in agriculture and tourism, which ties itself to a certain season or seasons of the year, and which requires significant decrease of labor outside of the season. Seasonal work cannot last longer than nine months within a twelve-month period.

Atkinson (1984) says the workforce can be segmented into two; core employees are permanently employed and often possess expertise on specific subjects. Peripheral employees are those who do not have permanent or full-time jobs, such as those hired to fill the need during seasons of higher demand.

Investing in existing employees is more economical than training new ones, as it takes time and resources to recruit, hire and train new personnel. Existing personnel have already been through the process, developed their skills and gained company specific knowledge, therefore the initial investment does not need to be replicated. (McKee 2022)

Research suggests that an employee with higher educational background is more likely to look elsewhere for more permanent and professional career opportunities rather than to return to their seasonal job. (Šošić et al. 2018)

3.4 Supervisors

Good supervisors know how to create a motivational environment for their subordinates to perform to the best of their abilities, they know how to plan and organize employee involvement and how to communicate effectively. New supervisors on the other hand can often be inadequately prepared to lead people as they are often promoted from a narrow task that seldom deals with leadership to a position that requires them to make sure everything gets done smoothly. (Biech 2015, Chapter 1)

Biech (2015, Chapter 2) mentions that people quit because they believe their managers and supervisors lack the skills to keep them happy. She states that learning to be a supervisor is not an easy feat and cannot be covered with one-off training courses to cover all the nuances of the job and new skills required to be effective in what they do.

A supervisors training has a positive effect on company performance as a whole, making it worthwhile for a company to invest in the training of their supervisors. Time spent in training improves involvement and innovativeness which can lead to new and improved methods of working, helping everyone involved. A positive, well trained and knowledgeable supervisor can help spread the work environment with positiveness and encouragement which in turn create a healthy atmosphere for other employees to feel happy to be in. (Barba Aragon, I. & Sanz Valle, R. 2013) Furthermore, Feltrinelli et al. (2017) say that off-the-job formal training investments aimed at middle management are effective. Human capital investments in middle managers make for a key strategic decision that allows a company to improve its productivity in the long run.

4 Purpose, benefits, and structure of the project

The purpose of the manual is to reduce the time needed to search for information regarding processes and to create a supportive document that can be utilized in the onboarding stage of a new employee. Reducing the time of searching for information gives the employer a direct way to reduce salary costs by cutting from the man hours used. In some cases, this cost is multiplied when several employees are needed to solve an issue, and thus interrupting their workflow.

The position is a supervisory role which means general knowledge of all the aspects, including those of other employees under one's supervision, is good to have. Knowledge of general laws regarding employment and collective agreements is also important.

The role is a seasonal one, which means an employee in the role might not be returning for the next season, and therefore a new person may be hired for the position. Having a structured manual helps to streamline the onboarding process and gives a practical guideline of tasks.

4.1 Structure

The manual is divided into several chapters, each describing their respective topic, its processes, and key details of the work. The structure and flow of the manual is linear, starting from the basics that begin when entering the role and then proceeding to more specific processes and workflows. It does not give detailed instructions considering problem-solving or reconciliation as topics similar to those are treated on a case-by-case basis.

The manual describes the work and software as is during the time of writing and does not go into technical detail on the specifics of the systems, as they are likely to change over time.

The structure is formatted as text only to prevent distractions and to keep the information in a concise package where it can be easily found.

4.2 Content

The content of the manual starts with introducing the company as a whole to give the reader a quick overview of the company structure. It then proceeds to describe the time before the season starts, what should and should necessarily not be done and how to do it. How to prepare for the arrival of new employees and how to make them feel acquainted with their new job and surroundings are also touched upon.

The manual then describes the software in brief, before going into more detail on the main tasks concerned where it then splits activities into subchapters according to the topic and importance of the content.

In a hectic environment one could lose track of time and their own energy and quickly become burdened with too much going on at once, so the manual also reminds the reader to take themselves into consideration as well.

4.3 Limitations & connections

As mentioned previously, the manual will not by itself be a sole resource to fall on, but rather supportive material to quickly gain an understanding of the different tasks and practices used. The first iteration of the manual is built based on the experience and knowledge of the author gained during his time working in the role and is therefore limited in information of other times, however, most topics have remained and are likely to remain rather similar.

Other Lapland Safaris destinations may have their own material similar to this, but they are not taken into consideration at the time of creating the Hetta -specific manual as the coordinators duties vary between destinations.

4.4 Project execution

The thesis project started in early March 2023 and ended in late May of the same year. It first began as a short lived idea of the author, but later turned out to be a feasible topic that could be useful.

The research started with the search for relevant literature and prior research of the same nature and then proceeded to form the outline of the manual itself based on the knowledge attained. Much of the information is company internal and specific to the role in question, and therefore could not be found externally.

Once the outline was ready, it was time to implement the learnings and build the structure for the manual in a way that made sense to the author and makes sense to the reader. Commissioner requests were also taken into account.

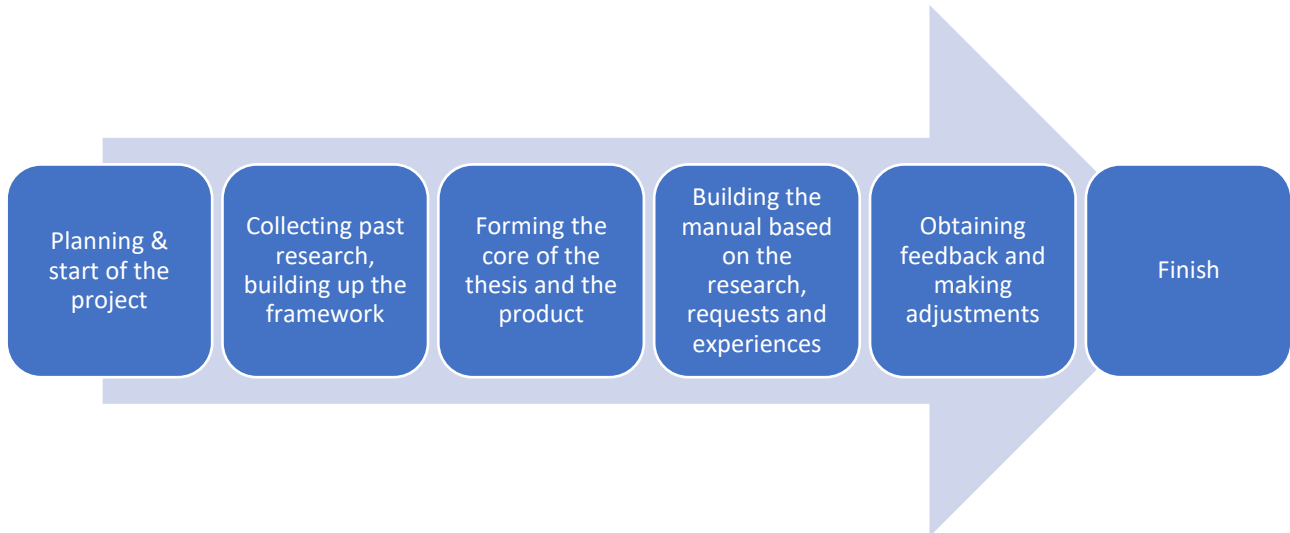


Figure 4. Project steps.

4.5 Project timeline

The project started in early March 2023 and lasted until late May 2023. The product and its content was finished largely during April, but adjustments were made in May after receiving commissioner feedback. The base structure for the thesis was formed in the early stages, but required more adjustments and additional research after consultation sessions with the thesis advisor. The schedule was quite open-ended on the authors side, and the ultimate goal was to finish it before June.

Time	Task
1.-31. March	Early planning, building the frame of the manual, completing the introduction, forming the frame of the manual
1.-30. April	Research, writing the thesis, completing the manual
1.-15. May	Research, writing the thesis, reviews
15.-31. May	Reviews, completing the thesis

Table 1. Project timeline.

4.6 Communication with the commissioner

Communication between the author and the commissioner was handled over email and Whatsapp messaging, as well as face-to-face during the beginning. The bulk of the project and its contents was agreed face-to-face at the start and communication during the project was kept minimal thanks to the author having been given freedom to do things as he sees best.

Feedback from the commissioner regarding the manual was requested towards the end of the process, and it was positive. Minor adjustments have been made accordingly, including some changes in formatting and wording, which resulted to a satisfactory outcome. The thesis itself was sent over to the commissioner as well at the same time, but no comment was made on that.

5 Conclusion

The end result of this thesis project is a digital file in written format describing the most common aspects of the coordinators role at Lapland Safaris Hetta. It should be made accessible to anyone taking on the role to give a quick overview of the responsibilities and tasks expected of them.

The manual is built in a standardized, company-formatted text file, in which it can clearly be seen who it concerns, with page margins indicating the company image.

The manual can be seen on Appendix 1.

5.1 Description of the manual

The guide first describes the environment in which the work is done, the employer and some specific matters, such as where to find something, who to contact and how to plan the upcoming season. A list to write contact information of any entity of interest on is also included at the very start.

The manual then goes on to describe the tasks that are to be finished before the season starts, some of which may already have been completed by someone else within the organisation. In the same part of the manual, a brief description of the most commonly used computer software is also written, but it does not go into detail on those, as the specific software already have their own how-to guides and training courses.

The following parts touch more on the human resources side, describing how, why and when to contact new and returning employees, what their specific roles include and what to take into consideration when dealing with them.

Moving on, the manual reaches the start of the season and the time when the first customers arrive. It describes the operation of the first tour operator -client as a whole and gives insight to how the ball starts rolling forward. The manual details the part of the third party tour operators' responsibilities during the Christmas season, what their employees are to do and how the coordinator should co-operate with them. Within this section, the manual also details the activities that are specific to the Christmas season and the tour operators' offer. As airport transfers are included in the offer, the operation surrounding those is also described.

After the Christmas season is over, the manual moves on to cover the rest of the season and its characteristics. As the tour operator changes, so do some of the activities and tasks with it, specifics of which can be found in the manual. As not all offerings change, mentions of the similarities can be found within.

The manual ends with a chapter dedicated to well-being on the job. As the role requires the employee to physically be situated in Hetta for most of the duration of the job, it can create challenges to someone moving there from far-away. Reminders of remembering to take oneself and their wellbeing into account are found in this chapter, but it is not meant to be a self-help guide or something alike.

5.2 Plan for following up and feedback

First assesment of the manual could be done in chronological segments, starting from the earliest relevant topic and advancing to the latest. Company information and policies can also be added or removed accordingly.

Notes per segment of the manual should be taken as relevant issues or topics of interest come up. These notes should be either stored as information to be adapted into the manual in the future, or be directly added by the person taking the notes, as per their discretion. As the manual is not an imperative part of the job, all more urgent work should be completed first and the manual be left until the adequate resources are available. As the season comes to a close in the early spring, there should be time that may be used to update the manual. The update can be done by the person(s) working in the coordinator -role, their supervisor or anyone with stake or insight into the topic.

5.3 Further development

The manual will likely go out of date sooner or later, and therefore should be updated regularly. Updates can be made by anyone with access to the file, but should be done by someone with accurate information of the topic in question, for example, the person working in the role or their supervisor.

As the role evolves and completely new resources and responsibilities may become available, revisions of the manual should be made with consideration of the importance of the topic.

First assesment of the manual may be done during or after it has been put to use. Feedback should be gathered from the parties involved, such as supervisors and the person(s) who use the manual. Notes of what is and is not relevant in the manual should be taken for future reference if the manual id to be updated or revised. This will allow for proper context and editing of the manual to be as accurate, and therefore as useful as possible.

According to Hackel (2020) the operations manual of tomorrow functions like a website and is interactive, has searchable and accessible content and has direct links to appropriate training

embedded within. Considering the previous, the manual could technically be integrated to be a part of the Lapland Safaris intranet already in place where other training material can be found. Embedding it as a part of already existing material would be a logical step to ensure it does not get lost or misused.

6 Discussion

The thesis project was originally planned to begin in autumn 2022, perhaps even earlier during the summer of that year, but was prolonged due to the then-to-be commissioner backing out of it. The entire autumn and early winter was then spent searching for another potential commissioner, as I wanted to have my thesis be of use to someone to solve an issue or help in business case, instead of doing an unrelated independent research project. During early 2023 I was in talks with a couple of possible commissioners, but those too turned out to be false promises. I then shared the idea of creating a guidebook with the company I worked in and proceeded to continue with that.

As the topic is unrelated to my degree programme in Aviation Business, not in my comfort zone and outside of my passions, it did not make for an easy process. However, the experience of having worked in the role in question helped in forging the outline of the project. Most of the actual writing and research was done during May due to relocating, work and other personal matters, so the timeframe also got skewed a bit.

6.1 Own learning

Overall I am somewhat satisfied with the result, moreso with the product itself over the thesis. If I were to complete the whole thesis process again, I would put more emphasis on staying on schedule and would request feedback earlier on, both from the advisors and the commissioner. More discussions about the structure and content could have also been useful.

I learned a lot about human resource management and the importance of training in the workplace during the process, and feel like I could now be able to spot errors in my own work more frequently. I read through many other bachelor's theses during the process and grew to appreciate the academic achievements of certain authors more.

Would I start another thesis-type paper again straight away? Absolutely not, as the process is time consuming and very exhausting and stressful at times. On the other hand, sometimes I felt like researching and writing was somewhat calming in a way that helped me get my mind off other things and purely focus on the task at hand.

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Appendices

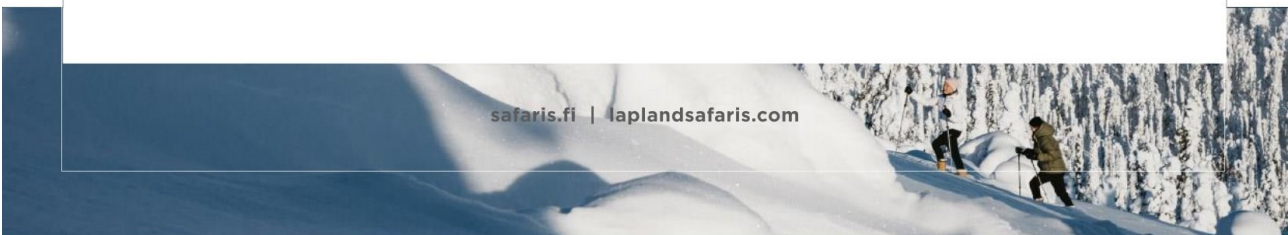
Appendix 1. Coordinator manual – Hetta



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FEEL THE SPIRIT OF LAPLAND!

Coordinator manual - Hetta



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This guidebook was created as a university thesis-project to give anyone working in the coordinator role at Lapland Safaris Hetta an easy-to-access cheat sheet for the most common topics faced while on the job. It is not intended to be a know-it-all do-it-all guide, but rather be used for getting to know some of the processes, tasks and systems used. Ideally, the guide is presented to the person taking on the role in the beginning of their employment to help get oriented to the position. The author of the guide has previously worked in the role, as well as other positions within the company.





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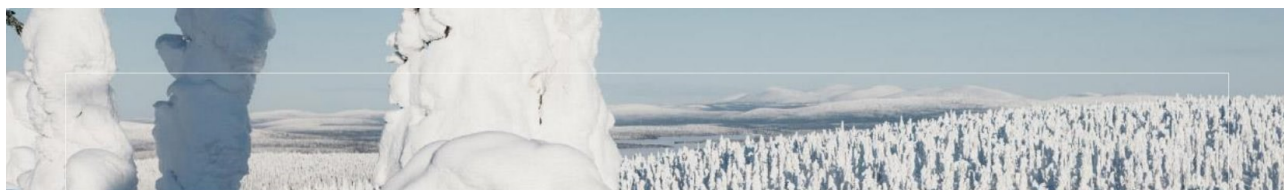


CONTACT INFORMATION

Here you can write down the contact information of people you work with for future reference.

Name	Phone	Email





1. LAPLAND SAFARIS HETTA

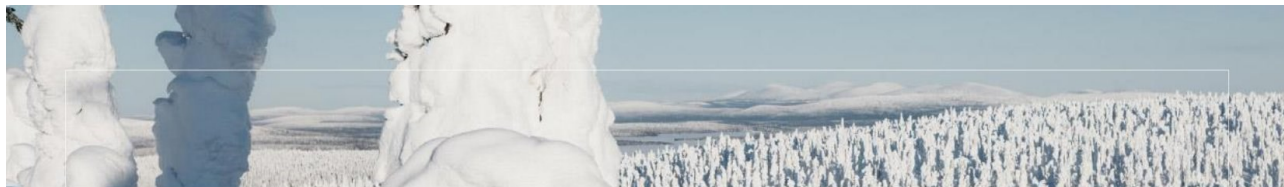
Lapland Safaris Hetta (LS, LS Hetta) is a part of Lapland Safaris West Oy, operating at Hotel Hetta and its surroundings in Hetta, Enontekiö, Finland. LS Hetta offers its clients multiple types of excursions and activities during their stay at the hotel. The vast majority of the clients travel with travel agents TUI UK and TUI NL, some with a package deal including accommodation at the hotel plus activities arranged by LS Hetta, and some with only accommodation. Some individual clients not with a travel agent may come by as well, but they are in the minority.

Activities and excursions are offered and put on sale according to availability, demand and conditions. Some activities (i.e. snowshoe- and snowmobile safaris) are arranged completely in-house and some are in co-operation with other service providers (i.e. husky- and reindeer excursions).

2. THE ROLE OF COORDINATOR AT LS HETTA

The role of the coordinator sees you take part in the activities, deal with clients, make reservations with suppliers, support your employees and so much more. Not to worry, while Hetta may seem remote and isolated from other LS destinations, support is always there. You just need to take the initiative and contact anyone within the organisation, and if they are unable to help you, they'll direct you to someone who is.





3. BEFORE THE SEASON

There is work to be done already before the season begins and the customers arrive to ensure smooth operations from day one. Some of the work may already be done, some might be in the middle being completed and some is waiting to be dealt with.

You should also know who you'll be supervising during the season around this time; the guides and the elves. More on them further on.

It's good to get to know the systems and practices during this time. The most important tools you'll be using are the ERP (Explores), rostering and hour planning tool (Maraplan), your email and your work phone.

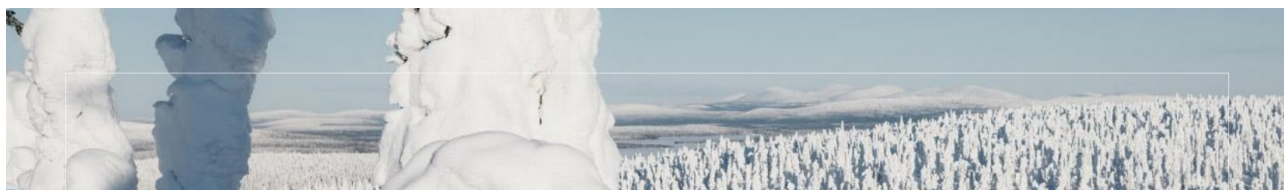
3.1 EXPLORES

Explores is where you enter the schedules of each activity, transfer or clothing change. The information in the system is visible to all Lapland Safaris destinations, making it easier to keep up with everything that's going on around the destinations as the information is kept in one place instead of being scattered in several emails or in peoples' heads. The system may seem a bit daunting at first but is rather straightforward once you get acquainted with it.

Explores is also the system used for invoicing and making reservations with suppliers. The system allows you to keep track of already paid invoices, cancellations and reservations. When invoicing, it's good to check that the numbers are correct before sending the invoice forward; you can do this in Excel or any way you're comfortable with. Someone will likely have ready-made templates they are willing to send you, so ask around if that's something you'd like to utilise.

Some suppliers have their own version of Explores (aka. Supplier-ERP) where the reservations you make show up on their end in a similar fashion as they do on your screen. Once they confirm the reservation on their end, it'll show they did so on your side as well. However, some suppliers who use the supplier-ERP may not be so well acquainted with it, so it might be a good idea to give them a call, a text or email as well just for good measure. You'll find out sooner or later who these suppliers are and should then adjust accordingly.





Reservations for suppliers who don't use the supplier-ERP are still entered into Explores, but they get the requests via email from the system. Remember press the button to do so! Some of these suppliers might contact you to say they don't want to get these emails, but rather a single email from you personally and that is OK. Send the reservations to your own email and confirm with the supplier once you have all the required information.

Explores is also the on-the-spot sales system where you set up and sell the safaris. Make sure everyone who needs a user account has one.

Help with Explores is provided by the IT-team, make sure you have their contact details on hand when needed!

3.2 MARAPLAN

Maraplan is where you schedule shifts and keep track of the hours worked, both of yourselves as well as the guides and elves. Work shifts are planned in three week blocks that have to be published at least a week beforehand. Also make sure to approve/lock the previous weeks marked hours on Mondays to prevent any accidental inputs or wrongdoing of the system (HR will remind you of this!).

Maraplan has a crash course video on the site and you should be provided a tutorial for it. Ask your supervisor for any help with the system.





4 GUIDES AND ELVES

Once you receive the names and contact details of the guides and elves for the season make sure to send them a welcome letter via email, where you introduce yourself and the Hetta operation, the employees accommodation and approximate working hours and duration. You might have returning people coming for the season who are already familiar with the work and you'll most likely have new people joining as well. Make sure to answer any questions they might have as often people might be nervous about starting a new job in a new setting, so it's best to ease those feelings by providing as much information as possible. Elves especially are often young people working what might be their first job, and many of them come from abroad so remember to be empathetic towards them.

4.1 ELVES

The elves will work for the duration of the Christmas season with TUI UK, with daily work hours ranging from none to nearly the whole day. Their first workday will be the day the first TUI UK quests arrive, and their last workday will most likely be the day the last TUI UK quests leave. It's worthwhile clarifying this in the welcome letter you send them to avoid any misunderstandings.

The elves' main responsibility is to entertain quests as "Santas real elves" while also ensuring the quests' well-being, i.e. making sure they're wearing enough clothing for the conditions. The elves will also be with the quests in the bus during their transfers to and from the airport making sure everyone gets on board the right bus at the right time.

There should be an elf orientation day arranged by the LS team at Levi where the elves will receive more detailed information about their job before the first quests arrive. Ask the Levi team for more information about the schedules, elf costumes etc.

HR and your supervisor will likely inform you more about what arrangements may be set up for people coming from abroad, e.g. visiting the tax office or similar.





4.2 GUIDES

The guides will be with you for the entire season including both TUI UK and TUI NL. Their main responsibility is to lead the excursions and activities, especially everything having to do with snowmobiles. Many of the LS guides have been doing it for several seasons and know the ins and outs of the whole ordeal, but of course you might have someone new joining as well.

The guides will also be selling the safaris during the time when TUI NL is in house.

Training for new guides will also likely happen at Levi, if you have someone new joining but haven't heard anything about training, be in touch with your supervisor.



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5 TUI UK

TUI UK will be your main guests during the Christmas season and will stay for 3 & 4 days at a time, making it two groups per week. Majority of these clients are families coming to experience the wonders of Finnish Christmas and seeing Santa with their children. You won't have to deal with the clients themselves too much as TUI will have sent their own employees to take the brunt. The TUI employees will consist of an assortment of Representatives and Entertainers, Reps and Ents for short, that you will be working with.

5.1 TUI EMPLOYEES AND PROGRAM

The TUI employees will be staying at the hotel for the entire Christmas season, working with you and the hotel. The Reps will do the sales of the LS excursions you've scheduled for them and the Ents will have their own activities and shows for the guests during their stay. You will work closely with the Reps and Ents as they use LS -systems and facilities for their jobs, and they will be asking questions from you.

Make sure you set the time and resources to be available for TUI employees during the Christmas season as they are your main 'customer' during that time. You'll plan schedules together with them, but also for them. Airport transfers, safari schedules & allotments and setting up the sales system within Explores are some of your responsibilities.

The Reps have their own sales targets they want to hit and will most likely be on your tail about getting more safari-departures and more seats available per safari. It's good to keep in mind that while you work together and would like to offer as much as you can, the resources and time are limited and not everything is possible. If you decide to offer more availabilities, make sure you've taken everything into consideration; guides, time, profitability, effort, yourself and all the other work you might be caught up in.

The Reps and Ents will be with the guests during most of their stay at the hotel, as well as on all transfers and some of the excursions.

5.2 TASTER DAY

The taster day happens once per stay where the clients get to try the different activities offered, husky- and reindeer sleigh rides and snowmobiling. You'll likely be there as well leading the snowmobile ride with one of your guides. The schedule is usually quite tight for the clients, so try to make sure everyone gets to go at least once. Adults can drive themselves and alternate drivers halfway, while children get to go in the sleigh pulled by the guide. Remember to bring helmets and blankets to the venue.





5.3 GALA DINNER

On the last night of their stay, the clients are invited to a Christmas dinner. During the evening the TUI team hold a show with the night climaxing to the families visiting Santa himself. After everyone's seen Santa, there'll be a fireworks display outside on the lake, where either a guide or yourself will be lighting up the fireworks.

Visiting Santa is one of the main reasons why people come to Hetta for Christmas. The clients expect nothing less than magical from the visit and that's why the gala dinner night requires careful planning. You will be planning the night together with the TUI team and the hotel, but most likely won't need to participate in the festivities themselves. Naturally, when talking about Santa, Elves will be present.

5.4 AIRPORT TRANSFERS

Arrival and departure day can get hectic at the Kittilä airport so be prepared to answer the phone even if your day might otherwise look quiet. Several flights full of families travelling to LS destinations arrive and depart within a relatively short timeframe and the airport is buzzing. The main thing to follow is the flight schedules and if there are delays. Buses are limited, so make sure you've reserved them well in advance to fit everyone. Be prepared to encounter some difficulties with the buses as well, but don't stress too much over them.

Quests should receive their hired winter clothing set at the airport on arrival, but make sure there are spares at the hotel in Hetta in case of broken zippers or the like.





6 TUI NL

TUI NL will arrive after the Christmas season is over and TUI UK has left the hotel. There are some differences with the operation, but the basic principles still stay the same. The Dutch stay for longer (a whole week) and are majorly couples with no children. There likely won't be a TUI Rep in Hetta, but you might still occasionally be in touch with someone from TUI who could be in Levi or some other destination.

Arrival and departure days are similar to TUI UK's, however, there are no guides on the buses and the airport is not as busy so it generally goes quite smoothly. TUI NL quests should also receive their hired winter clothing on arrival, but at the LS office in Levi instead of the airport. Remind the bus company to stop at the Levi office before heading to Hetta. Also make sure that the Levi office knows they're coming! A work order in Explores should be enough.

The TUI NL clients' package programme isn't as tightly scheduled as their UK counterparts and should have at least one day free of any LS activities. Some of the clients have bought a package deal including accommodation and activities, while some have just the accommodation. Those who have not booked the package may have booked some safaris beforehand or could be waiting to book on the spot.

On the day of arrival, a guide will hold a welcome meeting at the hotel to give the quests information about the excursions and the area and answer any questions they might have. Immediately after the welcome meeting is also a good time to have sales open! Use your own judgement on the timing of the welcome meeting, straight after arrival might sound good but the people have travelled for a while and usually want to relax for a bit.

Make sure to stay up to date with payments and cash in the register. Go through the receipts and count the cash once a week to spot any anomalies to avoid having to trace back weeks or months later, it's not a whole load of fun!



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7 YOURSELF

Last but certainly not least, remember to take yourself and your mental health into account. Days can, and will, get quite long and hectic at times, a bus might be late and a client or two might get upset about something, but nothing's that important to get too worked up over. Remember to take days off to recharge, go outside and enjoy the pristine nature and stay in touch with friends and family. Take advantage of the staff benefits and enjoy a relaxing night in a Lapland Hotel somewhere.

If any issues arise, don't hesitate to contact anyone of your colleagues, and when in doubt it's always ok to ask.



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