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# Creating a new culture concept

Case study: Culture Salon, Helsinki, Finland

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Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences

Bachelor of Business Administration

International Degree Programme

Thesis

2 April 2015

Author(s) Title Number of Pages Date	Hanna Launonen Creating a new culture concept – case study: Culture Salon, Helsinki, Finland 33 pages + 0 appendices 2 April 2015
Degree	Bachelor of Business Administration
Degree Programme	International Degree Programme
Specialisation option	European Management
Instructor(s)	Rebecca Kihlman, Senior Lecturer, Supervisor Niina Ilmolahti, CEO and Project Leader
<p>The objective of this thesis was to examine the widely known theoretical frameworks and analyse their applicability to the case study, investigate the process of starting a new business concept while studying the project plan of an actual concept at hand. The weight of the study was on the feasibility and viability of the project plan of Culture Salon. The melting pot of arts and culture is to be opened in Helsinki, in May 2015.</p> <p>The theoretical framework was collected from related business bibliography, while the project plan was formed based on the interviews with the project's team leader and members, observations and first-hand knowledge gained due the author's personal proximity to the project. The internally produced material and data was exploited to create the truthful outline of the project plan, and to ensure that the contents are according to the actual decisions and operations.</p> <p>The project plan of Culture Salon was profound and examined the feasibility and viability of the concept from several aspects. It was discovered that the theoretical framework, which is intended to be used for the marketing purposes of an actual, tangible products, have limitations that must be considered when handling an arts-related service concept. The investigation of the project plan revealed that the concept has a great chance to be both viable and feasible. However, it was found that the project plan did not answer to all questions that stakeholders and especially investors would consider essential and compelling.</p>	
Keywords	Project plan, market research, service marketing, culture

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## 1 Introduction

When the business is running slow, thinking outside the box is crucial. Especially in cultural activities, it is challenging to constantly attract audience and ensure that the selection is intriguing. This paper examines the process of creating and building a new cultural concept from a business point-of-view: How is this concept out-of-ordinary, and how it is able to differentiate itself from other art and culture service providers.

This study will explore relevant theories and discuss how applicable they actually are to the real-life case study at hand. The case investigated is the concept of Culture Salon, which will be opened in May 2015 to Helsinki, Finland. It will be a “melting pot of culture” and a meeting point for people who are interested in wide variety of arts and culture. Therefore, it will be intriguing to examine the theoretical framework, which is designed to understand and identify the characteristics of products, and then reflect the results to the culture-related concept. As the closer examination shows, a service concept has its own unique features, which differ from the core guidelines that are set for product sales.

By bringing variety of forms of cultural entertainment to the historical premises, the Culture Salon’s objective is to recreate the past salon atmosphere from the 17th century. In Culture Salon, there will be music performances, live entertainment with multimedia shows on the background, art exhibitions, three bars, café and restaurant services, and a shop to start with.

This study is significant to the shareholders of the Culture Salon project as it aims to answer to the research question if the project plan is feasible and viable. As the concept is rather unique, there is no previous datum on the success of the sorts. Therefore, the study is based on assumptions made out of other, somewhat similar ventures and general theories introduced in related literature. Data collection methods primarily concentrate on the case study – evaluating the material produced; action plans, meeting reports, budget estimations and contracts as well as activities in real life.

## 2 Project work

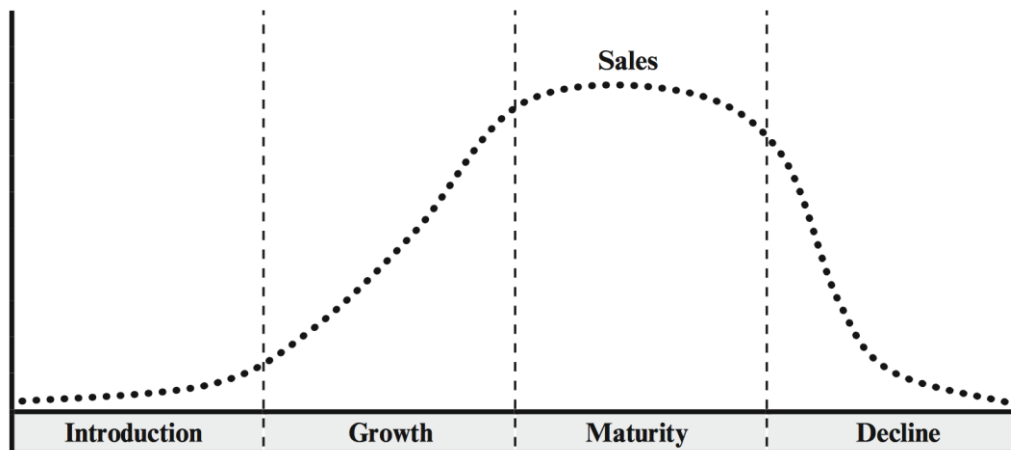
The following subchapters will examine the project work as whole. First, it will study the contents of related theoretical framework and investigate its applicability and limitations. The background information of the project and methods used are discussed before getting further acquainted with the actual plan. It aims to answer the questions regarding the execution of the thesis work and discuss the different aspects of the actual project plan.

### 2.1 Literature review

Companies are profit-seeking organisations that aim to design and generate successful products to maximise revenues. This study examines the viability of the Culture Salon project. In order to maintain their viability, a project or product must gain revenue. profitability enables the company to invest in research and development activities as well as support the labour force and their efforts. (Steinhardt, G., 2010; Kermally, S., 2004; Hundekar, S.G., Appannaiah, H.R., Reddy, P.N., 2010)

Product Life Cycle (PLC) model is often used to distinct the different stages of each product's life span. According to the PLC model, the sales volume and revenue of a product follow a certain pattern. (Hundekar, S.G., Appannaiah, H.R., Reddy, P.N., 2010).

Moreover, it identifies the ideal marketing decisions at each stage in order to maintain the sales and support the already achieved market share. The model is based on an assumption that products have a limited life span; they all have a development curve from formation until ceasing. Each stage of the life cycle affects the sales. In addition, they bring forth challenges that require modifications of the basic marketing mix elements and the positioning strategy. The sales volumes are maximised by making adjustments to the different elements of marketing mix. (Kermally, S. 2004) (Terlutter, R., Weinberg, P., 2006)



Graph 2 PLC model (Steinhardt, G., 2010)

The concept of marketing mix is widely used to assist in strategic planning and executing marketing decisions. It was first introduced in 1948 by Neil Borden of the Harvard Business School. He explained that there are eight main variables that generate the basis for a marketing strategy: marketing research, product development, pricing, packaging, distribution, advertising and sales promotion, selling and merchandising, and after-sales services (Jenkins, F., 1990). However, E. Jerome McCarthy simplified the marketing mix in 1971 and presented the 4 Ps that are widely used in today's business terminology and taught to the business undergraduates (Jenkins, F., 1990) (Kermally, S., p12, 2004).

The four Ps of marketing mix are product, price, place and promotion. To briefly introduce the four aspects; product may indicate to a tangible product where it covers the packaging, production, branding *et cetera*, but it can also indicate to an intangible service. "Product policy and strategy is the cornerstone of a marketing mix." (Hundekar, S.G., et al. 2010) Price includes all pricing strategies, discounts and other special offers. Place refers to selling and logistics, and the location or media where the product is being distributed. Promotion covers the aspects of advertising, for example the advertising channels and choice of media. (Kermally, S., 2004) (Terlutter, R., Weinberg, P., 2006)

The PLC model has four stages: introduction, growth, maturity and decline as presented in the Graph 1 PLC model. The first stage is introduction, in which the case study of this work, the Culture Salon is. There the product is first brought to the markets and intro-

duced to the customers. The profits are low and often non-existent, as the initial investment to produce and market the product or service requires grand amount of resources. From the marketing mix, the importance of Promotion is emphasized, as the concept is still unknown to the potential customers. Therefore, the company must find the proper tools to spread knowledge about the existence of a new, alternative product. The preferred image of the product should be transferred quickly to the market and the message must be clear. This can be gained with aggressive advertising and sales promotion that is designed to grab the audience's attention and interest. Moreover, the product design must support the brand and at the same time, draw attention. (Volkman, et al. 2010)

Once the product has been embraced by the customers and assimilated to the markets, the sales increase at a growing rate. This stage of product life cycle is called growth. However, the depletion of the growth stage often starts when the new entrants also recognise the profitable gap in the market leading to new rivals to enter. Third stage, maturity, has the highest peak of the sales volume. At this point of the product life cycle, "market for the product becomes saturated." (Kermally, S., 2004) Once all potential customers are engaged, the competition between companies becomes fierce. The product, price and promotion are all reviewed leading to more aggressive promotional activities and advertising, product improvements and, often, to price-cuttings. After the saturation of markets, the product's sales volume starts to decline. The profit margins diminish as the demand of the product decreases and more resource-consuming activities are engaged. Technological improvements and trend variations often cause the declining trend leading many of the producers to cease producing the product thus there are a some companies that manage to continue selling the product. At this point of product life cycle, there are fewer companies providing the product. (Bickhoff, N. *et al.* 2014) (Volkman, C., *et al.* 2010)

However, the four P's of marketing mix identify the relevant aspects for a tangible product thus it does not respond fully to the particularities of services. When analysing a service and the characteristics that separate it from a tangible product, the marketing mix is extended to seven aspects. The additional three Ps are personnel, physical evidence and process. (Bickhoff, N. *et al.* 2014)

According to Bickhoff et al. (2014) "the unique characteristics" that differentiate selling of a service from of actual, physical products are intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity and inseparability. Service cannot be sensed or acknowledged before purchase, even

though tangible products, food or other items can be associated with the experience. (Terlutter, R., Weinberg, P., 2006)

Moreover, service cannot be stored or warehoused for later use thus making the accurate analysis of supply and demand crucial in order to retain viability. Service is always on the spot sales. In addition, reaching the ideal equilibrium can be troublesome as the amount of demand of a service may vary largely and is dependent on various external factors. Especially when examining a completely new concept, which is in the introduction stage, forecasting the amount of demand is near impossible. In this case, there are only educated guesses giving guidelines to calculate, for example, future ticket sales. (Bickhoff et al., 2014)

Another character to make a service unique is its heterogeneity, meaning that it cannot be identically repeated hence the same service may be slightly different every time. “Services are variable because unlike a product they are difficult to standardize.” (Malaval et al., 2013). Regardless of the industry – was it air traffic or music performance – each time there are variables that affect the outcome. Here, the importance of good, qualified personnel is emphasized.

Each customer encounter defines the quality of the service. As an example, employee A can be friendly and professional when employee B is rude and unprofessional. The customer confronted by employee B will find the quality of the service poor, and it will be extremely challenging to change that connotation. Even though the saying goes: “all publicity is good publicity”, it is not preferable to have inglorious reputation right from the establishment of a concept. Internal employee decisions should be done carefully. In addition, training and accustoming the staff to the values of the company are at the core of successful customer encounters. (Bickhoff et al., 2014) (Malaval et al. 2013)

“Inseparability means that services cannot be separated from their providers. The time of production is very close to or even simultaneous with the time of consumption.” (Bickhoff et al., 2014) As the service is linked to the provider but also often to the premises, the physical evidence of quality and brand must support the service image. As the service itself is intangible, the customer relies on the tangible proof of quality and performance. They evaluate the service using the visible objects as a reference point. Therefore, a service-based brand requires 360 degrees’ support from the physical evidence in



order to convince the customer. The tangible aspects, by-products, premises and general outlook should be designed to fit the service and brand image. (Bickhoff et al., 2014) (Malaval et al. 2013)

However, the marketing mix has been criticized in increasing amounts lately. The general knowledge of categorizing the instruments and building the strategies based on the solid 4 Ps has been questioned more and more, as the markets have evolved along the history. (Terlutter, R., Weinberg, P., 2006)

Traditionally the businesses have had a transactional approach to the marketing decisions and activities. Moreover, it has been considered a pure oxymoron to apply the transactional and relational approach simultaneously to the company's operations. Transactional approach is driven by the ism that "the organization creates value by understanding (through market research) the demand and responding with an adequate marketing mix" as defined by Bejou (et al, 2013: p.60). Moreover, the external indicators, such as market share gained over competitors, are the dominating factors to measure the adequacy of marketing operations. (Bejou, D. et al, 2013)

Marketing mix has received criticism upon its product-centred mind-set. For example, the pricing strategies can be perceived to trick a customer to purchase the product due to the pricing, and then realize afterwards the futility of their purchase. Terlutter and Weinberg suggest that the customer has been "manipulated through price reduction to purchase a product he/she would not have otherwise purchased." (2006) Moreover, the marketing mix is enforcing a short-term mind-set and encouraging companies to view the marketing development in short life span rather than long-term systematic contingency. (Terlutter, R., Weinberg, P., 2006)

Moreover, markets have developed into a point where soft values are being noted and applied increasingly and the importance of relationship marketing have obtained more footing in the business world and among the executives opinions. In the basic, 4 Ps marketing mix there is no room for "new" terminology. As an example Van Waterschoot and van den Bulte (1992, p. 85) point out the quality management and recovery management "considered either arbitrarily ordered according to the four P's, or isolated by them." The natural development and market evolution is not considered in the theoretical framework (Bejou, D. et al, 2013:60; Stratten, S., Palmer, A., 2012:1-5).

## 2.2 Theory

As the literature review of this paper suggests, the ordinary and well-established theories can be applied to some extent. The service characteristics should be acknowledged when forming a project plan for a service concept. Moreover, the limitations have to be kept in mind while examining the feasibility of a particularly unique concept, from which there is no previous, directly applicable data or historical datum available. The concept of Culture Salon differs drastically from the original purpose of the theories and guidelines offered and taught in the literature material. In addition, as Lange (2009) indicates in his research, there is no scrutinised examination conducted in order to gain knowledge on arts marketing. "The majority of the existing arts marketing literature offers a foundation for exercising arts marketing by adopting conventional marketing theories and practices."

## 2.3 Methods

This research was conducted to assist analysing the feasibility and viability of an actual project plan. The target of the study is the concept of Culture Salon, which started off while writing this paper. Due to personal proximity to the project and its development, the author was not only able to reflect the originally drafted, structured project plan to the theoretical framework but also study the actual activities performed in the day-to-day operations. Especially observing the progress from inside the team was engaging and contributed to the honest project examination. Monitoring the working routines at the work place, the division of internal deeds and shifts in the general ambiance, and their alterations during the development of the project, were intriguing details but nevertheless significant aspects. The internal chores and their fluency, or the lack of it, played surprisingly large role in the successful advancement of the project.

In addition to the first-hand, internal observation, employer interviews were carried out in order to collect information. The management's views and future visions regarding the Culture Salon's concept were discussed mainly in an informal manner. The employer shared bits and pieces of information during the working hours, but time to time there were scheduled meetings reserved for a discussion. Those meetings were organised the thesis work in mind, and the author was able to lead to discussion in a manner that benefitted the research. Interestingly, the executives found the interviews worthwhile and useful for their point of view as well.

Moreover, weekly internal meetings where the project milestones were checked and each team members' urgent duties were divided helped structuring the project plan. The author gained insight on the prioritised aspects as well as was able to detect the less weighting dimensions. Nevertheless, the information gained from the weekly meetings had to be analysed, pruned and transmitted to a form that would advance and add value to the study.

In order to gain broader insight to the procedures related to forming a project plan, executives from other companies were interviewed. Especially helpful were the opinions of the former CEO of ASKO, Mr Raimo Kotiranta. He shared his first-hand knowledge of creating a project plan, what are the aspects that the shareholders are interested in, what type of information should be shared with stakeholders and what are the key strategic decisions that are usually closely considered in actual projects from his experience. His opinions were not directly referred to but taken into consideration when discussing different points of the project plan.

#### 2.4 Introduction to the case study

The case study examined in this thesis work is a concept of Culture Salon and its first edition Sibelius Finlandia Culture Salon, in Helsinki, Finland. The project plan of Culture Salon will be studied, analysed within a given theoretical framework and suggestions for improvements of the project plan are given in the case study.

The noun "salon" is often used to indicate to a beauty salon or a hairdresser, but by definition it can also be "a room in a large house in which guests are received" (Collins English Dictionary) or "a hall for exhibiting works of art" (Gersh-Nesic, B.) among others. The term is also associated to a gathering of guests "in a fashionable household" in the period of 1600s until the 1900s. Especially scholarly, artistic and politically influential persons were present. In addition, often salons are described to be giving surroundings for conversational gatherings where individuals are able to have discussions about arts, literature and other contemporary issues. (Collins English Dictionary; Gersh-Nesic, B.)

What is fitting for the project in hand, the Culture Salon's premises have historical value and appearance. In addition, its purpose is to gather artistic figures, and people fond of

art and culture together. The name of the venue aims to create associations to a historical, social place for an informal but civilized gathering. It is not supposed to be a pub or a place to ingest excessive amounts of intoxicating liquids but rather enjoy the surroundings; the art, the performances and other entertainment, while savoring a drink or two if wishing to do so.

The producer of Culture Salon is More On Oy Ltd. (More On Oy). It was founded by Niina and Olli Ilmolahti in December 1994. At the beginning, it operated mostly in the fields of visual arts and entertainment business. More On Oy acted as a manager for visual artists as well as performers trying to make fresh, young talents more known among the general public. In addition they produced several events and organised business gatherings and PR-events both small and large scale.

As time passed by, the focus and strategy of the company shifted towards productisation and business gifts. It built its services to help companies to create their own visual image of the brand. Further, More On Oy designed and organised thematic, personalised product solutions to support the customer's company image. Furthermore, it coordinated several licensing and event productisation projects.

Since the Finnish economy has not recovered from the recession that started to take place in 2008, companies have made significant budget cuts. As expected, the funds are taken from the assets that are additional perks. The demand for valuable business gifts and unified company products has diminished remarkably from peak years. For that reason, More On Oy was once again looking for ways to change its operations to the blue oceans and move away from the competition. (Kim, W. & Mauborgne, R., 2006)

The idea of a culture-related project stirred in December 2014 when the 150th anniversary of Jean Sibelius was drawing close. In More On Oy, they started to think of ways to utilize the year's celebrations in their business. An idea of a combination of Sibelius' music, theatre and art exhibition was born. They got the approval of Jean Sibelius' heirs for the project and made a three-year deal for premises in Helsinki city centre, which were well preserved and suitable for the purpose.

After signing the deal of three-years', the company was able to start planning other events to be organised in the premises. After a while, there were several artists contacting the office and asking for a possibility to perform in Culture Salon or even cooperate

for a long-term. The cooperation with artists and other partners will be discussed further in the SWOT analysis and opportunities.

For the Sibelius theme, they originally signed two professional musicians to perform a music show and for the art exhibition three artists who were to illustrate their vision of Sibelius. Other companies from a variety of fields expressed their interest in co-operation, for example, Fantastico Music Artist Management Ltd., Oy Fg-Naxos Ab, Rondo magazine and the city of Helsinki.

The decision to move back to event management and to start organising culture-related conventions was rather effortless, as the company had already recognised the downward development in the market of sole business gifts and the hardening price competition. Besides, as mentioned earlier in this chapter, the company has had previous experience in the arts marketing and the management has strong personal interest in culture and artistic entertainment.

## 2.5 Project plan

The following chapter contains the actual project plan of Culture Salon. Analysis and discussion concerning the particular section are included in the body of the text.

### 2.5.1 Situation analysis

Culture Salon, “Kulttuurisalonki” in Finnish, is to be a memorable centre of entertainment, which will exhibit products of cultural crossover. Moreover, it aims to be a meeting place for a variety of artists and musicians as well as a diverse representation of arts and music genres. “Melting pot of culture” would well describe the concept and its ambitions future intentions.

The core idea of the activities is similar to the one that the University of Helsinki had when they established their showroom/shop called Think Corner. The university wanted to bring science closer to the public and to bring it forth so that it is more easily approachable as well as available to the society also outside of the university world. As it is stated on the Think Corner’s website in the University of Helsinki’s web page, “Think Corner is a meeting place for research, the public and society located in the heart of Helsinki.”

(2015). The motto of Culture Salon could be “Culture comes out of the closet”. It wants to create an easy-going atmosphere where culture is not perceived as an exclusive and rigid activity of the privileged.

What is beneficial to the concept, is that it has several sources of income and does not rely solely on one source or service. The income flows are discussed in more detail in chapter 2.5.8 Keys to success.

Culture Salon will be entering the market of cultural activities. It will be first located in Helsinki, and once the concept has been established and solved the primary problems and question marks related to the formation and commencement, then the concept will be extended to other large cities in Finland. As the Culture Salon’s first concept will be Sibelius’ 150th anniversary, there will be a lot of competition. The challenge is to differentiate the concept from all the others as well as being able to do visible marketing with a limited budget. Networking and gaining new partners are crucial elements when a small company is penetrating a new market segment.

Moreover, another challenge is to deliver the idea of the concept of Culture Salon. It is previously unknown to the audience and clarifying the content requires additional resources. Especially, as the concept includes several operations and aspects – there are music performances, art exhibition, café and restaurant services as fixed contents, but the theme varies. Although the Sibelius theme is the main venue of the year, there will be other events and concerts organised almost each night of a week when there are no Sibelius Finlandia music performances. Therefore, labour time and efforts must be used to accommodate the potential clients with the concept of several cultural activities gathered together under one roof.

The following subchapters will examine the market particularities and competition, Culture Salon’s SWOT analysis, product offering, keys to success, critical issues, macro and microenvironment as well as marketing strategy.

## 2.5.2 Market Summary

In general, the target market of Culture Salon includes everybody who is interested in culture or is operating in culture-related activities. It wishes to attract three main cultural

sectors: music, art and more modern visual art of multimedia. The contemporary orientation of Culture Salon depends on the current theme, with Sibelius being classical music and Finnish history.

### 2.5.3 Market Demographics

Culture Salon is targeting artists, consumers as well as organisations. As it aims to be a unique meeting point for people interested in culture, it has a wide target group. However, there are several shows for one specific theme so adjustments can be made according to audience.

The primary target segment is large groups. The experience should be shared with others and it is meant to be a social event. Tourist groups and domestic travellers, musical orchestras and groups, clubs, organisations and associations are considered to be part of the primary target for Sibelius' 150th anniversary concerts.

A secondary target segment is local, culture-oriented individuals. As a meeting point for people interested in culture, it must attract artists, musicians, visual artists as well as other closely culture-related persons. Furthermore, the individuals who tend to visit all new art exhibitions, concerts and other urban culture events are to be reached. This interest group is targeted with the concerts and shows that are not the main theme of a certain period in Culture Salon, as Sibelius is.

To specify the target group of the Sibelius Finlandia Music Performance, the individuals as well as groups interested in Finnish national composer, Jean Sibelius or Finland's history are especially being targeted. This includes also the potential customers abroad. Classical music also has its admirers, as well as visual arts. Moreover, companies and organisations are also being targeted and marketed to bring their stakeholders to Culture Salon. Further, they are persuaded to take their employees, clients, shareholders, or other stakeholders to the show, and that way improve their company image. Additionally, the companies and organisations celebrating their own anniversary are potential target. Anniversary organisations will arrange some events or special recreational activities to celebrate the year. There is a certain sentimental connection in taking the stakeholders of a company, which is celebrating its anniversary, to an event where the Finland's national composer's largely announced 150th anniversary is the main theme.

However, the demographics of the target group should be discussed in more detail. At the moment it is too vague. Also targeting several groups with a very wide profile is a potential threat. Marketing to such a large group follows a quantity over quality mentality. Moreover, the advertising is scattered to a large target area and does not focus on one certain demographic or characteristic. It is manageable but requires resources to modify the advert and material according to the target segment.

Moreover, “individuals interested in culture” is a very broad description of a profile. It does not define the age group, profession or other characteristics. Also culture as a phenomenon encloses quite many dimensions; already music has several different genres and subgenres. As the Culture Salon aims to have a large of variety of shows and themes to be performed in the premises, it is advised to consider the optimal target market of each performance. If there will be a jazz musicians’ jamming night, the crowd is significantly different from the one attending an operetta of three sopranos. Even if the target groups are not identified in the project plan, it is advisable to clearly articulate the desired outcome. Introducing the potential customer profile will guide the processes of marketing and advertising, as the channels and tone have to be chosen according to the customer base in order to gain maximal benefits.

#### 2.5.4 Competition

Although Culture Salon wishes to move away from direct competition and towards blue ocean within the market of cultural activities, there is still competition to be taken into consideration (Kim, C. & Mauborgne, R., 2006). For the first edition of Culture Salon, in which the theme is Jean Sibelius’ 150th anniversary, the main competition is other service providers with the same selling point. Those can be found on the Sibelius Celebrations web page, which is being monitored by The Sibelius Birth Town Foundation. The web page contains all events organized to celebrate Sibelius’ 150th anniversary gathered (The Sibelius Birth Town Foundation, 2015). The advantages and disadvantages of network marketing will be discussed further in chapter 2.5.11 Marketing Strategy.

Other organisations offering art exhibitions in Helsinki are, for example the Ateneum Art Museum and The National Museum of Finland as well as smaller ones around Helsinki (The Sibelius Birth Town Foundation, 2015). Moreover, there are several concerts organised where Sibelius’ music plays the main role, for example in Tempeliaukio Church, Helsinki Music Centre, Musiikkitalo (“Music house”) and Finnish National Opera.



As on Sundays there is Brunch & Show offered, all restaurants and cafes serving Sunday brunch can be considered as competitors. Especially Kappeli, which has similar offer for their customers in the form of brunch and classical music concert (The Sibelius Birth Town Foundation, 2015).

Substitutes that do not compete in the same market as Culture Salon but are anyway consumers of potential customers' time can be considered indirect competition. Examples of these are other forms of entertainment include movies, bars, theatre and musicals, in the summer meeting friends at a terrace or going for a picnic rather than having a restaurant brunch. Also sightseeing and tourist shops are indirect competition for Culture Salon (Kim, C. & Mauborgne, R., 2006).

#### 2.5.5 Competitive strategy

Culture Salon is adapting the competitive strategy of moving away from the competition (Kim, C. & Mauborgne, R., 2006). It gathers different genres of culture together and allows the visitor to enjoy the all-included experience.

The Culture Salon is planned to become a "buzz place", meaning that the general public finds it quickly and makes it theirs. As the current theme can vary greatly, it should attract people from all walks of life. The repertoire will be everything between classical Sibelius music, jazz, funk or Edith Piaf cover songs. Additionally, the concept has already arisen interest among the top jazz musicians in Finland, and they wish to create their own, long-term project, where there is a jam of several artists once a month. Each time there would be one, changing head star, which would attract the people to come back to the events.

Once the business has taken its place in Helsinki's entertainment selection, visitors can be divided into two categories: 1) Thematic audience, meaning the customers who visit Culture Salon due to its current theme that is interesting for them, or 2) customers looking for guaranteed entertainment more or less regardless of the theme or show. The reputation of Culture Salon is to signal definite entertainment and a good time in a relaxed atmosphere.

The competitive strategy should be a long-term action plan that will help the company to gain competitive advantage over its rivals that operate in the same industry. According

to Michael Porter, the company is able to position itself among the competition by exploiting its strengths. Mainly, there are two main competitive strategies that a company can use, and they are 1) cost leadership and 2) differentiation (William Simcoe, 2012).

In this project plan, the competitive strategy is differentiation. However, the means of differentiation could be specified and defined in more detail. Also reflecting the action plan to the one of the main competitors would explicate the strategy and what is the actual competitive advantage that the concept of Culture Salon actually can gain. Furthermore, as a company should aim for sustainable competitive advantage, this should also be considered and explained in order for the Culture Salon to be viable, and not only feasible (William Simcoe, 2012).

### 2.5.6 SWOT analysis

In this chapter, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Culture Salon and its first theme Sibelius Finlandia Music Show will be discussed. Strengths are considered to be the internal capabilities that support the firm in achieving its goals, weaknesses functioning in the contrary – they are the internal factors that will prevent achieving goals. Opportunities are the external conditions that can be utilised in order to succeed whereas threats are the externals that might hurt the project's success (Goodrich, R., 2015; Simcoe, W., 2012; Seyedhoseini, S. et al 2008). The main points of each part are summarised and presented in Table 1 below.

#### **Strengths**

Strengths of Culture Salon are multiple. To start with, it is a new and fresh concept. It has novelty that people often expect from new experiences but it also has a traditional hue when performing classic, Finnish melodies as one main theme of the first year. It has the ability to modify its appearance quickly from one show to another. Also, the repertoire can be adjusted according to the supply of orchestras or art exhibitions available as well as seasonal demand.

The show is taken to historical and well-preserved premises right in the Helsinki city centre. It is easily reachable by public transport locally as well as on long-distance travels. Moreover, the many tourist bus operators have their city travel stop literally across the street from Culture Salon's front door. The building was used as a cinema from 1915

until 1987, therefore it has historical value and the reputation of a cultural centre. (Avi, 2014) As the entrance to Culture Salon is free of charge, it encourages customers to visit even if they are not going to the music show.

Employees of More On Oy are extroverts and sales-minded. They have a strong background in business-to-business as well as business-to-customer sales and marketing. Moreover, already established, wide networks are taken to full use in order to gain new relationships and reach the potential partners that are out of reach at the moment. As one of the characteristics of a service is that the personnel holds a significant potency over the popularity of the place, the employees are selected carefully. Additionally, the main required characteristics of the profile were established before the inviting applicants to the interviews. The employee candidates were introduced profoundly to the idea behind the concept, and the desired atmosphere and attitude of the workers was thoroughly explained. During the job interview, the candidates were directly explained the abilities and characteristics that are required in order to successfully serve the customers as More On Oy aims that all operations and actions send the same signal and support the brand image.

The inwards cash flow is not dependant on solely one source of income, but several core operations. The income is gained from ticket sales; both online as well as from the door, the shop where art and other items and by-products are being sold, café & restaurant services for walk-in customers, buyers of the Show & Dinner or the Show & Brunch package as well as beverages sold during the show. This way the operation is not dependant on the success of one operation. Distributing risk reduces the pressure to triumph each time on one certain operation or event night.

From More On Oy's point of view, it is beneficial not to have the employees of Culture Salon restaurant and shop on their payroll. According to a study called Museum Statistics 2013, which was conducted by Finland's National Board of Antiquities, the largest item of museums' expenditure is personnel by 47,7%. The second most expensive factor is the premises costs by 32,3% (2013). The contract between More On Oy and El Jefe gives Culture Salon the rights to organise events in the premises first for three years and will be undated after that period. Moreover, it is very low-cost for More On, meaning that even the factor that is the second most expensive one in ordinary projects, and its cost effects is being diminished.

## Weaknesses

As all projects and business operations, the weaknesses exist and they should be noted regardless of the magnitude. To begin with, the premises are used as a nightclub during weekends and Culture Salon is scheduled to be open every day. Even though the cleaning services and other arrangements are planned, there is no room for errors or force majeure. Moreover, this causes additional work to the employees, as all the material of Culture Shop must be removed from the hall and stored in a safe place. These adjustments require large amount of planning and takes its cut from the employees working hours. In the mornings, the shop must be set up and organised all over again.

There are several partners taking part in the project, meaning that coordinating the activities of all will require efforts and internal communication must be transparent and constant. Moreover, a separate company operates the restaurant services and therefore the control of these services does not lie with Culture Salon. Contractual details must be sorted and agreed, not to mention the constant cooperation and communication of any changes or obscurities otherwise it is a potential weakness to have several partners.

As the Culture Salon is launched towards summer, the indoor premises might cause problems. There is no terrace or outdoor balcony to which Culture Salon can be expanded. During sunny weather people are not fond of spending time indoors, especially in Finland where summer is rather short and sunny days are rare. As several cultural activities are gathered together, visitors are able to spend longer time at the Culture Salon. Concerning time management, during holidays this is reasonable but on weekdays it might be too long much.

In regards of the project management, signs of weakness can be seen in marketing strategy, internal coordination, and especially in social media operations. It is notable, that the activities are not well organised. Even though several ideas have been introduced and several tools offered, the management has failed to organise the marketing activities. There is neither a clear structure to delegate the tasks nor a strategy to fit them into the project timetable. (Seyedhoseini, S. et al 2008)

Luckily, the management is aware of the weaknesses in structuring marketing activities. Once the problem has been acknowledged, the organisation is closer to tackling it and

over-coming the faulty component. However, it would require active problem solving. The issues will not solve themselves or vanish unexpectedly.

Internal communication is failing to share information transparently among all team members. It causes delays in the work schedule when many aspects and important details have to be repeated and tasks are postponed until more information is given. Increasing confusion on all levels decreases efficiency when plans are double-checked, which leads further to a diminishing trust. If an employee cannot not be certain whether things are supposed to be carried on as agreed or whether the concept has changed without further information, it makes it troublesome and rather arduous to carry out any given task.

### **Opportunities**

However, there are several opportunities that are potentially beneficial for the project and the organisation. The premises are a significant value-adding aspect to the whole concept. As the premises can be adjusted easily and quickly for different purposes, it can accommodate a variety of performances. By mid-March, several musicians and performance artists have been in contact with More On Oy and offered their services. Clearly there is a need for new performance locations from the artists' side. The show selection is flexible meaning that the concept is not tied to one specific style or theme. Therefore it is able to attract proponents of a wide spectrum of trends and styles.

The concept of Culture Salon has attracted interest from several potential cooperation partners from the very start of the project. It can be wrapped in many covers and modified for a variety of styles. The venue itself is customer-oriented where there are many sources of entertainment and stimulation but with a clear and concise frame. The image of the salon is to be welcoming and easily approachable, also the general atmosphere is to be broad-minded and encourage social interaction.

Moreover, the concept is easily transformed and transferred into an export product. It can be licensed and exported rather easily to other locations and operators as long as appropriate premises are found. Suitable estates for the purpose can be sought from Finland, abroad or even from holiday cruises, short or long-term. In that case, the ready service concept can be licensed and the rights sold easily to spread the name and rep-

utation of Culture Salon. Having long-term plans and extension possibilities, the commitment and additional motivation to conduct the operations well may increase even more among the team members.

The Culture Salon concept depends greatly on the artists and the quality of their performances. Therefore it not only promotes the interests of its own organisation and generates wealth for itself but also for the artists. Culture Salon is a compelling partner for artists as they are able to offer their artwork to be sold in Culture Salon's shop as well as to gain visibility. Moreover, other by-products and value-adding items can be displayed in the shop. This engages other agents to the activities, and the more parties committed in the success of the project, the more likely it is to excel.

### **Threats**

Potential threats are the other service providers that have the same idea to utilise the Sibelius 150th anniversary. In addition, it is difficult to compete with large, well-known and established brands such as Ateneum or the Finnish National Opera. (Ateneum Art Museum, 2015; Finnish National Opera, 2015). As potential threats are other culture and event producers, the extent of cooperation and balance of direct, aggressive competition is to be closely considered.

Moreover, as mentioned previously, the concept of Culture Salon is new and it must be marketed thoroughly to the audience. If the message gets delivered in the wrong way, it will decrease the popularity of the events. If the concept of Culture Salon remains vague and the contents unclear, there will be instant negative implications that are laborious to change.

The domestic entrance ticket company TicketMaster Finland, In Finnish markets known as Lippupalvelu, will be a partner organisation, meaning that the employees of More On Oy and Culture Salon must learn how to use its service programs and electronic systems. TicketMaster Finland has informed that usually it takes approximately four weeks to learn the systems. This is a possible threat if employees are not able to adapt to the program well enough, which might cause problems when handling ticket reservations. This aspect is emphasized as in this case the timetable is rather tight and all operations are to be done in a short period of time in order to successfully open the Culture Salon.

On the other hand, it is a great addition to the sales force of More On Oy as TicketMaster Finland is a generally well-known and trusted ticket company in Finland. It has already established and strong networks and sales channels that are fully used to sell Culture Salon tickets. Moreover, TicketMaster Finland has a detailed and comprehensive monitoring and tracking system in which it is able to analyse the customers and their buying behaviour.

Table 2 SWOT Analysis

<b>STRENGTHS</b> Novelty Premises with historical value Reachable Sales-minded and experienced team Flexibility Bar services Physical evidence	<b>WEAKNESSES</b> Premises Indoor space Internal communication Coordination Marketing activities
<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> Broad selection of show concepts New way of thinking External interest Licensing and exporting possibilities	<b>THREATS</b> Competition, Sibelius 150 Unknown concept Changing technology Timing /lateness Partners and key employees

However, the greatest threat of all is that the goals are not met and tickets are not sold in large enough quantities. Also gaining sponsors is crucial from the point of view of the project's viability.

Another considerable threat is the other party of the three-year cooperation and premises' contract. Hypothetically speaking, if El Jefe, the other partner, goes to bankruptcy or ends up in any financial trouble, it will deteriorate the success of Culture Salon. The restaurant business is risky, and especially El Jefe's primary sector, bars and nightclubs. In Finland, the taxation on retail of alcohol has been increasing, and is planned to grow more. This causes the profitability to decrease and losing competitiveness, and at the worst case to letting employees go and shutting down the business. (Pitkänen, S., 2015)

Often key employees and their motivation create a potential a threat. If the key employees of a project lack commitment to or engagement in the project's success, they might harm its viability. However, in Culture Salon, most of the key employees are owners of the companies. As the owners are often willing to go above and beyond to make their business profitable, they are a solid part of the project and committed to the project's viability and feasibility.

### 2.5.7 Product offering

Culture Salon is not only a meeting point for people but also for different styles of culture; music, theatre, visual art as well as culinary art being only a few examples. In Culture Salon's first edition there will be music performances three days a week, and an art exhibition, a café & restaurant and a shop will be opened. Music performance Sibelius Finlandia music show consists of tenor Hannu Jurmu and pianist Jouni Somero's versions of Sibelius' music. During the concert, a multimedia show is reflected to the background showing photographs and animations of Sibelius and typical Finnish landscapes.

In the 3 x Sibelius art exhibition, there are tailor-made art works of three Finnish visual artists: Virpi Ekman, Jan Vaaka and Petri Petrie. A shop from which original artwork and drafts can be purchased will also operate in the premises called the Culture Shop. In addition, the shop has a wide selection of music as well as Sibelius and Finland related items. The contents of an art exhibition will vary and will be provided by Finnish visual artists.

In the future, once the Culture Salon has exhausted the Sibelius' theme, the organisers could consider the possibility to cooperate with an art gallery of some sort. If they wish to take full advantage of all the aspects of the concept, organising collaboration with an art gallery could boost the popularity of the exhibitions. Moreover, the offering of visual arts could be taken further to organise art lectures and informative sessions. This would attract again another niche market.

The café & restaurant is outsourced to a partner organisation Ruoto Catering that will provide snacks and refreshments during the Culture Salon's opening hours as well as Sunday brunch before the show. Dinner arrangements will also be possible by special order.



Later in the autumn 2015, there will be Edith Piaf nights by Tia Cohen and Vintage show as well as Billie Holiday Show by Sanni Orasmaa and Eero Koivistoinen Quartet. Furthermore, other theme nights and music genres are planned such as jazz, opera, music theatres, burlesque and Finnish folk music.

It can be assumed that the items sold in Culture Shop are not prioritised very high as they are not specified in the project plan. If they were significant part of the profit structure, they would be specified and listed but it appears that they are by-products to the other activities. However, as More On Oy has large stock of different design and art products, it is possible to gather the core items from the already existing selection and add other products as the project evolves further and the shop opens.

In general the offering of Culture Salon can be defined as a service even though there are tangible products that are concrete part of the concept. The main idea fulfills the four unique characteristics of a service defined by Hollensen and Opresnik (2010): intangibility, perishability, heterogeneity and inseparability as explained in the literature review. However, the selection of products has to be made carefully in order them to support and enforce the desired atmosphere and brand image (Bickhoff et al., 2014).

#### 2.5.8 Keys to success

A major key to success when creating a new cultural concept is to deliver the idea of the concept quickly and profoundly to the audience. What will be a challenge especially in the beginning of the project, is that the message has to be same the always regardless of the media. Certainly the style has to be appropriate for the channel but the tone of the message must be consistent.

Competing against the already well-established organisations would be too costly and time-consuming, meaning that Culture Salon will utilise its wide networks and professional relationships to generate and spread knowledge about it. Also low-cost marketing tools are accommodated. These tools include social media, such as a Facebook page, Internet page and personalised Instagram search word, “hashtag” #CultureSalon, or #Kulttuurisalonki in Finnish. In March 2015, in the social media Instagram searching for #CultureSalon, there are 23 posts indicating to a hair and beauty salon United States. In Finnish by search word #Kulttuurisalonki there is one post which is posted by a member of the Culture Salon project.

According to the study conducted by Statistics Finland, social network services were used by fifty-one per cent of the Finnish population aged 16 to 89 in the year 2014. Moreover, the number has been rising each year, and the popularity of social media is increasing. Especially the use of blogs where individuals share their experiences and opinions, and chat groups is growing (Statistics Finland, 2014). The city of Helsinki offers a possibility for local companies to have a blog writer to visit the place or use a service and then write a post about it for free. Consequently, Culture Salon has invited a blogger for a visit, and to write about the upcoming events. By exploiting the possibility, it is able to engage one advertising channel more and with low costs.

The social media is a useful tool but as with all marketing, it has to be purposeful and targeted to reach the appropriate demographics. Moreover, the message must be appropriate for the target audience and modified to fit the channel. This has to be taken into consideration when advertising Culture Salon in social media in order to gain full results from the efforts. Marketing strategy will be discussed further in chapter 2.5.11.

Small core team enables instant communication among its members. This enables the ability to respond to customers' needs in short notice, therefore providing better customer service. The importance of customer service should not be underestimated, as it is a way to differentiate from competition. The motto of More On Oy is "at your service" or "ilo palvella" in Finnish. The personal relationship and close relations with customers will be extended to the mind-set of Culture Salon.

### 2.5.9 Critical issues

As always, there are some critical issues that must be considered as the project develops. Sales are a crucial factor in the project; it cannot be carried on if there are no inwards cash flows to cover the costs. The sales team must aggressively push for sales, and especially for large groups, in order to fill the seats at the concerts.

The marketing budget is low, meaning that widely visible street advertising campaigns are out of the question as well as extensive newspaper or magazine marketing. Moreover, the amount of shows planned only for the first production, Sibelius 150, is ambitious - 55 show days mainly 3 days a week. Reaching tourists and summer visitors in Helsinki is crucial during the holiday season.

There is a vast amount of other Sibelius events that are being organised due to the anniversary year. Therefore, one of the most demanding challenges in communication and advertising activities is how differentiate the Culture Salon's events and Sibelius theme from the rest of them. Moreover, the companies are specified as one target market segment, but they are facing major budget cuts and are not especially eager to invest in culture activities or in any extracurricular activities for that matter. Therefore organisations and associations are more prospective as they have the funds and a certain budget that are to be used for the entertainment of the members.

#### 2.5.10 Macro and microenvironment

The Culture Salon concept is influenced by both macro- and microenvironment. Macro-environmental factors are the demographics of their customers, the economical development of Finnish economy, the poor financial stage of Finnish companies and their employee co-operation negotiations, the seasons of the year, tourism, the activities of the city of Helsinki, legislation changes concerning historical buildings, laws regarding alcohol serving, and advertising regulations being only a few examples as well as the air, sea and land traffic regulations. Unfortunately, the macroenvironmental aspects are out of reach meaning that the company is unable to affect those factors but rather only be prepared to adjust and adapt to any changes that might occur. (Oxford Learning Lab, 2015)

The microenvironment is more fortunate in the sense that Culture Salon is able to control or affect these factors to some extent. Microenvironmental factors are, for example, the distributors of the by-products sold in the shop and products needed in cafeteria services, summer employees who are employed to Culture Salon as well as the permanent employees. In addition, partners and contractors are part of Culture Salon's microenvironment (Oxford Learning Lab, 2015).

Different tools to analyse the micro and macroenvironments that a company or a project is operating in, devise on the issues that must be especially noted or prioritised. On the other hand, it relieves the resources from the operations or aspects that are not concerning at that moment (Hyvärinen, K., Pavicevic, D., Hurten, D., 2012). In this case, the different factors of the micro and macroenvironment could have been addressed one by

one, and the pointed out the central, the most pressing matters. Identifying them would have given even more profound reckoning on their significance.

#### 2.5.11 Marketing strategy

Culture Salon's principle marketing and advertising channels used to target consumers are TicketMaster Finland and social media. However, when targeting companies and organisations, direct sales and electronically sent campaign letters are sent for the appropriate person and titleholder.

Network marketing forms a large part of Culture Salon's marketing. Sibelius 150 Celebrations is project started by Sibelius Birthtown Foundation. For the special year, it has created a web page, which has formed a common ground for all Sibelius' 150th anniversary events and celebrations organised during the year 2015. Advertising on the web page is made very attractive to event organisers, as it is free of charge. Moreover, it encourages all participants to use their logo to create awareness and, at the same time to generate credibility of the events.

The city of Helsinki actively promotes activities in Helsinki and wishes to help local companies and organisations in marketing. There are free services such as blog posts written by their employee, as mentioned earlier in the chapter 2.3.8 Keys to success, but also visibility on Helsinki web pages and Visit Helsinki pages. However, More On and its co-operation company El Jefe are carefully weighing the importance of paid marketing resources, such as the ones offered by the city of Helsinki; printed leaflets for tourists and "Helppi" summer employees that assist tourists to get around Helsinki and to find places to see and simultaneously promote the events organised by partner organisations.

As mentioned, the tools and assistance of Sibelius Celebrations' association and the city of Helsinki will be taken full advantage of. In addition, contracted retailers are an important part of sales and marketing operations. On March 8, 2015 there are five retailers that are committed to promote Culture Salon's Sibelius shows. Those are Musiikki Marjatta, Jerry Leppilampi from Release Oy, Minna Pentti and Fantastico Music Artist Management Ltd., Liisa Kapanen from KapArt and TicketMaster Finland.

Retailers represent a spectrum of industries; Musiikki Marjatta is a traditional, Finnish travel agency organising music and theatre trips around Finland as well as abroad (Musiikki Marjatta, 2015). Minna Pentti is the CEO of Fantastico Music, which is an artist management company representing several Finnish artists and Liisa Kapanen is their retired employee operating as a sole trader. Release Oy is a business gift oriented music agency and TicketMaster Finland is a Finnish, entrance ticket sales company, which is part of the international Live Nation Entertainment Group (TicketMaster Finland, 2015).

The part of TicketMaster Finland in sales and marketing activities will be significant. E-tickets as well as tickets at the door will be sold via their system and machinery as already discussed in the SWOT analysis.

On the Internet, there are several web pages where organisations are able to advertise their events. Some of them have some sort of fee, but some of them are free-of-charge. The Culture Salon's events will be inserted to the free web sites. However, the process should be planned and coordinated. With the tight schedule that the project is conducted in, it would be beneficial time-wise to first examine the available forms of advertising and then put the effort to draft a plan that will be followed throughout the project. Keeping track of the channels and media is important in order to be able to inform about any changes or updates to the events. Moreover, it would help long-term activities, as it would be effortless to refer to the earlier, similar cases when deciding the marketing and advertising of any new productions.

## 2.6 Financials

The budget examined will be the estimation done to Sibelius Finlandia music shows, and not the Culture Salon as a whole. Due to confidential and contractual reasons, the actual numbers of the estimated budget could not be included.

Ticket pricing includes the value added tax (VAT), which is 10 %, and the pricing is the following: adults EUR 32,50 and children under 12 years' old free of charge when they are accompanied by a parent. There are no discount groups, meaning that the students, unemployed and retired pay also the full price. The ticket sales are expected as following; there are three shows per week, on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

According to the estimation, the break-even point is 51,22 tickets sold for each show. Meaning that each week there should be 153,66 tickets sold to the audience, and in a month, assuming four weeks in a month, 614,64. In the hall, there is space for approximately 200 people, depending on the seating. In case the audience is standing up, then there can be fitted much more, however, that is not planned to be the case in Sibelius concerts.

Additional revenue can be gained by selling VIP packages and balcony seats. Moreover, the revenue gained from Culture Shop, in which will be items designed and ordered specifically to the shop but also suitable products that are in stock of More On Oy.

The expenses are kept to minimum and the artists' payments are negotiated to be reasonable and in relation to the quality and their popularity. The artists who perform outside of the Sibelius shows, are required to give an estimation of how many people they should draw to the event and the ticket price for the evening is, more or less, based on the estimation. The additional employees hired to, for example, Culture Shop, will be undergraduates and young people who show talent in the field of business but who still settle with lower salary than an experienced one. More On Oy has had interns during its whole existence, and therefore has had good practise to choose the most suitable ones for the task (van Aartsengel, a. & Kurtoglu, S., 2013).

Moreover, cost-efficiency is increased by the arrangements regarding the employee in the Culture Salon and the non-existent rent of the premises. As mentioned in the strengths of SWOT analysis (p.16), this is significant competitive advantage and strong enforcement for the viability of the project.

### **3 Conclusion**

As discussed in the chapter 2.2 Theory, the project plan can be formed according to the structure offered by theories with a long history in business education. Moreover, the theories can be applied and the concept of Culture Salon examined based on the generally valued evaluation methods, while, however, keeping their limitations in mind.

To analyse the feasibility, PESTLE analysis could have been useful. Although there was a thorough consideration upon critical issues and micro and macroenvironment, conducting a PESTLE analysis would have helped to clarify and categorise more the different aspects that affect the project. Before starting the project, it is crucial to identify different aspects that influence the success of the project. These factors are political, economical, social, technological, legal and environmental aspects and issues. Even if some of the aspects would seem to have a minimal effect on the project or the stakeholders, still acknowledging them is beneficial. If there were any changes in some of the factors, it might be promptly recognised and actions could be taken accordingly before the situation would escalate (Simcoe, W., 2012).

Another useful tool would have been widely known and used Porter's five forces of threat. These five forces are suppliers, buyers, substitutes, competition and new entrants. A sincere and above-board analysis of these five forces of threat and conclusions based on the study would have assisted in formulating a viable strategy. (Hyvärinen, K., Pavićević, D., Hurten, D., 2012).

In order for a project to be viable, it needs a sustainable competitive advantage. The Culture Salon obviously has many strengths and virtues. However, they should be identified clearly in order to be able to exploit it, or them, to the fullest. The competitive advantage could be taken out and be used to really make the service stand out to the public and explicitly differentiate Culture Salon from the competition. Moreover, it would assist in designing competitive strategy, which is rather vague in this project plan. At the moment the competitive strategy is largely based on prevision and future perks, and assets that are possible to gain in the growth phase of product life cycle. The needed, concrete actions would be a bit simpler to plan and identify when the company knows the absolute competitive advantage that it has in relation to other operators (van Aartsengel, a. & Kurtoglu, S., 2013).

The core of change management is transparent communication. When any sort of change is being undergone, the information delivered to other team members should be accurate, constant and profound. This principle can be applied in project management when a new concept is being developed. When an organisation is at the stage of Planning according to the Deming's Cycle, Plan-Do-Study-Act, the importance of internal communication grows (The W. Edwards Deming Institute, 2015).

Culture Salon project is on quite tight schedule, the externally visible operations have already taken place in March 2015, but the foundation and core operations are still in progress. On the planning phase, the new ideas are being formed and some of those are taken forward. However, as the concept is still evolving, those decisions may still vary. When the ideas are being realised and the initiatives taking their form, the internal communication should deliver the steps of development to rest of the team.

Especially in this case study where there have been problems in regards of the internal communication, this is something that should be taken into closer examination. Lack of internal communication does not imply that the other communication to outside of the office would be any more competent or efficient (Hyvärinen, K., et al 2012; Seyedhoseini, S. et al 2008; The W. Edwards Deming Institute, 2015).

What is encouraging and positive for the viability of the project, the producer, More On Oy, has been able to link its previous operations and business activities to the concept of Culture Salon. The company has experience from on the spot sales, both B2B and B2C sales as well as productising a concept hence being able to express the brand via carefully designed and chosen product offering. Moreover, the employees are accustomed to work with artists and so called artistic souls that can be very careful and rigorous about their performance and art.

The difference between marketing a product and a service is known to be different. As Lange claims in his research, neither the same terminology nor the strategies can be used on both of them (2009). Moreover, when a service concept is based on a culture activity and related to arts, it is not comprehensive enough to follow the basic guidelines provided by the cardinal marketing theories. However, the subject is not profoundly studied. It has been acknowledged that same tools used to handle a tangible product should not be applied when promoting arts or a service. However, exploiting the theories that are profoundly studied and available is a decent way to examine a project concept. Analysis done from several angles is beneficial, especially when the limitations of the tools are being acknowledged and considered. (Lange, C., 2009) (Bichoff, N., *et al.* 2014)

To analyse whether the project plan is viable, it would have been beneficial to include more the other themes and productions that will be part of the concept of Culture Salon. It cannot be built solely around one theme, in this case the 150th anniversary of Jean Sibelius. Especially when it will be the main theme from May 2015 to September 2015



being less than six months. In September, the productions of Billie Holiday and Édith Piaf are to take over the spotlight and become the marketing punchline. Although, the concept evolves constantly and augments the possibilities, it would be beneficial to have some sort of vision already in the beginning, in order to predict the project's viability in long-term. The concept must be viable without the Sibelius theme and it would have been intriguing to examine it overall, and from several points-of-view rather than just one production.

What's more, delivering the vision, mission and values both internally and externally is becoming more and more essential. Particularly in service business where the employees are a visible, tangible part of the bought service product, they should be presenting the organisation's values and consort with them. For this reason, introducing and clarifying the vision, mission and values already in the project plan would help to build the project's brand from the beginning.

An essential part of project planning is to establish five or six concrete strategic goals, and then certain actions to achieve them. These goals can be, for example, a certain market share obtained in some specific time period, achievements regarding sales channels and their coverage or exporting objectives. Profitability and cost-effectiveness are some of the often used core objectives. Strategic planning often contains the objectives, actions and measures for both short-term and long-term giving milestones to help to adjust the guidelines and incentives for internal operations.

To conclude, the Culture Salon is a feasible project as long as there is a clear, established projection: what is it that the concept wishes to achieve, what is being done and how. When the outline of the project is pronounced, it has endless possibilities as there are countless number of talented and skilful musicians and artists that are still on their way to the fame and success. There are always partners that are more than willing to participate in a thrifty and well-functioning project. The producing company, More On Oy, is owned and executed as a family company ensuring that the core team is committed to its success.

Aspects that require close attention are planning, structuring and consistency. Firstly, planning and closely considering different options and possibilities at one fell swoop would save time and efforts, not to mention decrease the amount of mistakes and errors.

It is laborious process, and a waste of time when tasks are to be re-examined and re-done several times due to poor planning and communication errors.

Secondly, once the responsibilities and tasks are well planned and established, it is rather effortless to divide and assign them to the team members. Organising the different operations and responsibilities facilitates the monitoring of the progress and development. In order the project to be viable for long-term, the advancements and their direction should be controlled, if the project's evolvement is forwards, stagnant or totally erroneous.

Thirdly, consistency in all activities support the project in general, and its credibility in the eyes of the stakeholders. Irregular or irrational decisions seem suspicious and cause distrust in both internal and external stakeholders. As mentioned, especially in service products the employees are a crucial element in the popularity of the service. Scepticism of the employees reflect to the customers causing negative ambiance and decreasing demand.

The author would recommend the project plan to be reviewed from strategic and financial point of view, but sees that the Culture Salon can very well be feasible and viable when it is proceeded with care.

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