Creating a New Event Concept:

Case Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer

Workshop Conference

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- Case Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer Workshop Conference

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Innoguide Tourism is a network for tour guides creative operations. The Innoguide 2.0 project is the second version of an international project that provides a community for tour guides, guide trainers and guide organizations from across Europe. In the network the communities of the tourism industry can share information, but also learn more about innovative guiding.

The commissioner of this thesis was Laurea University of Applied Sciences, who wished to develop their co-operation with the Innoguide Tourism network by organizing the Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference for tour guides in Espoo in January 2016. This is a practice-based thesis that creates a new event concept based on the case of the Innoguide 2.0 workshop conference and by using the case as an example before creating the new concept.

The objective of this thesis was to create a new event concept for Laurea University UAS. The purpose of this thesis was to help Laurea UAS to plan and organize international conferences more effectively in the future by using the new concept.

The theory basis of this thesis covers the basics of organizing a conference, including the planning phase and what kind of practical arrangements are needed when organizing conferences. The theory includes the topics of choosing the target group, stakeholders, timing and schedule for an event and budgeting. Practical arrangements include searching for the venue, accommodation and transportation. The theoretical framework also in describes the basics of service and service conceptualizing.

This thesis used two phases of the Service Design model by Stefan Moritz; understanding and generating. The thesis used the 8x8 idealization method, an online survey answered by the participants of the case event and an interview with the project manager. These methods were exploded to create a new event concept. The finalized concept includes a new schedule and an event brief to show the phases of organizing an international conference in Laurea UAS.

Keywords: conference, event concept, organizing a conference

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Uuden tapahtumakonseptin luominen - Case Innoguide 2.0 matkaoppaiden workshop -konferenssi

Innoguide Tourism on luovan toiminnan verkosto matkaoppaille. Verkoston toinen versio Innoguide 2.0 on kansainvälinen projekti, joka tarjoaa yhteisön matkaoppaille, opaskouluttajille ja matkaopas organisaatioille ympäri Eurooppaa. Yhteisön avulla matkailualan toimijat voivat jakaa tietoa ja samalla oppia lisää innovatiivisesta matkaopas-toiminnasta.

Opinnäytetyön toimeksiantajana oli Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulu. Se toivoi kehittävänsä yhteistyötään Innoguide Tourism -verkoston kanssa järjestämällä Innoguide 2.0 matkaoppaiden workshop -konferenssin Espoossa tammikuussa 2016. Tämä toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö uuden tapahtumakonseptin luomisesta tehtiin Innoguide 2.0 -workshop konferenssin pohjalta, käyttäen kyseistä konferenssia case-esimerkkinä ennen uuden konseptin luomista.

Opinnäytetyön tavoitteena oli luoda Laurea-ammattikorkeakoululle uusi tapahtumakonsepti. Työn tarkoituksena oli auttaa Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulua suunnittelemaan ja organisoimaan kansainvälisiä konferensseja tulevaisuudessa tehokkaammin käyttämällä uutta konseptia.

Tietoperusta sisältää tietoa konferenssin organisoinnista, sen suunnitteluvaiheesta ja käytännön järjestelyistä. Teoria konferenssin suunnitteluvaiheesta käsittelee kohderyhmiä, sidosryhmiä, aikatauluttamista sekä budjetointia. Teoria käytännön järjestelyistä pitää sisällään tapahtumapaikan, majoituksen ja kuljetuksen kartoittamisen. Tietoperusta sisältää myös palvelun perusteet ja palvelun konseptoinnin.

Opinnäytetyön toiminnallisessa osassa käytettiin palvelumuotoilua Stefan Moritzin mallin ymmärrä- ja kehitä-vaiheiden mukaisesti. Uuden tapahtumakonseptin kehittämisvälineinä käytettiin 8x8 ideointimenetelmää, konferenssin osallistujien internetkyselyä ja projektipäällikön haastattelua. Konsepti sisällyttää uuden tapahtuma-aikataulun ja event briefin eli lyhyen toimintaohjeen, jotka osoittavat vaiheet Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun kansainvälisiä konferensseja järjestettäessä.

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1   Introduction

Conferences or so called meeting events have all one thing in common regardless of their size or subject; communication. Communication is important to any society and without that no nation in the world would function. Conferences are about selling an idea, informing participants, enthusing them, educating or even entertaining them. (Appleby 2005, 1 – 3.)

Conference is a universal term to describe different events; general meetings, seminars, board meetings, trainings, sales meetings and many more. Conferences are often an undervalued sector of the business tourism, which is a part of tourism industry. Tourism industry has been claimed to be the largest and at least one of the widest industries in the world. This means that it is important to provide conferences and that way communications both nationwide and globally. (Rogers 2008, 1 - 9.)

The objective of this thesis was to create a new event concept for Laurea University of Applied Sciences (UAS). The purpose of this thesis was to help Laurea UAS to plan and organize international conferences more effectively in the future by using the new concept. This thesis uses a workshop conference held in January 2016 in co-operation between Innoguide Tourism and Laurea UAS as a case study.

The theoretical framework of this thesis covers the basics of organizing a conference, including the planning phase and what kind of practical arrangements are needed when organizing conferences. The theory includes choosing the target group, stakeholders, timing and schedule for an event and budgeting. Practical arrangements include searching the venue, accommodation and transportation. The theory basis also in holds the basics of service and service conceptualizing.

This thesis uses two phases of the Service Design model by Stefan Moritz; understanding and generating. The thesis used 8x8 idealization method, an online survey filled by the participants of the case event and an interview from the project manager as tools to create a new event concept. The concept includes a new schedule and an event brief to show the steps of organizing an international conference in Laurea UAS.

The first chapter of this thesis comprises of the introduction, which is followed by the introduction of the client in the second chapter. The third chapter contains theory basis that includes the basics or organizing an event and conceptualization. The fourth chapter is the functional part of this thesis, where online survey from the participants of the workshop conference and the online interview of the project manager are used as research methods to the new event concept. It also shows how the generating phase of the Service Design Model by

Stefan Moritz was used as a tool to create the new event concept. The last chapter shows the conclusions of the thesis.

2   Laurea UAS and the Innoguide 2.0 -project

The commissioner of this thesis was Laurea University of Applied Sciences (UAS) and the representative was the organizations senior lecturer from the hospitality industry. Laurea UAS is the current organization of two predecessors; Vantaa University of Applied Sciences (1992-1997) and Espoo-Vantaa University of Applied Scienses (1997-2001). As an Applied University, Laurea focuses on networking activities, internationality, service quality, developing actions, entrepreneurship and guiding students to be successful in working life. Laurea UAS's current brand promise "Together we are stronger" describes Laurea's role in the Uusimaa region in South Finland. The skills and knowledge of the university's students, staff and partnerships are available to the whole Uusimaa area. Their service promise is "We are here for you at Laurea", which is a promise of learning for both the students and cooperative partners of Laurea, and development currently and in the future. (Laurea 2016.)

The Innoguide Tourism network is the home of the creative world of guiding. The Innoguide 2.0 project is the second version of an international project that provides a community for tour guides, guide trainers and guide organizations from across Europe. There the communities of the tourism industry can share information, but also learn more about innovative guiding. (Innoguide Tourism 2016.)

Figure 1: Innoguide Tourism (Innoguide 2015.)

The Innoguide Tourism network was started after a study that was conducted in eight European countries revealed that the important topics of interculturality, sustainability and experiential guiding were not covered that well in guide training curricula. This is the reason the Innoguide open source platform was created. The platform created for the network offers structured guide training programs around Europe, three online training modules on sustainable, experiential and intercultural guiding, a toolkit to integrate these topics in everyone's own organization, videos, blogs and train-the trainer workshops in partner countries. (Innoguide Tourism, 2016.)

Currently Innoguide provides information and networking opportunities between travel companies and entrepreneurs in 11 countries around Europe. Innoguide 2.0 project is a follow-up of the first Innoguide project that ran from October 2010 until September 2013. As the first Innoguide project focused on innovative guide training, Innoguide 2.0 focuses on sustainability, interculturality and experiential guiding. The main goal of Innoguide 2.0 is to give the tools for travel guide organizations in Europe to integrate these three topics in their organization, and gives everyone a chance to learn from each other in the most unique way. Currently, Innoguide 2.0 is funded by the Erasmus+ program, and it aims to stimulate innovative and entrepreneurship minded actions in the field of guiding in Europe. (Innoguide Tourism, 2016.)

The basic level Train-the-trainer workshops of the Innoguide 2.0- project were held in Belgium and the Netherlands in 2015. The first advanced level workshop was held from 18th-22nd January 2016 in Espoo, which was hosted by Laurea University (UAS). The theme of this workshop was sustainability. The workshop and its contents were designed to improve the participant's knowledge of sustainable and innovative guiding and how to implement that given information in their own work. The role of Laurea in the Innoguide 2.0 -project was to support the development of quality network between the partner companies in Innoguide, by providing service design expertise. Laurea also provides access to end-user and tourism related organizations in Finland. (Innoguide Tourism, 2016.)

3 Event Concept

The key concepts in this thesis are service, understanding what needs to be done when organizing a conference and event conceptualization. The sources used in this thesis consisted mostly of literature about event and conference management in English and Finnish. This first chapter starts by defining what service is, what are supporting services, what conferences are, what makes a conference successful and what are the benefits of a successful conference. The process of organizing a conference has been split into two smaller sections, which

are planning the conference and the practical arrangements of a conference. The planning section contains theory about the target group, stakeholders, timing, schedule and budgeting. The section about the practical arrangements contains theory about choosing the venue for the conference, booking accommodation and transportation. The last chapter contains theory about conceptualization.

3.1   Service and the Three Service Groups

The word service can mean many things; it may be a personal service such as the help of a doctor or the service of a product, like mobile phone. The definition of a service used to mean that the companies with the word service included were the only ones providing a service. Examples may be; telephone customer service or a bar service. In today's world, it is understood that every single company provides some kind of service, from hairdressing to creating adverts. Service is not built just by the organization or company providing it. Customer is a part of building the service just as much. Customers provide the need and the service is built around that need. From the customers point, a good service is when they feel well treated and the service is easily available. (Grönroos 2015, 47 - 48.)

In most cases, service means interacting with another. Sometimes however, especially nowadays, the user client may never even be in a straight contact with company providing the service. A good example is a laundry service; the customer orders a laundry service and that it is collected straight from home. A driver, who may not even be from the laundry company, but from a separate driving company, arrives to pick up the clothes. Then the driver takes the delivery for the laundry company, who washes the clothes. Afterwards the driver delivers the clothes back to the customer's home and this way the customer will never see the person providing the actual service, laundry wash. And to go even further, some companies take care of their orders only through online order programs, where an automatic system answers and communicates with the customer. This way the customer may never even communicate with any real person, a service provider. But luckily most of the times, the customer can still receive service from an actual person. A robot or a program can never truly win real persons warm and welcoming service. (Grönroos 2015, 48 - 49.)

Service can be divided into three groups; core services, facilitating services and supporting services. Core services are what companies have built their business around. To the airports it is to let people board on the planes as safe as possible. For an event company it is the events ordered by the client. Core service is not necessarily just one service as there may be many options; in a clothing store the staff's job is not just to sell clothes, but also give fashion tips for the customers and help to find the items suited for everyone. (Grönroos 2015, 207 - 208.)

For the core services to be successful, some additional extra services may be needed. Enabling services, or so called facilitating services are what either makes the core services look better, or even make them possible. When a customer buys a car, they also need a car insurance which is an ultimate necessary. Or when staying as a guest in a hotel, it is not just the room the customer requires. The reception, cleaning and food services are important part of the whole service model of a hotel. Without a facilitating service that works, the core service does not function either as the customer cannot make the best out of the service. (Grönroos 2015, 207 - 208.)

When creating an event, the practical arrangements fulfill the core service and make the customers overall experience successful. The third type of service is enhancing services or other words supporting services. These, just like facilitating services, are not obligatory but they fulfill the core service and make the customers overall experience successful. Supporting services are used to increase the value of the core service and to separate it from the competing businesses. The supporting services do have some role though; the location needs to be suited for the event and its nature. In addition all the core services need to fit into the planned budget. (Grönroos 2000, 207 - 208.)

3.2   Conferences

The conference and event industry is still considered to be a young, growing and very dynamic. In Europe and North America, it already is a huge international industry with big investments. It might have the youthful power, but as it is still in quite early stages compared to many other fields. Conference industry lacks some of the main characters of a successful business; sufficient market intelligence, proper terminology, people educated strictly to the industry, training structures and clear working paths. A good example is that conferences are still classified to the business tourism industry instead of having an event industry separately. (Rogers 2008, 1.)

A need for a conference comes from different organization's or communities needs to interact with each other about the matters that are important for them. This may mean one company's annual general meeting or another company's conference to their clients introducing their new products. What combines these two different conferences is that they are both to do with bringing people together face-to-face, so they can exchange ideas and information, network and build business relationships, discuss about current issues in their field of business or get to know new companies and organizations. (Rogers 2008, 2 - 6.)

The modern form of conferences is built on political and religious interactions of earlier centuries, from business meetings in between the ancient salesmen and the trade association conventions. The form of conferences nowadays started in the 1960s as a result of increasing investment on the conference industry. During that time the business world started to understand the importance of personal communication and mass networking when trying to create long term customer relationships or find new stakeholders for themselves. (Rogers 2008, 2 - 6.)

3.3   A Successful Conference and the Benefits

A successful conference is a combination of a variety of things, and it is something that everyone can feel. Even if the conference is based on an existing model, the atmosphere is always a unique experience. A successful conference leaves a positive feeling not just for the participants, but also for the hosts. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 101.)

Vallo and Häyrynen describe a successful conference as a star with six corners and two triangles (Figure 2). The two triangles include three main questions which should be answered before building a conference. The first triangle is called The Idea, with the strategic questions. When an organization starts to think why the conference needs to be held, they must carefully consider what type of message they want to give for the public and what does the organization want to give for the possible participants. This is the first corner of The Idea triangle. The goal of the conference should be clearly in mind from the start. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 101 - 103.)

The second question of the first triangle is to whom is the conference aimed for? When the host has a clear idea of the target group and how to response to their needs, the next thing is to think ways to reach the target group. This can be dependent on the age or location of the target group. What would be the best way to send the right message to the right group? The way to find these things out is to carry out a marketing research for the possible consumers. A conference should never be executed without the proved need of it. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 101 - 103.)

The third corner of The Idea triangle is the question what? What kind of conference is right for a certain target group or goal? All the questions need to be answered by either the conference organization or the customer buying the service. By answering all these questions the hosts can understand the main idea of the conference. And that idea is the essence where everything else is created around. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 101 - 103.)
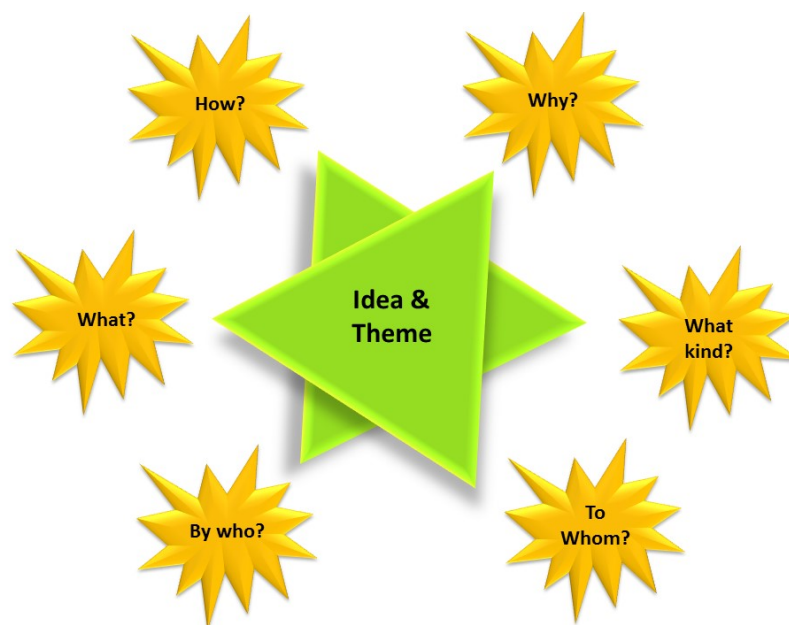
Figure 2: A Star Figure of Combining an Idea and Theme

The second triangle, The Theme, contains the operative questions which also need to be answered when creating a successful conference. These questions start with thinking how. How will the conference be executed in a way that will achieve the set goal, but still avoid the negative actions? To achieve this, the host organizing the conference needs to create the process in three steps; planning, executing and after marketing. The second corner of The Theme triangle is the question what is created? The content of a conference depends on the goal, target group and the message the host organizer wishes to send in public. What does the program need to contain, so the participants will get the information or experience they wished when participating the conference? The key to success is to understand the participant's point of view. Nothing can be more of a flop for everyone, than conference content with no value. Thirdly, the conference host needs to have a clear plan and an idea of everyone's responsibilities. The project manager is the key person in this part, as it is important for that person to know who is doing what in all the steps, who has the last responsibility of everything and who makes the last call in every issue. The role of a project manager is the most important when creating a conference. As the strategic triangle was more of creating and planning the conference, the operative one held the guide to implement the plans. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 103 - 105).

These six questions, or other words corners, and the two triangles they create need to be in a perfect balance for the conference to be successful. If even one of these parts is imbalanced, it will start a chain effect of failures. This may be hurtful for the conferences success, as the participants can usually feel the imbalanced atmosphere or the negativity they feel right af-

ter attending the conference. In reverse, if all these questions have the right answer and they are executed as planned, there is nothing in the way for the conferences success. When planning and creating a conference, the host organization needs to hold the idea and theme in mind all the time or the conferences activity content may stay very hollow. The conference planning star is the key to success. (Vallo & Häyrynen 2012, 106).

As conferences are attached to business tourism, the financial benefits can be significant. In 2005, visitors attending a conference in the United Kingdom spent an average of 164£ a day when other visitors, like tourists, spent an average of 57£ a day. When business tourists spend more money, the host country gets more economic benefits and a greater base for the next similar events. Another benefit in conferences is that they are held all year round. The main season might be during spring and autumn, when the bigger conferences and events are held, but many smaller conferences happen during winter time. The employee's perspective can be counted as a benefit as well; because conference industry is mostly all year round business, it creates permanent jobs, instead of temporary jobs which are usually more common in the tourism business. (Rogers 2008, 27 – 29.)

If the conference is a success, it will more likely be held again which can benefit business around it. The way to achieve this is by making sure the participants have a positive experience during the conference. If the host manages to charm the participant with the delegates of the destination country, like beautiful nature and locations or a unique experience, they will at the same time have an effect on the overall experience of the whole conference. When the participant has enjoyed the conference, they might bring other profits the next time. An example of this can be a person, who has had a good experience the last time, will next time bring the whole family on a small holiday at the same time. This means bigger hotel rooms, more dining in restaurants, more shopping and possibly bigger car rentals. The professional benefit of a conference should never be forgotten or underestimated. Conference is the place to go meet new people, create business relationships, and share and receive new information or working tools. It is an important part of any business, as knowledge is the key to success. The professional benefits are the main reason why conferences are held. (Rogers 2008, 27 – 29.)

3.4   Planning a Conference

In the following chapters, one will find out how to define the target group and stakeholders of the conference. Later on the importance of timing and creating a schedule will also be explained. Last but not least, one can read about the importance of budgeting.

3.4.1   Target Group

After defining relevant goals of the conference, it is time to think of the target group. Even if the target group would not be that precisely limited, there will always be some guidelines to who the marketing is targeted; whether it is about age, gender, music interest or the living area. Most of the events are dependent on the amount of participants; if it isn't profitable, it will not happen. (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 42 – 43.)

The reason for not having enough participants can be anything from ineffective marketing or wrong definition of target group, to the state of the community or economy. Before the conference is an annual event, all these challenges will determine the future of the conference. When the target group has been determined, the event manager needs to consider the benefits of the conference for both customer and the host itself. The whole nature of the conference starts from the needs of the people attending and it will have an effect on every part of the plan. What their values are in business, ethnic values, hopes and goals of attending the conference and how much are they willing to invest in it, financially or time wise. (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 42 – 43.)

Especially in a conference, the amount of participants can also be very small. So when planning the schedule, program and facilities, it is crucial to understand the customer and to have guidelines set to the right amount of participants. If the conference is for 30 persons, the facility needs to provide enough space, but also be functional for everyone to hear and interact. In a creative conference, where networking is in the main role, providing an innovating and functional space is important. (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 43.)

3.4.2   Stakeholders

In corporate events and conferences, the stakeholders can be divided into three categories. These are demand, suppliers and intermediaries. Demand for the market is what starts the organizing of an event. If there is no demand, there won't be any customers. (Beech, Kaiser & Kaspar 2014, 59 - 60.)

The organizations and businesses providing services are considered as supplier stakeholders. These can be the venue providers, accommodations, catering services, florists, contactors, DJ's or tour-guides. Every event and conference manager will come to know this type of stakeholders. They provide the goods of the conference; these things are necessary to make the consumer enjoy their time. (Beech, Kaiser & Kaspar 2014, 59 - 60.)

The third type of stakeholder is "the middle hand", intermediaries. They act on behalf of either the supplier or buyer. They may be the event company, who arranges a conference for a big technologic organization. They may be the marketing company in charge of making the conference public or they can be the company working behalf of the supplier. One form of this may be a staffing rent company, from whom the event will buy their restaurant staff services. Or it can be an agency, which connects the buyer to a professional speaker for the conference. What needs to be remembered is that these three types of stakeholders that the corporate event complex system uses are each working to achieve their individual organization goals. This means that the conference management team should first research and race the companies to find the perfect stakeholder for that exact event. (Beech, Kaiser & Kaspar 2014, 59 - 60.)

3.4.3   Timing and schedule

In her book Organising a Conference, Pauline Appleby (2005) states that perhaps the key part of any successful event is timing and the schedule of the event. If well structured, the conference can go very nearly perfectly and bring many benefits to the table. (Appleby 2005, 44 – 45.)

When scheduling the conference the event managers need to be realistic; what is and is not possible to do within the limited time and consider the multiple choices of different stakeholders, when sticking in budget. Even if another location would be a "cool" option, or better fitting to the theme, many times the limited budget will inhibit the choice. This is why bidding different companies is very important when making the stakeholder decisions. (Appleby 2005, 44 – 45.)

Appleby (2005) opens the benefits of using a planned schedule. Time is considered one of the most valuable resources in the planet, as it cannot be replaced once used. By timing the steps, it helps the project manager of the conference to keep on track of what is happening in every step so that everyone can save those valuable minutes, hours and days. Because coordinating one event at a time is not the norm of project manager, the timing helps the manager to work on multiple project at the same time. (Appleby 2005, 44 – 45.)

3.4.4   Budget

Creating a budget is crucial when planning any kind of a conference, as anticipated costs create a framework and set parameters for the conference. When organizing an event for a nonprofit organization, the conferences need to be generating enough money to cover the costs of the conference by collecting money from the participants. This is why setting a realistic

budget is extremely important. The budget must show the projected income of the conference along with all the expenditures of the conference. As the conference ends, a detailed balance sheet of all the costs and incomes should be created. This balance sheet will help to plan the next conference. (Rogers 2003, 179 – 184.)

In their book Vallo & Häyrinen (2012) wrote that it can beneficial to examine previous similar conferences and their budgets if possible. This will help one to create a realistic budget. Knowing the target group will also help to plan the budget, since one has an idea what kind of things they prefer and appreciate. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 147 – 149.)

The most common expenditures during conferences are hiring a venue and catering costs. Accommodation for the guests can also be very costly, and one option is to try to get the participants to pay for the accommodation by themselves if the budget is tight. Guest speakers might also want some kind of a compensation for their performances. Different kinds of materials such as papers, pen and other office supplies and badges or gifts for the participants also need to be taken into consideration when planning the budget for the conference. Depending on the size and style of the conference, one might need to hire some extra staff during the conference, and possibly even security. (Rogers 2003, 179 – 184.)

3.5   Practical Arrangements

During the following chapters the importance of the choosing the right venue for the event will be explained first. Then the chapter presents parts needed to be taken into consideration when arranging accommodation for the participants of the conference. Finally the importance of good transportation links will be explained.

3.5.1   Choosing the right venue

When choosing a location for a conference, one has to consider the pros and cons of each location. If the venue looks promising but is situated in a different part of the town, or maybe even in a completely different city, it might have a big effect on amount of people participating. Longer distance would also mean more expenses in transportation. One also needs to set aside the maximum amount of money they are willing to spend on the venue. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 139.)

The nature of the event and what kind of people will be participating will also have an effect, since some of the participants might have some special needs or requirements. When making a decision about the location of the conference, one should always see the venue in person, and assess the locations suitability for the conference critically. Things that need to be taken

into consideration when choosing a venue are whether it is suitable for the image of the event organizer, has the place hosted conferences before and how easily accessible it is for people with disabilities. The venue should be easily reachable by car or public transportation, and it needs to be large enough for the participants. The venue being used should include, or at least support the use of needed technology such as projectors, computers and sound systems. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 139 – 140.)

When choosing the venue, one needs take into account the time it takes to set up and dismantle the space, especially when hosting a conference or an event in a new environment. New event venues might have some problems with technology, or they might not have enough staff to handle a large amount of participants. Larger events may also require several days to set up everything, while it would only take one day to dismantle everything. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 139 – 140.)

3.5.2   Accommodation

When choosing accommodation for the participants of the conference, usually the most important factor is the possibility to walk from the hotel to the conference venue. However some people, especially those from bigger cities, would most likely not mind a short trip by public transport. Therefore one should instead look for hotels that are easily reachable by public transport if they provide some extra value for the participants of the event. One should also find out if it is allowed to smoke in the rooms, the availability of allergy rooms and rooms for people with disabilities. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 71.)

After choosing the hotel, the hotel needs to confirm the reservation, and always provide a written documentation or e-mail of the negotiated prices. This document should include any possible cancellation fees along with price. One should provide the basic information about the hotel, such as address and phone number, to the participants of the conference at latest in the invitation being sent to the participants. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 71.)

One option is to also book a certain amount of rooms for the participants of the conference. As the exact number of rooms is hard to decide several weeks before the event, one should look into reservations for any previous conferences and see what price ranges were the most popular, and make their own reservation accordingly. It is better to first book a small amount of rooms, and add more rooms later on, as it can be difficult to get rid of excess rooms. In addition, the organizer of the conference should provide information about the conference to the hotel's front office in case the participants have something to ask. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 71 - 72.) The participants need to be able to get into the venue easily. Moving between the venue, accommodation, airport or train station needs to be fluent, in order for the participants to

feel positive about the arrangements, and that way about the whole conference experience. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 73 - 77.)

3.5.3 Transportation

The most important task when organizing transportation for the conference is bidding the possible companies that are suitable for the task, and ask them to send you an offer. After that, one needs to create a more exact schedule for the use of the transportation including pick up points. The participants need to be made aware of the timing and pick up points as well. The organizer needs to make signs for the buses or taxis as well. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 76.)

The schedule needs to include the date, the route and any possible stops for pick up and drop off, not forgetting the places where the transportation leaves or goes and at what time. The schedule that will be given to the participants needs to at least include the name of the service provider. If possible, the contact phone number of the transportation company should also be given to the participants. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 76.)

When planning the schedule for the transportation, one can and should ask advice from the transportation companies since they have a lot of experience on how long it usually takes to perform similar missions. Getting all the people in the bus can take a surprisingly long amount of time, which also needs to be taken into consideration. Any possible changes to the schedule need to be informed to the participants as soon as possible. (Aarrejärvi 2003, 76 - 77.)

3.6 Conceptualizing a Service

The service concept is created and used to describe the customer path and service itself, or other parts of service production. Even before the service exists, the structure, main steps and working methods can be planned and brought in action with a concept. Service concept is a successful way of providing and releasing new service ideas inside the organization. The concept process should be in the same line with the innovation process and the financial goals of the organization. (Miettinen, Kalliomäki & Ruuska 2011, 107.)

Concept planning holds many different views and steps; the research information, drafts of the plan, a user-centered design and patterns or visual plans of the service. Concept does not fully define the service being created, but it gives the frames and key features for it. Concept plan is used to define and describe the user needs and by that to support the organizations next move. The created patterns and visual models are used to create scenarios and that way make them more understandable. Concept has a significant effect on the development and

future of the organization and it can also be used when creating a new strategy. (Miettinen, Kalliomäki & Ruuska 2011, 107.)

Concept planning can be divided into two steps; research phase and project phase. In the research phase the client's needs are defined, the concept is chosen and created but also tested. In the project phase the concepts features are being solved and defined, the different alternative concepts are being tested and developed and the final concept is decided. Concept planning happens in a colorful environment. Before concept planning, the service provider needs to understand who the client is, what the client's needs are, how they function or make decisions, what the risks are and who the competition is. Adding to this, the service provider needs to know their place in the market, financial possibilities, and the goals of the service and understand what brings value to the client. (Miettinen, Kalliomäki & Ruuska 2011, 107 – 108.)

4   Developing a New Event Concept

The writers of this thesis were in charge of the practical arrangements of a conference that was held in January 2016 in Espoo. During the entire project the writers of this thesis were in contact with the project manager of the conference and the representative of the commissioner. The representative was a senior lecturer form Laurea UAS, who was also the original contact person for Innoguide Tourism.

The following chapters show what was done before, during and after the conference week and what should be taken into consideration when planning for the next international conference in Laurea UAS. It also presents the service design phases and their tools being used during the process. These phases were understanding and generating. The improvements needed to be done were defined with the tools of service designs understanding phase. These methods were analysing the feedback collected from the participants, the interview of the project manager of the conference week and also analysing the old schedule of the conference held in Espoo January 2016. The actual creation of the new event concept was built with service designs generating phase tool, 8x8 idealization method. This functional part of the thesis was written after the initial Train-the-Trainer event in January 2016.

4.1   Case Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer Workshop January 2016

The purpose of the Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference was to spread awareness about sustainability within the hospitality industry, and also to promote the Erasmus+ funded Innoguide 2.0 project. The goal of the conference was to bring in a small group of professionals from the tourism industry to share their ideas, opinions and best practices. This would hopefully lead into co-operation between tour guides in different countries, and aid them in their work.

The target group consisted of people working in the hospitality industry as guides, guide trainers or students studying the hospitality industry. It included people from different institutions and organizations in the partner countries of Innoguide 2.0. The workshop conference had no age limit.

The conference was planned to create plenty of interaction between the participants. An interactive conference helped the participants to connect with one another, and thus promote networking. The main theme of the conference was sustainability, which played a big part when it came to arranging the practical issues such as transportation, food, venue and program for the field trip day.

The conference lasted 5 days from January 18th to January 22nd 2016. The schedule for the conference week was planned in co-operation with the project manager of the conference. Since the Innoguide project is funded by the EU from the Erasmus+ program, the budget was limited. The practical arrangements such as the facilities, food, accommodation and transportation were organized by the writers of this practice-based thesis with assistance from the commissioner of the thesis, while the content of the conference was provided by the Belgian project manager.

Sustainability in the hospitality industry was the main theme of the conference. The conference had guest speakers who shared their ideas and stories about what sustainable tourism means to them and what are their best practices. The participants were also given group assignments during the week, which they would discuss through during the sessions. The conference week included a field trip day to Nuuksio National Park in Espoo, a visit to the Nordic Travel Fair 2016 in Helsinki, and the opening of a restaurant that uses only food ingredients which would otherwise go to waste.

The host of the conference was Laurea University of Applied Sciences in Espoo, Finland. The host was represented by the commissioner's representative senior lecturer and two hospitality students. The representative for the Innoguide 2.0 project was the Belgian project manag-

er. The writers of this thesis were in charge of the practical arrangements of the workshop conference that was held in January 2016 in Espoo. Their main responsibilities for the conference included creating an information guide for the participants, which shared all the necessary information about transportation in Helsinki region, where and by when to book the accommodation, and basic information about Helsinki and Finland. The writers of this thesis arranged the activities for the field trip day of the week and also the farewell dinner. They booked the facilities for the conference and made sure everything was going smoothly during the conference week.

The atmosphere for the conference was very down to earth and relaxed. The objective was to make the atmosphere inspirational while still being informative. The aim was also to create an atmosphere that would encourage the participants to interact with each other.

4.2   Service Design

Services are complex and interactive systems which can be developed by using service design. Service design is a systematic way when one starts the process of creating and updating their services and business. Service design helps the organizations to find the strategic opportunities in their business, improve their present services and innovate new kinds of services. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 24 – 26.)

Service design is a process, where multiple tools and methods can be used to gather as much information as possible about the organizations services from multiple points of view. The most important part in the service design process is to make sure everyone in the service process is included, from the service provider to the customer and suppliers. This is needed to get the best possible result. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 27 – 29.) Moritz's Service Design Model will be used when creating the new event concept. The model (Figure 3) has six steps; understanding, thinking, generating, filtering, explaining and realising. This thesis includes two of the phases; understanding and generating. (Moritz 2005, 39 – 40.)

Finding out and learning

SD Understanding

Learning about clients, contexts, the service provider and providing insights.

Giving strategic direction

SD Thinking

Strategic and analytical tasks that help identify, plan, set, review, analyse and give a project direction.

Developing concepts

SD Generating

Developing relevant, innovative ideas and concepts. Creating solutions.

Selecting the best

SD Filtering

Selecting ideas and combining concepts. Evaluating results and solutions.

Enabling understanding

SD Explaining

Sensualisation and mapping. Making concepts tangible, showing future possibilities and giving overviews.

Making it happen

SD Realising

Implementation and delivery. Providing guidelines and plans.

Figure 3: Service Design Model (Moritz 2005, 123.)

Service design is an approach that combines different methods and tools from various disciplines when creating a customer experience. The idea of service design is to understand the client and build the overall experience, so it can provide endless benefits to the end user and that way also for the service provider. The main goal of service design is to create new service or to improve the existing ones, so they are better and more useful for the clients. And when the client is happy, the organization providing the service is also pleased. Service design is all about understanding the customer, organizations and the market environment. It is also about developing fresh, innovative new ideas, and how to make them into successful and

functional services. Service design cannot be considered to be a small project that helps to launch a service. It is an ongoing process to improve the components of a service through new practices. (Moritz 2005, 39 – 40.)

Service design helps to plan and shape service experiences. It gives the service provider ability to understand the customers, the market environment, the resources available to produce the service and gives an insight to what the customer might expect, need and experience across the service touchpoints. Using service design, one can unveil brand new opportunities to their business, come up with new ideas and solve problems. (Moritz 2005, 39 – 40.) Service design connects the needs of the customer with the desires of the service provider in order to create a fully functional service product that is economically, socially and ecologically sustainable (Tuulaniemi 2011, 25 - 26). According to Tuulaniemi (2011), the main goal of service design is to create the most enjoyable and positive service experience for the customer as possible.

4.3   Understanding

Understanding is the first phase in Moritz's Service Design Model. The main idea of the phase is to understand different parts of the service and the customer in order for the service to be as successful as possible. To understand a customer, their goals, values, needs, behavior and problems need to be defined. This will help and guide the service developer in the service process. In addition to customer understanding, it is also necessary to get familiar with contexts that may pose some limitations to a service. These may be political, financial, cultural, legislative and technological limitations. What needs to be defined and understood are the resources available to use, the short or long term goals, the responsibilities of the service provider and how big of an influence language can have in the service. (Moritz 2005, 122–127.)

Some useful tools and methods in the understanding phase are benchmarking, net scouting, trend scouting, mystery shopping and different surveys and interviews (Moritz 2005, 122–127). One also needs to set the goals and create a service strategy for the service provider in the understanding phase. Koivisto (2009) mentions benchmarking to be a useful method in this part, but in addition suggests using segmenting and different expert interviews (Koivisto 2009, 72).

In this thesis, the understanding phase meant analyzing the feedback collected from the participants and the project manager and interpret the old planning process schedule of Innoguide 2.0 Train.the-Trainer workshop conference in January 2016. These tasks were done in order to get a better understanding of the event, on how the writers of this thesis handled their responsibilities and what were the parts needing improvement.

4.3.1 Schedule for the January 2016 Train-the-Trainer Workshop

The schedule of the planning process was created after the Train-the-Trainer conference in February 2016. It was built to assist when creating the schedule for the new event concept, which will be shown later on in this thesis. The old schedule, which can be seen in Figure 4, was generated by using notes the writers of this thesis had kept during the planning and organizing process of the January 2016 Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop.

The old schedule in Figure 4 shows that the first meeting between the writers and the commissioner of this thesis and the Belgian project manager was approximately fifteen weeks before the workshop week via Skype. During the first meeting the writers of this thesis introduced themselves to the Belgian project manager and received the starting information on what they were expected to do. The most important thing for the writers of this thesis was to understand the needs and expectation of the participants and the project manager. The theme of the conference was announced to be sustainability in the hospitality industry. It was made clear that the content of the conference would be provided by the Belgian project manager, who would also be in charge of marketing of the conference.

As Figure 4 shows, the budget was created twelve weeks before the conference. This was also the week when the research for the field trip day's activities began. The budget turned out to be very limited because the project is funded by the Erasmus+ program and this caused some difficulties as arranged activities for groups tend to be quite expensive. The activities needed to be linked to the theme of the conference, which was sustainability.

Schedule for the January Innoguide 2.0 Event	
Practical arrangements	**How long before the conference?**
The first meeting with the client	15 weeks
Understanding the participants needs	15 weeks
Creating a budget	12 weeks
Researching activities for the field trip	12 weeks
Researching services for the conference	10 weeks
Booking the venue	10 weeks
Quota reservation for the accommodation	6 weeks
Bidding the services	5 weeks
Catering	4 weeks
Booking activities	3 weeks
Information package	2 weeks
Transportation during the field trip	1 weeks
Finding out the participants possible allergies & dietary restrictions and informing the catering service	1 weeks
Providing the necessary equipment	1 week
Ongoing tasks	
Keeping in contact with the client	
Keeping in contact with the project manager	
Staying in and updating the budget	
Answering for the participants questions	

Figure 4: Schedule for the January Innoguide 2.0 Event

The venue was booked ten weeks before the event. After doing some research of different venues, the commissioner of the thesis suggested the use of Laurea UAS campus facilities as they would be complimentary. After choosing this venue option, the writers of this thesis suggested three different rooms in Laurea Leppävaara's campus in the city of Espoo which they considered suitable for the workshop conference. The writers of this thesis also started to search for service providers for catering, accommodation and transportation.

A quota reservation for the hotel was made six weeks prior to the conference, at Hotel Hellsten in Espoo, near the venue. Ten rooms were set aside for the participants to book them with a given booking code. Instead of the writers of the thesis making a full reservation for the group, this arrangement was created as the participants would be paying the rooms by themselves. Five weeks before the workshop conference it was time to start bidding the catering and transportation services, as the schedule of the conference week was starting to become clearer. Catering was booked one week after that, and it was provided by BarLaurea.

BarLaurea is student restaurant and an innovative study environment and a center of service development. BarLaurea is located in Laurea UAS Leppävaara's campus in the city of Espoo

and it provides the cafeteria, restaurant and catering services of the campus. The actions of BarLaurea are not just providing food services for the students and staff of Laurea UAS, but it also gives a learning environment for the modules in hospitality field. (Laurea 2016.)

Activities were finally booked three weeks before the conference, and they would not be revealed to the participants beforehand. This was the project managers wish in order to surprise the participants. It was decided to take them on a nature walk to Nuuksio National Park in Veikkola with a local guide. In Nuuksio National Park, the participants had an opportunity to try a traditional Finnish winter action, snowshoeing. The local guide provided the group an authentic Finnish food, such as reindeer shoup. From the Train-the-Trainer workshop conferences point it was exceptional for the participants to meet and see a local tour guide in action. This was exactly what the Innoguide 2.0 project is about; learning from each other and from different cultures. During the field trip day, the participants also visited the Nordic Travel Fair 2016 in Messukeskus, Helsinki. The tickets for the fair were sponsored by the event, as they hoped to receive more global visibility by having Innoguide 2.0 project and tour guides from around Europe to visit their fair. After confirming the field trip day's activities the information package was created and sent to the participants two weeks before the start of the conference.

Transportation for the field trip was organized fairly late, just one week before the event. This was also when all the information about food allergies reached the writers of this thesis, who in turn informed them to Bar Laurea that was in charge of catering during the week. All the supplies needed for the conference were gathered a week before the conference. These included pens, post-it notes, paper, flip chart, computers and the participant's personal folders.

During the whole planning process, the writers of this thesis had several Skype conversations with the commissioner and the Belgian project manager of the conference. The budget was constantly updated as everything was booked. The writers of this thesis made sure they were available for any possible questions the participants may have had about the practical issues.

4.3.2   Feedback from the Participants

When developing a concept, it is important for the conference managers to collect feedback from the participants. The evaluating process of the feedback should not be overwhelming for either the participant filling the information nor to the host of the conference. The basis of a feedback is to receive an honest opinion of the customer. If the feedback system is functioning and giving information about the real opinions, it offers the participant an opportunity to give suggestions for the next conference. (Blinnikka & Kuha 2004, 194.)

Survey is a system for collecting information. Sometimes surveys are mixed with question-naires and that is incorrect. Internet surveys growth for companies is inevitable because of the benefits of using them. Such benefits for an online survey can be the low cost, quick responses and easy fielding. Internet surveys are the most used form of survey in the time of a mobile revolution because of the globally easy access. It also gives a flexible time scale for the answering process which works well in international surveys. It is also an effective way of to see the results; many online forms nowadays analyze the material ready for the survey supplier. (Sue & Ritter 2007, 1 - 9.)

In March 2016 after the workshop conference, twenty participants were asked to fill an internet survey (Appendix 1) about the practical arrangements of the event. The survey was made using Google Forms, and the survey featured both open field questions and multiple choice questions. The total number of questions was thirteen. The link to the survey was sent to the participants in a Facebook group that was created for the participants during the workshop week. The writers of this thesis felt it would be the most effective channel to reach the participants afterwards. Seven participants out of twenty answered to the internet survey during a one week time frame.

The questions in the survey included evaluating the amount of information they received, the practical arrangements and if it all fit in with the theme of sustainability. When the participants were asked if they felt that the facilities of Laurea UAS' Leppävaara Campus were suitable for the workshop week, they all agreed that the facilities were more than suitable for the conference. Two out of seven highlighted how excellent the cafeteria was.

When asked if the participants would have wished more options for accommodations, six answered no, as they felt the hotel chosen for them was in a great location near Laurea Leppävaara Campus. The price was also thought to be very reasonable according to six answerers. One participant felt the opposite, as the person would have wished a more unique and authentic accommodation, or for an accommodation closer to Helsinki. When asked about the information package that was provided to the participants, two persons would have wished more information about the facilities and accommodation. The rest five of them thought the information package, including accommodation suggestions, how to use public transport in Helsinki, and general information about Helsinki Metropolitan area, was very informative and they got everything they needed during their stay.

The field trip day for the participants was arranged on Thursday, 21st January. The survey asked which activities the participants felt were most interesting during the field trip. From four options; outdoor activities in Nuuksio, nature tour guide service, the Nordic Travel Fair or, farewell dinner at Waste-to-Taste restaurants, the first two and the dinner were clearly winners. All seven participants answered that they felt the field trip to Nuuksio Natural Park in Espoo (Figure 5) was one of the most authentic and exotic things they have ever experienced. The tour guide the participants had in Nuuksio was an experienced nature explorer, and was very popular among the participants. Six of the participants said that he truly showed them an experience like never before, and that singing by the fireplace made them feel special.

Figure 5: The participants of the Conference in Nuuksio National Park

The farewell dinner also got six votes out of the seven who replied. They thought that the idea of Waste-to-Taste restaurant was something so unique. To collect food that would otherwise go to waste and make it into an exceptional and amazing food, is truly something very inspiring, unique and definitely well suited to the sustainability theme of the week. The participants hoped that this would happen in their own countries one day too. The only negative part of the restaurant seemed to be the name.

The fourth part of the field trip was the Nordic Travel Fair in Messukeskus, a big international travel exhibition. It however was not that popular among the participants, and one even specifically underlined that the fair was not suitable to the theme of day at all and that it could have well been left out from the schedule.

4.3.3   Feedback from the Project Manager

Every survey question is a step closer to understand the respondent's behavior, knowledge and opinion. If the questions are well planned and structured, the survey can give very important information and advices for the future. Short and meaningful questions are easy and efficient for the respondent's. All the questions in the survey need to be exactly related to the subject the survey is for. One must ask if all the questions planned are really valuable for the survey's goals or if they are just little details. The length of the survey or its questions is not important. What matters is the information the survey gets from all the answered questions. (Sue & Ritter 2007, 38 - 39.)

After months of planning the conference and especially the practical arrangements together and being in constant contact via Skype and e-mail, the writers of this thesis met the Belgian project manager during the orientation day morning on the 18th of January 2016. The writers of this thesis were the project managers right arm; always available, helping with the practical arrangements in Laurea Leppävaara Campus or in Finland in general, and staying in touch with the stakeholders of the conference. A short interview (Appendix 2) was conducted by email to receive feedback about the practical arrangements from the project manager, with open questions. The questions were planned by the writers of this thesis.

The first question was about communication between the client and the hosts. In the project manager's opinion, communication on Skype and e-mails before meeting in person was excellent and easy. The process was clear to everyone and if there was some questions in the air, everyone could ask the others opinion on the fact. Emails were always answered quickly from both sides and Skype meetings were always held on time.

During the actual conference, the project manager said that help from the writers of this thesis was valuable and always available. If the project manager ever needed help, all she had to do was to send a text message or call. The project manager was also satisfied with the fact that the hosts had good skills in English, which prevented misunderstandings during the week.

The feedback on the facilities was very positive; spacious, colorful and creative room in Laurea Leppävaara Campus was the perfect choice for the workshop. The coffee and food services got a positive response as well. The catering service was always on time.

When asked about the field trip day, the project manager answered that especially the field trip to Nuuksio Natural Park was essential for the program. With the project managers own words; "The field trip day made the heart and soul of the week. People were very enthusiastic and they really got an unforgettable experience." The project manager thought that the day in general was also well planned and the timings were spot on. The transfers had been planned carefully, so the group wouldn't have to miss any parts of the day. And even with many plans and actions for the day, it all worked well thanks to the carefully created schedule by the writers of this thesis and the project manager. When asked if there was anything else the week would have wished or needed, the project manager replied that everything went perfectly.

4.3.4   Summary of the Feedback

Feedback from the conference was an excellent way for the writers of this thesis to improve their work, and create better methods for arranging a workshop conference. What could have been done differently is that instead of making a quota reservation for one hotel and focusing on that, the information package should have covered more options for accommodation for the participants to book themselves.

Even though the actual content of the conference program was provided by the project manager, the writers of this thesis could have taken the theme of sustainability more into consideration and show more of it during the activities and services. Such as everything from having water glasses instead of plastic cups in the coffee service, to borrowing computer tablets to the participants during the week instead of printing all the material on paper. The field trip day should have been thought more through too; the Nordic Travel Fair was not popular among all the participants as they felt it did not fit in with the main theme of sustainability.

The project manager only had positive feedback for the writers of this thesis, so most of the improvements are based on the feedback of the participants. In the project manager's opinion, the communication was working throughout the planning process and during the week, and that the writers of this thesis and their practical arrangements were important for the success of the conference.

The overall feedback was very good. The only complaints were about coffee that was served in Laurea being bitter. The participants felt that everything was arranged smoothly, everything was well planned and that the writers of this thesis were always available in one way or another. All of the participants in the survey felt they enjoyed their week in Finland and that they would come back again, even if it would be extremely cold. When asked to rate the overall experience from scale one to five, with one being not satisfied at all and five being

extremely satisfied, six participants chose a scale number five and one participant chose number four.

4.4   Generating Phase with the 8x8 Idealization Method

Third phase of the Service Design model is generating, where through innovation and new ideas the planned service will start to get its final form. The generating phase is based on information coming from the previous Service Design phases, in this case understanding. When innovating and coming up with new ideas, it is important to remember what is being planned and what the limitations of it are. The most crucial part in this phase is to understand all parts of the service process, since one must develop new idea, come up with solutions to problems and streamlining processes. And on top of that, all of it needs to be relevant and important for the users of the service. (Moritz 2005, 132 – 135.)

The newly developed event concept was created by analyzing the old schedule of the case conference and combining it with the feedback and improvement ideas from the participants and the project manager of Train-the-Trainer workshop. The new event concept includes a new event schedule and event brief. The new schedule (Figure 7) and event brief (Figure 8) contained in the new concept will help the organizers to keep up with the plan and to understand the nature of the conference. The feedback was collected using an online survey, and an interview was also conducted with the project manager of the conference after the event. The 8x8 idealization method (Figure 6) was used to find solution for the problems that were revealed from the participants and project managers' feedback.

In the 8x8 method, one starts by writing the problem into a paper. After that, eight empty pieces of paper are placed around it, and then filled with eight different perspectives about the problem. These eight different perspectives will be the new starting points, and then once again they each are surrounded by eight new blank spaces. The main reason behind the 8x8 method is to find out what kind of opportunities and things the problem may contain. (Ojasalo & Moilanen & Ritalahti 2009, 147.)

One of the methods used to create a new conference concept for Laurea UAS was the 8x8 idealization method. In this thesis, the 8x8 method (Figure 6) is used to find solutions for the problems that rose up in the feedback from the participants and the Belgian project manager of the Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference held in Laurea Leppävaara Campus in January 2016. The writers of this thesis also added their own thoughts and improvement ideas about the week into the 8x8 method. This is to prevent these problems from happening when organizing the next event using the new event concept.

Price	Reliability	Theme	Location	Safety		Dining	Services in the area	Sightseeing
Availability	Transportation		Price	Accomodation		Getting around	Information Package	Shopping
Safety			Quality			Accomodation options		
Price	Quality	Theme	Transportation	Accomodation	Information Package			
Allergies	Catering		Catering	The New Event Concept				
Cultural differences			Venue	Activities				
Price	Availability	Technical equipment available	Price	Weather	People with special needs			
Large enough for the event	Venue		Time of the year	Activities				
Suitable for the style of the event								

Figure 6: 8x8 Idealization Method

The first part in the event that needed some improvement, according to the writers of this thesis, was transportation. Arranging the transportation was done within a short amount of time and some aspects of it were not addressed properly at first. The transportation had a big impact on the budget of the January workshop conference and therefore in the new event concept, more time needs to be taken to gather offers from different service providers. The company providing the service should be reliable and have a good safety record. If possible, the theme could also have an effect on the choice of transport. For example, one could hire a hybrid bus or another ecofriendly option for a conference with sustainability theme.

As Figure 6 shows, the second area that needed improvement was the accommodation. Some of the participants of the Train-the-Trainer event had hoped for the hotel to be closer to downtown Helsinki, while many still liked how the hotel was so close to the venue. Safety of the area around the hotel was also something the participants valued. Some of the participants would have wished to have more options to choose the hotel from which means that in the future the people arranging the conference could provide more options, so every participant would be pleased.

Third thing that needed improvement according to the participants and the writers of this thesis was the information package about Espoo and Helsinki. The participants would have wanted more information about the area near their hotel and the venue, and also more maps. For the improved event concept, one should arrange more suitable maps about the area sur-

rounding the venue and the hotel. The information package could also include some popular sights that can be easily reached by public transport.

Catering was the fourth area that needed improvement, which was revealed by the Belgian project manager and the writers of this thesis. The theme should be shown in the catering as well, including what kinds of food or drinks are served, and on what kind of dishware. If the participants are from abroad, one could try to introduce some special local delicacies for them, within the limits of the budget. Coffee is also something that people need, and it should be of good quality if the budget allows it.

Venue was the fifth area. This improvement idea came solely from the writers of this thesis. The writers of this thesis would have wished more innovative space as a venue, but because of the limited budget it was not possible to provide. Laurea UAS campus as a venue was decent, but another place might have suited better for the relaxed, creative and interactive workshop conference.

Sixth area that could be improved was the activities during the conference. The prices of the activities during the field trip were tolerable compared to normal conference activities, but for a low budget field trip the price was challenging. Therefore one should look into more affordable options if the budget of the event is limited. The weather also plays a big role in choosing the activities, as during the winter it might get very cold for foreigners in Finland. Luckily in the case workshop conference, the participant's feedback revealed that they did not suffer from the cold, as they more like thought it as something new and different from back home. All of the activities should also be linked to the theme, as in this case the Nordic Travel Fair 2016 was not.

4.5   The New Event Concept

The new event concept contains a new schedule for the practical arrangements of the conference. The concept is planned to be especially helpful when planning the supporting and facilitating services for a conference. The schedule will help the organizers to stay in time, keep up with the steps and realizing possible problems.

The concept also presents an event brief as a new feature when planning the conference. Event brief is for the organizers to understand the nature, the boundaries and preconditions of the event.

The new schedule and the event brief were built around the information gathered during and after the workshop conference week using two phases of Service Design in the new concept;

understanding and generating. The combination of the two will guide the future people arranging international conferences in Laurea to proceed the planning in a right time and in a right order.

4.5.1   The New Schedule

The new concept schedule was built on by the experience of the conference in January 2016. On every future occasion the schedule will be planned not just by the organizers of the event, but together with the project manager. The improvement ideas for the new schedule were generated in the understanding phase by using the 8x8 idealization method (Figure 6) to come up with new perspectives for the schedule. However, the 8x8 method can be also used when planning the schedule. The schedule is one of the most important tools for the organizers and helps them to make sure everything gets done on time. The new schedule (Figure 7) is an updated version of the January 2016 Train-the-trainer event that was held in Laurea's Leppävaara campus.

The improvements for the schedule include reserving more time to plan the planning process for the event, such as creating an event brief that was not created before the January 2016 event. The new schedule (Figure 7) limits what is possible to organize during the time before the event. The budget also needs to be set very early on, as it is probably the most limiting factor in the event planning process along with time. Event brief (Figure 8) should be created at the same time with the budget.

The first meeting with the client and the project manager of the workshop week should happen fifteen weeks before the start of the conference. When a conference is arranged by event professionals, the timeline does not have to be as long. In this case conference, the timeline needed to be long as the writers of this thesis were still students. Next thing happening approximately three months before the conference is setting the budget or beginning to work with a given one. After this the event brief can be built, so the understanding of the conference and the participants can develop even more.

The research and bidding process of services happen twelve to ten weeks before the conference. Around two months before the conference, one must arrange the accommodation, venue for the workshop and catering services for the venue. The hotel should be booked in advance, depending on whether the conference will be held during busy summer months or during the quieter winter. This task was moved earlier based on the experiences from the January 2016 Train-the-Trainer event. Quota booking is recommended by the writers of this thesis, as it allows the participants to book and pay the room themselves.

Schedule for the New Event Concept		
Practical arrangements	**How long before the conference?**	**Advices**
The first meeting with the client	15 weeks	More interaction
Understanding the participants needs	15 weeks	
Creating a budget	14 weeks	
Event Brief	13 weeks	
Researching services for the conference	12 weeks	More bidding
Bidding the services	10 weeks	
Quota reservation for the accommodation	9 weeks	More options for accommodations
Booking the venue	9 weeks	
Catering	9 weeks	
Researching activities for the field trip	6 weeks	More related to the theme of the conference
Booking activities	4 weeks	
Transportation during the field trip	3 weeks	More options & time to book
Finding out the participants possible allergies & dietary restrictions and informing the catering service	2 weeks	
Information package	2 weeks	More information about the area of the accommodation, more popular sights in Helsinki
Providing the necessary equipment	1 week	
Ongoing tasks		
Keeping in contact with the client		
Keeping in contact with the project manager		
Staying in and updating the budget		
Answering for the participants questions		

Figure 7: Schedule for the New Event Concept

The venue booking is an important part as the space needs to be large enough for the number of guests, but also suitable for the style of the conference. Catering should be booked as soon as the conference is confirmed and the amount of people as well as the information about any possible food allergies should be communicated to the catering provider at least one week before the conference. Catering serviced usually provide a deadline for all the confirmations, but in the case conference the arrangements were more flexible due student environment. The theme of the conference should be taken into consideration when planning the catering for the event.

If the conference being planned includes a field trip or some kind of a day filled with activities, the research of the activities and their costs must start by an estimate of six weeks before the happening. This gives enough time to plan the field trip in total, make sure it adds to the budget and make all the possible changes. The actual booking can be done straight after the research of the activities, but no later than four weeks before the conference or the field trip. Also, if changes need to be done, they are still possible before that time unless there has been a part of the cost payed beforehand.

Any possible transportation needs should be finalized and confirmed at least three weeks before the conference, in order to have time to prepare for possible cancellations. The information package should be planned and created latest at two weeks before the conference. The information package could also include maps about the areas close to the venue and nearby cities. This improvement idea came from the participants of the January 2016 Train-the-Trainer event. Possible equipment's can be collected one week before the workshop.

4.5.2   The Created Event Brief

Whether one is making a small event within their organization, or in collaboration with an events agency, an event brief is needed. It combines all the necessary information when one starts to plan an event. In its simplest form, it is a document that can be given to an events agency, or it can be used as a tool to help planning an event within the organization. An event brief answers the most basic questions; why is the event being held, what is the purpose of the event, who is the target group, what kind of an event is being built; is it a one off event or a chain of events, what is the content of the event, who will be hosting the event, what kind of an atmosphere should the event have and what is the budget of the event. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 159.)

For the January 2016 Innoguide Train-the-Trainer workshop conference, an event brief (Figure 8) was created after the conference in March 2016. The event brief's content was filled with information from a diary that was written during the planning process and conference week by the writers of this thesis, who were in charge of organizing the practical arrangements such as accommodation, transportation and booking a venue for the conference.

The first step of the event brief is understanding the purpose of the event. The purpose effects on all the other parts and decisions of the planning process. It gives the organizers some knowledge and frames for what is to come. In the case of Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference, the purpose was to promote Innoguide 2.0 project and to share information of sustainable practices in hospitality industry. This gave the writers of this thesis some perspective of what Innoguide 2.0 project is all about and what both them and the

commissioner, wish from the conference. This can be used as an example in the future for the people organizing international conferences in Laurea.

The next step in the event brief is to define the target group for the event. It is important to understand the participants attending the conference as it affects much on the practical arrangements. In the Train-the-Trainer conference the target group were travel guides and partners of the Innoguide 2.0 project from around Europe. As there were participants from many different cultures, the planning process needed to consider their different needs, wishes and advices which might not be thought if the participants would have been native Finnish. One example is the weather. The conference was held in January, so even though almost everyone understands that the weather is very cold, the writers of this thesis needed to make sure that the weather forecast has been properly informed for everyone. In the future, the organizers of international conferences in Laurea UAS can consider this part too. One also needs to at least have a rough estimate of how many people are going to be attending the event in order to start the planning process. From there, one can move on to plan the content of the conference by finding out what is the goal and purpose of the conference.

As Figure 8 shows, the next thing to be considered is the nature of the event and in this case conference. This affects a lot on the outcome; is the conference going to be serious minded week or a playful and more relaxed networking week. By this it also gives frames for what kind of image the conference is going to have. The nature of Train-the-Trainer workshop conference included networking, internationality, sustainability and a lot of interaction between the participants, the host organization and the project manager. What this meant for the writers of this thesis was that they needed to consider the venue carefully. Even though the venue was decided by the hosts to be located in Laurea Leppävaara Campus in Espoo, the actual space needed to be considered carefully. What would the group need in the space? What kind of a space would be excellent for interaction and networking program or games? These are parts that the future organizers need to consider carefully, even with the possible limits, like budget.

Event Brief

The purpose of the event	Promoting the Innoguide project Share information of sustainable practices in hospitality industry
Target Group	Partners of the Innoguide project Travel guides
The nature of the event	A conference with plenty of interaction Internationality Networking Sustainability
Implementation	5 day event, from the 18th of January until the 22nd 2016 The content of the event was provided by the client The schedule of the week was planned with the client Due to the Innoguide project being funded by the EU (Eramus+), the budget was limited Practical arrangements organized by students as a part of their studies
Content	Sustainability theme was shown throughout the week Field trip Guest speakers Group assignments during the week Interaction between different nationalities
Hosts	Laurea University of Applied Sciences One senior lecturer from Laurea UAS Wrtiters of this thesis from Laurea UAS Project manager for the event from Belgium
Atmosphere	Down to earth Interactive Relaxed, open Social Inspirational Informative

Figure 8: Event Brief for the January 2016 Innoguide 2.0 event in Espoo

Implementation as the next step tells the organizers what is done and by who. It opens up different roles in the planning process and shows the main information; how long is the event or in this case the conference, when is it held and where. Figure 8 shows how the responsibilities were divided in Train-the-Trainer workshop conference. It gives the future organizers an example of clear roles in the working process.

The next step of the event brief is the content of the event, or in the case of this work, the conference. It shows the future program of the week in outline. As Figure 8 presents, in the case conference the theme was sustainability which the writers of this thesis tried to consider when arranging the conferences practical parts. It also shows that the conference week included a field trip, guest speakers, group assignments and international interaction. The content of the conference is one of the most important parts the event brief. For the future international conference organizers this part gives understanding the conference.

The event brief also contains an information about the hosts. For a conference, there is not always just one host. This may be inevitable especially in the international events or when the event is due a co-operation of two or multiple organizations. In the case of Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference, the hosts were; Laurea UAS and one senior lecturer as the organizations representative, the writers of this thesis from Laurea UAS and the project manager of the event from Belgium. This gives the future conference organizers an example on multiple hosts.

The last step of the event brief is the most important one when planning a follow-up conference; the atmosphere. Atmosphere has a huge impact on the participants and so it was in the case of Train-the-Trainer workshop conference. Because the participants gave such positive feedback, the hosts will most likely organize a new conference in the future, with similar frames. And that conference is where this new event concept should be used to help the new organizers to plan and proceed the conference. The new event concept gives a lot of helpful inside information that nobody can read from a book. This event concept provides advices on both what was well implemented and what parts needed a little more improvement.

5   Conclusions

The objective of this thesis was to create a new event concept for Laurea UAS with the help of service design tools. The purpose of the thesis is for Laurea UAS to use it when organizing international conferences in the future. The new event concept was built around the case of Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference held in Finland, in January 2016. The workshop conference was held in a co-operation between Innoguide Tourism and Laurea UAS for the first time ever. The writers of this thesis were part of the team organizing the conference and the practical contact from Laurea UAS. They had an opportunity to be a part of the first co-operation conference between Laurea UAS and Innoguide Tourism.

As the conference was held in Finland for the first time without a planned concept, the writers of this thesis created a new event concept to use in the future. The new concept includes a new schedule, which highlights the planning process of an international conference organized in Laurea UAS. A planned schedule created to the new event concept will keep the conference organizers aware of their deadlines and to make sure that everything needed to be organized is done. The new event concept also contains an event brief, which was planned to help the organizers to understand the conference guidelines such as the purpose of the event, the target group, the hosts, the nature of it, implementation, content and overall atmosphere. By understanding the conference, customers and stakeholders, the next people planning an international conference for Laurea UAS can be even more prepared for the possible challenges and prevent negative events. The event brief was not used in the Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference in January, but the writers of this thesis felt it was essential to have this in the new event concept as it helps the organizers to improve the results.

When generating the new event concept, the writers of this thesis used the 8x8 idealization method to understand all parts of the conference that needed improvement. All the practical arrangements which needed improvement were transportation, accommodation, information package, catering, venue and activities. The main critique the participants and the project manager of the conference informed of was that some of the services, like the Nordic Travel Fair 2016 during the field trip, were not as suitable for the sustainable theme of the conference, as it was for the travelling industry in general. They would have also wished for more options for the services; more accommodation options, a more detailed information package about the sights in the area and more local food served. Unfortunately some of these parts were not optional to offer, as the budget of the conference was limited.

The writers of this thesis wish that with the new event concept, the next people organizing the Innoquide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference or another international conference in Laurea UAS, can create an even more successful event with more planned pre-work and understanding towards the theme of the event. When the plan is more official and detailed, it is easier to stay within the time limits and provide more options for services. Even though the budget was limited in the case conference, this event concept can be used in other similar conferences and then there might not be as many limits for the services provided by the organizers.

The new concept can be used on any similar occasions in the future and it will most likely be used at least partly in the next Innoguide 2.0 conference in Finland if their co-operation with Laurea UAS continues. The writers of the thesis have understood that the next event in Finland may occur during the following year of 2017. The new event concept is the first version made based on the Innoguide 2.0 conference. This means that even though the new concept is ready for use, the world develops all the time and the concepts need updating during time.

The commissioner representative of this thesis was pleased with the practical arrangements of the Innoguide 2.0 Train-the-Trainer workshop conference in January 2016. The writers of this thesis were available for both the commissioner representative and the project manager of the workshop week during the whole process, from the first Skype meeting until after the conference. From the commissioner's point of view, especially the event brief was an interesting tool in the new event concept.

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Figures

Appendices

Appendix 1: The feedback from the participants via internet survey

QUESTIONS   RESPONSES   7

Event feedback

Thank you for participating in the Train-The-Trainer workshop in Finland!
We hope you had as much fun attending as we did organizing it.

We would like to hear your thoughts concerning the practical arrangements; facilities, accomodation, transport, food, information package and field trip day.

Please fill this quick survey and let us know your thoughts, your answers will be anonymous.

Did you find the facilities in Laurea to be suitable for the workshop?   *

Long answer text

Would you have preferred more options for accomodation? *

◯ Yes

◯ No

Was the information package provided suitable for your needs, or would you   *
have needed more information?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Poor	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯	Excellent

QUESTIONS   RESPONSES   7

If you answered options 1 or 2, we wish to hear your thoughts:

Long answer text

Did you find the transport information we provided useful? *

○ Yes

○ No

If you answered no, what was missing:

Long answer text

Which parts of the field trip day's program did you find interesting? *

☐ Outdoor activities in Nuuksio

☐ Our guide, Kai Pihlström

☐ Nordic Travel Fair

☐ Waste to Taste

Was there something during the field trip day you didn't like? *

Long answer text

Was there something during the field trip day you didn't like? *

Long answer text

How did you find the concept of Waste to Taste restaurant? *

Long answer text

Free word on practical arrangements: *

Long answer text

How were your hosts (Elisa, Mika and Laurea UAS)? *

Long answer text

Overall, how satisfied were you with the event? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Unsatisfied	○	○	○	○	○	Very satisfied

Appendix 2: The interview for the project manager of the workshop conference week

1. How did you feel the communication before the event went with the people handling the practical arrangements due

   a) Skype?

   b) Email?

2. How did you feel the communication went during the event with the people handling the practical arrangements by

   a) Whatsapp?

   b) Face to face?

3. How did you find the arranged facilities and coffee service?

4. What about the activities (Nuuksio Natural Park, Travel Fair and dinner), did you feel they were fun and/or essential for the weeks program?

5. How do you feel the students were as hosts? How did you find their availability?

6. Was there anything else you would have needed or wished from the arrangements of the week?