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The development of a start-up from idea to feasible business concept

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Laurea University of Applied Sciences
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**The development of a start-up from idea to feasible
business concept**

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The development of a start-up from idea to feasible business concept

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This thesis report describes the development of the author's start-up company, "a thousand words". A comprehensive account is provided of this venture's development from the initial rough idea to a feasible business concept that is ready to go to market.

It is the author's ambition to provide realistic insights into the development process which may offer motivation and confidence to other start-up entrepreneurs. The academic goal is to delineate the role of the theoretical knowledge base in entrepreneurship and provide examples of the implementation of appropriate tools and methods in a real-life case scenario.

The research-oriented approach for this project is innovation. The author used a variety of methods to reach her research objectives. These ranged from traditional methods, such as documentary research, qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey to the rarer encountered diary method. There is no strict division between the theoretical and empirical sections; rather, these are intertwined within the respective chapter and topic.

Each chapter of the thesis report starts with a short description of its content. The respective chapter's content is always structured in the following way. First, the theoretical background is highlighted, e.g. definitions are given, general information on the topic provided. Then the application of the theoretical findings and theories to the case start-up "a thousand words" is presented. Finally, the respective interim results and findings are summed up.

The results of this research and development work are as follows. The author identifies business planning approaches and tools suitable for a small start-up. She conducts market research for the case start-up, "a thousand words", with both its customer groups. Furthermore, she designs and develops a Business Model Canvas and an elevator pitch presentation for the case start-up. There follow the marketing strategy and a minimum viable product (MVP) for "a thousand words". Finally, the author identifies the most essential skills for start-up entrepreneurs.

Keywords: start-up, business planning, elevator pitch, minimum viable product.

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1 Introduction

The first chapter provides the essential information about the thesis document, such as the background of this research and development project as well as its aims and objectives, followed by the theoretical framework, in which the project is embedded, the research oriented development approach and methods used, including the information about the limitations of research, concluding with the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Background

The author has always been close to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs as she could observe the latter in her social and family surrounding as well as in various job positions. However, she never believed to have what it takes to be an entrepreneur herself. Especially the alleged lack of creativity was considered being the main obstacle. Becoming an excellent organiser and administrator became therefore the goal of her professional development.

However, after taking the (compulsory) course “Business models and entrepreneurship” at Laurea UAS the author got curious about the topic. Listening to entrepreneurs telling stories about their careers was too exciting. Especially the record of their personal development and growth in the process fascinated the author. Additionally, there were presented various opportunities to work on one’s business idea with help of professionals within Laurea UAS, its student organisation focusing entrepreneurship, i.e. Laurea ES, and beyond the university.

Since the author has had a rough business idea outline on her mind, she decided to give it a try in terms of developing it to a feasible business concept. The initial suggestion came from one of the author’s photographer friends, who are not interested in the business side of the affairs as such, but would like to monetise their art on the market somehow. The basic idea was to “rent photography art to offices”. The author elaborated on a possible business model for this rough vision and came up with the first draft of the business concept (see Appendix 1: Initial business idea), with which she participated in the Business StartUp course at Laurea UAS during the autumn term 2015 and applied for a spot at the Cambridge Venture Camp 2015 organized by Laurea ES. This is how the current business project for author’s company called “a thousand words” came to existence.

In the various research literature about entrepreneurship in general and start-ups in particular, the author has never found a reflection about the entire entrepreneurial journey of a small start-up, i.e. a comprehensive story about its development from the initial rough idea to a feasible business concept that is ready to go to market. Essentially, the author will depict the research and development processes that are needed before a business plan can be

written. Especially the changes that happen to the initial business idea in the process and as the result of market research interest the author. Another focus of attention will be laid on such vital practical aspect of marketing as the presentation of one's business idea in form of (elevator) pitch. Here, too, the author feels the need to fill a gap and delineate performance development during the process of idea maturing and practicing public speaking skills.

1.2 Thesis's aims and objectives

With her thesis, the author targets following aims and objectives.

1.2.1 Aims and outcome

There are two main aims, i.e. broad statements of intent that identify this thesis's purpose (Dawson 2009, 51). First of all, the author aims at illustrating an entrepreneurial journey of a small start-up that provides realistic insights as well as motivation and confidence for others. The second goal is to delineate the role of theoretical knowledge base in entrepreneurship and provide examples of tools' and methods' implementation in a real-life case scenario.

The intended outcome of the thesis is to develop a feasible business concept for the case start-up "a thousand words" that can be registered and start operating on the Finnish market in 2017.

1.2.2 Objectives

The specific objectives, i.e. "measurable achievements that build towards the ultimate aim of the project" (Dawson 2009, 51) are following:

- Identify business planning approaches and tools suitable for a small start-up
- Conduct market research for the case start-up
- Design and develop a Business Model Canvas (BMC) for the case start-up
- Design and develop an elevator pitch presentation for the case start-up
- Design a marketing strategy for the case start-up
- Design and develop a minimum viable product (MVP) for the case start-up
- Identify the most essential skills for start-up entrepreneurs

1.3 Research oriented development approach and methods

In order to deliver a research and development project paper of high standard, regarding both academic requirements and practical value, the author will use following research oriented development approaches and methods.

1.3.1 Research approach

According to Ojasalo, Moilanen and Ritalahti (2009, 14) the decision about the concrete methods for particular research should be made depending on the general approach for the whole development project. Even though the chosen approach does not automatically determine the research methods, it “dictates the choice of methods to a certain extent” (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 16). However, there is no numerus clausus of approaches, so that creative combination of fitting elements from various approaches is not only possible but also rather desired (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 16).

Since the main outcome of this development project is to create a feasible business concept for a new venture, this “novelty of the outcome” (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 18) makes innovation the most sensible approach. Keeping in mind that implementation and commercialization are vital characteristics of this approach (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 18), the author will additionally use field research approach as form of market research to accommodate the practical requirements of innovation.

1.3.2 Research methods

In order to meet the objectives and master the outcome, the author will use a range of different research methods, combining both quantitative and qualitative research directions to a “mixed-methods research” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2009, 152; Ng & Coakes 2014, 128). Again, same as with the approaches, the strict division and definition of various methods is less important for the present project than their “instrumental value”, i.e. their practical usability “to find the best possible new practices” (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 16).

The data will be gathered and analysed with help of the following methods.

1.3.2.1 Documentary research

The importance of documentary research was already mentioned above in the section covering the theoretical framework. The analysis of documentary evidence about the research area will therefore build the base of the theoretical part of the thesis. As “documents” will be considered not only such traditional sources as books and articles in professional journals, but also e.g. presentation material provided by various professionals in contact lessons and seminars attended by the author. With regards to the analysis of the documentary sources, the author will aim at applying “a critical approach and careful consideration” as suggested by Ojasalo et al. (2009, 22). The author will always try to reflect who has produced the document, for which purposes and what audience. The author will build and voice her own opinion about the views expressed in the researched literature.

1.3.2.2 Learning diary

One of the research methods for the practical part of the thesis will be keeping a learning diary. The author will watch, record and analyse events of interest she participates in.

Author's participation with her business idea in the Business StartUp course offered by Laurea UAS and in the Cambridge Venture Camp 2015 organised by Laurea ES will build the core of this diary method. Also, author's taking part in events focusing the elevator pitch, such as Pitch&Beer by Laurea ES, and giving own presentations about pitching experiences and public speaking as a skill will be recorded and analysed. One of the main purposes of this hands-on research approach will be to try out and practise business pitching as a popular idea marketing tool as well as to reflect on the development from the first pitch to the most recent one. Other important outcomes will be creating company's presentation material and the Business Model Canvas for the business idea.

All activities will be collected systematically and carefully recorded by keeping a "learning diary", similar to the idea of "diary methods" described by Lida, Shrout, Laurenceau & Bolger (2012). The pitching presentations will be whenever possible video recorded. The author will always reveal her role as researcher and take active part in all researched activities. This role does not raise any ethical concerns regarding the conducted research. The gathered data, where the author also expresses her opinions and feelings during the research process can be seen in Appendix 2 and in a video recording (Grinberg 2016d).

1.3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

To understand the photographers' view better the author will conduct semi-structured or thematic interviews (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 19) with various artists with help of a questionnaire (see Appendix 3: Interview). The idea is to interview a large enough number of professional, semi-professional and hobby artists of both genders and different ages, in order to be able to create two personas based on this research. The purpose of this research is, firstly, to find out whether there will be enough free picture supply and, secondly, what kind of artists to approach for cooperation in this business venture. At the same time the author will investigate the usefulness of the service design tool "persona" for market research.

1.3.2.4 Survey

In order to conduct market research with potential business clients, the author will make a survey using her online questionnaire "Workplace interior design" ("Työpaikan sisustaminen") created for this purpose. The intended sample will consist of private healthcare centres (lääkäriasemat) operating in the ten biggest cities in Finland. The main purpose of the survey

is to find out how big role do pictures play in the workplace setting, e.g. how often are they being exchanged and what is the average budget for this kind of office decoration.

1.3.2.5 Benchmarking and competitor comparison analysis

Benchmarking is a well-established development tool. The author will investigate its usefulness for a small start-up.

According to Ojasalo et al. (2009, 22) benchmarking is a “useful method in the development of quality, productivity, operating processes, work practices and other areas of an organization”. Financial Executive (2005) distinguishes two types of benchmarking: competitive benchmarking and best practice benchmarking. Business Dictionary (2016) defines competitive benchmarking as “Continuous process of comparing a firm's practices and performance measures with that of its most successful competitor(s)”. Whereas “Best practice benchmarking ... is designed to identify world-class performers and the specific underlying best practices they utilize that will enable your company to realize similar world-class results” (Financial Executive 2005).

In author's opinion, benchmarking is not feasible for a small start-up that has not started operating yet. There is simply not enough data produced to be able to determine the benchmark (KPI). Services of professional market researchers, who produce benchmark relevant studies, are too expensive for a start-up.

What a start-up can and must do is competitor comparison analysis, i.e. try to figure out one's competitors and research them as thoroughly as possible in terms of prices, services, logistics etc. (O'Berry 2007, 20). The author will apply this method to the case start-up.

1.4 Limitations

The biggest limitation of this research is author's personal, i.e. emotional and financial involvement in the development process of the start-up in question. Literature sources focusing research methodology caution researchers about selecting a topic that is not only important and interesting but rather “too close”, so that it is difficult to “step back and be objective” (Skott & Masjo 2013, 1). The author was doing her best to stay as objective as possible during the research process, especially with help of three persons: her business partner as well as her both mentors (Juusela 2016; Martin 2016).

Another limitation is the scope of this development and research project in the framework of a Bachelor's thesis. Even though the author was prepared to extend the time frame for the project in case of need, it was not possible to include an accurate account of all aspects

concerning conducted research and undergone development. Thus, present research paper contains a selection of most important information by the author.

The fact that the vast majority of research was conducted in Finland and targeted the Finnish market presents a limitation, too. This research paper is about the entrepreneurial journey of the start-up “a thousand words”, therefore its findings might not be applicable to other industries, companies and/or persons.

Since not all interviewees have agreed to be named, all interviews will be presented in an anonymized form in order to respect the individual wishes of interviewed persons and comply with principles of ethics in research, that imply granting of anonymity and confidentiality if the researched party so wishes (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 65).

Last but not least, the author will not mention any concrete numbers and figures concerning the business financials, such as costs, prices, investments etc. Author’s business partner objects to revealing this information, which the author will respect. Neither the author believes this data is crucial for the present research and development project.

1.5 Thesis structure

The thesis is organized in the following way:



Figure 1: Thesis structure

The chapter titles are self-explanatory. Each chapter starts with a short description of its content. The respective chapter's content is always structured in the same following way. First, the theoretical background is highlighted, e.g. definitions are given, general information on the topic provided etc. Then the application of the theoretical findings and theories to the case start-up "a thousand words" is depicted. Finally, the respective interim results and findings are summed up. There is no strict division in theoretical and empirical part, these are rather intertwined within the respective chapter and topic.

2 Business planning

This chapter discusses the value and usefulness of (traditional) business planning for a small start-up.

2.1 Is business planning necessary?

Entrepreneurship research findings highlighted in the scientific journals show that planning is beneficial for new ventures (Brinckmann, Grichnik & Kapsa 2008; Carvalho & Jonker 2015; Chwolka & Raith 2011; Gruber 2006).

2.2 Business planning for a small start-up

Having established above that business planning is beneficial for start-ups, now the question arises how should it be undertaken. There are various approaches to business planning thinkable.

2.2.1 Traditional business plan

Traditionally, business planning is a process resulting in a written business plan. There are different types of business plans serving different purposes and addressing different people and organisations (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 141), and therefore being different in length and detail (Timmons, Zacharakis & Spinelli 2004, 40).

The most common business plan types are the following three types. The operational business plan, which is the longest (usually over 80 pages) and most detailed, is meant for company's internal use "to guide the development, launch, and initial growth of business" (Timmons et al. 2004, 41). The full business plan is about 25-40 pages in length and is written for investors (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 141). Finally, the shortest "summary" (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 141) or "dehydrated" (Timmons et al. 2004, 41) business plan is prepared for testing the business idea with investors by describing the initial business idea and concept.

Writing a business plan is such a common approach to starting a business that there are companies specializing on helping others with their business plan compilation and providing guidebooks and templates of business plans for different industries and sectors, e.g. Kexpa (2016).

2.2.2 Lean start-up

In the end of the last decade a novel approach to business planning emerged called lean start-up. The representatives of this movement explain why one should not write a business plan (Blank 2013; Maurya 2012; Ries 2011, 81) and advocate a new business planning approach to business planning.

The fundamental principle of a lean start-up is less planning, more trying out the product with the customer as soon as possible. The slogan “Try and fail early” puts it in a nutshell. Pivoting, i.e. adjusting the business idea/business model after having tried it out with the customers is therefore the key. The start-up “Build-measure-learn feedback loop” by Eric Ries illustrates the lean process:

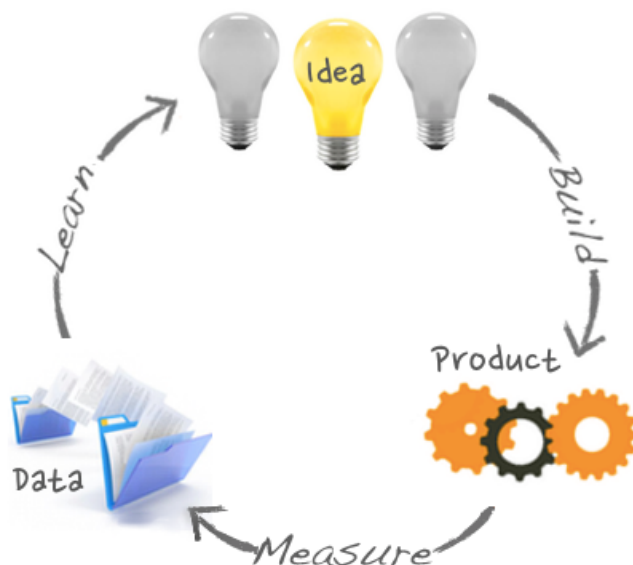


Figure 2: Build-measure-learn feedback loop (Ries)

2.3 Business model

The lean understanding of a start-up venture is closely linked to the term “business model”. Blank (2010b) provides following definitions of the terms: “A startup is an organization formed to search for a repeatable and scalable business model” and “A business model describes how your company creates, delivers and captures value”.

The main differences between a business plan and a business model lie in their respective volume, form and intended user(s). Business plans are far more detailed than business models and are meant to be presented to bankers and investors (Barrel, Gill & Rigby 2015, 63). A formal business plan is a usual prerequisite to apply for loans and other forms of traditional funding. Allegedly, the investors never actually read these “hypotheses about your business, sales, marketing, customers, market size, etc.” (Blank 2010b). A business model, on the other hand, depicts a comprehensive system that demonstrates “how all the pieces in your business plan interconnect” (Blank 2010b).

Considering the key meaning of a business model for a start-up, the author was surprised to get to know that many start-ups apparently fail to provide one. According to a CB Insights study (2014) need/lack of business model accounts for 17% of start-up fails and shares rank six together with poor product as following figure shows:

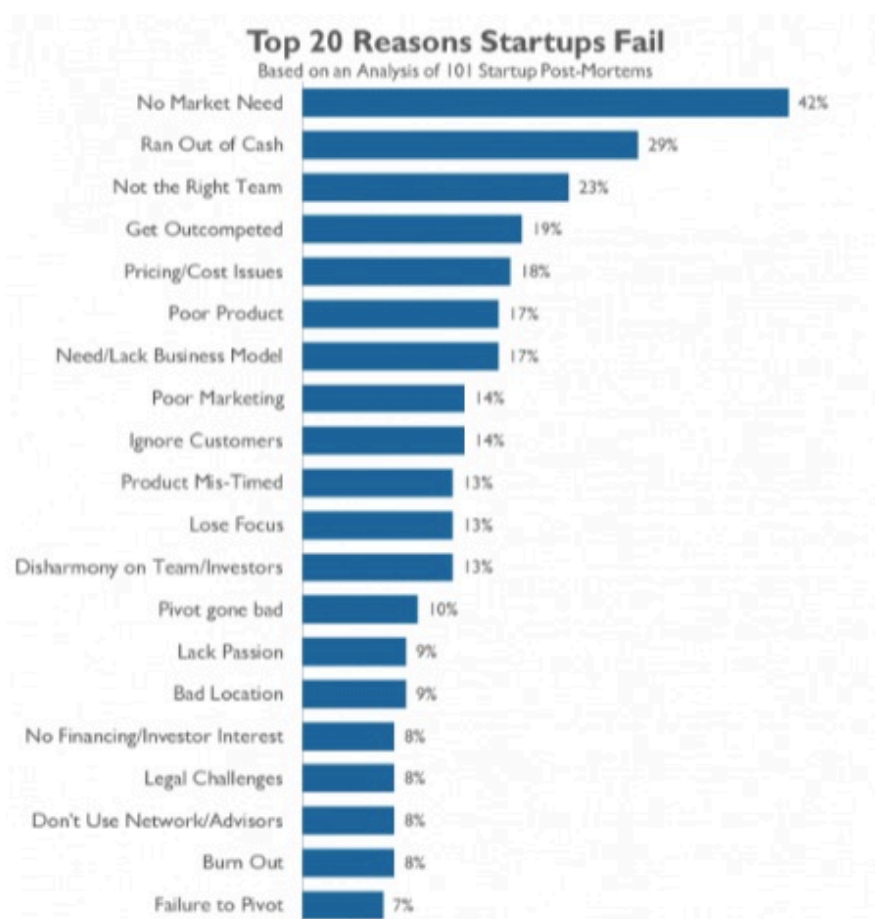


Figure 3: Top 20 reasons startups fail
(CB Insights 2014)

2.4 Business Model Canvases

Since, compared to a business plan, business model is a demonstrative, graphic way of representing the company’s business strategy, there are different ways of drawing a diagram

of a business model thinkable.

2.4.1 Original by Osterwalder

The original Business Model Canvas (BMC) by Osterwalder is a business model innovation tool that helps organizations to understand, design and implement new business models or enhance old business models, it consists of nine building blocks (Osterwalder & Pigneur 2010).

| | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <p>KEY PARTNERS</p> <p>Who are our key partners? Who are our key suppliers? Which key resources are we acquiring from our partners? Which key activities do partners perform?</p> | <p>KEY ACTIVITIES</p> <p>What key activities do our value propositions require? Our distribution channels? Customer relationships? Revenue streams?</p> <p>KEY RESOURCES</p> <p>What key resources do our value propositions require? Our distribution channels? Customer relationships? Revenue streams?</p> | <p>VALUE PROPOSITIONS</p> <p>What value do we deliver to the customer? Which one of our customers' problems are we helping to solve? What bundles of products and services are we offering to each segment? Which customer needs are we satisfying? What is the minimum viable product?</p> | <p>CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS</p> <p>How do we get, keep, and grow customers? Which customer relationships have we established? How are they integrated with the rest of our business model? How costly are they?</p> <p>CHANNELS</p> <p>Through which channels do our customer segments want to be reached? How do other companies reach them now? Which ones work best? Which ones are most cost-efficient? How are we integrating them with customer routines?</p> | <p>CUSTOMER SEGMENTS</p> <p>For whom are we creating value? Who are our most important customers? What are the customer archetypes?</p> |
| <p>COST STRUCTURE</p> <p>What are the most important costs inherent to our business model? Which key resources are most expensive? Which key activities are most expensive?</p> | | <p>REVENUE STREAMS</p> <p>For what value are our customers really willing to pay? For what do they currently pay? What is the revenue model? What are the pricing tactics?</p> | | |

Figure 4: The Business Model Canvas (Osterwalder 2013)

Osterwalder was the pioneer in the field of canvases as a method to advance business models. After this tool became popular, there were developed numerous adaptations of the BMC for profitable as well as for non-profit ventures. Due to the fact that covering all existing alternative canvases would extend the scope of this research project, the author will present two adaptations that she has encountered during her entrepreneurship studies and add a recent discovery from the German start-up scene.

2.4.2 Lean Canvas

The Lean Canvas was presented to the author during the lecture on business models by Maisala (2015) in the StartUp class as an alternative to the BMC.

Maurya (2011) has developed his Lean Canvas inspired by the BMC, but focusing on the specific needs of a start-up. An entrepreneur should be able to sketch the Lean Canvas in less than 15 minutes (Maurya 2012, 26) to reduce the planning time and speed up the learning. The Lean Canvas is illustrated in the figure below.

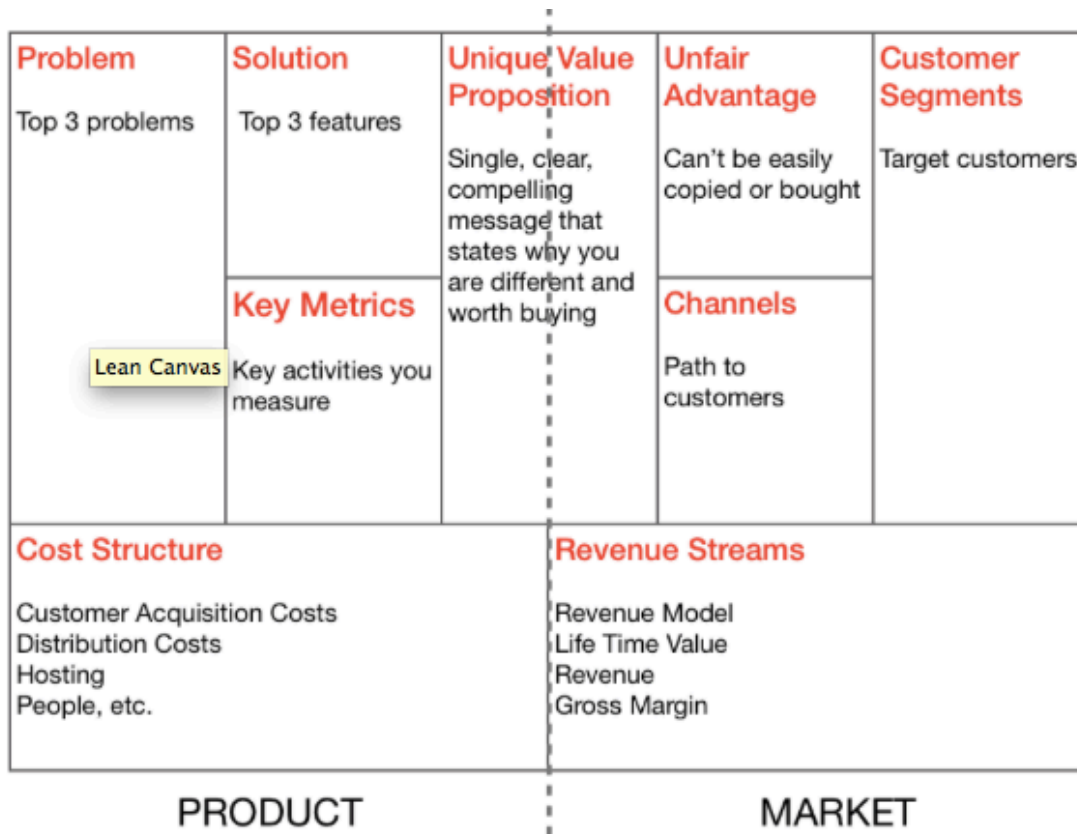


Figure 5: The Lean Canvas
(Maurya 2011)

2.4.3 Service Logic Business Model Canvas

During her StartUp classes in 2015 and in the Service Innovations course 2016 the author was introduced to the Service Logic Business Model Canvas by Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2015). This canvas's creators seek to increase competitive advantage by applying service-dominant logic theory with the original BMC.

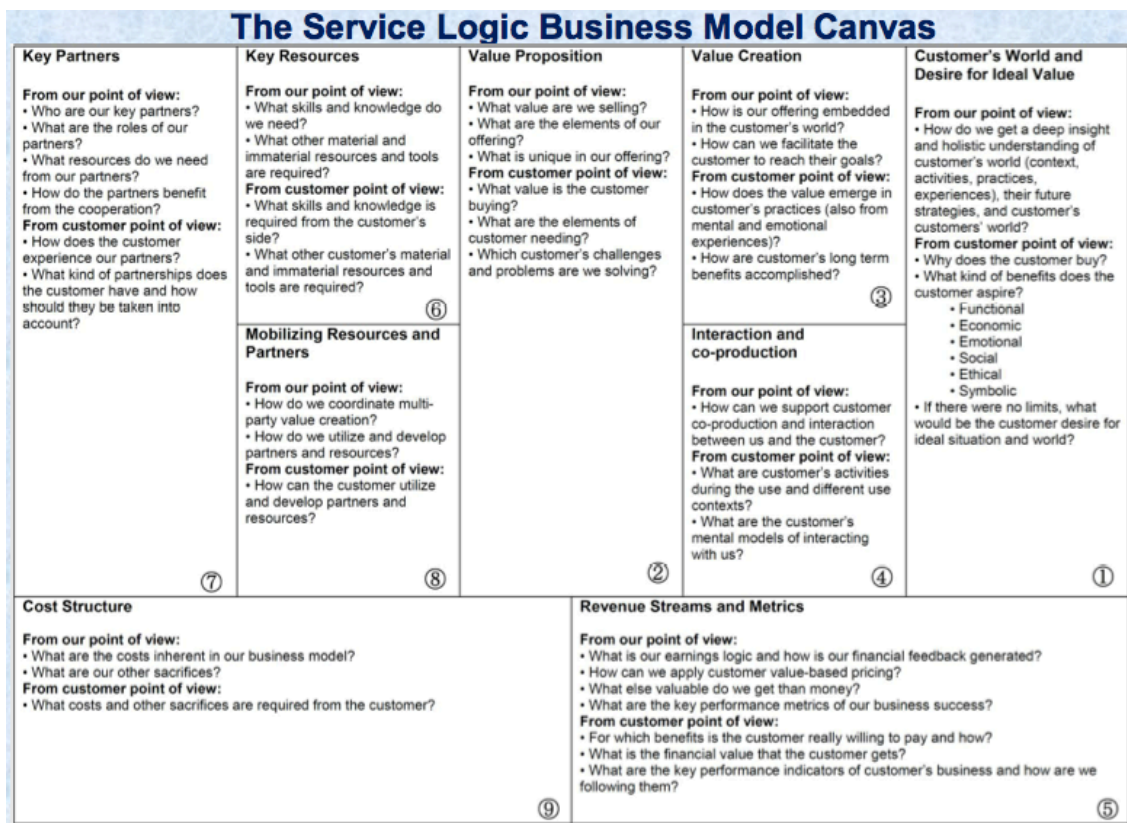


Figure 6: The Service Logic Business Model Canvas (Ojasalo & Ojasalo 2015)

2.4.4 The “Bierdeckel-Businessplan”

A truly German solution by Barth (2016) suggests that a business plan should fit on a beer mat. Notice that in this case the term “business plan” is used to describe a business model canvas, i.e. the beer mat business plan depicts the basic structure of a business model in a graphic way.

It lies in the nature of the BMC to be reviewed and renewed in the process of working on the business idea/model (Martin 2016. Personal communication). Therefore, the initial BMC was revised after conducting the market research with both customer groups and taking the feedback by the Rotary Start Up Challenge 2016 jury into consideration (Appendix 10). The development will be highlighted in detail at the end of the market research chapter.

The author does not on principle refuse trying out other canvases, especially those presented above, in addition to the BMC in order to examine the business model of “a thousand words” critically from different angles continuously every step of the way. However, it was not possible to try out and compare different canvases within the scope of this research and development project.

2.5 Interim findings

Summing up, there is no bypassing writing a business plan. Latest when there is a prospect of getting a start-up grant from the state, the BMC will not suffice any more. While some investors might be satisfied when being approached with “at least clearly defined business model” (Barrel et al. 2015, 142), banks and other traditional investment groups will always expect a full formal business plan. However, putting more effort into business planning by preparing such a traditional business plan will not harm the entrepreneur in author’s opinion. Having said that, the question whether a business plan is a prerequisite to start acting on the market, testing the idea (service/product) and validating the business assumptions must be answered in the negative. The lean approach to business panning is the suitable way for start-ups to commence their business operations.

3 Market analysis

This chapter is dedicated to analysing the target market in Finland. First, the general atmosphere and conditions of starting an own business will be depicted. Then author’s findings regarding the specific market segment of photography and other digital art will be presented.

3.1 Entrepreneurship environment in Finland in general

The current situation in Finland is very positive and reassuring for aspiring entrepreneurs (Finnfacts 2016). There are a number of governmental and non-governmental initiatives that support, educate and promote the start-up scene, such as e.g. Tekes, Finnvera, Sitra, NewCo Helsinki and many others. Helsinki Metropolitan area hosts a great many of events focusing entrepreneurship and start-ups, from such well-known and pricy as SLUSH to free events like

e.g. Boost Your Business and Entrepreneur DATE. Those, who cannot afford to visit SLUSH, have the possibility to participate in its free side events, e.g. Ultrahack and Founders' Day.

3.2 Competitor comparison analysis

The author has identified and compared her business model to the following competitors: In Finland: Taidelainaamo (no date), Show Case (2016), LUOVA (2016) and Galleria Huuto (2016).

Europe: Lumas (2016), Rise Art (2016), Photo Circle (2015) and YellowKorner (2016).

The author did not find a company offering leasing packages, i.e. conceptualized office decoration that is being exchanged periodically. This means that there are currently no big companies in author's direct competition, but "only" indirect competitors (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 186).

The author also believes that she could stay lower in price than the competition, if the printing part of the business could be figured out. There might be a need for a bigger investment for an own printing device in order to maximize the margin.

4 Market research

This chapter is dedicated to market research that was conducted by the author with both customer groups, i.e. the artists and the business clients.

4.1 Explanation of terms

The terms "market research" and "marketing research" are often used interchangeably. However, they do not mean the same and therefore will be defined below.

The main difference lies in the scope of research. Market research focuses, as the name suggests, on the target market, i.e. investigates a specific marketplace and consumers within it (Gillette 2013, Key Differences 2015). Marketing research is a much wider and more general concept that includes all steps of the marketing process, from market analysis and research to pricing, sales and advertising research (Gillette 2013, Key Differences 2015). Following figure by Key Differences (2015) demonstrates substantial differences between market research and marketing research:

| BASIS FOR COMPARISON | MARKET RESEARCH | MARKETING RESEARCH |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Meaning | A study undertaken to collect information about the market statistics, is known as market research. | Marketing research is the systematic and objective study, analysis and interpretation of problem related to marketing activities. |
| Branch of | Marketing Research | Marketing Information System |
| Scope | Limited | Wide |
| Nature | Specific | Generic |
| Involves | Research of marketplace and the buyer's behavior within that market. | Research of all the aspects of marketing. |
| Dependency | Dependent | Independent |
| Purpose | To check the viability of the product in the target market. | To make effective decisions regarding marketing activities and to keep control on the marketing of economic output. |

Figure 8: Market research vs marketing research
(Key Differences 2015)

Thus, market research is used to validate the ideas on markets and product application, which builds a basis for (further) marketing research to provide the information necessary to do a marketing plan (Gillette 2013). Therefore, the research that author needed to conduct with her both clients' groups on this stage of idea development qualifies as market research.

The author disagrees with existing narrower definitions of the term describing market research as means to "address a business problem" (Adams & Brace 2006, 6). In author's opinion, market research is also suitable to check the feasibility of a business idea, which is not the same thing as solving a certain business problem.

4.2 Relevance

According to already mentioned study by CB Insights (2014) illustrated in Figure 5, failing to find out what market needs are, is with 42% by far the main reason for start-up failure. Therefore, the significance of market research with potential customer groups cannot be overestimated.

Lean start-up approach supporters emphasize that creating a product or a service that is not needed on the market is a common mistake in the start-up scene (Graham 2012, Maurya 2016). Maurya (2012) puts it in a nutshell with his famous quote “Life's too short to build something nobody wants.”

The case start-up “a thousand words” is no exception. The author realizes the need of conducting different kinds of research with various groups and individuals to cover the numerous areas of vital information for such a project. Market research is an essential component in this process, both for finding out about the supply situation on the part of the photographers as well as the demand situation on the side of the business clients.

4.3 Market research methodology

At this point the author will present the research methodology chosen for market research with the respective customer group and justify her choice.

The very first question that needs to be answered regarding research design is whether the desired data already exist and could be reanalysed (Saunders et al. 2009, 256) or does the research aim at uncovering information for the first time (Adams & Brice 2006, 20). The already existing (secondary) data proves to be very useful since it saves time and financial investment. Especially the possibility of conducting it with the help of the internet is very attractive as was demonstrated above when outlining competitive comparison. However, the aim of the market research at hand is gathering data from the potential customers of a novel business idea. Therefore, new (primary) data must be collected for this purpose. This qualifies for the research to be primary research.

Next step is to determine what kind of information is required, i.e. simplifying, facts and figures as opposed to opinions and feelings (Adams & Brice 2006, 21). This leads to the traditional division in, respectively, quantitative versus qualitative research. Even though strict differentiation between the two has become increasingly unpopular in modern research practice, which tends to be holistic (Smith & Fletcher 2004, 6; Ng & Coakes 2014, 42-43), it would be wrong not to acknowledge the distinction between the both methodologies (Silverman 2011, 4).

Quantitative data is numerical and standardised; it is analysed with the help of diagrams and statistics (Saunders et al. 2009, 482; Silverman 2011, 4). With help of quantitative research one can find out e.g. percentages of people who think and behave in a certain way. In comparison, the qualitative research aims at gathering information about what people think and how they behave (Adams & Brice 2006, 21). Qualitative data is therefore non-numerical,

derives from non-standardised information delivered with words and needs a special concept in order to get analysed (Saunders et al. 2009, 482). The objectives of the research project imply the most suitable method, and it can be that e.g. qualitative research precedes a quantitative study to assure the quality of the latter (Meier 2000, 147). It is important to decide on appropriate methodology not only for academic discussion's sake, but especially because often diverse information is required and both approaches could be generally applicable to different stages of research (Adams & Brice 2006, 22).

In the present case, the author seeks to investigate two different customer groups of “a thousand words”: the artists, who will supply their pictures for the company's database, and the business clients, who will purchase the art leasing packages. From the artists, the author would like to find out what do they think about the business idea in general and would they participate in it. From the business clients, the author would like to get to know the state of affairs concerning office decoration in form of art/pictures in the corporate setting. Since the data gathered from the artists will consist of their opinions and feeling, the qualitative research approach is suitable. Business clients' opinions naturally matter as well, but the author is more interested in gathering facts and figures from them, i.e. getting a comprehensive description of the current situation and practices regarding art at working place, therefore, qualitative research methodology will be applied in their case. The decision regarding research design mirrors the current situation at the present level of business idea development and is conducted in the hope of preparing a solid basis for further research.

4.4 Market research with artists

This section is dedicated to qualitative research conducted with the artists.

4.4.1 Market research questions and goal

The present market research aims at finding an answer to the following central research question: Will there be enough supply of free pictures for the database of “a thousand words”?

To provide more structure and clearer guidelines for research design as well as later data analysis following three sub-questions were used additionally:

1. Is exposure enough for artists?
2. What service do they need / want / expect?
3. What are their conditions for cooperation?

In addition to finding an answer to the research question, the author set a goal of creating two personas based on the information received, in order to delineate the types of potentially promising artist clients for “a thousand words”.

4.4.2 Market research method

While the term “methodology” describes the more abstract decision about the research approach, such as the “research stance” as such, the research method is a concrete “usable and effective” tool for data collection (Ng & Coakes 2014, 50).

For her market research with artists the author chose the most common qualitative research method: interviewing (Silverman 2011, 165-166). There are different types of qualitative interviews. Since the author wanted to get “both ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions” answered (Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82), the interview was semi-structured, i.e. conducted with the help of thematically structured questionnaire containing both open and closed questions (Gillham 2007, 70; Eriksson & Kovalainen 2008, 82-83). The interview questionnaire can be found in Appendix 4. All interviews were personal, conducted face-to-face, one was via Skype video connection.

4.4.3 Interviewee sample

There are different sampling strategies for qualitative market research projects thinkable. The main distinction is made between probability and non-probability samples (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam 2003, 77). Ritchie et al. (2003, 78) explain that “In a probability sample, elements in the population are chosen at random and have a known probability of selection”. It is obvious that this technique is more appropriate for statistical research rather than a qualitative market research project.

Non-probability sampling techniques are more suitable for qualitative research. Amongst others, there is criterion based or purposive sampling within this approach. “Members of a sample are chosen with a ‘purpose’ to represent a location or type in relation to a key criterion” (Ritchie et al. 2003, 79).

The author has conducted 12 interviews, ten with photographers and two with digital artists. The first three interviewees are from author’s social environment, one of them gave the author the idea of leasing art to offices in the first place. Two candidates approached the author after she was pitching her business idea in Laurea’s Business StartUp course. One interviewee volunteered after author’s pitch at Cambridge Venture Camp. The other half of the interviewees was found by means of networking, i.e. simply letting the social environment know that artist interviewees were needed.

4.4.4 Time frame

The interviews were conducted between 14 October 2015 (the first interview) and 23 February 2016 (both the last interviews). The precise interview dates are as follows: 1st on 14 October 2015; 2nd on 18 October 2015; 3rd on 18 November 2015; 4th on 24 November 2015; 5th on 3 December 2015; 6th on 30 December; 7th on 21 January 2016; 8th on 2 February 2016; 9th on 3 February 2016; 10th on 4 February 2016 and the last two, 11th and 12th on 23 February 2016.

4.4.5 Interview procedure

The interview procedure was kept the same with all the interviewees. First, the author has contacted the designated interviewee personally by Email or via Social Media channels, such as WhatsApp and Facebook messenger to arrange the interview, i.e. get the respective artist's agreement to be interviewed, explain the interview procedure in detail and decide the date of the face-to-face meeting. Then the interviewees received two documents via electronic channels, the "Initial business idea" (Appendix 1) and the "Interview questionnaire" (Appendix 4). Those two documents were examined by the respective artist prior to the interview date.

4.4.6 Data recording

Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, 85) name following ways to record interview data: "notes written on the spot, note written afterwards, and taping the interview". Both, written notes and audio recordings are considered to be "text" (Ng & Coakes 2014, 175).

The author has audiotaped each interview and taken notes during the meeting with the interviewees. The shortest interview was 27,49 minutes long, the longest lasted for one hour and 9,34 minutes. The interview length depended on the respective interviewee's time commitment and willingness to talk, e.g. elaborate on questions, add topics, follow side-tracks of the conversation etc. Author's on-the-spot notes were made on a printed-out interview questionnaire in form of key points and, more seldom, full statements.

4.4.7 Data analysis

Analysing qualitative data can prove to be very challenging and time-consuming due to amount of textual data and less structure compared to numeric data (Ng & Coakes 2014, 173). There are various methods used to analyse qualitative data. According to Gillham (2007, 126) "An unstructured interview is usually conducted with narrative or thematic forms of analysis in mind; a more structured interview indicates a categorical analysis". For the present

research, the author chose the framework analysis method, which is based on the categorical analysis.

This method was developed by researchers at the UK National Centre for Social Research. According to Barnard (2010), “Framework is a data management tool” that aims “to organise data to facilitate interpretation”. It is therefore a tool used in a two-step analysis approach, where data is organised first, and interpreted then. In framework, the qualitative data is classified and organised “according to key themes, concepts and emergent categories” (Barnard 2010). Also “the framework identifies a series of main themes subdivided by a succession of related subtopics” (Barnard 2010).

The author analysed the data with following steps. First, she read and completed her notes while listening several times to the recordings of the respective interview. This step implied between two to five repetitions depending on how structured the interviewees replies were. The notes were completed in a separate document that included the initial on-the-spot notes as well as additional data transcription. The second step was to systematically organise the data in categories and sub-categories. Since the interview questionnaire was already semi-structured, it was less time-consuming. However, the open-ended questions were challenging to grasp. Third step was to interpret the data of each interview and compare it to other interviews’ data.

4.4.7.1 Personal details

The first section of the interview questions concerned itself with the artists’ personal details. Since, as already mentioned above in section 1.4 Limitations, not all the artists agreed to being named in this research paper, therefore the author will reveal neither the names nor the aliases of the interviewees, but only refer to their gender and age instead.

The information received in the process of the interviews is summed up and presented in the following table:

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Gender | Six female interviewees and six male interviewees |
| Age | The both youngest interviewees were 21 and the eldest was 52 years old at the time of the interview. Seven interviewees were age 21-25. |
| Nationality | Seven Finnish (two of which Swedo-Finnish, one with partly Jordanian roots, one with partly British roots), a Latvian, an Australian, a German, an Austrian and a Spanish interviewee |

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Residence | 11 interviewees live in Finland, one in Germany |
|-----------|---|

Table 1: Interview section “Personal details”

As a result of this section’s analysis, the author can say that the interviewee sample was rather versatile in terms of age and nationality, both genders were represented equally. Due to the fact that all interviewees but one have their residence in Finland, this sample can be considered as being representative for Finland only, and not for Germany. All but two in Finland living interviewees live in the Metropolitan area, the other live one in Tampere, one in Lahti. Therefore, this market research is suited to represent the artists’ opinion in Southern Finland, specifically in the Metropolitan area. Out of 12 interviewees ten were photographers and two digital artists, thus this research is more representative for photographers.

4.4.7.2 Artist details

The second section of the interview was dedicated to the interviewees’ identities as artists. The information gained in the course of the interviews is summed up and represented in the following table:

| | |
|--|---|
| How long do you occupy yourself with photography/digital art? | <p>Answers vary from “two years” to “over 30” years. Four artists have occupied themselves with photography/digital art between two and five years, five artists between five and ten years, and three photographers over 20 years.</p> <p>It was difficult to get very precise answers to this question, because there are different understandings of the term “occupy” possible, e.g. “started to do for the first time” or “got seriously interested and invested time and money in it”. Two artists have said that there were years long breaks in their occupation with photography.</p> <p>All but three artists said that their interest in photography was triggered by a family member.</p> |
| What kind of photography are you interested in (e.g. landscape, portrait, urban etc.)? | <p>The interviewees gave following answers:</p> <p>“Landscape” - 7 answers, “Portraits” -6 answers, “Nature” (trees, flowers) - 4 answers, “Street / urban photography” - 4 answers,</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>“Fashion”- 2 answers, “Food photography” -1 answer.</p> <p>The answers show that most artists are versatile and do not want to restrict themselves to only one type of motive, only three artists said that they are merely interested in one particular kind of photography.</p> <p>One photographer said that such “specialization” is often due to equipment requirements, i.e. wild nature photography requires different lenses than fashion photography in a studio.</p> <p>Also, from the answers to this question, the author understood the significant difference between gig work and free art. When an artist is commissioned to do commercial work, she or he naturally does not pick the motive, and as a rule does not get emotionally attached to the art work, respectively does not consider it “art” at all.</p> |
| <p>Did you complete any vocational training to become a photographer or any other professional education related to art?</p> <p>Sub-questions: If “yes” - Which, where and how long? If “no” - Where and how did you learn about photography?</p> | <p>Nine artists have answered “no” to this question. Five of them said that they are self-taught artists. The other four artists said that they have taken some classes in art (drawing and painting) and/or photography in high school and/or online (Shaw Academy), YouTube tutorials were mentioned by two artists.</p> <p>Three photographers have completed official vocational education, all abroad from Finland (in Austria, Spain and Great Britain).</p> <p>Four artists have underlined the difference between learning about the technical and the artistic side of photography. They all said that it is relatively easy to learn how to handle the equipment, whereas having “the eye” for composition and light is what makes a photographer an artist.</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| Do you engage in other form of art than photography, e.g. painting? | The majority of interviewees engage in more than one form of art. Eight artists mentioned such art forms as painting and drawing, music, writing and poetry, design, performance art, video making and editing as other art forms. Four artists answered that photography is their only form of art. |
|---|---|

Table 2: Interview section “Artist details”

The author has drawn following conclusions when analysing this section.

The most important analyse result is the big difference between commercial work and free art work. The artists do not own the rights to the former, and are much stronger emotionally attached to the latter.

The circumstance that interest in photography and other forms of (digital) art seems to run in the family, provides the author with an additional possibility to reach out to artists potentially interested in co-operation, i.e. through their family members.

The fact that most artists are interested in different kinds of motives means that there is a possibility of getting versatile pictures for the “a thousand words” data base from the same artist.

4.4.7.3 Presentation and distribution

The third interview section dealt with the questions of how do the artists present, distribute and monetise their work. The received information is summed up and represented in the following table:

| | |
|--|---|
| Does your art sustain you financially or do your (also) earn money doing something else? | Only three photographers answered that their art completely sustains them financially since they are professional photographers running a respective business. Out of the remaining nine artists, one photographer said that she would like to live of her art, but since she does not make enough money with it, she is forced to do other jobs. Another photographer said that even though she sells her art every now and then, she is not at all sure, whether she would like it to be her source of income, because the pressure could affect her creativity in a negative way. She prefers to stay |
|--|---|

| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>a free artist.</p> <p>Three photographers said that although they sometimes take on paid jobs and sell their pictures, they see it rather as a side-income for a strong hobby and do not intend to make a bread-earning business out of it. Two of these photographers said that being a full-time artists is very tempting, but too insecure; the third interviewee from this group has never considered being a full-time artist at all.</p> <p>Four artists, two of which were photographers and two digital artists, said that they do not make any money with their art and never considered that possibility due to “not being good enough yet”. Later they would welcome the thought.</p> |
| <p>Channels of exhibition: how do you present your art to public (e.g. Flickr, Instagram, own webpage, exhibitions etc.)?</p> | <p>The interviewees gave following answers:</p> <p>“Webpage” was named 4 times, both own and company’s webpage, “Flickr” - 3 times, “500px” - 2 times; “Instagram” - 5 times; “Facebook” - 6 times; “Pinterest” - once; “Tumblr” - once; “LinkedIn” - once, i.e. link to portfolio; “exhibitions” - once; “atelier” - 2 times.</p> <p>Four artists do not present their work to the broader public at all. One of these four only does commercial work and has neither free pictures nor time to post them in e.g. Social Media channels. The other three show their art to their friends and anyone who displays interest in it, but only in a private setting, e.g. pictures on the walls at home, saved on the phone etc.</p> <p>The artist’s age tends to affect the readiness to</p> |

| | |
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| | <p>display their pictures in such Social Media channels as e.g. Facebook and Instagram. Younger artists are more comfortable with using Social Media channels for displaying their artwork, even though they know that their pictures could get stolen from there. The older artists do not trust the Web, try to protect their artwork with watermarks, even though they know the latter could be removed, or avoid the Social Media channels all together.</p> |
| <p>Do you participate in or organise exhibitions to show your pictures to broader public? Sub-questions: If “yes” - How often per year? Where (country, area, location etc.)? Do you get pictures sold there? If “no” - Why not and would you in principle like to? Please name all the reasons, e.g. financial (costs of print, framing, rent etc.), time, effort (cannot be bothered with marketing and organization) etc.</p> | <p>Only one of the interviewed artists is constantly exhibiting her photographs in own organised exhibitions and in galleries. She organises 3-5 exhibitions per year in different European countries. She sells up to 3 pictures per exhibition.</p> <p>One other artist used to organise his own exhibitions in Southern Finland, but gave it up due to low sales and the amount of effort that an exhibition takes.</p> <p>Ten interviewees have never exhibited their work in an art exhibition. Out of these, one professional photographer is not interested in it at all. The remaining nine interviewees would be in principle interested They gave following reasons for not having organised an exhibition by now:</p> <p>“Money” - 6, “Contacts” - 3, “Time and effort” - 3, “Marketing” - 1, “Not being good enough yet” - 3, “Not having enough pictures yet” - 2, “Afraid of criticism” - 1.</p> <p>Also with this question, there were different tendencies due to interviewees’ age. The most common first reaction for the interviewed young</p> |

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>artists was that organising an own exhibition has never even crossed their mind and they wouldn't know where to start. The older artists were concerned with the financial and organisational aspects of an exhibition.</p> |
| <p>Is there any place/location where you would not like your pictures exhibited?</p> | <p>One interviewee did not want to exhibit his photographs in an exhibition (see above). Two interviewees gave no answer to this question.</p> <p>Two interviewees said that their pictures could not be exhibited in a place that does not correspond with their political and ethical beliefs.</p> <p>Seven artists did not have any restrictions as to exhibition's location.</p> <p>The latter group was most commonly surprised by the question, since they consider any (additional) exposure being positive.</p> |
| <p>Channels of distribution: how do you sell your pictures? E.g. (own) online shop, art dealer, agent, gallery, auctions etc.</p> | <p>Five of the interviewed artists have never sold their artwork at all.</p> <p>Two interviewees only work commercially, i.e. they do not own their pictures after the job is done, the client buys them directly.</p> <p>The remaining five photographers have done both, commercial work and free art. They sell their "free art" pictures via following channels: gallery, agent, own website, word-of-mouth and making postcards.</p> |

Table 3: Interview section "Presentation and distribution"

The author arrived at following conclusions after analysing this section.

Firstly, it can be said that it is difficult to earn money with photography and digital art.

Secondly, most artists have neither the financial means, nor the expertise to present their pictures in an art exhibition. Thirdly, the vast majority of interviewees exposes their art work online, mainly on relevant Social Media channels and not on an own website or in an online

shop. Last but not least, the majority of interviewed artists considers exposure being entirely positive, “any exposure is good exposure”.

4.4.7.4 Technical requirements

The next interview question was about the artists’ knowledge concerning the technical side of photography and digital art. With this question the author intended to find out the quality requirements of the trade and whether artists know them.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>For the database: what are the technical requirements of a picture file in order to allow for high quality print up to size 100x125 cm?</p> | <p>Two artists did not answer this question during the interview.</p> <p>Four artists did not know the answer, but two of them said that they could get this information relatively easily from their network.</p> <p>Six artists said that one would need a raw, i.e. non-comprised file in a very high resolution of minimum 50MB, which is only possible to produce with a full-frame camera.</p> |
|--|--|

Table 4: Interview section “Technical requirements”

The answers to this interview question mean that the author will have to restrict the database of “a thousand words” for artists working with a full-frame camera. The author will also need a back-end professional in her team to deal with the stored data amount.

4.4.7.5 Business idea

The fifth section of the interview was dedicated to artists’ opinion about the business idea of “a thousand words”. The information is summed up and represented in the following table:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>What is your expert, i.e. artist opinion about the business idea? Sub-questions: Would you give your pictures for the company’s database? If “no”, why not? What does the concept miss?</p> | <p>Ten interviewed artists said that they liked the idea. Firstly, because it provides free opportunity for artists to expose their artwork and, secondly, gives everyone the possibility to enjoy art in everyday life. However, two artists have underlined that this business idea would be difficult to implement and needs very smart marketing with the business clients.</p> <p>Two interviewees were not sure about the business concept and what does it bring for the artist. They</p> |
|--|--|

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>are not willing to give their artwork for exposure purposes only and would need to negotiate better conditions for their cooperation.</p> <p>Four artists said that it is not feasible for them to give up the rights for their pictures for the period of two years. It is too long period of time for exclusive use for free.</p> <p>Five artists asked, whether their name and services they offer would be advertised on the website of “a thousand words”.</p> <p>Two artists said that the commission fee of 10% is too little, the usual rate lies at least at 15%.</p> <p>Eight artists said that they would give their artwork for “a thousand words” database.</p> |
| <p>How important is business ethics, especially the aspect of charity for you when doing business with your art?</p> | <p>Six artists liked the idea of the social element being part of the business concept.</p> <p>Three interviewees said that they did not care about it.</p> <p>Three interviewees did not understand the question. Two have misunderstood what “charity” means in this context. After explanation by the author, they said that they did not mind as long as it did not cost them anything.</p> |

Table 5: Interview section “Business idea”

The author has reached following analysis results from this section.

Firstly, the business idea is generally liked by the artists. Secondly, the majority of the interviewees would give their artwork for “a thousand words” database. The third and most important finding is that the restriction to one copy per picture is not feasible. Lastly and surprisingly for the author, only half of the interviewed artists considered the social aspect of the business idea to be important for their agreement to cooperate in this venture.

4.4.7.6 Art scene

The last interview section is dedicated to the question what do artists need to do in order to become famous in their field.

| | |
|---|---|
| How can an artist make a name in the art scene? | The interviewees named following ways and factors: “Participating and visiting exhibitions” - 4 times; “Developing own distinctive style and brand” - once; “Social Media presence” - 5 times; “Networking & connections” - 7 times; “Professional education” - once; “Luck” - twice; “Do not know” -once. |
|---|---|

Table 6: Interview section “Art scene”

The analysis of this question has shown the author that exposure (“Participating and visiting exhibitions” as well as creating “Social Media presence”) and connections gained through networking are considered the most important factors that help an artist to become famous. To quote one of the interviewees: “You are only as strong as your network! Just go out there and meet people, spend time on showing your face and telling what you are about”.

4.4.8 Answers to qualitative market research’s questions

The result of the qualitative research with artists is presented in form of answers to this market research’s question and sub-questions in the table below:

| Question | Answer |
|--|--|
| Will there be enough supply of free pictures for the database of “a thousand words”? | Yes |
| Sub-question | |
| Is exposure enough for artists? | Yes, for most artists |
| What service do they need / want / expect? | Free and frictionless service, marketing of their name and services, no involvement in the day-to-day business |
| What are their conditions for cooperation? | Exposure, marketing, no restriction to one copy only |

Table 7: Answers to qualitative market research’s questions

4.4.9 Qualitative market research's reliability

Reliability addresses the issue of whether the research findings are sound.

4.4.9.1 Reliability of qualitative research

The quality of qualitative research findings is often being questioned and challenged regarding its reliability. Each time typical qualitative research methods are described in a textbook, there is a paragraph about how crucial it is to take care of the reliability issues by providing a “detailed description of the research process and justifications for the interpretations” (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 15; see also Saunders et al. 2009, 328). The method of triangulation, i.e. verifying the research findings from different points of view, e.g. by using different samples, research approaches and researchers, is recommended to “improve the reliability of results” (Ojasalo et al. 2009, 15). The less standardized the research procedure, e.g. when using semi-structured and in-depth interviews, the more criticism regarding reliability it earns (Robson 1993, 229; Saunders et al. 2009, 326).

The quality of data gathered in qualitative research is discussed along the same parameters as in quantitative research: validity, reliability and objectivity, i.e. bias (Saunders et al. 2009, 326). Here is a table by Gibbs (2012) that illustrates the criteria of data quality for both research types and highlights different terms used to address them:

Criteria of soundness

| <i>Qualitative</i> | <i>Quantitative</i> |
|---|---------------------|
| Truth value/credibility | Internal validity |
| Applicability/ transferability | External validity |
| Consistency/ replicability/ dependability | Reliability |
| Neutrality/not biased/ Confirmability | Objectivity |

Table 8: Criteria of soundness
(Gibbs 2012)

The internal validity becomes an issue when the researcher fails to gain interviewee's trust or establish one's credibility otherwise (Saunders et al. 2009, 326). Data gained in such an interview would be compromised. Generalizability addresses the question of whether the

research findings could be used as a representative sample, which would allow drawing statistical conclusions about a larger group of people (Robson 1993, 72; Saunders et al. 2009, 327). The main concern about reliability is whether other researchers would reveal same findings if they were to repeat the research process (Saunders et al. 2009, 326) or whether same researchers could repeat their interviews with the same outcomes.

The latter issue leads to the question of bias. There are two kinds of bias thinkable, on the side of the interviewer as well as on the side of the interviewed person (Saunders et al. 2009, 326). The interviewer could demonstrate bias in many different ways during the interview, e.g. by commenting on the interview questions, using a certain (under-)tone when asking them or in a non-verbal manner, and influence the answers to the questions this way. Additionally or alternatively, the interviewer can be biased when analyzing the gathered data after the interview. Finally, interviewees themselves can show biased behavior for a number of reasons, related and unrelated to the interviewer, such as e.g. avoidance and unwillingness to answer certain questions (Saunders et al. 2009, 327).

In defense of not standardized qualitative research methods can be said that they are primarily designed to explore new areas of research, to gather brand new data about a topic and not to verify an already known phenomenon or theory in a statistically correct manner. However, as already mentioned above, in order to be taken seriously in academic terms, it is essential to document and record all research steps in great detail.

4.4.9.2 Reliability of this market research project

The author believes that she succeeded in gaining the interviewed persons' trust and established her credibility throughout the research process, otherwise she doubts that there would be 12 interviewees willing to participate in this research project in the first place. Therefore, internal validity, respectively truth value present no problem in author's opinion.

On the other hand, it is unclear whether this market research's findings could be generalized. There was no triangulation method used to verify the research findings. The author doubts the external validity and suspects that the sample would have to be bigger and more versatile in order to allow statistical conclusions about a large group of people. Transferability of findings is therefore unlikely given in researcher's opinion.

Since the research procedure was not completely standardized, i.e. the interviews were semi-structured and not structured, it is possible that other researches and/or interviewee groups would deliver different answers to the open questions. Thus, replicability is not guaranteed.

Finally, the researcher cannot vouch for complete objectivity, even though she aimed at the highest possible level of neutrality throughout the research process, especially during data gathering and analysis. The possibility of conscious and unconscious biased behavior cannot be excluded either on the side of the researcher, or on the interviewees' side.

However, the author believes that the findings of present market research are as sound as can be expected of a qualitative research study within the scope of a comparable research and development project.

4.4.10 Personas


Creating two personas based on the information received from the market research with the artists was an additional goal of this qualitative research.

Stickdorn and Schneider (2010, 178) define personas as “fictional profiles, ... developed as a way of representing a particular group based on their shared interests”. With help of this Service Design tool, the author seeks to delineate the “recognizable archetypes” (Stickdorn & Schneider 2010, 178) of potentially promising artist clients for the case start-up.

In her lecture for the StartUp classes at Laurea, a Service Design professional said that one needs to interview (or as she prefers to say “have a conversation with”) six to nine people in order to be able to build a persona (Nousiainen 2015). This sample size is enough unless one asks “totally wrong questions” (Nousiainen 2015).

Based on her 12 interviews with photographers and digital artists, and hoping that the interview questions were sensible, the author created two personas:

Maria Vara
 Professional photographer with own atelier



"Any exposure is good exposure!"

Age: 36
 Work: CEO of Photo Vara Oy
 Family: Married, 2 children (14 & 10)
 Location: Vantaa
 Character: creative-chaotic

Goals

- Make Photo Vara Oy a successful and profitable business
- Ambitions as an artist
- Wants to be able to sell own photographs

Free time

- Plays the piano
- Teaches her children how to draw and take pictures with her old camera

Dreams

Maria's dream is to have her artwork exhibited in an art gallery and become famous in the art scene.

 She'd also like to finish her vocational education in visual arts in Helsinki one day.

Figure 9: Persona 1

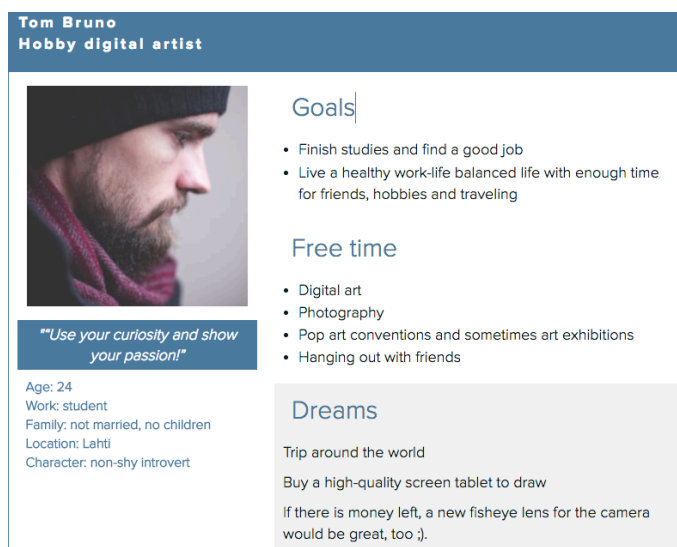


Figure 10: Persona 2

4.4.11 Marker segmentation

Additionally, to creating personas, the author was able to segment the market of photographers in Finland. Market segmentation means according to Adams and Brace (2006, 5) "identifying different sub-groups within ... group of customers". This was an unexpected but welcome result that will help the author finding right type of artists for co-operation on "a thousand words" project. The identified market segments are presented in this table:

| Photographer Pictures | no education, no full-frame camera | education or very well self-taught, full-frame camera |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| commercial | no known market, maybe apart from people, who manage to sell their snapshots to the "Yellow press" | Professional commercial photographers, who only work gigs, no free pictures, no interest in a project like "a thousand words" |
| free art & hobby | beginners | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Free artists 2. Commercial professionals with photography as a hobby 3. Keen enthusiasts |

Table 9: Photography market segmentation

The author will target the artists in the lower right segment for co-operation.

4.5 Market research with business clients

The following section is dedicated to quantitative research conducted with business clients.

4.5.1 Market research questions and goal

This market research aims at finding an answer to the following central research question: Are pictures considered an important part of office decoration that contributes to positive work environment?

To provide more structure and clearer guidelines for research design following three sub-questions were used additionally:

1. How often are pictures being exchanged?
2. What is the budget for this?
3. Which department is responsible for office decoration?

In addition to finding an answer to the research question, the author set a goal of finding a prospective healthcare centre to target for direct selling and concierge MVP.

4.5.2 Method and sample

Survey is the most common method of conducting quantitative research (Ng & Coakes 2014, 90). There are numerous thinkable sampling approaches, while main distinction is made between probability and non-probability sampling (see above, section 4.4.3). Probability sampling is not practicable for a small start-up, since it requires statistical know-how and appropriate equipment. An expert (company) would need to be hired, which is much too expensive for an early-stage start-up.

Non-probability samples in quantitative research are distinguished in convenience sample, quota sample and judgement sample (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong & Saunders 2008, 344). Judgement sample is constructed when “The researcher uses his or her judgement to select population members who are good prospects for accurate information” (Kotler et al. 2008, 344). This type of sample was used in the present quantitative research.

For her quantitative market research with business clients the author chose to conduct a survey with help of an online questionnaire with private health care centers (yksityiset lääkäriasemat) in the ten biggest Finnish cities: Helsinki, Espoo, Tampere, Vantaa, Oulu, Turku, Jyväskylä, Lahti, Kuopio and Kouvola. The choice of this specific business sector for the survey was made strategically and is explained in more detail in section 8, Marketing strategy, B2B marketing. The restriction to the ten biggest Finnish cities was made to keep

the scope of this research manageable, while covering enough population to receive representative results.

4.5.3 Data gathering procedure and time frame

The survey was web-based, the online questionnaire was designed using Google Forms (Grinberg 2016f) because other known provider restricted the number of questions to ten. The questionnaire contains different question types, such as multiple choice, interval scale and open-ended questions. The survey questionnaire was designed in Finnish language with help of author's business partner in order to increase the potential participant number.

On 29 April 2016 the participation request Email (Appendix 11) was sent to all private healthcare centers found in the respective areas. Thorough search of secondary data on the Internet with help of search engine Google preceded this step. The author put the key word "lääkäriasemat" combined with the respective name of the city into the search field and noted all search results in a separate document. In cases when there was more than one contact Email found, the author chose the office manager, the office secretary, head of marketing and HR as recipient. Ten days after the initial participation request was sent, the author followed up with a reminder Email (Appendix 11) to all addresses.

4.5.4 Data analysis

Even though online survey tools such as Google Forms collect responses to the surveys automatically and show them in graphs and charts, this is not data analysis strictly speaking, this is "merely" data organisation and presentation. Data analysis must be performed by the researcher, it lies in the nature of surveys being designed to "test ... hypotheses" (Ng & Coakes 2014, 91).

4.5.4.1 Survey question No.1

The author received answers from following private health care centre companies:

1. Yrityksen nimi (12 vastausta)

| |
|----------------------------|
| Bulevardin klinikka |
| Diagnos Terveyspalvelut Oy |
| Lääkärikeskus Aava oy |
| Suomen Terveystalo Oy |
| Jämsän Terveys Oy |
| Doctagon Oy |
| Arte ja Orto Oy |
| Lääkärikeskus Aava Oy |
| Diacor |
| Sairaala NEO |
| Sairaala Eira Oy |
| Mehiläinen |

Figure 11: Survey question No. 1

All together 12 participants have filled in the questionnaire. Even though the answer No. 3 and No. 8 were from the same company, Lääkärikeskus Aava Oy, they came from different subsidiaries, which is all right for this research.

4.5.4.2 Survey question No.2

With this question the author wanted to know the size of the respective private health care center, judging by the number of its subsidiaries. This information is important for further marketing approach.

2. Kuinka monta toimipistettä yrityksellä on Suomessa? (12 vastausta)

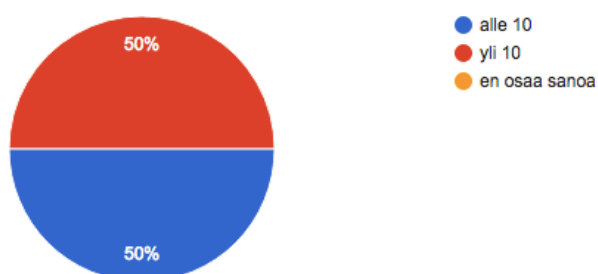


Figure 12: Survey question No. 2

Half of the answers came from big companies with more than 10 subsidiaries and the other half from smaller companies with less than 10 subsidiaries. This proportion means an adequate representation of each size of company for this research.

4.5.4.3 Survey question No. 3

With this question the author intended to find out who is generally responsible for answering survey questionnaires and, subsequently, could be approached for further market research.



Figure 13: Survey question No. 3

Half of the respondents were in the highest position in the company, i.e. managing directors. Surprisingly, only one answer came from the marketing director. Unfortunately, over 40% have answered “other” without specifying who. This shows that the design of this question was suboptimal.

4.5.4.4 Survey question No. 4

With this question the author intended to find out who makes decisions regarding office interior design and, subsequently, could be approached for marketing.



Figure 14: Survey question No. 4

Nearly 60% of the respondents answered that company's headquarters are decision makers regarding office interior design. Only one has answered that each subsidiary is responsible for this by itself. This is good news for the author, since she can concentrate sales and marketing activities to the key deciders in the headquarters. On the other hand, this could mean that there is no market for "a thousand words" artwork products, because of strict policy regarding corporate identity.

4.5.4.5 Survey question No. 5

With this question the author intended to find out who is directly responsible for office interior design at the respective subsidiary and, subsequently, could be approached for sales and marketing.

5. Kuka on vastuussa Teidän työpaikan sisustamisesta? (12 vastausta)

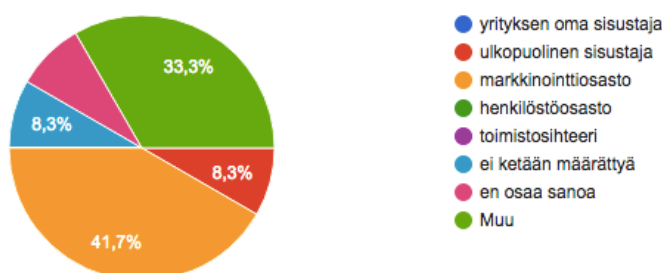


Figure 15: Survey question No. 5

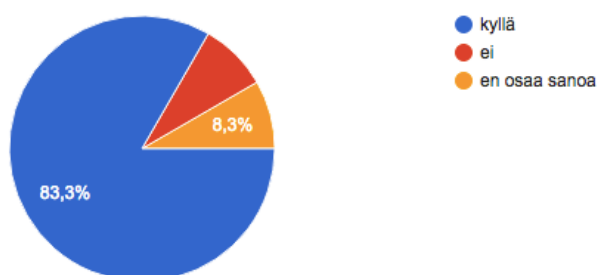
Over 40% of answers were that the marketing department is responsible for office interior design. One company has their own interior designer. Only one answered that they use professional interior designers from outside. Unfortunately, over 30% have answered "other" without specifying who. This shows that the design of this question was suboptimal. Analysing the answers to this question can be said that there are different responsible units thinkable, therefore each company would need to be contacted before any sales and marketing activity.

4.5.4.6 Survey question No. 6

With this question the author wanted to find out the role of interior design companies in the market of private healthcare centers.

6. Onko toimipisteenne koskaan käyttänyt sisustusyriyksen palveluita?

(12 vastausta)



Jos vastasitte "kyllä", haluaisitteko kertoa mikä sisustusyritys? (6 vastausta)

| |
|--|
| Useita ei |
| En |
| Pen & Hammar, My Degerth |
| En muista nimeä |
| Martela, Maricken, lukuisia muita..... |
| en |

Figure 16: Survey question No. 6

Vast majority of healthcare centres (over 83%) has used the services of an interior design company. This means that deciders and/or gatekeepers for “a thousand words” services could be found there. The author will have to contact these firms for possible co-operation. From the answers to the open-ended part of the question the author got to know some company names already.

4.5.4.7 Survey question No.7

This question was aiming at getting to know the level of awareness how positive working environment influences the general wellbeing at working place.

7. Miten tärkeä on Teistä positiivinen työympäristö henkilöstön työhyvinvointiin?

(12 vastausta)

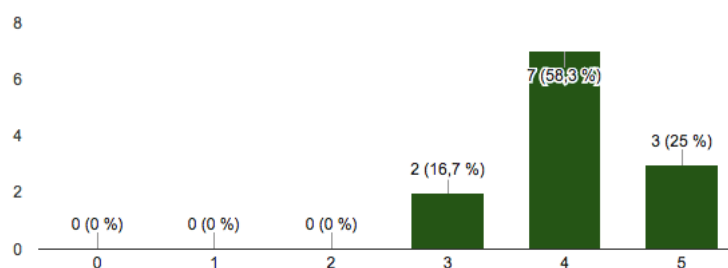


Figure 17: Survey question No. 7

As expected, the vast majority (over 83%) answered that positive working environment is “important” or “very important”.

4.5.4.8 Survey question No. 8

With this question the author wanted to find out the role of office interior design in creating a positive working environment.

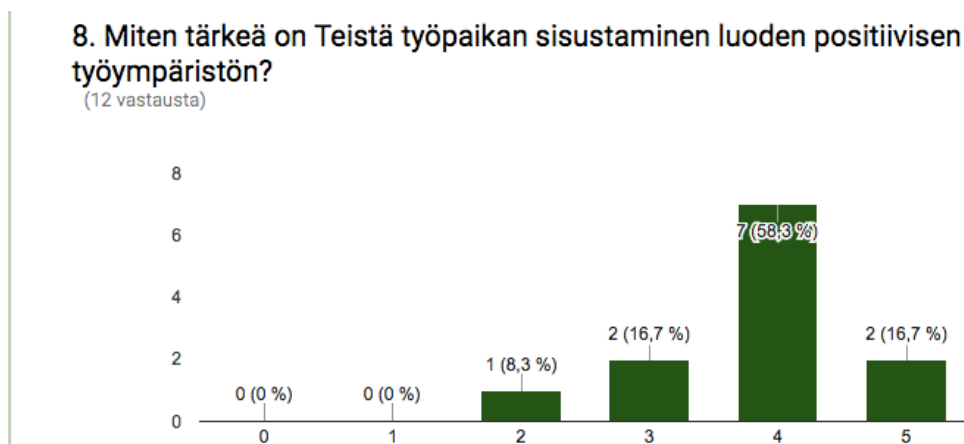


Figure 18: Survey question No. 8

Again, not surprisingly, however with less percentages (75%) have answered that it is “important” or “very important”.

4.5.4.9 Survey question No.9

With this question the author wanted to find out the role of office interior design for company’s clients/customers.

9. Miten tärkeä on Teistä työpaikan sisustaminen asiakkaille? (12 vastausta)

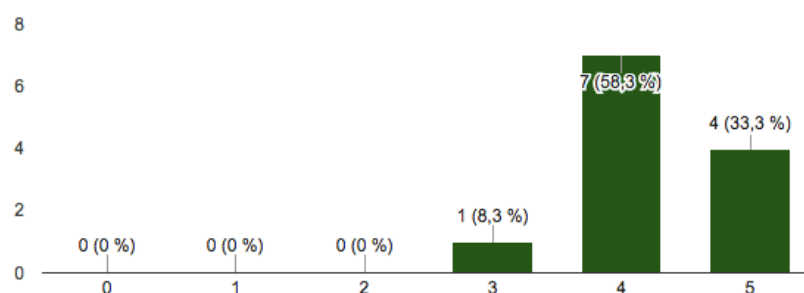


Figure 19: Survey question No. 9

The vast majority, 11 respondents out of 12, answered that it is “important” or “very important”. This is good news for “a thousand words” because the business idea is to decorate waiting rooms and public spaces.

4.5.4.10 Survey question No.10

With this question the author wanted to find out the role of office interior design for company's business partners.

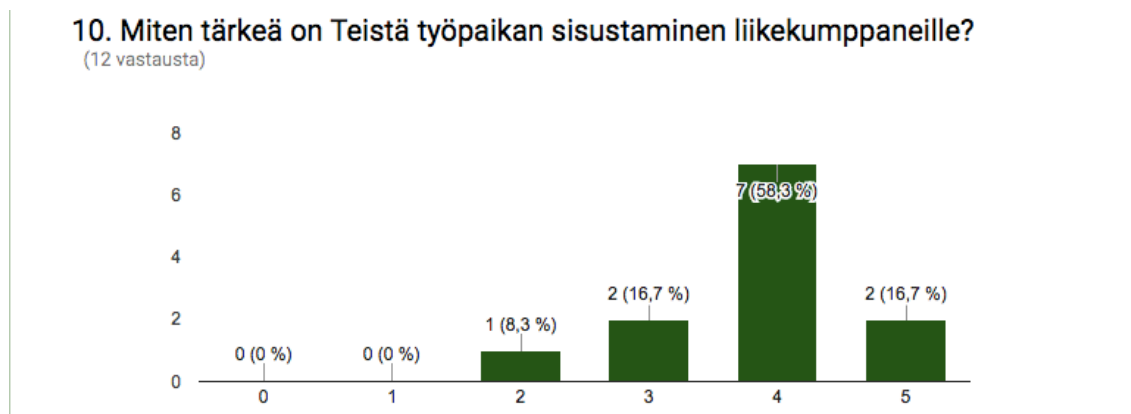


Figure 20: Survey question No. 10

People consider office decoration less important for business clients than for customers, 75% compared to 91,6%. However, this percentage number is very high, which is still good news for “a thousand words”.

4.5.4.11 Survey question No. 11

With the following question the author wanted to get to know the yearly budget for office interior design in the respective company.

11. Kuinka paljon toimipisteenne sijoittaa työpaikan sisustamiseen vuosittain?

(12 vastausta)

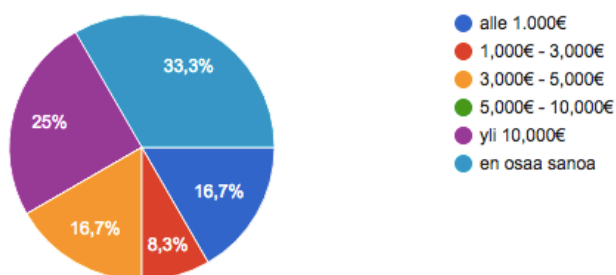


Figure 21: Survey question No. 11

The answers to this question show that there are potentially budget means for creating a niche for “a thousand words”.

4.5.4.12 Survey question No. 12

With this question the author wanted to get to know the portion pictures and paintings take in the yearly budget for office interior design in the respective company.



Figure 22: Survey question No. 12

The answers show that there is not a lot of yearly budget means assigned for picture decoration. This means a challenge for sales and marketing activities of “a thousand words”.

4.5.4.13 Survey question No. 13

This question was about finding out the best practices regarding the frequency of office interior design exchange.

13. Kuinka usein toimipisteenne sisutaminen uusitaan? (12 vastausta)

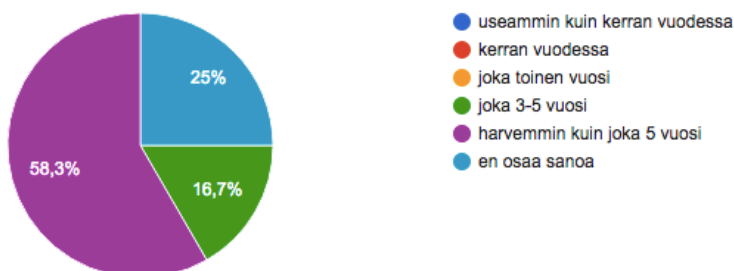


Figure 23: Survey question No. 13

The answers show that the office interior design is not exchanged very often, 75% answered every 3 years and more seldom. This could mean good news for “a thousand words”, because of available wall space for the pictures.

4.5.4.14 Survey question No. 14

This question was about finding out the best practices in the offices regarding the frequency of picture decoration exchange.

14. Kuinka usein toimipisteenne maalaukset ja muut kuvat uusitaan?

(12 vastausta)

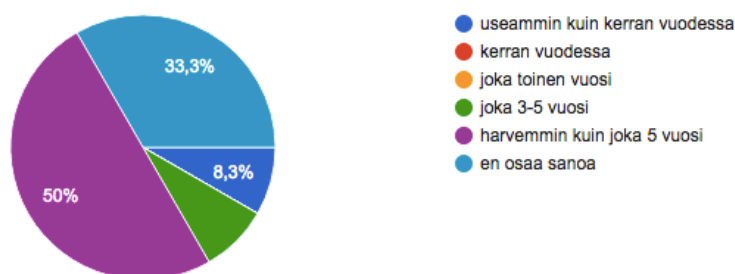


Figure 24: Survey question No. 14

The answers show that the pictures are not exchanged very often, over 58% answered every 3 years and more seldom. Only one healthcare centre renews the pictures more than once per year. A large portion of respondents could not answer this question, possibly due to the fact of not paying attention to it. This means that probably “a thousand words” will need to raise awareness about its service offer in this respect, i.e. underline the benefits of quarterly pictures exchange for the company.

4.5.4.15 Survey question No. 15

The last question was an open-ended one, it gave the participants the opportunity to add information. The author was pleasantly surprised that half of the participants chose to do so.

15. Vapaa sana koskien toimipisteen sisustamista, erityisesti maalauksia ja muita kuvia käyttäen.

(6 vastausta)

Lääkäriasemalla on 3kk välein vaihtuva taidenäyttely. Eli odotustilojen seinät ovat erinäköiset muutaman kk välein

Toimipisteissä ei ole maalauksia, vaan yhdenmukaiset, brändin mukaiset valokuvataulut

Meillä on käytössä omat brändikuvat, joista on tehty kanvastaulut toimipisteiden seinille. Muita tauluja tai maalauksia ei ole lupaa käyttää. Meillä on brandbookissa määritelty brändivärit, jotka otetaan huomioon sisustuksessa.

Käytämme vaihtuvaa valokuvanäyttelyä. Se tuo vaihtelua ja toisaalta antaa kuvaajille tilaisuuden saada työnsä esille.

Harvoin on resursseja sellaisten hankintaan

Yrityksen pitkän historian johdosta, yrityksellä on ollut maalauksia ja muita taideteoksia esillä erilaisissa tiloissa.

Figure 25: Survey question No. 15

From these answers the author got to know that the general idea of having an exhibition in the office premises is not new and that the quarterly picture exchange seems to be known, too. On the other hand, there are offices that offer no market space for artwork because they display only company's own marketing material. Both is important information for sales and marketing activities of "a thousand words".

4.5.5 Answers to quantitative market research's questions

The result of the quantitative research with business clients is presented in form of answers to this market research's question and sub-questions in the table below:

| Question | Answer |
|---|---|
| Are pictures considered an important part of office decoration that contributes to positive work environment? | No clear answer |
| Sub-question | |
| How often are pictures being exchanged? | Every 3 years and more seldom (over 58%) 25% did not know the answer |
| What is the budget for this? | 41,7% (5 answers) - under 1000€; 25% (3 answers) - 1000€-3000€ 25% (3 answers) - did not know the answer 8,3% (1 answer) - 3000€-5000€ |
| Which department is responsible for office decoration? | Different departments can be responsible, 41,7% marketing unit |

Table 10: Answers to quantitative market research's questions

It was challenging for the author to find a precise answer to the research question. This means either that the survey design was suboptimal because the quantitative data could not be interpreted easily or that the research question formulation failed.

Unfortunately, the author was not able to reach her additional goal of finding a prospective healthcare centre to target for direct selling and concierge MVP. This will be her priority business activity in winter 2017.

4.5.6 Reliability of this market research project

Quantitative data can only be considered reliable, if the sample size is suitable (Ng & Coakes 2014, 156). According to Meier (2000, 148) commercial market researchers use samples of several hundred without considering them "very large samples", Ng and Coakes (2014, 90)

state that “Most universities suggest ... a minimum of 50-70 participants ... for validity of a survey research study”. Since the sample size of the present research project was very small with only 12 respondents, and the author did not test the data reliability with a standard test, e.g. Cronbach’s Alpha (Ng & Coakes 2014, 148), the results of this survey cannot be regarded as sound.

4.6 Interim findings: changes to the initial business idea

The information gained by the market research with both customer groups led to following changes of the initial business idea, which were reflected among others in the revised BMC (Appendix 10).

1. Not only photography art should be included in the business idea, another modern reproducible form of art such as digital paintings/digital art, too.
2. It is not feasible to work with single copies of pictures. The artists object to that and there is also otherwise no need for it, since limited editions of 50-75 copies are considered small in this field of business (Lumas).
3. The agent fee for helping to promote artists’ services and selling their pictures should be 15% instead of 10% mentioned in the initial business idea description (Appendix 1).
4. Art auctions after the ending of the leasing period are not so interesting for artists, they are more concerned with what is happening to their pictures during the leasing period. Therefore, presentations of the business idea should not focus on this aspect too much.
5. The social aspect of the business idea is not essential for older artists’ and business clients’ co-operation. Therefore, it does not need to be included in the business idea presentations such as e.g. elevator pitch, unless the audience consists of younger artists.
6. Since not all young artists own a high-quality camera, a side business idea, respectively an additional go-to-market and marketing strategy, could be to apply for grants from foundations supporting art projects, lend a professional camera to young artists and arrange contests.
7. Interior design companies are possible co-operation partners.

5 Financial planning, risk management and go-to-market strategy

This chapter is dedicated to financial planning regarding the case start-up “a thousand words”, its go-to-market strategy and risk management of this venture. These terms are self-explanatory to the greatest possible extent and their relevance for planning a business venture is evident.

The business model of “a thousand words” does not require a lot of (financial) investment upfront, because the most expensive element, i.e. printing out and framing, will happen after the art leasing packages have been ordered and paid. The intended minimal duration of a leasing contract is one year, i.e. four leasing packages that are being exchanged on a quarterly basis.

The author has found an investor to start pivoting, i.e. testing the idea with business clients and adjusting it to the market needs (see above 2.2.2 lean start-up). This investor is her business partner, who will later take care of sales and marketing in Finland. The financial goal at this stage is “to earn 1€ and demonstrate that the payment circle functions” (Ylälahti 2015, Ylälahti 2016). After this is accomplished, the author and her business partner will aim at securing further financial means to scale the business. They plan to approach e.g. such first round investors as “business angels” (Barrel et al. 2015, 11, 132).

There are different types of business funding. The two main ways of getting external capital are either taking a loan or giving away equity (Barrel et al. 2015, 76; Barringer & Ireland 2010, 346). Loan financing means that one borrows money and then pays back the debt with interest (Barrel et al. 2015, 76; Barringer & Ireland 2010, 346). While giving away equity in exchange to investment means “selling a stake in the ownership of the business” (Barrel et al. 2015, 76), so that the investor becomes a co-owner. Both business partners of “a thousand words” would prefer debt financing over equity funding. Since the business model implies fast cash flow, it qualifies for a Finnvera loan (Finnvera 2016). This is a very attractive state backed loan, where the entrepreneur carries only 25% risk in case of insolvency.

The biggest investment for “a thousand words” will be what Barringer and Ireland (2010, 342) call “sweat equity”, i.e. author’s time and effort that she puts into the company. This type of investment should not be disregarded but rather taken into account when reflecting whether the business venture is feasible and worth pursuing. Time commitment, in particular, is crucial and according to O’Berry (2007, 20-21) should be written down to keep track of it. The most important financial strategy of “a thousand words” will be bootstrapping, i.e. being resourceful at avoiding everything that requires financial investment as much as possible (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 344-345). Examples of applied bootstrapping are hiring a trainee to create the MVP for “a thousand words” and spending no money for marketing (see below 8. Marketing strategy).

Since the business concept of “a thousand words” does not require a lot of money investment upfront, the risk management at this point is easy. Author’s business partner is aware of the fact that there is no guaranty for his financial investment to get paid off.

The author and her business partner have agreed on the following go-to-market strategy for “a thousand words”. The kick-off will be in form of direct sales to a promising group of business clients. The author and her business partner have decided to target Finnish private health care centres first. Additionally, market access through cooperation with interior design architects is thinkable. Franchising would be an appropriate scaling model for later business development stages.

After the market research with the artists and as a result of working with her mentor Tuulikki Juusela (Juusela 2016), the author got an additional funding and go-to-market idea. It could be possible to get grants from foundations supporting art projects, arrange contests and start running “a thousand words” like that.

The biggest money-worth capital of “a thousand words” will be the pictures data base, which is depending entirely on networking and having good relationships with the photography and digital artists. Therefore, in author’s opinion, worrying about the financial capital alone would not suffice.

6 Social capital

This section deals with the non-financial capital and the intangible assets of “a thousand words”.

There are many various definitions of the term social capital (Claridge 2004). The definition that has been used by The World Bank, the OECD and other international organizations is following: „Networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate cooperation within or among groups“ (OECD 2001, 41).

6.1 Networking

Since the main capital of “a thousand words” will be its picture database, it is evident that good contacts to photographers and digital artists are key to company’s success. Therefore, the importance of successful networking could not be over-emphasized. Networking as a vital skill for every entrepreneur was covered by Hobson (2016) in a Future StartUp’s class lecture during a session planned by the author on 17 February 2016. Barrel et al. (2015, 141) stress the “value of networking and building connections” for the purposes of fundraising and approaching investors.

Visiting start-up events (see above 3.1 Entrepreneurship environment in Finland in general) and becoming a member of organisations focusing entrepreneurship, e.g. Laurea ES, is a convenient way of networking with like-minded people. Participation in business idea

contests, e.g. Pitch&Beer, is a great channel not only for marketing but also for networking. Of course, online networking e.g. on the Social Media platforms is not to be neglected. O'Berry (2007, 127-133) provides good guidelines to online and face-to face networking.

The author was accepted as a mentee to the Entry Point 2016 mentoring programme by Helsingin seudun kauppakamarin Chamber of Multicultural Enterprises (COME) in September 2016. Being active in this programme turned out to be very rewarding, not least because of author's mentor Tuulikki Juusela (Juusela 2016), who is widely known as "networking grandma". Apart from being essential and rewarding, professional networking turned out to be very time-consuming and it requires a lot of energy, too.

Auhtor's mentor Tuulikki Juusela says that people underestimate networking in terms of its duration and time-consumption. Networking is not just visiting events and exchanging business cards, this is merely the very first step. The essence of networking is the long-term win-win cooperation between the people based on mutual respect and trust. "I scratch your back and you scratch mine" as Tuulikki Juusela expressed it.

6.2 Team

In author's understanding of the definition above, social capital of an organisation is built of and by the people who work in it and the people they (net)work with. Not surprisingly therefore, Timmons et al. (2004, 21) say that the "team is the key ingredient for success" of a company.

According to Maurya (2012, 58) one should start a venture with a team that is able to cover the areas of development, design and marketing. Timmons et al. (2004, 104) speak of two to five key people, who are flexible and willing to multitask. Team composition of "a thousand words" went as follows. First, the author got a business partner on board, who will cover sales and marketing in Finland. Then a BIT trainee temporarily joined the team to develop the company's website prototype. Last but not least, the author was fortunate to get two experienced mentors on board: Sabine Martin (Martin 2016) and Tuulikki Juusela (Juusela 2016), who have agreed to help the venture with their expertise and network. The team is still missing a member to cover the "design" aspect properly. It will be author's task for the year 2017 to find such a person for "a thousand words".

7 Business pitching

There are numerous ways of marketing one's business idea. However, since the "essence of marketing is minimising the difference between what you say and what your audience hears"

(Barrel et al. 2015, 108), this section is primarily dedicated to the verbal presentation of business ideas, focusing on the (elevator) pitch as a marketing tool.

7.1 Types of business pitches

There are different types of business pitches, distinguished essentially by their length to serve different needs.

7.1.1 Short summary

The shortest kind of pitch lasts only for up to ten seconds and is a summary of the business idea described in a sentence or two (Maisala 2016).

7.1.2 Elevator pitch

The classic elevator pitch is “a brief, carefully constructed statement that outlines the merits of a business opportunity” (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 347). The name derives from the idea that an entrepreneur meets a potential investor by chance in an elevator and has only the time available that it takes to get to the right floor in order to explain the essence of the business venture to a stranger (Barrel et al. 2015, 131, 137; Barringer & Ireland 2010, 347). This type of carefully prepared and well-rehearsed speech is also described as “the spoken version of the executive summary” of the business plan (Barrel et al. 2015, 107).

There is no consensus as to how long an elevator pitch should last. According to Maisala (2016) it takes 30-60 seconds, whereas Barringer and Ireland (2010, 347) suggest the length of about 45 seconds to two minutes. Barrel et al. (2015, 107) first vaguely mention “a couple of minutes”, but then agree to the two-minute upper limit (Barrel et al. 2015, 142).

7.1.3 Pitch

The full live pitch is a longer presentation of the business idea that lasts about five to 15 minutes according to Barrel et al. (2015, 107). Whereas Maisala (2016) calls this “a short presentation” and calculates five to ten minutes for it.

7.1.4 Full presentation

A full business presentation is suitable for being handed out as well as verbally presented, and lasts for 15-20 minutes (Maisala 2016). Kawasaki (2015) agrees, that one should not talk for longer than 20 minutes and rather use the spare time to answer questions from the audience, while referring to this type of presentation as “pitch”.

The author sees no point in splitting hairs and trying to figure out precise definitions of various verbal presentation types. The most important matter in this respect is to know exactly how much time one has available to present the business idea and to prepare for this time frame.

7.2 Pitch's purpose

In contrast, considerations regarding the business pitch's objectives are crucial. The ultimate purpose of the pitch is tightly connected with the targeted audience and is very likely to determine such essential elements as the structure, form and tone of both verbal and graphic presentation. The pitch's assessment criteria are also determined by the purpose.

7.2.1 Fundraising

Mostly, the business pitch is considered to be aimed at attracting investors and raising funds for the Start Up (Barrel et al. 2015, 131; Barringer & Ireland 2010, 346). This view is reflected in the pitch judging criteria (Appendices 5 and 6) that focus a lot of attention on the coverage of the financial side of the business idea, i.e. presenting figures and numbers. The goal of the pitch is, accordingly, an appointment meeting with the potential investors.

7.2.2 Networking and marketing

In author's opinion, there is a lot more that could be accomplished by the means of a business pitch.

Firstly, there is no reason not to classify raising funds from such early investors as friends and family (Barringer & Ireland 2010, 344) as a business pitch, even though it will likely appear in a different form than a pitch to strangers. This kind of pitch would be targeted at raising interest, sympathy, or both with the readiness to help out financially rather than to invest in a traditional sense.

Secondly, according to Maisala (2016) as well as Bayley and Mavity (2008, 79) there are numerous types of pitching situations in life, so that essentially every persuasive talk or presentation, such as e.g. a job interview, qualify to be called a pitch even if they do not aim at getting funds. Therefore Maisala (2016) defines business pitching as "A way to quickly present your business proposal to potential clients, investors, new recruits, partners, support organizations etc."

The author agrees with this wider understanding of the term. The goal of an early-stage Start Up pitch should be set first and foremost at growing one's professional network rather than

raising money, because, in author's opinion, Start Ups need mentors more than financial means in the beginning. Maisala (2016), too, in his lecture on 4 April 2016 said that he considers "pitching for a business card" to be a sensible approach for Start Ups. Maisala (2016) also presents his own assessment criteria that appeal to the author more than the Dragons Den's at CVC or Pitch&Beer's (Appendices 5 and 6) due to their openness regarding the pitch's purpose and audience.

Last but not least, pitching is an excellent channel for marketing the business idea to potential cooperation partners, such as e.g. team members, mentors, and even customers. After her pitching presentations the author was on a regular basis approached by photographers, digital artists or their friends, who showed interest in "a thousand words".

7.2.3 Feedback on the idea

In author's opinion that was also given in an interview after a pitching event (Laurea 2016), it is generally important to talk about one's business idea with others. This prevents a lot of mistakes deriving from the fact that one is biased towards own creations that took a lot of time and effort to develop. It is important to listen to other people's comments and embrace constructive criticism.

Pitching her business idea as often as possible on various occasions was very beneficial for the author not only in terms of developing her presentation skills. Through feedback received on the idea, the author was able to develop the concept of "a thousand words" further and discover new business opportunities that she did not consider before.

7.3 Criteria for successful pitch

Tightly connected to the purpose of the pitch is the question of what should a good business pitch sound and look like. The criteria of a successful pitching presentation can be divided in two main areas: content and delivery.

7.3.1 Content

The content of a pitching presentation depends on various factors, most important being such as the already mentioned purpose, the targeted audience and the available time frame. Especially due to the fact that the presentation is held "against an unforgiving clock" (Barrel et al. 2015, 135), it is essential to plan and practise one's pitch very well. The key decision in terms of content is which details of the business idea to highlight and what information to leave out (Barrel et al. 2015, 136).

Maisala (2016) claims that it is only possible to convey two to four main messages within the time frame of two to three minutes and offers a general content guideline for an elevator pitch, which he calls the “NABC Model”. Being an acronym for need, approach, benefits, and competition, this model implies that a successful pitch should cover these four core elements. First, the need of customers and market is named. Then the approach chosen to satisfy this need, i.e. solve the concrete problem, is described. Thirdly, the benefits for the customers are highlighted. Finally, the competitive advantage is addressed by explaining why and how the presented solution is better than the competitors’ approach.

It is imperative that the pitch offers a logical flow of information presented in a coherent narrative that is easy to follow. In order to avoid one of the most common mistakes of “Assuming that your listeners intuitively understand the magic” (Barrel et al. 2015, 133), Maisala (2016) recommends the so-called (grand)mother test. To pass this test the presentation must be so clear that one’s (grand)mother could follow it without any difficulty. However, the accuracy of such a test is highly doubtful, because (grand)mothers are likely to be delighted about anything their (grand)children present and therefore provide them with “false positives” (Fitzpatrick 2011). Albeit, according to Fitzpatrick (2011), such faulty data that seems to validate one’s business idea could come from any other source as well. For him the key lies in the type of question and not in the person, who is asked it (Fitzpatrick 2011).

Being aware of this common pitfall of receiving polite rather than honest answers, the authors recommends to practise business pitches with critical friends (Grinberg 2016b). By making clear that solely criticism, i.e. pointing out the problematic and unclear points would be appreciated as valuable contribution, the author is usually able to get candid feedback on her business idea in general and her current presentation specifically.

7.3.2 Delivery

Even though content is the key aspect, the impact that delivery has on the audience should not be underestimated.

7.3.2.1 General aspects

There is a consensus that a pitch should be presented in a vivid and engaging manner in order to awaken/maintain the audience’s interest (Barrel et al. 2015, 133-134, 135; Maisala 2016; Appendix 6: Pitch&Beer feedback from judges). In addition to displayed enthusiasm there are such general aspects of personal impact as e.g. looking and sounding the part to be taken into account (Appendix 5: Dragons den judging criteria).

Marginally, there can be found recommendations regarding the performance as such, e.g. "make eye contact", "move around", "don't read the script", "slow down and pause for emphasis" (Maisala 2016). Barrel et al. (2015, 135) advises the pitchers "to speak in plain English, in the first person" and like Maisala (2016) also warns "that speaking is not the same as reading a report out loud". Bayley and Mavity (2008, 109) go further and suggest that pitch notes should be burnt after being rehearsed, since "you are *pitching*, not reading out loud".

However, the author found that while there is typically sufficient information about the pitch's content provided, there is not enough support regarding presentation performance given to the students, i.e. the latter are being told what (not) to do, but not explained how to apply or avoid a certain procedure. The author aimed to close this gap by giving talks focusing on the question of how to become a good public speaker during the spring term 2016. In this context the author would like to refer to her presentations covering the topic of public speaking skills for additional information (Grinberg 2016b, 2016d and 2016e).

7.3.2.2 Storytelling

There are numerous rhetorical devices that can be used when writing and delivering a business pitch. Since covering them thoroughly would go beyond the scope of this research paper, the author will address only storytelling at this point.

Storytelling is a narrative technique used in Service Design for compelling depiction of a new service proposition (Stickdorn & Schneider 2010,198). "Storytelling is often paired with Personas in order to convey deeply resonant insights into user experiences" (Stickdorn & Schneider 2010,198). The approach of telling a story about a Persona using one's product or service in order to achieve an emotional reaction through identification is very popular. Many pitching trainers suggest using this technique in order to vividly demonstrate the business idea.

However, the positive effect of using any rhetorical tool is likely to be diminished by repetition, especially in a context of larger events focusing business pitching. Thus, if everyone else is likely to apply a certain approach in their pitch, it can be advisable to restrain from it and come up with something fresh in order to stick out. In author's opinion, since there are no explicit strict rules that need to be followed when pitching a business idea, one should simply do what works best considering the specifics of the business venture as well as presenter's personal characteristics. In this context the author would also like to refer to her presentations covering the topic of public speaking skills for additional information (Grinberg 2016b, 2016d and 2016e).

7.3.2.3 Visual aids

In general opinion a pitch of any length can be just spoken, i.e. does not necessarily need the visuals to support it (Barrel et al. 2015, 135; Bayley & Mavity 2008, 61). The fact that in business pitches are mostly accompanied by a PowerPoint presentation, whereas e.g. political pitches are always speeches, is according to Bayley and Mavity (2008, 61) just a matter of convention. Barrel et al. (2015, 144) point out that not all investors like PowerPoint and might prefer another types of presentation. In author's experience, however, the more advanced and elaborated the business idea, the more it profits by being additionally illustrated with visual aids, especially if there are figures and calculations involved.

Also, there is a common understanding that a set of beautiful PowerPoint slides does not replace nor equal a good presentation (Maisala 2016). The slides are meant to support the talk and illustrate the idea rather than become a presentation in its own right (Bayley & Mavity 2008, 58-61). This leads to the criteria of a "good" PowerPoint presentation. Barrel et al. (2015, 134) warn of overloaded presentations that contain too much visual material that is difficult to process, also Bayley and Mavity (2008, 60) call for simplicity. According to the latter (Bayley & Mavity 2008, 33-34) individual slides should not be self-contained complete messages but rather "series of pictures" that gain meaning when following in a sequence, accompanying the flow of the talk.

The author agrees with all of the above statements and her PowerPoint presentation was created accordingly (Grinberg 2015c). In it especially the truism 'less is more' was implemented as well as the idea that the slides are not meant to convey the business idea by themselves but rather illustrate the talk. All the more was the author surprised to get to know that the above approach to PowerPoint presentations for business pitches is not universal after all.

When applying to a pitching competition organized by a well-known accelerator in Helsinki in the end of March 2016, the author was asked to "send in her pitch" by the responsible mentor/business coach. After having emailed her PowerPoint presentation to him, the author got the following response: "I was looking at your pitch that you sent to me. I am sorry to say but that is not a real pitch. I would suggest you look at this web page to learn how to make a good pitch". Author's protests against "pitch" being equated with the "PowerPoint presentation" and her offer to send a video recording of her pitch performance were unfortunately left unanswered.

In this way the author got to know that there are pitch deck templates, such as e.g. the above suggested version by Kawasaki (2015), that are used by organizations focusing on Start

Up development, education and funding. Delivering such a standardised pitch deck in compliance with the template is evidently the entrance precondition to a number of business idea pitching competitions.

As much as the author disapproves of this approach and agrees with Bayley and Mavity (2008, 263), who claim that “rigid templates limit the scope of verbal and spatial reasoning”, there is nothing she can do but play by the respective rules of each business idea pitching contest. The author does not doubt the expertise of the pitch deck template creators. However, this solution implies among other things that there is only one purpose to business pitching, i.e. fund raising, a view disproved earlier in this paper.

7.4 Author’s pitching experience

The author was able to gain a lot of public speaking experience due to numerous opportunities to pitch her business idea that were presented to her especially in the course of participant observation (Appendix 2: Learning diary). All together the business pitch for “a thousand words” was presented on following occasions.

7.4.1 Business StartUp course

Business pitching represented one of the most important parts of the Business StartUp course, i.e. there were two compulsory elevator pitches and the final pitching presentation in front of external judges at the Startup Sauna (Laurea 2015). There are video recordings of both compulsory pitches, i.e. the very first presentation of author’s business idea in class (Grinberg 2015a) and pitching in the context of a Pitch&Beer event organized by LaureaES (Grinberg 2015b).

Unfortunately author’s final pitch at the Startup Sauna cannot be demonstrated. This event, however, was one of the most crucial and path-breaking in the process of developing the business idea of “a thousand words”. First of all, the author managed to attract the attention of one of the jury members, a business angel, discussed the idea with him shortly and received his business card. This business angel confirmed author’s opinion of private healthcare centres being the most prospective business client group to start direct sales with and gave the valuable advise to try to find the right person within the customer’s organization, who would see added value in high quality office decoration rather than only the cost factor, i.e. a person from HR rather than from marketing division. Secondly, the author was approached by a fellow student, who provided the idea of including digital paintings in “a thousand words” picture data base in addition to photography. The thought that company’s product portfolio could be widened by other forms of reproducible art than

photography did not occur to the author before. Starting from this point, the author regarded digital artists as potential cooperation partners and clients.

7.4.2 Cambridge Venture Camp

Developing different types of pitches to be able to present one's business idea in varying situations was the most emphasized activity during the CVC 2015. As the program demonstrates (Appendix 3: CVC 2015 program), pitching presentations and training appeared almost daily on the Venture Camp's agenda. The author was able to gather truly invaluable experiences not only regarding public speaking and creation of presentation material, but also in terms of elaboration of the whole business concept. Working out the structure of the pitch, listening to trainers' feedback and incorporating their suggestions for improvement in the presentation, were vital milestones for advancing the business idea.

Already during the first week of the CVC the author managed to get her present business partner on board by "selling" the idea to him. Incidentally, the name "a thousand words" was his idea. In addition to finding a meaningful name for the company, the author was instructed to create visual presentation material with a lot of pictures and examples of photographs to support the pitch and better represent the business concept. The author must admit that creating the visual aids was very challenging for her, since she is not at all skilled in graphic matters. The structure of the presentation was changed substantially after the final pitch workshop, where the author was fortunate to get coached by PuzzlePhone professionals. This last training unit has brought so many important fresh insights that the author needed to work for several more hours in order to incorporate all of them into her pitch.

Unfortunately there is no video recording of the final pitch at the Dragon's Den held on 5 December 2015. The feedback that the author has received from the judges can be seen in Appendix 5: Dragons den judging criteria, 5 December 2015.

7.4.3 Additional pitching opportunities

During the spring term 2016 the author made an effort to use every possible opportunity to pitch about "a thousand words" and practice her public speaking skills.

To begin with, the author presented her business idea pitch during the Future StartUp course session on 17 February 2016 (Grinberg 2016a). Another part of the presentation was dedicated to author's findings as to how to become a good public speaker (Grinberg 2016b). The latter was based on the information gained from an online course on public speaking taken by the author in January 2016 (McGarrity no date) as well as author's personal experiences.

Unfortunately, the planned recording of this event did not work out due to technical difficulties regarding the camera battery.

Furthermore, the author presented “a thousand words” once again at a Pitch&Beer event by LaureaES, meanwhile having joined the Entrepreneurship Society as an active member. This pitch (Grinberg 2016c) resulted in winning the second place in the competition. Judges’ feedback and evaluation can be seen in Appendix 6: Pitch&Beer feedback from judges, 10 March 2016.

Last but not least, the business idea pitch of “a thousand words” was part of a longer presentation given by the author on 4 April 2016 in Service Innovations class. In this talk the author reviews her pitching experiences, gives an account of her pitch’s development process and covers the topic of public speaking as a skill (Grinberg 2016d and Grinberg 2016e).

7.4.4 Pitching judge

In addition to pitching herself, the author was able to gain some experience as a judge for students’ pitching presentations at Laurea. She acted in this capacity on following occasions: first, when assessing students’ final pitches at the Liiketoimintamallit ja yrittäjyys study unit closing event on 12 April 2016, and then at the StartUp courses’ closing events on 27 April 2016 (Laurea 2016) and 16 November 2016. Thus, the author listened to and commented on pitches by students of different disciplines given in English as well as Finnish languages. Apart from being highly educational as well as entertaining, this experience was invaluable for the author regarding her own presentation’s development. Since she was able to put herself in judges’ shoes, the author eventually understood the comments and criticism received during her pitches in the past (Appendices 5 and 6).

7.5 Analysis of pitch’s development

In her presentation on 4 April 2016 the author gives an account of her pitch’s development process and draws conclusions (Grinberg 2016d).

Apart from reflecting the developments of the business idea as such, e.g. including the name “a thousand words” and mentioning the team after it was built, the pitch developed as follows.

Although the author initially planned the sample product, i.e. a photography print, to be the only prop used during the pitching presentations, she recognized the need for visual aid in form of slides in order to better illustrate the business model.

Then the order of the pitch narrative changed, from historical to more focusing on business clients. The author has realized that she needs to start the pitch with the business aspects of office decoration and not the artist view in order to address the added value for paying clients first. When the pitch started with the photographers' needs, many people thought that it is a social enterprise and did not grasp the revenue model.

Consequently, the author was able to formulate the mission for "a thousand words" clearly in one sentence. The line "My mission is to get rid of all ugly office walls in the world by decorating them with customized and periodically changing pieces of digital art and photography" is now used as a summary of the business idea as well as a mission statement in pitching presentations and on company's website (Grinberg & Korotyuk 2016c).

After having gathered experience in judging pitches, there was an important recent development regarding pitch's content. Previously, the author considered the criticism about missing financial information in her pitch not to be constructive, since she was not asking for money. "If I am asking for 0€, what other numbers do you need?" (Grinberg 2016d). Now the author understands the point of criticism that there is no financial planning whatsoever introduced. In the future, the author still will not be able and willing to talk about numbers due to her business partner's veto and her own reservations, but she will cover the finances similar to the way they are represented in this paper.

7.6 Interim findings

The process of developing the pitching presentation for "a thousand words" has led to following conclusions.

Firstly, business pitching is a multifunctional marketing tool for one's business idea that needs to be carefully planned and practised in order to create a positive first impression on potential stakeholders. Secondly, public speaking is an essential skill for entrepreneurs and worth investing time and effort in. Thirdly, creating visual material in form of slides cannot be bypassed. It does not matter whether the author or someone else considers visual aids to be important for a presentation. Many events focusing pitching require a convincing pitch deck as a selection criteria. Therefore, in order not to miss a promising chance of marketing the business idea, it is essential to invest in well-prepared pitch deck slides.

8 Marketing strategy

Apart from participating in as many pitching contests and business idea competitions as possible for being the most promising direct marketing channel, the author and her business partner have determined following marketing strategy.

As already mentioned above in the section about financial planning, bootstrapping will be the general strategy of “a thousand words” for the near future. This implies that there will be no money spent on advertising, public relations campaigns or similar. All marketing actions will be initiated and carried out mostly by the author herself, i.e. backed by sweat equity.

The obvious choice of modern, efficient and free marketing concept for a start-up is the social media marketing (SMM). Social media marketing is “an integral part of 21-st century business” (Felix, Rauschnabel & Hinsch 2016, 1) that offers a holistic framework of different marketing channels (Aaker, Kumar, Leone & Day 2013, 578). This marketing strategy implies win-win marketing with photographers and digital artists, meaning that e.g. their links will appear on the website of “a thousand words” and vice versa.

Word-of-mouth is a powerful personal communication channel used in marketing (Kotler et al. 2008, 708), there exists even a Word-of-Mouth Marketing Assosiation (Aaker et al. 2013, 578). The author will aim at creating a company image for “a thousand words” that generates a lot of positive word-of-mouth (especially electronic word-of-mouth) marketing from customer to customer.

Another marketing approach will be B2B, i.e. business to business marketing. Business markets are far more lucrative than consumer markets (Kotler et al. 2008, 291). Therefore, the selection of the first business customer target group being private health care centres was also made strategically with the B2B marketing approach in mind. Private health care centres have mostly other companies as customers, i.e. the patients who will see the decoration concept of “a thousand words” while waiting for their doctor’s appointment could be deciders or gatekeepers (Kotler et al. 2008, 301) for office decoration in their respective companies.

Last but not least, the author and her business partner will apply what they call “The Body Shop strategy” to marketing, i.e. using such media as e.g. the press for free publicity and promotion. The founder and CEO of The Body Shop, Anita Roddick, believed that investing in traditional advertising only results in wasting time and financial resources while the end-product consequently becomes pricier for the customer. Instead she used free publicity provided by the press, to which she always kept good contact by giving a lot of interviews (Backlund 2015). Aside from the discussion whether traditional advertising is suitable for modern business forms, in author’s opinion, it is clearly not practical for start-ups due to high financial investments required. The team of “a thousand words” intends to keep high profile in the general press, e.g. Finnish daily papers, in order to create positive publicity. The goal is to develop a comprehensive PR strategy for later branding.

9 Minimum viable product

In order to be able to test the business idea of “a thousand words” on the market with the customer groups, both business clients and artists, it was necessary to materialize the idea in some way, i.e. make it tangible, possible to demonstrate also beyond the scope of a business pitch and get customers’ feedback.

9.1 Definition

The term used to describe such a test materialization of a business idea is minimum viable product (MVP). According to Ries (2011, 294) this term “has been in use since at least 2000 as part of various approaches to product development”. By now MVP has become “one of the most important lean startup techniques” (Ries 2009).

There are several definitions of MVP with differences as to the requirements on the idea materialization level. Ries (2009) provides the widest description, which reads “the minimum viable product is that version of a new product which allows a team to collect the maximum amount of validated learning about customers with the least effort”. Later in his book Ries (2011, 294) has generalized the definition even more and used the term MVP to depict “any version of a product that can begin the process of learning, using the Build-Measure-Learn feedback loop”.

Maurya (no date) criticizes that according to Ries’s definition also market research measures, such as e.g. customer interviews, would qualify as MVP and postulates a stricter definition to account for the component word “product”. According to Maurya (no date) “a minimum viable product is the smallest thing you can build that delivers customer value (and as a bonus captures some of that value back)”.

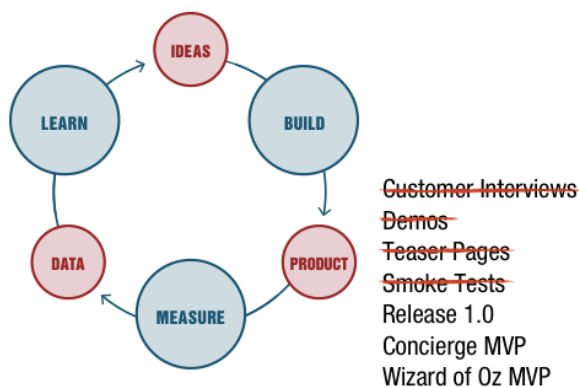


Figure 26: Minimum viable product
(Maurya no date)

Blank (2010a), who uses the term “minimum feature set” as congruent with MVP, emphasizes that it is not the goal to make all potential customers like one’s MVP but rather to sell the first version of the product to those “early visionary customers”, who will ultimately help develop it further to fit broader market requirements.

As both MVPs created for “a thousand words” meet the requirements of the stricter definition, there is no need to argue for this point.

9.2 Two MVPs for “a thousand words”

Since the business idea of “a thousand words” involves both, a conventional product in form of printed out and framed pictures and a service in form of a website, where these pictures can be ordered, the author decided to invest in two MVPs, i.e. respectively the product and the service one. Also the fact that there are two different customer groups, i.e. the artists providing their pictures in exchange for exposure and paying business clients, was taken into account when creating the MVPs.

9.2.1 Product MVP

In order to be able to demonstrate to potential business clients what a picture by “a thousand words” could look like, the author purchased two photographs by one of her favourite artists and ordered them to be printed out in a sample size 45x80 cm and set under respectively acrylic glass and matt acrylics. These pictures were then used as visual aids during author’s business pitches, such as the pitch during the Pitch&Beer event on 22 October 2015 (Grinberg 2015c) and the final pitch during the Finnish CVC week on 13 November 2015 (Appendix 3: CVC 2015 program). The main intention on this stage of idea development was to stand out in the pitching crowd by presenting an actual product sample while marketing the idea.

However, the implicit intention was also to get people interested in the product by giving them the possibility to personally inspect the picture after the pitch. The author has hoped to get valuable feedback about the quality of the product and its features, e.g. the idea of the frameless frame and different kinds of acrylic glass cover. The Pitch&Beer event, where the product MVP was used for the first time, did not lead to further feedback on the picture due to overall setting and atmosphere. Whereas the final pitch during the Finnish CVC week generated intended reactions and unleashed discussions about the product and its features with other participants. Especially the fact that the picture is not framed in a traditional sense, which makes it easy to fit different (office) environments, and safer acrylic instead of glass finish, were favourably noticed.

Although the product MVP was meant to address paying business clients in the first place, it can also be used when discussing cooperation with artists if they want to know how their pictures will be presented.

This MVP will be used as a product sample when conducting direct sales to business clients in 2017.

9.2.2 Service MVP

Creating the other MVP to materialize the main service component of the business idea, i.e. the company's website for "a thousand words" was a lot more complicated and time-consuming. This project took the author several months and has by far exceeded the estimated time schedule and workload.

9.2.2.1 BIT trainee for support

Due to the fact that neither the author nor her business partner have sufficient knowledge in IT related matters at their command in order to create a prototype of the company's website themselves, a BIT trainee from Laurea UAS had to be hired for this job. It was primarily the author's task to instruct and supervise the trainee throughout the development process. Due to lack of experience with working in IT field, the author thought that her part of the project would be the easier one, since it did not involve coding. However, already at the beginning of the process the author began to realise that her involvement in the actual web design will not be just nominal.

9.2.2.2 Definition and facets of web design

Powell (2002, 15) defines web design as "a multidisciplinary pursuit pertaining to the planning and production of Web sites, including, but not limited to, technical development, information structure, visual design, and networked delivery", and illustrates this rather complex term with the aid of the following figure:

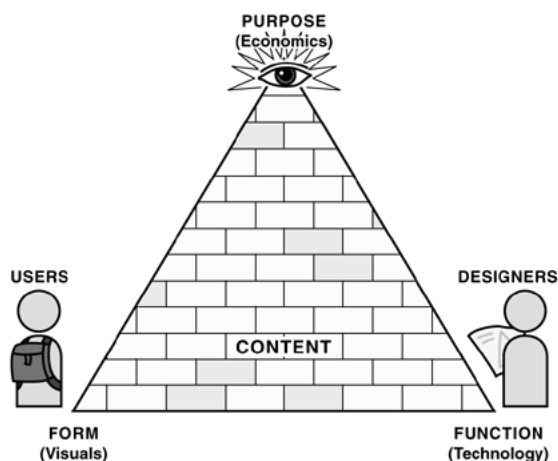


Figure 27: Web pyramids: the facets of Web design (Powell 2002, 5)

According to Powell (2002, 4) there are five main areas of web design, such as content, visuals, technology, delivery and purpose. Due to the prototype nature of the service MVP, the delivery aspect, i.e. the network related issues concerning “the speed and reliability of a site’s delivery” (Powell 2002, 4) were not followed up at all in the course of this project. Out of the remaining four facets of web design, the only area that the author was not involved in was the technology process, i.e. the coding, which was completed solely by the BIT trainee.

9.2.2.3 Author’s contribution

The author was in charge of the entire website content, including not only text but also picture material, which were composed in close cooperation with the photography and digital artists. During March 2016 the author has sent an invitation letter to each potentially interested artist with the information about the current state of business idea development, creation of the website prototype and instructions regarding the pictures (Appendix 7: Letter to artists (MVP)). The written content was created considering and comparing competitors’ websites, especially Lumas (Lumas 2016) and Showcase Room (Showcase Room 2016). Organization and structure, i.e. the inner logic of the site’s content presented a special challenge and was revised significantly for the second mock-up version (see below “Service MVP development”).

The author has made all fundamental decisions about the website’s layout, i.e. all the visuals were discussed and decided upon in close cooperation with the BIT trainee considering what options were technically possible to implement. Here again, the author was using competitors’ websites to explain the intent, which visual effects and techniques she would like to see applied on her own company’s website. The author was also significantly involved in the creation of company’s logo, the decisions about the colour scheme, as well as the

overall graphical appearance of text and picture material including fonts, sizes and placement on the web page.

According to Powell (2002, 4) the purpose, i.e. the economic reason for the site's existence is the most important aspect of web design. The author could not agree more with this statement. The fact that the website of "a thousand words" must be appealing to and addressing both customer groups, i.e. the artists as well as the business clients, was considered by the author in all her decisions made in other web design areas. The challenge was to create a website that balances different interests without compromising the respective essence.

9.2.2.4 Service MVP development

Currently there is (only) a mock-up version of the website for "a thousand words" available and the author is waiting for the site's prototype to be put online*. The difference between a mock-up and a prototype version lies in the interactivity of the latter. Micaleff (2015) describes mock-ups as "static design representations", whereas clickable prototypes "enable users to experience and test their journey through the user interface". Obviously, the author will need the prototype version in order to test her idea with the business clients with the goal of creating an optimal user experience for this customer group.

However, mock-ups should not be neglected as they are a useful tool for early and fast stakeholders involvement in the project's development stages by testing the visuals with them (Micaleff 2015). In the case of "a thousand words" the first mock-up of the website (Grinberg & Korotyuk 2016a) was created because a photographer wanted to know whether there would be a possibility to promote his own business there. Thus, the primary function of this mock-up was not to present the visual elements, such as the logo, colours, typography etc. to a stakeholder, but rather to introduce the overall layout and the organization of the website. For this stakeholder the most important information was that there is an "Artists" section present, where he could put any relevant information about himself including promotion of own business and services. Also the fact that there is "Package of the month" presented on the home page and highlighting the artist's name was appealing to this potential cooperation partner. It is obvious that the first mock-up version was only meant to address the artists and neglected the business clients' perspective.

Compared to that, the second mock-up (Grinberg & Korotyuk 2016b) presents a more elaborated version of the service MVP that balances the interests of both customer groups much better. Apart from purely visual improvements such as centred header and logo, as well as inserted margins, the main progress can be seen in the re-organization of the site and adding text content, i.e. measures that were targeted at the business clients. The homepage includes now information about leasing as business model and links office decoration to

employees' productivity. The section "Themes" was integrated into "Packages" as one of the search criterions for better user experience with less clicks when looking for a pictures leasing package. Instead, the section "Wish list" was introduced focusing on further development of the site regarding customer database. "Your style" section now includes a link that refers to a study conducted by Robert Half International in 2012 according to which work environment rates most crucial for employee satisfaction (Peters 2013), and appeals to business clients not to settle for inexpensive mass production when decorating their offices with pieces of art. The contact section "Talk to us" has been completed with additional service and product ideas, mentioning in particular the possibility of hiring a photography artist for an assignment. This section now also encourages business clients to become co-creative regarding offered services and thereby demonstrates high customer focus and willingness to develop services together.

*The prototype of the website was put online after the writing of this part of the thesis document was completed. It can be found under the reference Grinberg and Korotyuk 2016c.

9.2.2.5 Service MVP usage

This MVP will be used, firstly, when discussing cooperation possibilities with photography and digital artists starting summer 2016. Secondly, it will be applied for direct sales to business clients starting 2017. Alternatively to later, i.e. as a plan B, the service MVP could function as a prototype for the "Concierge MVP" approach, a highly personalized service for company's first paying customer, who will help to accelerate the learning processes and validate the growth model (Ries 2011, 102).

9.3 Interim conclusions

In the course of developing the MVPs the author has made the acquaintance of a field entirely new to her and drew following conclusions. Firstly, the author and her business partner will have to get familiar with digital photography in order to be able to set and examine the technical requirements for the picture data base as well as for the print. Secondly, there will soon be a need for a back end developer, preferably again a trainee, to create a fully interactive prototype that serves B2B marketing needs better, i.e. demonstrates the order and payment procedure. Last but not least, the author will need to learn about web design herself, if not to develop the website further and keep it running, then at least in order to be able to communicate properly with professionals who do.

10 Conclusions, prospects and recommendations

In this last section the author will summarise her findings and conclusions drawn from the entire research and development process. Furthermore, she will introduce the plans for the near future of "a thousand words" and its team. Last but not least, the author will put together some recommendations for entrepreneurship-minded people.

10.1 Conclusions

This research and development project set out to meeting seven objectives. Results and findings are presented in the table below:

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Identify business planning approaches and tools suitable for a small start-up | <p>Approach: lean start-up, Chapter 2.2.2, pages 14-15</p> <p>Tools: 1. diverse business model canvases, particularly the original BMC by Osterwalder.</p> <p>2. Personas as a Service Design tool to create customers archetypes</p> <p>3. Google Forms as an affordable online survey tool without question number restriction</p> |
| 2. Conduct market research for the case start-up | Market research was conducted with both customer groups. Qualitative market research with artists can be found in Chapter 4.4, pages 25-41. Quantitative market research with business clients can be found in Chapter 4.5, pages 41-53. |
| 3. Design and develop a Business Model Canvas (BMC) for the case start-up | There were produced two BMCs. The first BMC, based on the initial business idea, can be found in Appendix 9. The second BMC, developed in due consideration of the market research and idea development, can be found in Appendix 10. |
| 4. Design and develop an elevator pitch presentation for the case start-up | There were produced four elevator pitch presentations. The links to the respective video recordings can be found under References, Reference material by the author, Grinberg A. 2015a, 2015b, 2016c and 2016e (the latter starting min. 5.53). |
| 5. Design a marketing strategy for the case start-up | The developed marketing strategy is presented in Chapter 8, pages 66-67. |

| | |
|--|--|
| 6. Design and develop a minimum viable product (MVP) for the case start-up | The case start-up's MVP is the prototype website, which was developed by the author together with an IT trainee. The links to both mock-up versions and the website can be found under References, Reference material by the author, Grinberg, A. & Korotyuk, A. 2016a, 2016b and 2016c. |
| 7. Identify the most essential skills for start-up entrepreneurs | On the basis of present research and author's personal experience, the most essential skills for a start-up entrepreneur are networking and public speaking skills. These are indispensable for early stages of a business venture. |

Table 11: Results and findings

10.2 Prospects

In the course of carrying out this research and development project, the author realized the need of the following further steps for "a thousand words" and the people behind the idea.

First of all, there is a need for more artists to cooperate with in this venture. The author will dedicate her time to networking and promoting "a thousand words" in the photography and digital art scene starting summer 2016. She will present the prototype website to all interviewees and ask for their feedback. Furthermore, the author will take contact to artists pointed out to her, but whom she could not interview until now due to lack of time.

It is planned to register "a thousand words" as Oy (Ltd) in Finland in 2017. In order to secure all possible support and guidance for the registration procedure, the author has enrolled for the Developing StartUp course at Laurea for the next term. She also hopes to benefit from this course regarding writing the business plan and clearing the possibility of getting financial support from e.g. Finnvera.

Author's business partner will start direct sales with private health care centres in spring 2017. The author will support and assist him especially regarding product testing with clients using the MVP.

In order to secure maximum promotion for "a thousand words" the author will apply to all business idea and pitching contents in the Helsinki Metropolitan area, where she can possibly take part in. One of the main goals is to make it to SLUSH in November 2017.

Last but not least, the author has booked a Web Development course with CareerFoundry starting October 2016 as an attempt to close the gap in her qualification for developing "a thousand words" further.

10.3 Recommendations

In the hope that this research and development paper could be useful for other people, who are in the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey, the author would like to give some recommendations.

First of all, share your business idea with others, preferably with critical friends and professionals like e.g. business angels. Do not be afraid that someone steals it from you, especially if the idea is about a new service and is currently in an early stage of development. Nobody knows all the considerations you have made so far, so that you will always be ahead of the others regarding the idea development. In author's opinion, you have got nothing to lose, but a lot to gain from constructive criticism. Those critics help you developing your business model for free, listen to them.

Invest in your public speaking and presentation skills development. This is the most important marketing channel for a novel idea. Equally important is networking. It is essential that you are proactive and persistent. The easiest way to start networking in your field is to join an organisation of like-minded people. Invest time in finding such an organisation.

Try to find out as early as possible, which skills essential for developing your business you personally are missing. Either make a plan regarding how to acquire these skills yourself or start looking for team members you trust. A mentor will likely be your most valuable team member. Pitch for business cards, not investment in the first place. You need professional guidance more than money in the beginning of your start-up venture.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Initial business idea

Photography Art Leasing

The idea is to lease art photography pictures to offices and public institutions, e.g. city halls, hospitals, restaurants, hotels etc. Since exhibitions are very expensive to carry out, many (unknown) artists are not able to present their work to the public. The rents for presentation rooms are high, but also the substantial prices for print and framing are a cost factor. My company would collect pieces of artwork in a database, print the photographs, frame the pictures and lease them to offices and public institutions. The business clients would purchase a leasing package that can be designed according to their wishes, e.g. an art-package "Seasons of the Year", "Flowers", "Nordic Nature", "Bridges and Roads" etc. Each leasing package consists of a fixed amount of pictures, about ten. The leasing contract runs at least one year. The pictures within an art-package are being changed every quarter of a year, so that the leasing clients get to enjoy new works of art every three months. There will be only one copy of each photography. The artists sign a contract that they are not using, i.e. printing, publishing, presenting, selling etc. the pictures selected for the database for the period of two years. This way it is secured that the companies and public institutions get to see exquisite pieces of art photography rather than a mass product. At the end of the leasing contract there is an art auction organized by my company in co-operation with an art gallery or similar dealer, where the photographs can be obtained. The artists do not have to participate in the auction if they do not wish to, e.g. in case they found a buyer already. The artist decides about the selling price, my company offers financial advice and legal help to the artist. When a piece of art from the database is sold, my company gets a commission about ten per cent from the artist. With my business idea I intend to contribute to such society goals as e.g. inclusion of the elderly. Thus, donating pieces of art to hospitals and retirement homes is an inherent part of my business model. For instance, I plan to exhibit pictures from unrented leasing packages in retirement homes, so that if the elderly people are not able to visit an art exhibition, the latter would come to visit them.

Appendix 2: Learning diary Business Start Up and CVC

| Week No. & Activities | What have I observed and learnt? |
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| <p>Week 38 - Start Up course Kick-off “Cockoo Workout” - writing my learning plan/ learning contract</p> | <p>I was not sure at all whether this course is the right choice for me. Probably because despite always being interested in entrepreneurship and connected to entrepreneurial people, I did not think that running an own company would be something for me. Firstly, I did not believe that I could come up with a feasible business idea. Secondly, I imagined that a successful entrepreneur must know much more about accounting and bookkeeping than I do. Last but not least, I never wanted to have to deal with employees, because I heard so many unfortunate stories by employers that it simply scared me off employing anyone.</p> <p>However, already the kick-off lecture was so inspiring that I decided to stay on the course and give it a try. My main reasons were following: it was possible to participate in all three courses and therefore work on different ideas simultaneously. Since I was torn between two ideas for my thesis it was a good chance to be able to elaborate on both of them. Furthermore, the teachers would not force anyone into a team and underlined the necessity of independent working during the course so that I had a rare opportunity to work on projects that really interested me without compromising neither on the ideas, nor on my personal aspirations regarding discipline, timing and quality.</p> <p>My motivation to take this course was also due to inspiring and motivating guest lecturers. The co-founders of “Cockoo Workout” were very reassuring and supportive. It is from them that I have for the first time realized that nobody needs to be perfect, not even entrepreneurs 😊. By this I mean, that their openly shared story has shown that neither the business idea, nor the entrepreneurs need to be 100% thought through and complete in order to be able to start a successful business. Learning by doing is a more common as well as more sensible approach, already because one needs to learn constantly from one’s customers. This gave me the needed kick to stop thinking how ‘I am nor ready yet’ and just giving my ideas an honest try.</p> <p>Writing my learning plan/learning contract was very helpful in terms of wrapping-up all the positive impulses I got from the first session and setting concrete goals for the course.</p> |
| <p>Week 39 - Methods for Idea</p> | <p>The guest lecturer Tatu Tuohimetsä from “Monkey Business” was great fun, so that I have enjoyed the</p> |

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| <p>Creation “Monkey Business”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - writing my business idea summary - personal coaching with Seppo Luode | <p>session very much. He has prepared an interesting and engaging lecture; I have even learnt that working in a team on a fun project (the marshmallow challenge) can be a blast. Just like speed dating during the last session, it was also a nice way to get to know one’s course mates.</p> <p>Tatu Tuohimetsä spoke about how ideas are generated in a relaxed mode of brain, e.g. in a state of mind just before falling asleep. This made me think of a wonderful book I have read lately that deals exactly with this question, i.e. how does human brain learns and creates new thoughts. “A mind for numbers” by Dr. Barbara Oakley is a book every student and (aspiring) entrepreneur definitely should read! There is also a brilliant MOOC course offered by Coursera, which is based on this book. I have taken this course some months ago and can only highly recommend it to everyone: https://www.coursera.org/learn/learning-how-to-learn.</p> <p>Tatu Tuohimetsä also spoke about how important it is to formulate the right question when looking for the answers to problems. This made me realize that I have often neglected something as simple as this thought! Since I am a big MOOC fan, I have decided to search for a related online course. Sure enough I found a promising looking course on creativity by Dr. Roberta Ness that I will try out as soon as I can: https://www.mooc-list.com/course/reinvent-yourself-unleash-your-creativity-edx.</p> <p>Writing down the summary of my business idea about leasing art photography, which I decided to go with on the Business Start Up course was a good first step for clarifying the idea and deciding on how to present it. Personal coaching session was very reassuring for me, because Seppo Luode regarded my idea as feasible and good to go. I was delighted to hear that the idea is elaborated enough to be presented to others because this is the same idea I wanted to apply for participation in Cambridge Venture Camp with.</p> |
| <p>Week 40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Global/Future Trends - Event: Yrittäjyystiistai - Cambridge Venture Camp application | <p>I was delighted with this week’s programme, because I got very interested in trends and megatrends already last term during Business Models and Entrepreneurship course. The guest lecturer Riikka Siuriainen was very informative, so that I have liked the session all together. The main problem she addressed, i.e. difficulties for Finnish innovators to get funded and supported at home so that they often end up being snatched away by foreign companies and investors, reminded me of an</p> |

event with a related topic “Mitä mättää Suomessa?” that I have visited at Laurea Hyvinkää campus some time in spring this year. It was good to get to know that there are now a lot of start up hubs and other support possibilities for new entrepreneurs at Laurea and outside the university, e.g. Spinno, Tekes, Ultrahack and SLUSH.

By the way, there is a good MOOC course on trends: Analyzing Global Trends for Business and Society <https://www.coursera.org/course/globaltrends>.

This week’s session has offered the first possibility to present our business ideas in front of the course. It was awkward and scary to present one’s (yet unready) idea, but it went well. The main thing (and challenge) for me is not to run away from such tasks but do them over and over again; hoping that at some point the nervousness will go away.

Talking about my business idea in public was a good preparation for the application to participate in the Cambridge Venture Camp that I have submitted this week. While it was easy to send the business idea summary since I have already prepared it for the Business Start Up course, writing a short description and the motivational letter was quite challenging for me. The feedback on my business idea that I have gotten during this week’s session has definitely helped me with the application to the CVC.

This week I have attended the LaureaES event Yrittäjyystiistai for the first time and got to see and enjoy three brilliant speakers at once! I really liked all of them: Sami Heino, Epu Ylälahti and Ali Jahangiri were each great in their own way. The main messages I got from “Groom” founder Sami Heino was that “you are creative when you do not have money” and that a successful business does not have to be based on a pioneering idea, but always means excellent service (“the Groom experience”) and modern marketing, e.g. in SOME. Eeva-Liisa “Epu” Ylälahti is an inspiring business lady, who talked about the importance of being authentic and that “vaatimattomuus ei kaunista!” This was good to hear, since to me understatement is seldom a good idea in (business) life, too. Epu’s entrepreneurial story is an inspiration to all “undecided” entrepreneurial spirits like myself. She has failed several times, never gave up despite of difficulties, and was able to be an entrepreneur and have a happy family life. Ali’s story was quite similar regarding the failures and new beginnings, and he also underlined the importance of authenticity. I liked his sentence “deeds, not thoughts!”

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| <p><u>Week 41</u> - Business Model Canvas - Christel Isberg's talk</p> | <p>Even though I already got to know the Business Model Canvas by Alexander Osterwalder last term during Business Models and Entrepreneurship course, it was good to hear about this important basic tool again and I have learnt new aspects about it. The main point about BMC is its focus on the customer, i.e. when filling in the canvas one should always start with the “customer segment” in the upper right corner. After the “customer segment” one should go over to the “value proposition”, which can be either a “pain relief”, i.e. solve customer’s problems or a “gain provider”, i.e. deliver additional services to the customer. The new magic word I learnt in this context is “co-creation”, i.e. working with one’s potential customers as early as possible! However, since it is impossible to meet the needs of all the potential customers without compromising on the product or service, it is equally important to decide which customer segments to focus on and which ones to ignore.</p> <p>There are also some critics on the BMC because it was made primarily for industrial companies, i.e. production industry. When working in the service industry one needs to emphasize the focus on the customer even more. Therefore the Service Logic in BMC by Katri and Jukka Ojasalo was introduced. However, I feel that I need to get the grip of the generic model first and study the follow-up models afterwards. Therefore, after the lecture I have watched Alexander Osterwalder explaining his BMC “How to Design, Test and Build Business Models” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RzkdJiax6Tw.</p> <p>The guest lecturer’s entrepreneurial story was very interesting. It appealed to me that Christel Isberg is able to run two very different companies at the same time: 2BCn and Showcase Room (www.2BCn.fi; www.shoc.fi) because this is what I plan to do in the future, i.e. running several different companies together with my husband. Since Showcase Room deals with young artists’ work, it was great for me to get to know the competition and benchmark the prices for my business idea.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 42</u> Ill, did not come to class - Artist interview No.1 - Artist interview No.2</p> | <p>This week I unfortunately had to miss the class because I was ill. However, I was actively working on my business idea by interviewing two hobby photographers about it.</p> |

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| <p>- market/field research</p> | <p>Since conducting individual interviews with photographers of various backgrounds in order to get to know their expert opinion about my business idea is one of the main research methods used in my thesis, I took the preparation and planning for the interviews very seriously. If the interviews were “only” means for my internal market research in order to establish whether there will be sufficient supply for my database, I probably would not have bothered with the accurate academic approach, recording, analysis etc. and would have just talked to different photographers about my business idea instead.</p> <p>First of all, I have watched the learning videos from the Research and Methodology course material about the interviews, in order to get the information about the academic requirements of this research method. It was very useful for me and made some aspects of interviewing that I have learnt about before more clearly to me. For instance, I got to know the proper procedure for analyzing an interview that matches academic standards.</p> <p>For the purposes of my research, i.e. interviewing different people about the same rather precise topic, I have decided to go with a structured interview type. In course of elaborating on my business plan I have conducted a number of unofficial and not academic ‘interviews’, i.e. conversations and discussions with artists. Thus I imagined knowing enough of the basic details to be able to create a sensible questionnaire. Creating the questionnaire, however, was not as easy as thought. For although I know each detail about my business idea, it was challenging to try to communicate it to others in form of questions in order to get their artist’s point of view as precisely as possible.</p> <p>Another preparation step was to revise the short summary of my business idea, which made me write some parts of it more clearly. However, I tried not to make the actual text longer by adding explanations, so that the interview partners do not get bored while reading it.</p> <p>Parallel to the preparation activities above, I started looking for possible interview partners. Since I know several (semi-) professional photographers socially, naturally I addressed them first. Fortunately three of them agreed to take their time for an interview with me. ‘Unfortunately’ two of them have informed me that they would rather give their interview in German, so that I had to translate the questionnaire into German language.</p> |
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| | <p>A couple of days before each interview took place I sent the summary of my business idea and the questionnaire to my respective interviewees.</p> <p>Since I am not at all good (nor interested) in technical issues, the recording of the interviews and later saving of the data to my laptop was a critical matter. In order to be on the safe side, I have organized an extra voice-recording device and came to my first interview equipped with three different gadgets to record the interview, i.e. phone, laptop and dictaphone. The recordings went well. With help of a friend of mine I then got the data safely transferred to my laptop's hard disc.</p> <p>The interview results were more reassuring than I have expected, i.e. one of the artists said that she would give her pictures for my database and we agreed upon it per handshake. The other photographer said she was not sure about giving her pictures to me (or in fact showing them to broader public at all) and made a lot of restrictions concerning the locations where her photographs could be exhibited. Since I do not like to work closely with complicated people unless I absolutely have to, I decided against making this artist a business offer.</p> <p>During the weekend I have also conducted some field research in Helsinki. My goal was to find out the market prices for exhibition space in e.g. art galleries as well as the prices for the kind of high quality print that I have planned for my business (frameless print under Plexiglas/acryl glass). The prices were even higher than I have anticipated.</p> <p>At LUOVA (www.luova.fi) that deals with fine art printing, I got an estimated price of 580,00€/print in size 1,5mx1m. At LUOVA gallery, which is situated in the same premises as the printing shop, artists can exhibit their pictures for 2.100,00€/4 weeks rent, incl. insurance, excl. any printing services and putting/arranging pictures on the walls. The last exhibition at LUOVA gallery was "Pitkä tie" by photographer Martti Matilainen (3.9.-30.9.2015). Since then there was no-one asking for the exhibition space.</p> <p>At Huuto gallery (www.galleriahuuto.net), which is situated more centrally and beautifully in Helsinki Uudenmaankatu, the rent costs 1.450,00€/3 weeks and must be booked 1,5 years in advance! It was interesting to see that the current exhibition "Tyttölapsia/Girls" by Kirsti Tuokko at Huuto gallery consisted of "visually layered images painted on Plexiglas". It seems that I</p> |
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| | <p>have chosen the right material for my prints without being aware of it.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 43</u> - writing BMC ready - Pitch presentation in class - Event: Pitch and Beer</p> | <p>This week I have written the Business Model Canvas for my idea ready. It was very helpful for clarifying my idea, especially such questions as distribution channels and key resources. When writing down the key activities, I have realized that I need to start looking for a team member with excellent IT background, who would create the company's homepage and database and keep them updated.</p> <p>Another big topic of this week was pitching. We had our first pitching presentations in class and then at the LaureaES Pitch&Beer event same day. So I ended up holding three pitches on a Tuesday! I have decided to do my pitches both for leasing of sewing machines and art photography with props instead of PowerPoint slides in order to stand out from the crowd. And also because I am not good at making slides ☺. In class I was pitching with a sewing machine in my hands and at the Pitch&Beer with a photography print on Plexiglas. All pitches went well even though I felt very nervous about making them. I already knew that preparation and "doing one's homework" is the key for any good presentation from the Business Communication course last term. I have noticed, however, that "being best prepared" means different thing to different people, i.e. just as the pitch is something very individual, so is the preparation for it. For instance, I cannot make a good presentation when its text was written down into last detail. It only makes me nervous if I miss one word or replace it by another. My recipe for a pitch is to write down some key points, memorize the order in which I want to talk about them and then talk freely. The biggest challenge for me is to stay within the time limits. I guess, as they say "harjoitus tekee mestarin" and I will get better with time. I also have to get familiar with the last Start Up session's materials on business presentations and work thoroughly through them.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 44</u> - Service Design by Anu K. Nousiainen - Business Models by Tuomas Maisala - Event: Entrepreneurs Tuesday - Digi Expo</p> | <p>This week's session has offered the best lecture of the whole course! The co-founder of Futures Fit, Anu Nousiainen, has not only presented her second to none (not even in comparison to the Cambridge lecturers') talk about service design, but offered concrete advice concerning researching value co-creation and market research strategies, which was invaluable for developing my business idea as well as for my thesis process. I have</p> |

learnt so much during this short time. For instance, I have never realized how tightly service design is connected to my favorite topic of trends. It was also comforting to get to know that although the most trends of our time are technical, one does not have to have an IT background in order to be able to research them. The most important part for me personally was about the importance of social impact when doing business. Since my art leasing business idea includes a social dimension, because I truly believe that sustainable business can only be run on a win-win-win principle, it was great to have this view confirmed.

Tuomas Maisala's presentation about Business and Revenue Models for Start Ups was very useful for my thesis process. He has offered a lot of background information in a very structured and understandable way. It was reassuring to hear that leasing is a modern business model and that I was potentially on the right track with my business ideas. I also got to know about the Lean Canvas Model for the first time. I think it will be beneficial for me to use several different canvases for developing my business idea further, even though they are all based on Osterwalder's BMC. I think it could help me to inspect my idea from different angles and make it better this way.

This week's Entrepreneurs Tuesday event with Evon Söderlund, the founder of Huone Events Hotel was one of the worst presentations I have ever heard in my life. I did not understand why the presenter was talking about her private life story for 50 minutes. During the last 10 minutes of her talk that she has dedicated to her entrepreneurship, she failed to describe the business as such! Only after the teacher Sini Setälä has asked Evon to tell what "Huone" actually is, we got to see some pictures of it and got to know about the company in terms of services, staff etc. Then Evon constantly mentioned how good looking she is (which she is) and how difficult it is for a beautiful woman to be taken seriously in the business world. It was downright ridiculous. Then it was mentioned several times that doing business in Finland for foreigners is so hard (which is true), but since Evon's husband and business partner is a Fin, I failed to see the point. I like the idea of "Huone" and Evon Söderlund is surely a power business lady, but she definitely needs to work on her presentation.

During the weekend I have visited the Digi Expo exhibition in Helsinki hoping to do some field research for the photography and printing part of my business

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| | <p>idea. Unfortunately there was nothing interesting for me, i.e. mostly game companies and nothing at all about the print. I ended up at Rajala in Posttitalo asking questions about cameras and memory cards.</p> |
| <p>Week 45 - Idea Generation workshop - started looking for IT team member</p> | <p>This week I took part in the Idea Generation Workshop as part of the Idea Start Up course using a tool by Flanders DC, which was not only great fun but also presented me a useful tool for developing my business idea(s) further. I came to the conclusion that the more different tools I use, the more I go back and forth through different stages of my idea, the better elaborated it gets. This way, I either discover new aspects that I have not thought about before or find new possible solutions for known problems. I found a good article on idea generation and start up skills on the internet: http://www.entrepreneurial-insights.com/18-best-idea-generation-techniques/. I have started looking for the missing IT person for my team and asked a couple of BIT students whether they would be interested to join in. My plan is to find an ambitious BIT student and offer her/him a traineeship placement to develop a prototype platform for my company.</p> |
| <p>Week 46 - Cambridge Venture Camp Finnish week - Event: Entrepreneurs Tuesday</p> | <p>On five days of his week I was participating in the Finnish week of the Cambridge Venture Camp (see program). Needless to say that I have learnt a lot of new things during this intense week. The most important topics for me were the minimum valuable product, go-to-market strategies and product development. Tuukka Ylälahti, the co-founder of Wahwa gave the best lectures of this crash course on entrepreneurship. He has addressed such an unusual and interesting question for me as how to be a successful entrepreneur without having to create a corporation. As I mentioned before, I neither want to have employees nor work in a big company, because I feel that this would limit my personal freedom and give me more headache than benefits. However, almost all the entrepreneurial talks deal exactly with this type of business model, i.e. developing an idea, establishing a company, hiring people, growing the company as fast and as big as possible. In Tuukka Ylälahti I found a successful entrepreneur, who dreads working in corporations for the same reasons that I do, i.e. rigidity, slow response to change and continuous HR issues. His recipe is to develop an idea up to a stage when it is sellable to a corporation, get rid of it and start something new. Thus Wahwa is specializing on high-tech and IT, I do not think</p> |

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| | <p>that this approach is feasible for my business idea. I started thinking about how I could scale my art leasing company once it is running, without hiring staff and came up with something like a franchise business model. However, this idea is not thought through yet.</p> <p>During this CVC week I also got to know new aspects and details of topics that were not entirely new to me, the most important was of course pitching. I have received a lot of useful tips regarding my business idea's presentation and was able to train my pitching skills almost on a daily basis. It was equally very hard and very effective. On my current pitching To Do list is now: finding a company name, creating convincing and expressive slides, becoming more precise in presentation.</p> <p>During this week's Entrepreneurs Tuesday event I have heard the term "serial entrepreneur" from the guest lecturer Ilkka Lavas for the first time in my life. I liked the idea very much and enjoyed listening to Ilkka's approaches to doing business, despite of not liking his presentation as a whole. I simply do not like it when people present many private life details, such as e.g. children's and holiday pictures. I do not only fail to see the point in doing so, this level of exposure actually disturbs me. Probably it is a cultural thing; to me it rather belongs to North America and not to Europe though.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 47</u> Ill, did not come to class - Artist interview No. 3</p> | <p>This week I unfortunately had to miss the class because I was ill.</p> <p>I was working on the PP slides for my pitch, because I have realized that they make my art leasing idea clear to the public, clearer than when I just use a photography print as a prop. I tried to incorporate all the tips regarding the presentation that I got during the previous week. Finding a name for the company has proved to be more difficult than expected. In fact, I could not do it on my own at all. It took several brainstorming attempts with my business partner to come up with a nice name. Our company will be called "a thousand words". We also have started thinking about company logo and CI.</p> <p>My third interview with a photographer has proved to be of a complicated nature. The artist has dismissed my business idea because the artists are not financially involved in the leasing process. The involvement she meant was of course that the artists should earn a percentage of the leasing fees. When I explained that in this case the photographer would have to participate</p> |

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| | <p>also in the printing costs 50/50, she found it “unfair”. I think that if I happen to need a certain type of pictures for my company’s database, I might as well just buy them from the artists for under 50€/file and do not bother with organizing an art auction and other promotion activities for this photographer. It does not seem to be worth it otherwise. For “a thousand words” I will try to find hobby photographers with a computer full of beautiful pictures who are willing to invest in exposure, the chance of making a name in the art scene and getting hired for photo gigs with help of my company.</p> <p>When conducting some online research for competitors this week, I have found such high end expensive photography art dealers as: http://www.saatchiart.com/photography and http://eu.lumas.com. The Corporate Art Service of Lumas http://eu.lumas.com/corporate-art-service/ is closely related to my business idea. However, I still have not found any company that would offer leasing packages, i.e. conceptualized office decoration that is being exchanged periodically. I also believe that I could stay lower in price than the competition, if I could figure out the printing part of the business. For the first time I have realized that I might need a bigger investment for an own printing device, in order to maximize the margin.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 48</u> - Pitch for Idea Start Up - Future Start Up workshop - Artist interview No. 4 - Contract with BIT student for web platform - Event: Yrittäjyystiistai</p> | <p>This week I was doing my second pitch for the sewing machines’ leasing business idea, this time with slides because I draw conclusions and took advice from the previous CVC week.</p> <p>I also have participated in a Future Start Up workshop, which was very interesting and gave me a possibility to get to know interesting people from this course and practice Finnish a little bit.</p> <p>I have conducted my fourth artist’s interview, which went very well up to the point when I have realized that the interviewee does not actually have a professional full-frame camera, which was a prerequisite I used in the interviewed photographers selection. Now I know that it is not enough just to ask: “Do you shoot with a full-frame camera?” but actually need to establish the camera brand, model etc. before each interview.</p> <p>A positive development was signing a traineeship contract with a BIT student, who will develop a prototype platform for my company, which is scheduled to be ready by the end of Mai 2016.</p> <p>Aape Pohjavirta has offered a brilliant talk during this</p> |

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| | <p>week's entrepreneurs Tuesday's event. Even though he was not talking about his own entrepreneurial activities that much, he told in a rhetorically perfect and entertaining manner about the spirit of entrepreneurship and why it is vital for our all future. Aape has painted a gloomy picture of a future world with jobs getting fewer and population growing faster, the rescue in form of jobs creation comes only from entrepreneurs. I liked that he said how easy it is to discourage someone with a new idea, but what it does to our economy and the whole world. Therefore we all should think and act constructively instead of being guided by such feelings as e.g. envy, and support entrepreneurial innovative thinking in and around ourselves. I definitely will read the recommended book "Thinking, Fast and Slow" by Daniel Kahneman to reflect more on this talk's topic.</p> |
| <p>Week 49 - Cambridge Venture Camp English week - Artist interview No. 5</p> | <p>This week I have spent in Cambridge taking part in the English week of the Venture Camp (Program, Appendix 4). On the whole, I have enjoyed all lectures offered there. This week was an even more intensive crash course than the Finnish week of the program. Especially happy I was about hearing Prof. Jack Lang from Raspberry Pi. The most useful lecture for my business idea was about Market Research by Chris Lamaison, the founder of Cambridge Resolution. He gave such brilliant practical advice about effective research methods and offered a complete "recipe" for a four-hour and a ten-days market research, which blew my mind! I will definitely try out this approach in January 2016 when conducting market research with potential business clients of "a thousand words".</p> <p>Gary White, the founder of CBHC offered numerous wise words of advice during his lecture at the "Be your own boss" seminar. He said something very true yet so seldom underlined, that it is much easier to create one's own working place than a business and that therefore most people work IN their businesses instead of working ON them. It is so simple and so brilliant! It is exactly what distinguishes a hard working professional from a hard working entrepreneur, because if a business cannot run without its founder, it is a job place and not an enterprise. I was absolutely delighted by Mr. White putting this central thought so clearly.</p> <p>I will also use the book "Show me the money" co-written and given as a present to CVC participants by Alan Barrel for my thesis, especially the part about valuation and key financial ratios.</p> |

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| | <p>The English week of CVC was a tough boot camp for my pitching skills. After the first presentation, I got the feedback to include examples of pictures I want to use in my database, describe the business process more clearly, say where am I now in the business process and tell what will be my next steps. After having done that, I thought that my pitch is good, the PP slides are fine and that I will not need to “stay up all night to re-write the presentation before the Dragon’s Den” like the organizers kept predicting. Not a bit of it! Friday’s Final Pitch Workshop has brought so many important new insights that I really needed to work for several more hours to incorporate all of them into my pitch. I was finally able to formulate my mission clearly in one sentence. “My mission is to get rid of all the ugly office walls in the world by decorating them with customized and periodically changing pieces of art photography”. I got to know the phrase “fun and frictionless engagement”, which was used to describe my customers’ journey on the company’s web platform. Last but not least, I have eventually realized that I need to start my pitch with the business aspects of office decoration and not the artist / photography part in order to make the whole idea clearer.</p> <p>This week’s interview with a photographer was more than positive. I feel that I have finally found the type of artist that I would like to work with. Needless to say that I was delighted when she said that I could get her pictures for my database. So by now, I have two photographers and hundreds of their pictures ready to be used for the prototype web platform. I also have no doubts as to the supply of art photography in the future, because I know which artists I need to find.</p> |
| <p><u>Week 50</u> - Pitching at Start Up Sauna - Finalizing learning diary</p> | <p>My final pitch at the Start Up Sauna went very well, especially because I have managed to get advice and card from the business angel Tapio Heikkilä. However, I have realised that I need to practice my public speaking skills more in order to sell my idea to potential mentors, customers and investors better.</p> <p>I must say that the Start Up course complex was the best course that I have ever had at the university! It was inspiring and affirmative, has taught me so much about entrepreneurship, and made me believe in my abilities as entrepreneur.</p> |

Appendix 3: CVC 2015 program

Program

Monday 9th of November

11.30 - Meet camp organizers in the hotel lobby or the main lobby in Laurea Tikkurila. If you are a HAMK, LAMK or KYAMK student staying at the hotel, please wait for organizers in the hotel lobby to escort you to Laurea Tikkurila.

12.00 - 13.30 Welcome and introductions
Mr. Alan Barrell and CVC project team
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (12.00 - 18.00)

13.45 - 15.30 Ice breaker - Team activity
CVC project team
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (12.00 - 18.00)

15.45 - 16.45 Introduction to pitching
Mr. Alan Barrell
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (12.00 - 18.00)

Daily homework: **Make a one minute pitch including what you're selling and to whom.**

Tuesday 10th of November

09.00 - 10.00 One minute pitch from all teams
CVC project team
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)

- 10.30 - 11.30** **Business Model**
Vesa Tuomela
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)
- 12.00 - 13.30** **Art of pitching**
Mr. Alan Barrell
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)
- 13.45 - 15.30** **Team coaching, idea and pitch workshop**
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)
- 16.00 - 17.45** **Entrepreneurship Tuesday**
Line-up to be announced later
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, lecture hall

Daily homework: **Fill business model canvas, make 3 minute pitch**

Wednesday 11th of November

- 09.00 - 10.00** **Minimum Viable Product**
Speaker TBA
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (and B407) (08.00 - 18.00)
- 10.30 - 12.30** **Midweek pitches**
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (and B407) (08.00 - 18.00)
- 13.45 - 15.30** **Midweek pitches, feedback**
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (and B407) (08.00 - 18.00)
- 16.00 - 17.30** **Team coaching, idea and pitch workshop**
Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (and B407) (08.00 - 18.00)

Slush participation for the students who have tickets.

Daily homework: **Create minimum viable product and initial financial calculations**

Thursday 12th of November

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 09.00 - 10.00 | Product Development Tuukka Ylälahti <i>Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)</i> |
| 10.30 - 11.30 | Product Development, team coaching <i>Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)</i> |
| 12.00 - 13.30 | Go-to-market Tuukka Ylälahti <i>Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)</i> |
| 13.45 - 15.30 | Go-to-market, team coaching <i>Laurea UAS Tikkurila, Living Lab (08.00 - 18.00)</i> |
| 18.00 → | CVC Dinner Location to be announced later |

Daily homework: Final 5 minute pitch
Friday 13th of November

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| 09.00 - 12.00 | Final pitches <i>Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (08.00 - 15.00)</i> |
| 13.45 - 15.00 | Feedback and Cambridge week info <i>Laurea UAS Tikkurila, B409 (08.00 - 15.00)</i> |

Preparation tasks for Cambridge week:

- - 1, 3 and 6 minute pitch
- - business model canvas
- - minimum viable product plan including financial calculations
- - product development plan
- - go-to-market plan

VENTURE CAMP 2015 from 30th of November until 5th of December by Laurea Entrepreneurship Society | www.laureaes.fi

| Monday 30th of Nov | Tuesday 1st of Dec | Wednesday 2nd of Dec | Thursday 3rd of Dec | Friday 4th of Dec | Saturday 5th of Dec |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| | <p>09:00 - 10:00 CEDAR and the Entrepreneurial University of the Year <i>Prof Lester Lloyd-Reason</i> ARU, HEL 110/111</p> | <p>09:00 - 10:00 Market Research <i>Chris Lamaison</i> ARU, LAB 027</p> | <p>09:00 - 10:00 Valuation <i>Vernon Harten-Ash</i> ARU, COS405</p> | <p>09:00 - 10:00 Investors <i>Alan Barrell</i> ARU, LAB109</p> | |
| | <p>10:00 - 11:00 Crowd Funding <i>Francesca O'Brien</i> ARU, HEL 110/111</p> | <p>10:00 - 11:00 Market Research ARU, LAB 109</p> | <p>10:30 - 11:30 Workshop <i>Vernon Harten-Ash</i> ARU, COS405</p> | <p>10:30 - 11:30 Financial Modeling <i>Alan Barrell</i> ARU, LAB109</p> | <p>10:00 - 13:00 Dragon's Den Judges: <i>Alan Barrell</i> <i>tba</i> St. Catherines College, Ramsden room</p> |
| <p>14:15 - Meet up ARU main doors</p> | <p>12:00 - 13:00 Case: Raspberry Pi <i>Jack Lang</i> ARU, LAB 109</p> | <p>12:00 - 13:00 Introduction to law/legal considerations <i>Olli Oksman</i> ARU, LAB307</p> | <p>12:00 - 15:00 Entrepreneur experience exchange <i>12.00 Fiona Nielsen</i> <i>12.30 Jeremy Sosabowski</i> <i>13.00 Neil Prem</i> <i>14.15 Sheeza Ahmad</i> ARU, COS405</p> | | |
| <p>15:00 - 16:30 Welcome to Cambridge <i>Alan Barrell and Marcia Baldry</i> ARU, COS 207</p> | <p>13:45 - 15:00 The Cambridge Phenomena <i>Walter Herriot</i> ARU, RUS203</p> | <p>13:45 - 16:00 Mid-week pitches ARU, LAB307</p> | | <p>14:00 - 17:00 Final pitch workshop <i>Mentors (Plus Alejandro visits us at judge!)</i> Judge Business School, Keynes House – KH 107</p> | |
| <p>16:30 - 18:00 Student experience in Cambridge <i>Krista Keränen</i> ARU, COS 207</p> | <p>16:00 - 18:00 room for working ARU, RUS208</p> | | <p>17:30 - 20:00 Be your own boss seminar ARU, LAB107</p> | | |
| <p>18:00 - 19:30 Team coaching Regal Pub, 38-39 St Andrews Street</p> | <p>18:00 - 19:30 Team coaching The Great Northern, 1-3 Station Rd</p> | <p>18:30 - 21:00 Dinner, invite only event St Catherine's College</p> | <p>20:00 - Meet up with ARU ES students The Emperor on 21 Hills rd, Cambridge, CB2 1NW</p> | | |

Appendix 4: Interview questionnaire

Expert opinion interview / Expertinneninterview

- Personal details / *Angaben zur Person*
 1. Name/*Name*
 2. Alias/*Künstlernamen*
 3. Age/*Alter*
 4. Nationality/*Nationalität*
 5. Residence/*Wohnsitz*

- Artist details / *Angaben zur/-m Künstler/-in*
 6. How long do you occupy yourself with photography? / *Wie lange fotografieren Sie schon?*
 7. What kind of photography are you interested in (e.g. landscape, portrait, urban etc.)? / *Sind Sie auf bestimmte Motive spezialisiert (z.B. Landschaft, Portrait usw.)?*
 8. Did you complete any vocational training to become a photographer or any other professional education related to art? / *Haben Sie eine Ausbildung zum/-r Fotografen/-in oder eine andere Ausbildung im künstlerischen Bereich gemacht?*
 - a. if “yes” - Which, where and how long? / *wenn “ja” - Welche, wo und wie lange?*
 - b. if “no” - Where and how did you learn about photography? / *wenn “nein” - Wie und wo haben Sie fotografieren gelernt?*
 9. Do you engage in other form of art than photography, e.g. painting? / *Beschäftigen Sie sich mit einer anderen Art von Kunst außer Fotografie, z.B. Bildmalerei?*

- Presentation and distribution / *Ausstellung und Verkauf*
 10. Does your art sustain you financially or do you (also) earn money doing something else? / *Ernähren Sie sich von Ihrer Kunst oder gehen Sie (auch) anderen Beschäftigungen nach, um Geld zu verdienen?*
 11. Channels of exhibition: how do you present your art to public (e.g. Flickr, Instagram, own webpage, exhibitions etc.)? / *Durch welche Kanäle präsentieren Sie Ihre Kunst dem breiteren Publikum (z.B. Flickr, Instagram, eigene Webseite, Ausstellungen usw.)?*
 12. Do you participate in or organize exhibitions to show your pictures to broader public? / *Nehmen Sie an Ausstellungen teil bzw. organisieren Sie Ausstellungen für Ihre Bilder?*
 - a. if “yes” - How often per year? Where (country, area, location etc.)? Do you get pictures sold there? / *wenn “ja” - Wie oft im Jahr? Wo (Land, Stadt, Räumlichkeiten usw.)? Verkaufen Sie Ihre Bilder dort?*
 - b. if “no” - Why not and would you in principle like to? Please name all the reasons, e.g. financial (costs of print, framing, rent etc.), time, effort (cannot be bothered with marketing and organization) etc. / *wenn “nein” - Würden Sie es prinzipiell*

gerne tun? Was steht Ihnen im Wege? Bitte zählen Sie alle Gründe auf: z.B. finanzielle Überlegungen (Kosten für Druck, Rahmen und Miete etc.), Zeit, Mühe (keine Lust, sich mit der organisatorischen/kaufmännischen Seite zu beschäftigen) usw.

13. Is there any place/location where you would not like your pictures exhibited? / *Gibt es einen Ort, an dem Sie Ihre Bilder nicht ausstellen wollen?*
14. Channels of distribution: how do you sell your pictures? E.g. (own) online shop, art dealer, agent, gallery, auctions etc. / *Vertriebskanäle: wie verkaufen Sie Ihre Bilder? z.B. (eigener) Onlineshop, Agent, Galerie, Auktionen usw.*
- Technical requirements / *Technische Fragen*
15. For the database: what are the technical requirements of a picture file in order to allow for high quality print up to size 100x125 cm? / *Welche technischen Anforderungen muss eine Fotodatei erfüllen, um einen qualitativ hochwertigen Druck bis zur Größe 100x125 cm zu ermöglichen?*
- Business idea / *Geschäftsidee*
16. What is your expert, i.e. artist opinion about the business idea? Would you give your pictures for the company's database? If no, why not? What does the concept miss? / *Was meinen Sie als Expertin/Künstlerin über das vorgestellte Geschäftsmodell? Würden Sie Ihre Bilder für die Datenbank zur Verfügung stellen? Wenn nein, warum nicht? Was fehlt an dem Konzept?*
17. How important is business ethics, especially the aspect of charity for you when doing business with your art? / *Wie wichtig ist Ihnen die ethische Seite des Kunstgeschäfts? Wären Sie bereit, Ihre Bilder für gemeinnützige Zwecke einzusetzen?*
- Art scene / *Kunstszene*
18. How can an artist make a name in the art scene? How does one get discovered and by whom? / *Wie kann sich ein/e Künstler/in einen Namen in der Kunstszene machen? Wie wird man entdeckt und durch wen?*

Appendix 5: Dragons den judging criteria, 5 December 2015

Coach / Judge [REDACTED] Company / Project Name: A thousandWords

Dragons Den Judging Criteria – 2015 Finland Venture Camp

The judging process is an opportunity to assess the companies for Investment Readiness. After the coaching session, each company is asked to make a final presentation to a panel of assessors/judges. Scoring is best done during the final presentations, and your judging based on the position as a prospective investor. These are the formal criteria against which you will be assessed:-

| | Criteria | Possible Score | Your Score | Improvement Areas |
|--|--|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 1 PRESENTATION QUALITY / PERSONAL IMPACT | | 15 Points | | |
| Looks the part | - Appropriately dressed to a high standard with an investor image - Professional and smart appearance | 2 | 2 | |
| Sounds the part | - Authoritative voice that is slow, clear, calm, deliberate and uses an influencing tone when appropriate | 2 | 2 | |
| Communication style | - Succinct and jargon free both in written and verbal format | 3 | 3 | |
| Passion | - Displaying high levels of enthusiasm, energy and hunger for the business and venture | 5 | 3 | |
| Presenting with Impact | - High level of ability with presentation tools, influencing skills, audience control and involvement | 2 | 2 | |
| Ability to be direct | - Reacts with confidence when challenged and handling objections | 1 | 1 | |
| 2 CLEAR VISION | | 15 Points | | |
| Innovation | - Demonstration of innovative ideas | 5 | 3 | |
| Clarity of Vision & Direction | - Demonstrated examples of future solutions/products and how they could operate in the field - Provided a clear understanding of the direction of the company | 10 | 6 | |
| 3 MARKET POSITIONING | | 15 Points | | |
| Opportunity | - Is there a market opportunity for this Product/Service - Market positioning of product / service - The competitive environment | 10 | 6 | |
| Feasibility | - Demonstration of clear go-to-market strategy - Strong Sales & Marketing model | 5 | 3 | |
| 4 FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS & BUSINESS PLANNING | | 20 Points | | |
| Viability | - Is the company making realistic profitability/cash-flow plans | 10 | 5 | |
| Revenue & Sales | - Realistic assumptions developed for revenue targets - Evidence a sales pipeline and prospecting activity exists and sales activity needed to drive results is understood | 10 | 5 | |
| 5 INVESTMENT APPROACH | | 20 Points | | |
| Proposition/Exit | - Is there a clear exit strategy? - Demonstration of clear investor return after x years | 10 | 5 | |
| Funding | - Use of funds: Will the raised capital be used appropriately given the performance/stage/life-cycle of the venture? - Funding strategy: Is the level of funding realistic? | 10 | 5 | |
| 6 MANAGEMENT TEAM | | 15 Points | | |
| Expertise | - Does the company have the commercial skills and sufficient 'horsepower' to launch the venture? | 5 | 3 | |
| Industry & Technology Knowledge | - Is there sufficient industry and technology expertise? | 5 | 3 | |
| Executive Board / mentoring | - Openness / acknowledgement of the need for advisors or formal board. How is the company currently advised and mentored. | 5 | 3 | |
| TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE | | 100 | | |

Coach /Judge: [REDACTED] Company / Project Name:

*A-ZIOWAND
WORLD
AWNA*

Dragons Den Judging Criteria – 2015 Finland Venture Camp

The judging process is an opportunity to assess the companies for Investment Readiness. After the coaching session, each company is asked to make a final presentation to a panel of assessors/judges. Scoring is best done during the final presentations, and your judging based on the position as a prospective investor. These are the formal criteria against which you will be assessed:-


| | Criteria | Possible Score | Your Score | Improvement Areas |
|--|--|------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 1 PRESENTATION QUALITY / PERSONAL IMPACT | | 15 Points | 10 | |
| Looks the part | - Appropriately dressed to a high standard with an investor image - Professional and smart appearance | 2 | | |
| Sounds the part | - Authoritative voice that is slow, clear, calm, deliberate and uses an influencing tone when appropriate | 2 | | |
| Communication style | - Succinct and jargon free both in written and verbal format | 3 | | |
| Passion | - Displaying high levels of enthusiasm, energy and hunger for the business and venture | 5 | | |
| Presenting with Impact | - High level of ability with presentation tools, influencing skills, audience control and involvement | 2 | | |
| Ability to be direct | - Reacts with confidence when challenged and handling objections | 1 | | |
| 2 CLEAR VISION | | 15 Points | 8 | |
| Innovation | - Demonstration of innovative ideas | 5 | | |
| Clarity of Vision & Direction | - Demonstrated examples of future solutions/products and how they could operate in the field - Provided a clear understanding of the direction of the company | 10 | | |
| 3 MARKET POSITIONING | | 15 Points | 3 | |
| Opportunity | - Is there a market opportunity for this Product/Service - Market positioning of product / service - The competitive environment | 10 | | |
| Feasibility | - Demonstration of clear go-to-market strategy - Strong Sales & Marketing model | 5 | | |
| 4 FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS & BUSINESS PLANNING | | 20 Points | 2 | |
| Viability | - Is the company making realistic profitability/cash-flow plans | 10 | | |
| Revenue & Sales | - Realistic assumptions developed for revenue targets - Evidence a sales pipeline and prospecting activity exists and sales activity needed to drive results is understood | 10 | | |
| 5 INVESTMENT APPROACH | | 20 Points | 0 | |
| Proposition/Exit | - Is there a clear exit strategy? - Demonstration of clear investor return after x years | 10 | | |
| Funding | - Use of funds: Will the raised capital be used appropriately given the performance/stage/life-cycle of the venture? - Funding strategy: Is the level of funding realistic? | 10 | | |
| 6 MANAGEMENT TEAM | | 15 Points | 3 | |
| Expertise | - Does the company have the commercial skills and sufficient 'horsepower' to launch the venture? | 5 | | |
| Industry & Technology Knowledge | - Is there sufficient industry and technology expertise? | 5 | | |
| Executive Board / mentoring | - Openness / acknowledgement of the need for advisors or formal board. How is the company currently advised and mentored. | 5 | | |
| TOTAL POSSIBLE SCORE | | 100 | | |

Appendix 6: Pitch&Beer feedback from judges, 10 March 2016

a thousand words

Pitch & Beer

Feedback form for judges



Please circle the number you feel describes each criteria the best.
5 = Very good, 1 = Poor.

General impression:

How clear is the presentation?

1 2 3 **4** 5

Overall rating of the pitch?

1 2 3 **4** 5

The content of the pitch:

How well did you understand the business idea?

1 2 3 4 **5**

Did the pitcher provide sufficient information regarding the numbers/financial aspect of the business idea during his/her pitch or during questions afterwards?

1 2 3 4 5

How well the pitcher succeed in telling his/her story in a compelling way and maintain the interest of the judges?

1 2 3 **4** 5

General feedback and comments:

18

WWW.LAUREAES.FI

- MAYBE HAVE THE IMAGES
BIGGER
- BUSINESS MODEL NEEDS
A PROFESSIONAL TOUCH...
~~THE~~ BUILD A PICTURE OF IT
- GOOD TO HAVE AN APP
- WORDS CAN USE RECONSIDERATION

Pitch & Beer

Feedback form for judges



Please circle the number you feel describes each criteria the best.
5 = Very good, 1 = Poor.

General impression:

How clear is the presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

Overall rating of the pitch?

1 2 3 4 5

The content of the pitch:

How well did you understand the business idea?

1 2 3 4 5

Did the pitcher provide sufficient information regarding the numbers/financial aspect of the business idea during his/her pitch or during questions afterwards?

1 2 3 4 5

How well the pitcher succeed in telling his/her story in a compelling way and maintain the interest of the judges?

1 2 3 4 5

General feedback and comments:

*Could have more details on numbers
and the business case.*

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Pitch & Beer



Feedback form for judges

Name of the pitcher or idea: Anna

Please circle the number you feel describes each criteria the best.
5 = Very good, 1 = Poor.

General impression:

How clear is the presentation?

1 2 3 4 5

16

Overall rating of the pitch?

1 2 3 4 5

The content of the pitch:

How well did you understand the business idea?

1 2 3 4 5

Did the pitcher provide sufficient information regarding the numbers/financial aspect of the business idea during his/her pitch or during questions afterwards?

1 2 3 4 5

How well the pitcher succeed in telling his/her story in a compelling way and maintain the interest of the judges?

1 2 3 4 5

General feedback and comments:

WWW.LAUREAES.FI

Appendix 7: Letter to artists (MVP)

Hi!

The Art Photography business idea “a thousand words” is about to enter the next stage, i.e. Minimum Viable Product in form of a web platform prototype that will be marketed to business clients starting April!

If You are still interested to participate in the whole thing (which I definitely very much hope :)), please compile 10 beautiful photos of Yours in a harmonious package and let me know when You are ready to rock! Needless to say that since this art package is Your own small exhibition, You alone decide which photos fit together, how to name the package etc. However, if You want to discuss things with me beforehand, welcome. Also, feel free to prepare more than one package :). Remember, that all the photos in a package must exist as raw files, too, because they will be printed out in a bigger format after being ordered.

The web portal has an “Artists” section. This is where You can put Your data, professional interests, whether you can be hired for gigs and everything else You want to say.

Of course, I will not put anything on air, before showing You the current version of the portal.

If there is anything You want to discuss, write, text or call me.

Best regards,

Anna

Appendix 8: Feedback BMC

ROTARY START UP CHALLENGE 2016

PALAUTE KILPAILUTIIMILLE

A Thousand Words

There should be a demand for these services if we can find a common interest between artists, printing companies, art galleries, charity societies and enterprises.

It could be effective to analyse different customer segments to find out the needs and the competition within each segment.

In order to find out the possibility for profitable business it could be wise to do a market research and ask the constituents for their opinion.

How much are you prepared to invest?

RSUC JURY OF LEPPÄVAARAN ROTARYKLUBI



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| BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS | | ART LEASING | | |
|---|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Key partners</p> <p>Who are our Key Partners? Who are our Key Suppliers? Which Key Resources are we acquiring from partners? Which Key Activities do partners perform?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists II. Printing companies, maybe even printing machines suppliers III. Art galleries and art dealers IV. Charity societies | <p>Key activities</p> <p>What Key Activities do our Value Propositions require? Our Distribution Channels? Customer Relationships? Revenue streams?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating pictures database and company's homepage 2. Printing and framing photos 3. Business clients' acquisition <p>Key resources</p> <p>What Key Resources do our Value Propositions require? Our Distribution Channels? Customer Relationships? Revenue Streams?</p> <p>Big enough, diverse and high quality pictures database</p> | <p>Value propositions</p> <p>What value do we deliver to the customer? Which one of our customer's problems are we helping to solve? What bundles of products and services are we offering to each Customer Segment? Which customer needs are we satisfying?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition of their art pictures to the broader public • Possibility to sell their pictures e.g. at auctions • Possibility to "break through" in the art scene <ol style="list-style-type: none"> II. Business clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized (even unique) artistic office decoration that is meant to improve the working environment for employees and impress customers • Punctual and reliable service in changing office decoration | <p>Customer relationships</p> <p>What type of relationship does each of our Customer Segments expect us to establish and maintain with them?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists: long-term co-operation based on trust and mutual benefit II. Business clients: long-term co-operation <p>Channels</p> <p>Through which Channels do our Customer Segments want to be reached?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists: word-of-mouth and through schools II. Business clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our company's homepage • Trade fairs focusing office decoration, e.g. Habitate • Pitching during business events | <p>Customer segments</p> <p>For whom are we creating value? Who are our most important customers?</p> <p>Two different customer groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists/photographers, who will provide their pictures for company's database • Especially young artists, who do not have the financial means nor the business expertise to organize an exhibition for their pictures • Hobby photographers, who would like to show their art to the public but cannot be bothered with the organizational/business side of things II. Business clients, who will purchase the art leasing packaged for their offices etc. • All kinds of business companies that work in offices • Hotels, restaurants • Public sector offices |
| <p>Cost structure</p> <p>What are the most important costs inherent in our business model? Which Key Resources are most expensive? Which Key Activities are most expensive?</p> <p>Since the pictures from the database are only being printed after the package has been ordered, there is no big capital investment needed. Costs for quality prints are, however, rather high (depending on the size up to 500€/picture). There are no expensive key resources since the artists are not being paid in money for providing pictures for the database. The only expensive activity is creating the company's homepage and database. The homepage must be very good, interactive, including a pre-order possibility for the business clients.</p> | <p>Revenue streams</p> <p>For what value are our customers really willing to pay? For what do they currently pay? How are they currently paying? How would they prefer to pay? How much does each Revenue Stream contribute to overall revenues?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artist customers do not pay any money to the company; they currently pay either very high rental, printing and framing costs, or pay nothing but do not exhibit their pictures II. Business clients will pay for the customized (even unique) artistic office decoration that is being changed periodically. Form of payment: leasing (tax-friendly). Now only cheap disposable " Ikea " art | | | |



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| BUSINESS MODEL CANVAS | | ART LEASING "a thousand words" | | |
|---|---|---|--|--|
| <p>Key partners</p> <p>Who are our Key Partners? Who are our key suppliers? Which Key Resources are we acquiring from partners? Which Key Activities do partners perform?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists II. Printing companies, maybe even printing machines suppliers III. Interior design companies IV. Culture and art foundations/funds V. Rajala Pro Shop photography store and school VI. Private health care centers | <p>Key activities</p> <p>What Key Activities do our Value Propositions require? Our Distribution Channels? Customer Relationships? Revenue streams?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creating pictures database, company's webpage and some channels 2. Printing and framing artwork 3. Direct sales to business clients <p>Key resources</p> <p>What Key Resources do our Value Propositions require? Our Distribution Channels? Customer Relationships? Revenue Streams?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big enough, diverse and high quality pictures database • Social capital in form of good functioning networks to artists and business clients • Determined yet flexible core team | <p>Value propositions</p> <p>What value do we deliver to the customer? Which one of our customer's problems are we helping to solve? What bundles of products and services are we offering to each Customer Segment? Which customer needs are we satisfying?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exhibition of their pictures as printed and framed artwork • Additional exposure on the company's website and some channels • Advertisement of services on the website • Additional sales channel • Possibility to "break through" in the art scene II. Business clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customised (even unique) artistic office decoration that is part of the working environment for employees and impress customers and business partners • Punctual and reliable service in changing office-decoration | <p>Customer relationships</p> <p>What type of relationship does each of our Customer Segments expect us to establish and maintain with them?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists: long-term co-operation based on trust and mutual benefit II. Business clients: long-term co-operation based on trust and mutual benefit <p>Channels</p> <p>Through which Channels do our Customer Segments want to be reached?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artists: word-of-mouth, on Social Media, pitching during business events and business idea competitions II. Business clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • direct sales • "a thousand word's" homepage • Trade fairs focusing office decoration, e.g. Hablare • Pitching during business events and competitions | <p>Customer segments</p> <p>For whom are we creating value? Who are our most important customers?</p> <p>Two different customer groups:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Photographers and digital artists, who will provide their artwork for company's database • Hobby artists, who do not want to invest yet more money in their already expensive hobby. • Professional photographers, who would like to show their free art to the public, but cannot be bothered with the organizational/business side of things <ol style="list-style-type: none"> II. Business clients, who will purchase the art leasing packaged for their offices etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All kinds of business companies that work in offices • Promising target group is private health care centers • Public sector offices |
| <p>Cost structure</p> <p>What are the most important costs inherent in our business model? Which Key Resources are most expensive? Which Key Activities are most expensive?</p> <p>Since the pictures from the database are only being printed after the package has been ordered, there is no big capital investment needed upfront. Costs for quality prints are, however, rather high (depending on the size up to 500€/picture). There are no expensive key resources since the artists are not being paid in money for providing pictures for the database. The only expensive activity is creating the company's homepage and database. The homepage must be very good, interactive, including a pre-order possibility for the business clients.</p> | | <p>Revenue streams</p> <p>For what value are our customers really willing to pay? For what do they currently pay? How are they currently paying? How would they prefer to pay? How much does each Revenue Stream contribute to overall revenues?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Artist customers do not pay any money to the company; they currently pay either very high retail, printing and framing costs, or pay nothing, but do not exhibit their pictures II. Business clients will pay for the customized (even unique) artistic office decoration that is being changed periodically. Form of payment: leasing (tax friendly). Now only cheap disposable "leas" art. III. Grants for art projects from foundations and funds | | |

29 April 2016

Aihe: Kysely Työpaikansisustaminen

Hei!

Olen viimeisen vuoden Laurea AMK:n opiskelija ja tutkin mikä on isompien yritysten käytäntö työpaikkasisustamisessa. Erityisesti kuvien käyttö ja niiden rooli työpaikkaviihtyvyydessä. Olisin kiitollinen, jos voisitte auttaa minua ja löytäisitte aikaa vastata seuraaviin kysymyksiin. Kysely löytyy täältä:https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rAkJUOfcDr96Q-x5hElw2W0bgVU5Xpybhf8cMudNeJg/edit?usp=drive_web. Kyselyyn vastaaminen kestää noin 10-15 minuuttia. Kyselyn linkki on avoinna 15 toukokuuta 2016 asti.

Kiitoksia jo etukäteen vaivannäöstänne!

Ystävällisin terveisin,
Anna Grinberg

9 Mai 2016

Aihe: Muistutus Kysely Työpaikansisustaminen

Hei!

Mikäli olette vastanneet minun noin viikko sitten lähetetty kyselyni, kiitoksia todella paljon!
Jos ette vielä ole ehtineet vastata, toivoisin, että löytäisitte ajan siihen. Pyyntöni olisi, että saisin Teiltä tukea, jotta saisin minun opinnäytetyöni valmiiksi.

Olen viimeisen vuoden Laurea AMK:n opiskelija ja tutkin mikä on isompien yritysten käytäntö työpaikkasisustamisessa. Erityisesti kuvien käyttö ja niiden rooli työpaikkaviihtyvyydessä. Olisin kiitollinen, jos voisitte auttaa minua ja löytäisitte aikaa vastata seuraaviin kysymyksiin. Kysely löytyy täältä:https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1rAkJUOfcDr96Q-x5hElw2W0bgVU5Xpybhf8cMudNeJg/edit?usp=drive_web. Kyselyyn vastaaminen kestää noin 10-15 minuuttia. Kyselyn linkki on avoinna 15 toukokuuta 2016 asti.
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