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RESTAURANT VISIT AS AN EXPERIENCE

Case company: restaurant Comico

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RESTAURANT VISIT AS AN EXPERIENCE

This bachelor's thesis was conducted as a case study for restaurant Comico of Naururavintolat Oy. The aim of the study was to measure how customers perceive experiences during their restaurant visit in the case company and to determine whether the case company can be identified as an experience service provider. Other objectives were to identify certain details, such as ways to improve the perception of experiences.

The theoretical part of thesis was gathered from marketing and business literature, articles and previous publications all related to the topics at hand. The theory examines experience industry as a whole, with emphasis on customer's perception over different components related to a restaurant service. Customers are at central focus in this study, which means that individual factors such as emotions, preferences and expectations are carefully investigated.

A qualitative method was chosen for the empirical part of the study. An open-ended questionnaire was designed to interview customers. Interviews were recorded. Subsequently, restaurant's manager was interviewed with the same technique. The interviews were summarized and analysed by using content analysis. The results of the interviews are spread throughout the text along with the theory.

The results provide a direction to develop Comico's ability to act in the future. The case company's overall service process is good, yet some details should be improved regarding service attitude of the employees, consistency of the theme and decorative details. The case company is also recommended to conduct a quantitative research to measure customer satisfaction. The most important outcome of this thesis was to provide a framework for any restaurant business willing to succeed in the field of experience industry. This thesis not only helps service companies to identify failure points within their service processes but also gives suggestions and examples how to improve them.

RAVINTOLAKOKEMUS ELÄMYKSENÄ

Tämä opinnäytetyö suoritettiin tapaustutkimuksena Naururavintolat Oy:n ravintola Comicolle. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena oli kartoittaa miten asiakkaat kokevat elämyksellisyyden ravintola Comicossa ja voidaanko Comico määritellä elämyspalveluiden tarjoajaksi. Työssä tarkasteltiin myös tekijöitä, jotka vaikuttavat elämyksellisyyteen eniten ja vähiten.

Teoreettinen aineisto koostui markkinoinnin ammattikirjallisuudesta, aiheeseen liittyvistä aikaisemmista tutkimuksista sekä elämystalouden viimeisimmistä julkaisuista. Työn teoreettisessa osassa esiteltiin elämystalouden keskeisimpiä osa-alueita keskittyen erityisesti ravintolaelämykseen. Teorian avulla tarkasteltiin myös elämystä asiakkaiden kokemana prosessina sekä asiakkaiden tunteita, mieltymyksiä ja odotuksia.

Lähestymistavaltaan tutkimus oli laadullinen. Avoin kyselylomake suunniteltiin asiakkaiden haastatteluja varten. Niin asiakkaiden kuin ravintolapäällikönkin haastattelut nauhoitettiin, jonka jälkeen tutkimusaineisto analysoitiin käyttämällä sisällönanalyysiä. Teoria ja tutkimusaineisto esitettiin yhtenäisesti, toinen toistaan seuraten läpi työn.

Tutkimustulosten perusteella esitettiin kehittämisehdotuksia Comicon palveluprosessin parantamiseksi. Haastateltavien mukaan Comicon palveluprosessi toimii suhteellisen hyvin, tosin paljon parannettavaakin löytyi. Comicon keskeisimpiä kehityskohteita olivat henkilökunnan asenne ja ravintolan teeman yhtenäistäminen. Comicon tulisi myös toteuttaa laaja asiakastyytyväisyyskysely. Tutkimuksen tärkein tulos oli luoda viitteellinen kehys elämysteollisuudessa toimiville palveluyrityksille, jonka avulla yritykset voivat tarkistaa ja mahdollisesti parantaa toimintatapojaan.

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1 INTRODUCTION

"Smile and I will feel good. Tell me and I will probably forget. Show me and I might remember. Involve me and I will understand. Let me do it and I can express myself. Stimulate all my senses and I will become interested. Entertain me and I will surely come back. Give me a small thing that reminds me of your world when I am at home and I am yours" (Markkanen 2008.)

Welcome to the experience economy! Consumers no longer try to satisfy their so-called functional needs, whereas their desire for hedonistic consumption is ever growing. Shopping has turned into a leisure activity, a fun social event and a visible part of today's culture. To some people shopping has become a whole way of living and an energy source; one Italian department store declares how they have changed the "Point of Purchase" to "Point of Performance and Pleasure". The consumer is a superhero starring at one's own movie from the experience economy's point of view. The present consumers already have everything and now they want not only to create something new all by themselves, but also to express themselves and to try what it feels like to be a star. Plenty of businesses already offer such opportunities: Pottery Café in Milan allows its customers to paint their own cups and customers can design their own shoes in an Adidas shop in Paris. Those wanting to feel like a supermodel should travel to Tokyo where a clothing store allows its customers to have their image reflected on the giant screen right outside the store. Indeed, experience economy can be considered as a new economic trend with a combination of culture, continuous development and new business opportunities. (Markkanen 2008, 1-18; LCEEI 2008.)

The objective of this study was to determine how customers perceive experiences during their restaurant visit in a case company called Comico. It was also crucial to study how experiences are created and how important they are for a company as a competitive advantage. First, the theoretical part introduces the concept of experience economy as well as experiences in general and the meaning of them in today's society and business life. In order to fully measure the performance of the

company, the experience concept needs to be fit for service standards because after all, the company is a service organisation as well. The research was qualitative in order to make the manager and the customers answer spontaneously. It was not only interesting to find out how Comico's customers perceived experiences, but also to compare if the customers' views matched the vision of the management. As a result, the study provided useful insights for the case company and subsequently help them to improve their overall customer satisfaction.

The empiric part is combined with the theory throughout the study so that the work will be presented in a form of a story with a lesson at the end when conclusions are made.

2 CASE COMPANY: COMICO - café & bar ý restaurant

The case company Comico is a private theme restaurant operating in the centre of Rovaniemi. The basic concept of their service is to provide food and cafeteria products throughout the day. Comico includes elements of a café, a restaurant and a club within the same premises, which makes Comico the most diverse restaurant in Rovaniemi. In addition to the basic restaurant concept, they offer stand-up comedians, acoustic live music and restaurant theatre performances during evenings. Comico tries to offer a simple and relaxing environment for their customers mixing a Latin cuisine and bar with a coffee house. Premises are designed to stand out from the average design used in Rovaniemi restaurants. Most restaurants use dark wood whereas Comico is covered with bright colours like orange and red. The products are designed to meet the demands of even the most critical and demanding customer with a large selection of beverages and drinks as well as food and special coffees. When entering, the first thing a visitor comes in contact with is the bar, which provides immediate contact with the staff . Greetings are exchanged already at this point. The facilities are divided in two areas. The first section offers a casual lounge for people stopping by just for a cup

of coffee or a foreign beverage. The second section of the restaurant is a comfortable lounge with sofas and cabins and a stage, where casual dining can continue throughout the day until the music is turned up in the evening and a possible performance will start.

Customer groups are divided in accordance to the particular service: cafe, bar, food and performance. Their target customers are people ranging from the age of 25 to 35. However, the age is not the defining component of their customers, but the relaxed attitude and desire to gain new restaurant experiences in Rovaniemi. The most typical customer has the consumption habits and lifestyle of so-called city persons who are used to enjoy light and fast dining outside their home kitchens. The wide programme of different shows and performances attract people interested in culture, music and theatre. According to Mr. Näsman, the restaurant manager, Comico's strengths are flexibility and innovative solutions in order to satisfy any needs of their customers. (Näsman 2008.) Comico's sing-along nights are especially popular among students. A band gets on the stage and the audience is provided with songbooks, which include lyrics to various songs of the mainstream music industry. The idea is that the customers are the stars of the night, not the band. The customers get to decide what the band will play. However, the customers also need to do their part: they are expected to sing along with the band. The songs are chosen in a quite non-sophisticated way - by shouting louder than others.

The inspiration for this study was created during the researcher's stay in Rovaniemi in 2007 and 2008. Tourism industry is the most important field of business in Rovaniemi and provides seasonal work for people from all over Finland (City of Rovaniemi 2008). Experience industry is a very familiar concept for people in Rovaniemi and no wonder: the competition is based on companies' ability to offer experiences especially for tourists. This study focused more on how the regular people living in Rovaniemi perceive experiences as a part of their everyday lives. Travelling abroad and visiting exotic countries are ways to find experiences for sure, but the challenge grows even bigger when the same criteria need to be found in our own neighbourhood. The case company caught the researcher's interest with its unusual theme compared to other businesses in the

area. Most of the businesses in Rovaniemi were very focused on the Lapland theme with reindeers, huskies and Father Christmas. Comico's management had to be brave to create something so different when every other restaurant had followed the mainstream trend more suitable for Rovaniemi character. It would had been easy to measure experiences in Santa Park or in some of the dozen safari firms and the results would had been quite obvious. No, the challenge was to measure whether experiences can be carried out through regular routines such as a visit to a restaurant. Everyone needs to be astonished every once in a while.

3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Purpose of the study

As mentioned earlier, Comico is a theme restaurant operating in Rovaniemi, Finland. The case company is interested in finding out whether their aim to provide unique (service) experiences for customers has worked out in practice - not only in the minds of the management. The purpose of this study was to determine how customers perceive experiences in the case company Comico. The objectives for this study were to improve the case company's customer satisfaction, perceived service quality and the overall service performance. Through these components the feeling of an experience can then successfully be carried out.

The research questions are:

1. How do customers perceive experience during their visit in the case company Comico?
2. Does the case company fulfil the requirements as an experience service provider?
3. Can the perception of experiences be improved? How?

3.2. Conceptual framework

Conceptual framework provides a map for the study. The figure can be approached vertically from customers' or service provider's view points. Another approach is to see the service process in three pieces: input (before), service (during) and output (after). Like the service provider, the customer has an important role in the service delivery process as well and therefore in the entire service experience. The customer's input means the customer's activity level during the service performance. That is, whether the service is perceived passively like buying an ice cream or actively as when taking dance lessons. The service provider's inputs are what any service business needs: a staff, facilities, other customers and most importantly, a good business idea. The service process itself begins with the customer's expectations of the service. The expectations are influenced by the customer's individual needs, his past experiences and word of mouth. The second part of the process begins when the customer perceives the service, which is a result of the service delivery. Both the expectations and delivery influence the perceived service and are at the central focus in this study. A service delivery is a result of how the management imagines customers' expectations to be like. What the management believes customers want is not usually what customers know they want. This results as gap number one shown in the framework. Problems within the service process are described with five gaps. If a company manages to identify and close these gaps, the better are the chances to succeed in the market. In addition to the service process, certain elements and emotional levels need to be added in order to fulfil the requirements set for experience providers. Experience elements are characteristics of a service such as authenticity, individuality, contrast and interaction. Experience levels are emotions that a person goes through during a service starting with interest, perception, learning and ending with an experience and sometimes even with a mental change. The desired end result is customer satisfaction and, most importantly, a feeling of experience.

One must first understand the concept of experience before adding all other components of the process, which are only parts of the whole. This study guides you through the wilds of experience industry, starting from chapter 5.

CUSTOMER

Personal needs

Word of mouth

Past experience

INPUT

OUTPUT

Customer's input

Expected Service

Gap 5

Output quality:
End result

Perceived service

IMAGE

Gap 1

Service provider's input

Service delivery

Gap 3

Experience and satisfaction

Perception of service quality specification

Gap 2

Management perceptions of consumers' expectation

Experience elements

SERVICE PROVIDER

Gap 4
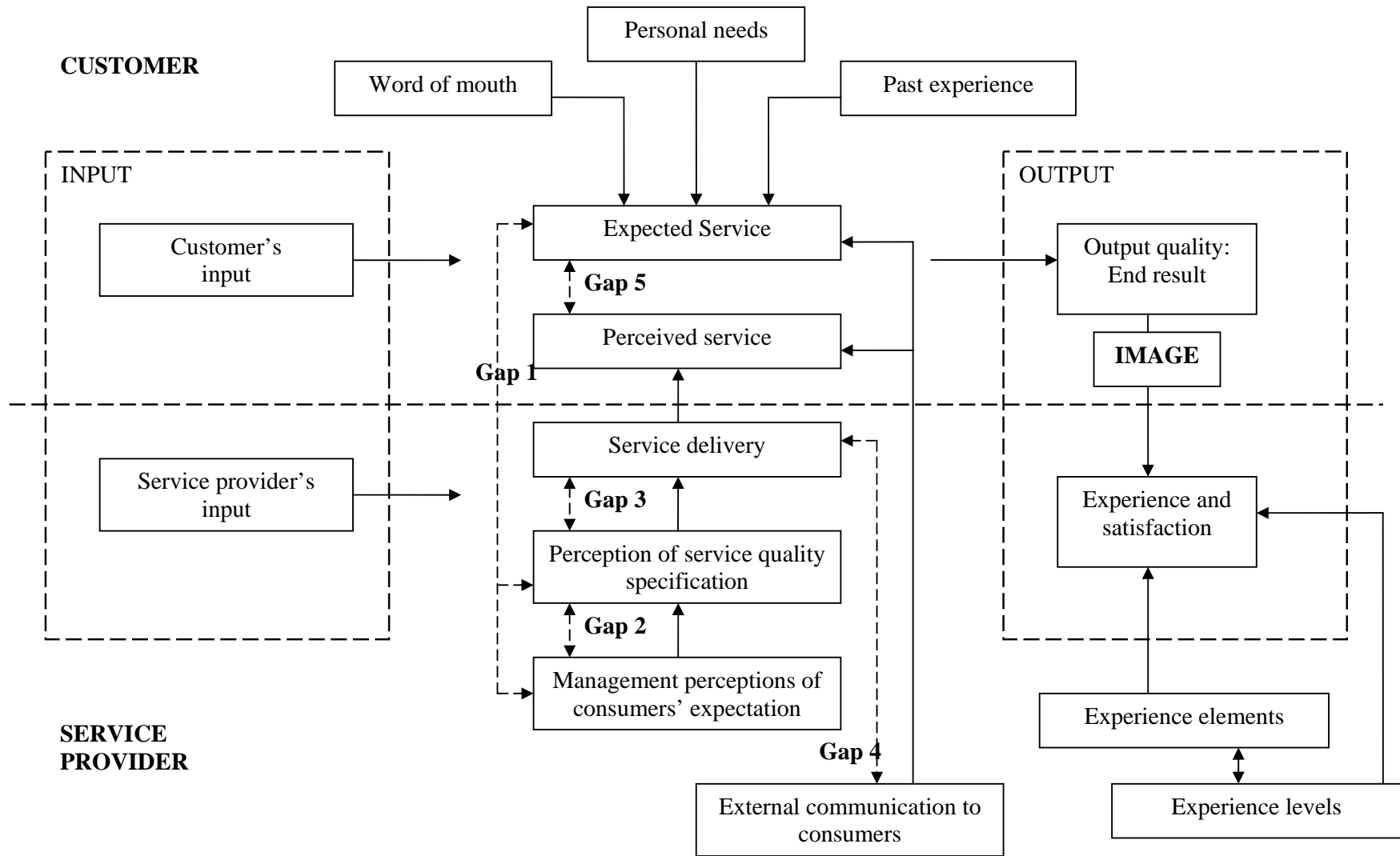
External communication to consumers

Experience levels

Figure 1: Conceptual framework (Adapted from Grönroos 2007, 114; LCEEI 2007; Markkanen 2008).

4 CONDUCTING THE STUDY

4.1 Research methods

Research questions are like a door to the research under study. Whether empirical activities produce answers or not depends on the formulation of such questions. This decision is also dependent on the decision as to which methods are appropriate and who or what should be included in the study. The essential criteria for evaluating research questions include whether they can be answered in the framework of the given and limited resources (time and money for instance). Additionally, it is absolutely essential to formulate a clear research question. (Flick 2006, 111.) The research questions were formulated in this thesis after a wide search over the theory of experience industry. There are not as many publications over the topic as one may have hoped but the quality will hopefully overlook quantity.

Methods for gathering data can be grouped into two main categories: theoretical research methods and empirical research methods. The fundamental difference between these two can be seen easily, but there are issues affecting the line drawing between the two. The material in the theoretical research consists of previous studies done on the subject. The target of the gathered information is usually in the concepts, perspectives and theories concerning the branch of study. The subject of the empirical research came from the outside world and the data needed to be gathered by a systematic method. These two often mix due to the fact that a theoretical research almost inevitably ends up in empirical conclusions and vice versa. (Uusitalo 1991, 89-95.) Both the methods were used in this study. Theoretical research was based on various sources, mainly literature, articles and Internet. The empirical research of this study was conducted in Rovaniemi during spring 2008. Both the researches are linked together throughout the text in order to keep the text readable and interesting.

4.2 Qualitative and quantitative research methods

The simplest way to distinguish qualitative and quantitative methods from another is to say that qualitative methods involve a researcher describing characteristics of people and events without comparing events in terms of measurements or amounts. Quantitative methods, on the other hand, focus attention on measurements and amounts of the characteristics displayed by the people and events that the researcher studies. (Thomas 2003, 1-2.) This study focused on the qualitative method as the topic circulates such issues as feelings, emotions, expectations, needs and hopes people over the case company and its services.

4.3 Data collection

After defining research questions the proper data collection strategy had to be chosen from the three most relevant qualitative data collection strategies. The strategies are interviews, narratives and discussions. Interviews usually involve a researcher orally asking questions for individuals to answer orally. (Flick 2006, 147; see also Hirsjärvi 2007, 187.) Interviews were chosen as a fit strategy for the study, as the interviewees' own ideas and opinions played the main role in the empirical part of the study.

According to Hirsjärvi and Hurme (2000), an interview is the most commonly used form of data collection for its flexibility and it is suitable for various different research purposes. Its benefit is to gather data from areas that are unknown or have only limited grounding. Interviews are suitable for researches that require clarifying answers and deeper analysis on the given information. Interviews also have some disadvantages as a research method: arranging interviews, finding interviewees and the interview itself demand a lot of time and effort. Analysing the research material is a slow process, whereas the interpretation and reporting of the results are problematic because lack of models. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2000, 34-35.)

When planning an interview, researchers can profit from deciding which of several interviewing techniques fits their needs. Four popular techniques are loose-question,

tight-question, converging-question and response-guided. The purpose of loose-question technique is to allow interviewees answer with unrestricted freedom. The tight-question strategy is designed to discover interviewees' preferences among a limited number of options – yes/no or like/dislike or some other multiple-choice option. The converging approach is designed to benefit from both the loose and tight techniques. First, the interviewer asks board, open-ended questions but then, following the interviewee's reply, the interviewer asks one or more specific questions in order to sharpen the answer. The response-guided approach is based on follow-up questions. (Thomas 2003, 63-64.) This research benefit from the converging method, as the interviews included open-ended questions whose answers were specified with some additional questions relevant for the issue at hand. The questions were divided into several categories each circulating over different aspects relevant to a visit to a restaurant. These were: background information, business idea, staff, customer service, service environment, and customer's role, programme, expectations and satisfaction. More specific questions were made within each category in order to encourage interviewee's imagination and to support his memory.

Six interviews were recorded for the study with ten interviewees, five women and five men ranging from the age of 21 to 28, the average age being 26. All the interviewees were university students and 8 out of 10 were single. Considering these basic characteristics, all the interviewees could be included in Comico's target group. The average length of customer loyalty in Comico was two years and the average number of visits was once every two months. Not surprisingly, the main reason for visits was food. Still, there is more than the eye meets (in this case the stomach). Food is important for a restaurant, of course, but this study was more interested in the smallest details.

The interviews were conducted in Rovaniemi between May 25 and June 16, 2008. The language used in the interviews was Finnish. The longest interview with three female interviewees at a time took 29 minutes whereas the shortest interview with one male interviewee took 12 minutes. The complete research questions for customers and management can be found at the end of this study (Appendix 1 and Appendix 2).

The interviews were held as follows:

       Interview 1 – In Comico, one interviewee

       Interview 2 – In Comico, two interviewees

       Interview 3 – In the University canteen, one interviewee

       Interview 4 – In the University canteen, two interviewees

       Interview 5 – In a private residence, three interviewees

       Interview 6 – In a private residence, one interviewee

After a promising start it became difficult to find interviewees in Comico since people did not want to be bothered nor were they interested in the study. This was understandable since the interview was quite long and there was no reward for taking part in this study. Comico is known to be popular among students so the researcher sent e-mail to selected students at the university of Lapland requesting regular customers in Comico to help improve the service quality there and to participate in the thesis. Volunteers responded already within a couple of days and interviews were agreed to take place in the university canteen and in two private residences. A group session with three female interviewees was a success since the ideas and comments of others made the conversation fly and the interview soon started to remind of a discussion. After a shy start, the interviewer could have left the room and the discussion would still be going. If someone had already come up with a good answer, others found it easy to agree with it and had then nothing to add. Interviews with two interviewees at a time were also more productive than with one interviewee at a time.

The manager of Comico, Mr. Jari Näsman, was interviewed in the restaurant's facilities in 20th of June 2008 after the customers had been interviewed. The interview took 20 minutes and the interview was recorded. In addition, the manager and the researcher had also been sending e-mails and having telephone conversation in order to specify some answers and get more information for the study.

4.4 Quality assessment

The main issues in assessing the quality of the study are the validity and reliability of the research. Researches tend to avoid making mistakes, yet validity and reliability of results and conclusions may vary. Reliability measures the repetitive components of the results. In other words, if two identical measurements provide the same result, the result can be identified trustworthy. Validity determines whether the research method is actually measuring what it intends to measure. Measurements and methods do not always match the researcher's conceptions of what is being studied. This happens because people may misunderstand questions and therefore give "wrong" answers. (Hirsjärvi 2007, 226.) Reliability presumes that the progression and the conclusions of the research are reported correctly based on the research material. Reliability of the research analysis and the conclusions are therefore evaluated by validity of interpretations. In order to measure reliability of the research material alone, the researcher must document and give reasons to those arguments that the categorisations are based on. (Nieminen 1997, 219-220.)

It was clear that the questions used in the research are meant for regular customers of the case company Comico. The questions turned out to be so specific that a customer who had dropped by in the restaurant once or twice could not possibly notice the details of different parts of service. This was noticed when one interview was started with a male interviewee but was then interrupted since he had visited the case company shortly only twice. The researcher's ability to produce reliable research material and analysis will be evaluated at the end of the thesis.

4.5 The interview

Before each interview, the researcher explained each interviewee the purpose of the study. It was agreed that the interview was going to be recorded. The environment was secured from possible interruptions during the interview.

The interview was first started with warm-up questions about the interviewee's history with the case company, such as number of visits during a year and what were

the reasons for their visits. It was also really important to make sure that the interviewees could tell what made Comico so much different from other restaurants in Rovaniemi. This was crucial from uniqueness-aspect. If Comico had not found unique, the study would have failed instantly. This means that if the case organisation did not have a character of its own, this research would have been unnecessary.

Then the interviewer guided the interviewees through the most important themes of the study, such as the service process, which is the functional part of the business starting with entering the company premises and ending with goodbyes. The staff was also evaluated as what the employees said and did give away the true nature of the company. It was interesting to find out whether professionalism was more appreciated than personality and what were the most wanted characteristics for the ideal front-line employee working in a theme restaurant. Other themes were service environment, the customer's own role in the service process, customer satisfaction and so on. As a conclusion the interviewees were asked to tell spontaneously about one of their visits to Comico. Finally, the interviews were closed with personal background information: age, occupation and marital status. It was ensured that their real names would not be used in the study. All interviewees agreed that direct quotations could be used. However, the quotations were translated from Finnish to English but it was done as precisely as possible.

4.6 Analysis

The research material was analysed with content analysis. Content analysis is a systematic and an objective tool to describe, organise and conceptualise the phenomenon in question. An inherent objective for a qualitative research is to find common methods, similarities or differences in research material. The basic process of a material based qualitative research is the content analysis process. Content analysis stands for condensing the research material in such way that the investigated phenomena can be described briefly and commonly or that the relation between the phenomena can be clearly brought forth. (Gyngäs & Vanhanen 1999, 3.)

According to Gyngäs and Vanhanen (1999), the technical part of the analysis starts with resolving the original expressions. The research material consisted of asked questions based on the research problems. First, those words that are at focus with the research will be recognized. These expressive sentences will be resolved to a group of most identical expressions. The most identical expressions will be grouped to the same category and the category is given a common denominator. Then, connecting these similar lower categories creates the next, upper categories. The upper categories are also given a common denominator. Finally, the upper categories are united to one descriptive category. (Gyngäs & Vanhanen 1999, 3-12.) The grouping for this study is described in Appendix 3.

The analysis of the interviews has been spread throughout the text. As mentioned earlier, the research questions had been categorised based on how experience was created within a service process (business idea, staff, facilities, etc.). Therefore this study follows the same principle and deals with one issue at a time simultaneously from theories' and case company's viewpoints. There are also many real-life examples in order to make the topic at hand more practical. In addition, suggestions made by the interviewees are widely presented as well as the researcher's own ideas that sprung during this study. Quotations are used along the analysis in order to keep the text as lively and interesting as the interviews were. Let the journey to the heart begin!

5 TOWARDS EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

5.1 Changing consumption trends

A new rising consumption trend is individualism. The time of mass production from past decades is evidently over as consumers demand more customized attention in all aspects of life. New and somewhat common trends are consumer-hedonism as well as individualism, nostalgia and environment. The changing values can be explained

with ideologies of our time such as aesthetics and hedonism. Aesthetics is a philosophy based on enjoyment and beauty. Longing for beauty is considered as a quality that all people naturally possess, whereas hedonism stresses the importance of pleasure. Hedonistic consumption of products and services is based on the desire to experience the greatest possible pleasure. Subsequently, modern hedonism refers to consumption with a strong emphasis of dreaming. Aiming at pleasure can then be seen as a controlled entirety, consisting of pleasures and experiences. This form of consumption has been seen to grow for the past years, especially in the fields of experience shopping and pleasure-aimed consumption. (Hillo 2006, 4.) Such shopping occurs well in the U.S. theme shopping malls (with Roman market or live animals) and in Rainforest Cafés where one can experience the atmosphere of an rainforest while enjoying coffee: the audio-animated animals together with sounds of rain and thunder give an experience out of the ordinary. (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 18-24.)

Consumption has become an activity that involves a production of meaning as well as a field of symbolic exchanges. Consumers do not consume products or services; they consume the product's meanings and images and take it for granted that an object will fulfil certain functions. It is actually the object's image, not the object itself that makes the difference and changes the value that has previously been put on products and services by marketing objectives. Consumer behaviour researchers have tried to rebalance the functional and utilitarian vision of consumption by applying a so-called experiential perspective that focuses on hedonistic values and individual objectivity (Figure 2). In an experiential perspective, consumers are less interested in maximizing their benefits and more focused on hedonistic gratification within a given social context. "Should we consume to live or should we live to consume?" People consume today mainly to exist (identity) and not only to live (needs). It is through consumption that people build up and reinforce their identities (Carù & Cova 2007, 4-5).

Weight of
objective
features

UTILITARIAN
PRODUCTS

**Consumer's
search for
identity**

Traditional
vision of
consumption

HEDONIC
PRODUCTS

Weight of
subjective
responses
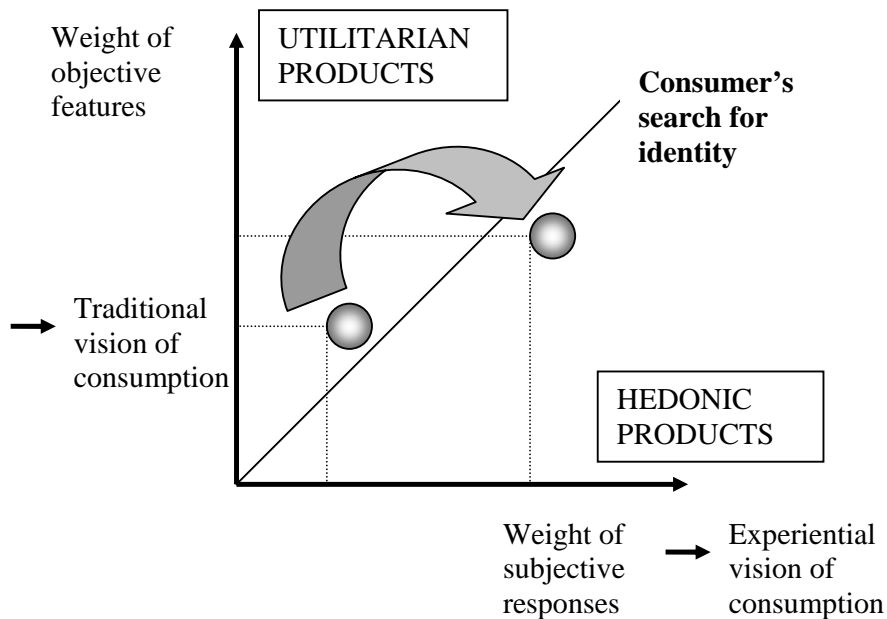
Experiential
vision of
consumption

Figure 2: The experiential vision of consumption (Carù & Cova 2007, 4).

The new consumption trend identifies consumption as a constant flow of fantasies, feelings and pleasures. The elements of post-modern consumption describe well these modern trends, as they all tend to annihilate the lines between past trends and etiquettes in order to create something new. (Hillo 2006, 4.) Traditional marketing is therefore to be replaced with "experiential marketing, which focuses on consumer experiences, treats consumption as a holistic experience and recognizes both the rational and emotional drivers of consumption". This is the case particularly with service organisations as each interaction with a consumer creates an experience over the entire organisation. (Harris, Harris & Baron 2003, 185.)

Fantasies, feelings and pleasures are important corner stones in Comico's business plan. Mr Näsman, the manager, had an idea to combine individual service, good food, quality entertainment and a theme within the same service concept. In his words: "We have decided to offer customers an option". A marketing research was conducted in Rovaniemi in 2004. The purpose of this research was to find out what kind of restaurant services were missing in the Rovaniemi region and whether Comico's concept would attract customers with its unusual business idea. The research was carried out in a nightclub owned by the student union of the university of Lapland. According to the research, wide interest was shown towards stand-up

comedy and theatre in a restaurant. The results showed that 84 % were interested in stand-up comedy whereas restaurant theatre received an interest rate of 68 %. The number of overall respondents was one hundred. Comico's business idea is based on this research. (Näsman 2008)

5.2 New source of value

Offering experiences create value, as consumers demand different things today than twenty years ago. The 21st century has brought changes in business along with the transformation of our society. People want to buy an emotional experience instead of plain products and services. A product which does not posses the experience element will not cope in the future competition. A true experience product is a significant adventure divergent from the ordinary and at its best can lead to an inner, personal change. Consumers are also prepared to pay more for such service: Experiences add remarkable value compared to a traditional service concept. Organisations recorded to be operating in the field of experience economy are mainly service business, as all the possibilities of experience economy have not yet been applied. (LCEEI 2008.)

Comico serves not only food, but also experiences along with it. Theatre performances, sing-along nights and stand-up comedy all create an emotional experience in addition to the regular restaurant visit. Customers are also willing to pay for this service, yet the price is not that high: Comico charges from five to eight euros for entrance on show evenings. However, there is no entrance fee on sing-along nights.

The most common cafeteria or a restaurant product is coffee. What defines the price on a nice cup of hot coffee? When a person buys a packet of coffee at a grocery store and makes the coffee himself, he would probably agree to pay a few cents for a cup of it. Buying the same cup at a restaurant would cost more as the cup of coffee is served with nice premises, music and of course, service. The product has now "changed" from good to service and so has the given value (Figure 3). When a person buys a service, he purchases a set of intangible activities carried out on his behalf. Pine & Gilmore (1999, 1-2) offer experience as the fourth economic offering

in addition to the other three: commodity, good and service. The greatest difference in price occurs when the same cup of coffee is served with an experience. Pine & Gilmore (1999) state the following: "When a person buys an experience, he pays to spend time enjoying a series of memorable events that a company stages – as in a theatrical play – to engage him in a personal way". A good example is the Rainforest Café where a cup of coffee with audiovisual experience costs more than at Starbucks across the street (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 18).
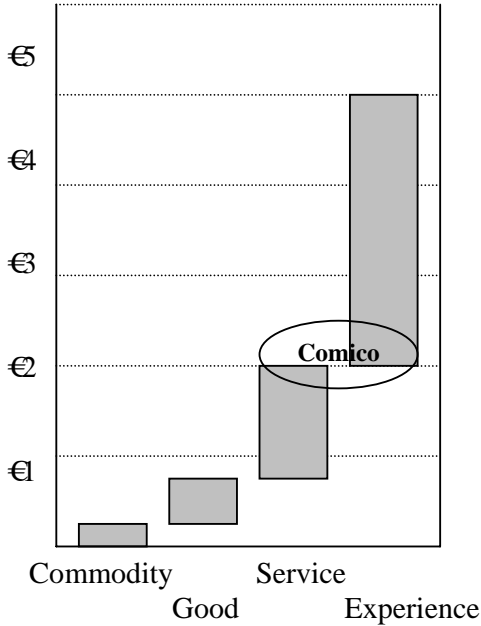
Figure 3: Price of the coffee offerings (adapted from Pine & Gilmore 1999, 2).

The average price on a coffee product in Comico is €2,35. As shown in the Figure above, the price fades between a regular service product and an experience product. Comico has not yet invested in any audiovisual equipment nor is it located next to the Eiffel Tower in Paris, so the extra price is charged in entrance fees for now. Experiences are still measured throughout the company, not only through performances.

5.3 Dream society

Businesses have been driven by information technology in the information society; in the dream society businesses will be driven by stories and emotions, not just by data. A research at the Copenhagen Institute for Future Studies shows that the major growth in consumption in the future will be of a nonmaterial nature. Why do we create stories? Human beings have lived for and with myths, fairy tales and legends from time immemorial. The days of the information society are numbered and the transformation towards the dream society has already begun as the market for feelings is eclipsing the market for tangible products. Consider the sudden desire for free-range hens: Customers do not want hens to live their lives in small, confining cages; customers want hens to have access to earth and sky. In other words, consumers want eggs to be produced under the technology and methods of our grandparents in the old-fashioned way. This means that the eggs become more expensive but consumers are happy to pay an additional 15 or 20 percent for the story behind the egg; they are willing to pay more for the story about animal ethics, about rustic romanticism, about the good old ways. (Jensen 1999, 52.)

Comico has combined a bit of theatre, a bit of exotic countries and plenty of bright colours to spice up the Arctic Circle! The idea of Finnish people being blue and melancholic should be taken aside and turn a new, fresh leaf for attitudes especially for young adults. When it is dark outside and the snow comes pouring in, would it not be nice to step inside into something warm and comfortable for a nice cup of hot chocolate. The restaurant is actually built a bit underground, which reminds of a cave, even a sanctuary. Comico's management understand that being different and having a character of its own can provide a happy place for customers to come to. Having a laugh during a meal does not do any harm for anyone.

Businesses need to imagine their futures the way good novelists imagine their stories. Business scenarios are a stage and the market is the play with its actors. The word scenario is etymologically related to scene, where the scenario is the background for the drama of the market. Operating with scenarios makes it easier to answer companies' questions about the future: What stage are we to act on? What does the scenery look like? The comparison of scenario planning to the world of theatre and

fiction is no accident. Building scenarios is not merely an analytic exercise, it is also part drama and part dream. Nowadays, most large firms use scenarios in some form or another, because the future is uncertain. (Jensen 1999, 27-28.) It is necessary to transfer not just the market, but the business as well into a theatrical act, where employees are the cast and business strategy is the play script and customers the audience. The facilities of a business create the overall stage, which needs to be transferred and thematised into a theatre, an entertaining environment where customers can enjoy themselves, join the play and be the leading actors and actresses of the show. (Markkanen 2008, 21-22.) Enjoy the play.

6 EXPERIENCE

The origin of the concept of experience can be found from the 18th century and the era of romanticism, which is associated with search for intensive pleasure and emotional excitement combined with western society's quest for identity – leading towards a search for experiences. An experience is a subjective episode that consumers live through when they interact with a firm's product or service. (Carù & Cova 2007, 5-38.) An experience can be defined as a positive and wholeness-like emotional adventure that challenges all senses. Usually experiences include a feeling of exceeding oneself by doing something out of the ordinary, something differing from the every-day life. Not all of us experience a theatre evening or a visit to a restaurant as enjoyable as scuba diving or rock climbing. Still, by seeking out activities outside the safety of our homes make us all posses the same hunger: need to experience something new and exciting. We seek entertainment, astonishment, wonder and surprises as a contrast to the greyness of our daily lives. If we embrace these extraordinary emotions and feelings to our everyday activities and our everyday persona, one might be heading towards emotional development and a wider perspective over life. (LCEEI 2007.) One could say experiences make us better people.

There's no such thing as artificial experience. Every experience created with the individual is real, whether the stimuli are natural or simulated. (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 36.) Experiences live only in the minds of the "experiencers" who have embraced the experience on an emotional, physical, intellectual and even on a spiritual level. One might need to share the experience with other people in order to complete understand how it has influenced them. Sharing photos with a friend after a trip can have such an effect. Each person has preferences and an individual way to perceive the world, which makes us experience same situations differently. (Hillo 2006, 5.) A trip to Stockholm can be very exciting for a person who has never travelled before compared to someone with more travelling experience, for instance. The consumer's expectations and values are directly correlated with the desired experience, which cannot be directly produced at any circumstances, humans being complex as they are. (LCEEI 2008.)

6.1 Experience triangle

Which elements should an experience service or product possess? Which products are experience products and which are not? Answers to these questions offer the experience triangle (Figure 4) defined by Lapland Centre of Expertise for the Experience Industry (2007). The model helps to understand and analyse the experience character in tourism, entertainment and culture industries, virtual experiences and design products. This model can be viewed from two perspectives: the level of the specific elements of the product and the level of the client's own perception. Although a unique experience is impossible to guarantee with certainty, elements may nevertheless be included in the service enabling the creation of the unique experience-related criteria and transfer the product or service into a unique experience. (Tarssanen 2005, 8.)
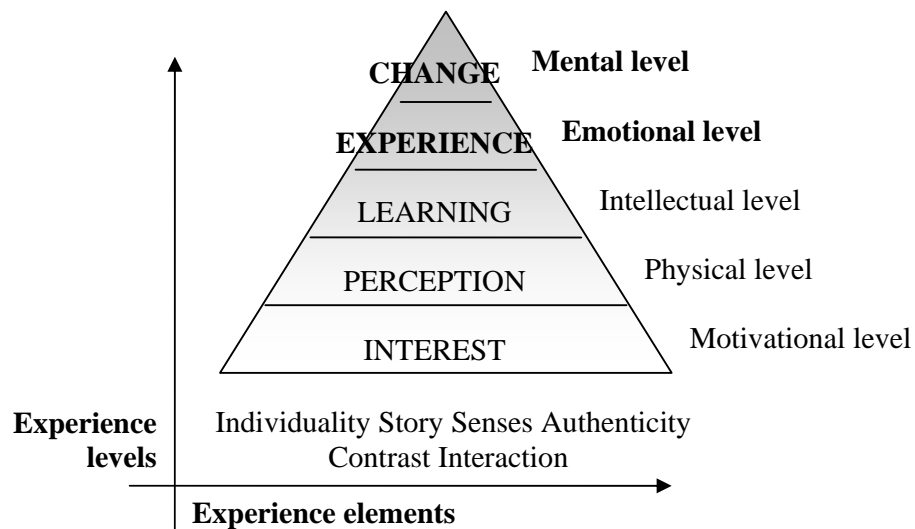
The experience triangle showing levels from bottom to top: INTEREST (Motivational level), PERCEPTION (Physical level), LEARNING (Intellectual level), EXPERIENCE (Emotional level), CHANGE (Mental level). On the axes: Experience levels (vertical), Experience elements (horizontal) with: Individuality Story Senses Authenticity Contrast Interaction.

Figure 4: The experience triangle (LCEEI 2007).

6.1.1 Experience elements

A good, functional unique experience product or service has all the basic elements involved on each level of the experience.

Individuality

Individuality refers to the uniqueness of the service so that a completely same or even similar product cannot be found elsewhere. Individuality can be seen in customer orientation, flexibility and in the possibility to tailor a product according to the preferences and needs of a customer. Travel services and program providers often need to be flexible as they need to pay attention to a big group of people with different needs and wants. Customisation can be taken as far as needed but the more custom-made the product gets the higher the expenses get. The challenge is to create products that can be easily personalized and have the basic concept simple enough to be copied without difficulty. (Tarssanen 2005, 9.) Individual marketing means tailoring products and marketing programmes to the needs and preferences of individual customers. New technologies are today permitting many companies to

return back to customized marketing. That is: Mass customisation, which is the process through which firms interact one-to-one with masses of customers to create customer-unique value by designing products and services tailor-made to individual needs. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 254.) Comico is also on the quest to provide unique restaurant experiences to the ever demanding, urban customers. According to the study conducted for Comico's benefit, seven out of ten interviewees mentioned "different" or "unique" as a distinctive character of Comico. The interviewees thought the theme, decoration and food to be one of a kind compared to other restaurants in Rovaniemi. Sing-along nights were also mentioned, but the second most important character after uniqueness was food.

> *Comico is like one big living room. Reminds me of the TV show Friends!* (Saara, 24)

> *Comico has one of the most entertaining interiors of all restaurants. Everything functions together creating a tight and a warm atmosphere. Usually restaurants are shallow, but Comico's choice of space, colours, material and decorations create a cosy atmosphere. Menus and water bottles delight any time. They remind me of a certain American style and Tarantino's movies.* (Satu, 27)

Several smiling comments were made about Comico's menu (Appendix 5). The menu is actually a small cartoon booklet. It takes quite a while to actually read through the menu, which is over 26 pages long. For this reason ordering can be sometimes rather slow.

> *I like baco and poco. They really create the Mexican atmosphere!* (Hannu, 25)

> *Best about advertising are poco and paco. Cartoon characters are great and memorable, even though I wonder about the Mexican theme… in Rovaniemi.* (Taneli, 23)

Image 1: A cartoon featuring in Comico' menu (Appendix 5).

The restaurant is privately owned which makes it unique when compared to other restaurants; most of the other restaurants concepts can be found in any other town of Finland. Private ownership has given the manager free hands and has consciously given Comico the character of its own. When considering mass customisation, could Comico's unique service concept be copied to other towns as well? Other university cities in Finland could be interested in the concept but it is very likely that similar service can already be found elsewhere. Comico is special in Rovaniemi because it is one of a kind in the town.

Authenticity

Authenticity stands for the creditability of the product. Authenticity exists naturally at a travel destination and is part of the region's way of life and culture. (Tarssanen 2005, 9; Gilmore 2007, 21.) According to Edward Bruner (1994), authenticity is defined by the customer himself. The product is genuine if the customer experiences it true and real. There is no universally recognized true and real, yet there is always some authority's version over what is real. A product should be based on the culture of its designer so that producers would perceive the product as a natural part of their own, local identity. Souvenirs and design products are such products. Each representation and copy that we observe over any culture changes our view over the original. (Bruner 1994, 397.)

Comico's theme is their main asset when trying to provide something unique and different for their customers. The theme is shown in menu, decoration, colours, lighting, furniture and so on. In this case authenticity can be defined by the creditability of the theme. The management's idea of the theme is that they have cross-Latin cuisine and they have a wide selection of foreign beverages. Comico's overall impression was described to have a cosy atmosphere and the played music is quiet enough for social interaction. Comico was criticised to have a messy and confusing style. All the male interviewees thought the place was nice and cosy, but four out of five female interviewees thought the place looked cheap and colours on the walls were too bright.

> *I don't think their theme stands out that much. (Henna, 24)*

> *The theme could be brought forward more discreetly. (Jenni, 26)*

> *The decoration is like a diner meets Finnish gas station. (Henna, 24)*

It is true that matters of taste are something not worth arguing about, yet still every interviewee agreed that there was something shady how the theme of the cuisine had been combined with the premises. Every other interviewee agreed the decoration reminded him or her of an American breakfast restaurant or a milkshake bar from the

50's. Even though the interviewees had agreed that the place was different, cosy and pleasant with a funny theme, they were still unhappy to recognize that the theme is not consistent. It was the messy atmosphere that attracted these young consumers yet they wished it to be changed to look more like the mainstream restaurants. In this case one may think carefully before making any changes, as these thoughts seem to arise from a more unconscious level. An example: Girls are on a shopping trip. One may hear another one saying: "Oh, that blouse is so you!" Sure it is. You already have five blouses exactly like that one waiting at home. People are used to something and therefore like to keep doing something the same way they always have done. It is safe and easy. In this case the formula is the same. The interviewees were delighted by the extraordinary look of the place but at the same time they would changed the look to something else.

Story

It is important to combine the different elements together with a story so that the experience will become tight and enthralling. A believable and true story gives the product and the experience a social meaning and a reason to actually experience the product. A story is used to explain the customer what is being done and in which order. No tourist goes ice fishing for the simple joy of ice fishing but to learn the great and important skill of ice fishing or as they are convinced about it. A lake nearby can be a mystic place or the catch can be especially valuable. A good story is a mixture of fiction and fact: old beliefs and legends assorted with regional information. Stories also activate customers on an emotional level. Impressiveness of a product should be well thought of and the script written with customers' interests in mind. Above all, the story needs to be reliable. Pine & Gilmore (1999) call this harmonization of an experience. Coherent themes are also a crucial part of experience products. Themes and stories need to be present at all phases of an experience, from marketing and customer service to the experience itself. (Tarssanen 2005, 10-11; Pine & Gilmore 1999, 46-55.)

Once upon a time in Mexico there was a dream of a restaurant. The restaurant would have character and, most importantly, quality. The story tells how three gentlemen

Paco, Poco and Loco designed delicious recipes for the restaurant, which was named Comico. The name Comico refers to "comedian". Indeed, the menu is described to be a comedian's menu and small stories throughout the menu delight any customer, no matter how low they might be feeling. Paco, Poco and Loco are three happy Mexican fellows who share their passion to food as well as their love to a beautiful girl called Juanita. All three try to impress Juanita the best they can but so far without success. Paco is the tall and sophisticated wine master of the trio. His long nose can tell the difference between any wines in the world. Poco is the youngest and the dumbest of them. If he sets his mind to something, it usually has a catastrophic ending. Loco is short, round and loud. He is the main chef and loves good food, especially quality food.
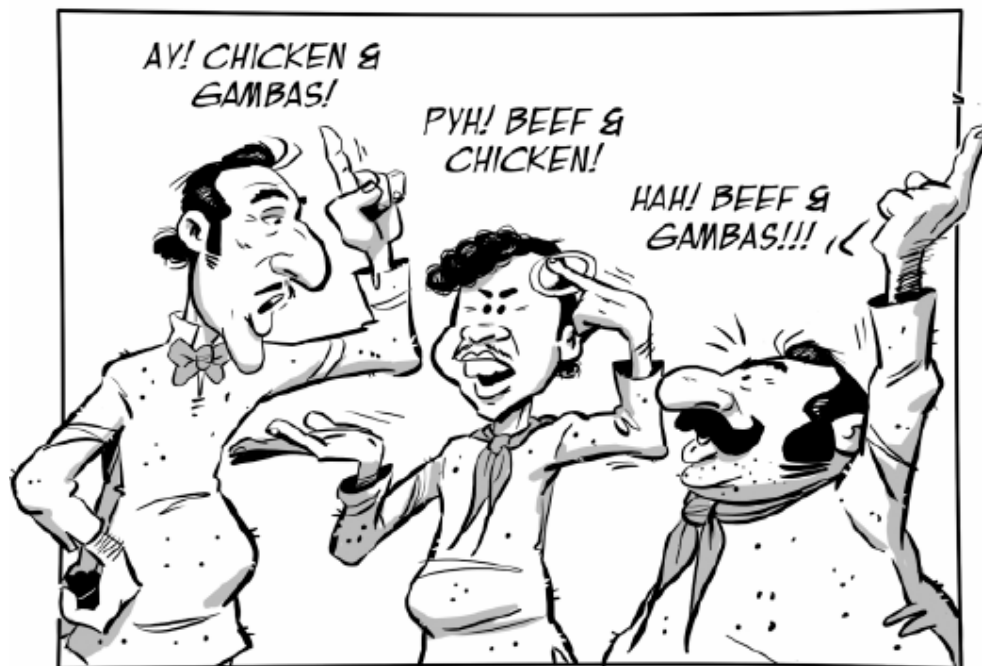

Image 2: Paco, Poco and Loco (Appendix 5).

Contrast

Contrast stands for differentiation in the eyes of the customer. Experience products need to offer contrast to the customer's daily life and therefore be different. The customer must be able to experience something new, exotic and definitely something out of the ordinary. Nobody wants to drive from home to work on his spare time. As

a contrast, rallying on a forest route is totally whole another driving experience. One may see oneself differently after an extraordinary experience when being in a strange environment in another persona Experiences can possibly bring the relaxed and extreme "holiday character" closer to our daily personality who is able enjoy life and crack daily routines in a liberating way. (Tarssanen 2005, 11.)

If one wishes to have dinner in a less traditional way, the right address is Comico's sing-along night. The joy of singing comes to life in Comico where (after a few drinks) the audience is brave enough to join the band's performance and sing with them. Anyone can request for a song and the songs are familiar, as the songbook consists a wide collection of mainstream music. All five male interviewees and one female interviewee out of five had participated in the sing-along nights in Comico. They were happy to tell that they had taken part in singing and that all but one had requested a song or had at least tried to do so. All agreed that the band was good.

They were great, absolutely splendid! (Joonas, 25)

Phenomenal! Very professional! (Saara, 24)

The male interviewees shared a very excited attitude towards sing-along nights and were very pleased with the band's playing. Four out of five female interviewees seemed to have somewhat negative attitude towards sing-along nights even though they had not visited any. The prejudices seemed to be big for them. Most of the interviewees added that they have not been informed about sing-along nights well enough.

No, I haven't been to a sing-along night. Actually, I haven't got the slightest idea what it is about but it sounds like I would need to sing as well and that really doesn't sound like something I'd do. (Satu, 27)

Absolutely great atmosphere! Great choices of songs, which everybody were familiar with. (Joonas, 25)

It can be that the code of behaviour in these events is so unusual that it frightens those who have not encouraged themselves to try something new and embraced this new experience. That is, the contrast is too big. Comico could add some information about sing-along nights on their website with some pictures as well. For those who are curious but not brave enough could get an extra push to join one of these evenings if they just had more information.

Senses

The more effectively an experience engages the five senses the more memorable it will be. All senses should be in a natural harmony, yet in a way where they strengthen wanted parts of the theme. A good experience covers all senses. If different senses are not stimulated purposively - with too many or too few stimulations - the impression of the experience may suffer greatly. (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 59; Tarssanen 2005, 11.) Four out of five senses are well covered in the case company. The customer's vision is stimulated by decoration, colours and lighting; hearing is stimulated by noise and music. Delicious smells flow from the open kitchen straight to the dining area where customers can smell and see their food being prepared. Good food, refreshing drinks and tasty snacks cherish the customer's taste with different flavours. The remaining sense, the sense of touch, does not stand out as well the rest of the senses. Materials used in cutlery, menu, porcelain and any other small details the customers come in contact with are also important but do not need to be in the centre of attention. According to this study the most important qualities of a good restaurant are food and atmosphere. Food includes taste and sense of smell whereas atmosphere is indirectly connected to vision and hearing. Atmosphere is created by "a particular environment of surrounding influence", which can be effected by decoration (WordNet 3.0 2006).

Interaction

Interaction takes place between the product or service representative and the customers. It represents successful communication between a product and its

producers. Interaction is essentially involved with a feeling of kinship: Experience can be "performed" with friends, family or with a group of people. This is important to remember when people attend to a group activity, like a scuba diving trip or a husky safari. Introducing people to each other give them a feeling of belongingness and therefore strengthen interaction within the group and producers. It does not necessarily need other people in order to enjoy of an experience but group behaviour includes awareness of the experience being socially accepted and appreciated. Consequently, this increases social status and tightens relationships within a group. (Tarssanen 2005, 11-12.) Interactive marketing means that service quality depends heavily on the quality of the buyer-seller interaction during the service encounter. Service marketers, therefore, have to master interactive marketing skills. Thus, Ritz-Carlton selects only "people who care about people" and instructs them carefully in the fine art of interacting with customers to satisfy their every need. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 302.)

Comico does not need to be concerned with customers interacting with other customers in a way Tarssanen (2005) describes it, as people tend to go to restaurants with people they already know, such as friends, colleagues and family members. A noisy customer at the next table can be disturbing though. The interaction between employees and customers is very important from customer satisfaction's point of view. Comico's customers are not perfectly pleased how they have experienced interaction with the staff of Comico. The average opinion about the staff's competence was "OK" but suggestions for improvements were repeating the same theme: The customers feel like the employees are not motivated enough to care about them and their needs as customers. Several comments were made regarding attitude, friendliness and efficiency.

> *I would wish them to be more friendly and happy.* (Satu, 27)

> *They could at least come over every once in a while and ask if everything's all right?* (Joonas, 25)

Altogether, the interviewees hoped to get more individual attention than just the regular "thank you" and "bye". They were also wondering whether the service was

slow because lack of employees or because lack of interest towards customers? The possibility to give feedback could maybe solve these kinds of communication problems.

6.1.2 Experience levels

The vertical axis of the model illustrates the building of the customer's experience from impulsive via interest, experience and the conscious processing of an emotionally rich, unique experience leading to a mental change.

Motivational level

The motivational level is at the bottom. This refers to awakening the customer's interest. At the level of motivation, customer expectations are created with respect to the product or service, the desire and readiness to participate and to experience it. The product or service is brought to the consciousness of the customer by marketing means, for instance. All unique experience-related criteria should be fulfilled already during this stage. In other words, the marketing of the product or service should be as personal as it can be, monistic and genuine. (Tarssanen 2005, 12-13; Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 191-192.) Comico possesses a very personal theme and style in marketing, which unfortunately does not seem to reach its customers at least not before visiting their premises. It was clear that the marketing had not reached the interviewees, but the word of mouth is even more valuable. Six out of ten interviewees had visited Comico for the first time by a recommendation of a friend. When asking about Comico's means of marketing, most of them were confused since they could not recall seeing any. According to Mr Näsman, the manager, Comico has advertisements on local papers every other week; their program, opening hours and menu can be found on their web page at www.comico.fi. Their web page is only in Finnish but they are planning to add the menu in English on the web site. The most efficient marketing channel turned out to be university's e-mail lists where sing-along nights are widely marketed.

Physical level

The second level is the physical level. On this level the customers experience their environment through the senses and the product or service is received, tried, recognized, acknowledged and brought into consciousness. Using physical senses we realize where we are, what is happening and what we are doing. A good product or service ensures a pleasant and safe experience on the physical level: It is not too cold or too hot, one is not hungry or thirsty, and no physical danger is at threat. Expectations of the above are so-called 'extreme' unique experiences, where the successful experience of the risk of death or injury is an essential element. The technical quality of the product or service is tested on this level as well. (LCEEI 2007; Tarssanen 2005, 13.) The physical level was measured with questions about lighting, music, noise and temperature in Comico. These are very basic questions but give valuable information about the overall impression of the service environment. Noise, atmosphere and colours were three most repeated features that affected the interviewees' perception over Comico. Noise and the level of music were both silent enough to have a good conversation with friends while eating. Music could get louder during evenings but it would be part of a performance or other program. Atmosphere was described with words like cosy, small, silent and idyllic. Comments made about colours were not as flattering. One third of the interviewees thought colours like red and orange made the place look cheap and tacky. It was clear four female interviewees out of five thought the place had a messy interior, but also three male interviewees had a very strong disliking opinion about the colours. However, most likely the problem was not with the colour itself, only the way it had been used. Even when the group of three female interviewees had similar negative comments about decoration, their general attitude towards the place was very positive, same for the male interviewees.

Intellectual level

Intellectual level is the third level. On this level we process the sensory stimuli provided by the environment and act in accordance, learning, thinking, applying knowledge and forming opinions. We decide on the intellectual level if we are

satisfied with the product or not. A good product or service offers the customer learning or training experience and a potential to learn something new as well as developing and obtaining new information either consciously or unconsciously. (Tarssanen 2005, 13.) As mentioned earlier, the main reason for the interviewees to visit Comico was food. The programme and atmosphere were also frequently listed as reasons to go to Comico.

> *Why? Well because I'm hungry of course and then I go to the sing-along nights as well.* (Hannu, 25)

> *I drink, eat and listen to music.* (Erkka, 22)

> *I go there for the great food, pleasant decoration and atmosphere. I've been very satisfied with the place, been going there for three years.* (Satu, 27)

All the interviewees agreed to be satisfied with Comico - even those who did not fancy the design and colours. They had also recommended the place to other people. They had recommended Comico for prices, food and sing-along nights. The prices are suitable for students as they receive a 15% discount with a valid student card. The food was said to be good and the portions big. A half of the interviewees had also taken out of town friends and family members to eat in Comico. In their opinion Comico was the number one restaurant in town. The sing-along nights were said to be a good place to hang out with friends and meet other students.

The interviewees had formed their opinions about Comico based on their experiences. The interviewees had spent time within the service facilities as well as they had had interaction with the staff. They had enjoyed a lunch or a dinner from Comico's menu and possibly attended to a sing-along night as well. They had been pleased with the price and had decided to come again. The menu is comparable to one other restaurant in Rovaniemi. Several comments were made about Comico's kitchen to be similar to its competitor Amarillo. However, the interviewees still preferred to visit Comico, which was explained as follows:

Interviewer: *Your suggestions for improvements?*

Interviewee: *All walls could be painted in one colour and then maybe have some Mexican hats hanging here and there (laughing).* (Jenni, 26)

Interviewee: *But not like in Amarillo or anything since they have the same food.* (Henna, 24)

Interviewer: *What makes Comico special?*

Interviewee: *Comico is different 'cause it's private and not as stiff as Amarillo.* (Hannu, 25)

Interviewer: *Do you share your experiences in Comico with others? If you do, what?*

Interviewee: *Sure I do. There's relaxed atmosphere, Amarillo-type of food but with more varieties. It's also cheap.* (Joonas, 25)

The interviewees had clearly found the connection between Comico's and Amarillo's style. Seven out of ten interviewees agreed food to be the most important reason to visit Comico but there are reasons to doubt this. The menu comparisons below illustrate how similar their menus are. The menus are unfortunately mostly in Finnish, but the English headlines will give the idea of what is being offered. In addition, whereas Comico offers student discounts Amarillo has several weekly changing offers for the holders of S-Etukortti (a Finnish bonus card). (Valve 2007, 175.) Even when the similarities had been recognized and accepted, the interviewees still preferred to visit Comico instead of Amarillo. The conclusion is that in the end it is the atmosphere, the place itself and other customers rather than just the food that attract in Comico. The food must be great but it is not unique - the place is.

Image 3: Menu comparison between Amarillo and Comico (Appendix 5; Valve 2007).

Emotional level

The fourth level is the emotional level or actually the experiencing level of the unique experience. An individual's emotional reactions are difficult to predict and control. If all basic elements of the product have been well taken into account so far, and the physical and intellectual levels both function, it is quite likely that the customer will experience a positive emotional response: joy, excitement, contentment, the pleasure of achievement or basically something the individual regards significant. (Tarssanen 2005, 13-14.) The interviewees were asked to list emotions and feelings they get when thinking about Comico. The answers did not follow any common pattern, but the words "relaxed" and "loose" were repeated

mostly. The results could be categorized to four different types of feelings: physical, mental, social and functional as presented below.

1. Physical: hungry, full

2. Emotional: loose, satisfaction, relaxed, freedom

3. Social: having fun, friends

4. Functional: easy

Physical feelings were important for three of the interviewees, whereas five interviewees listed both emotional and social feelings. The two remaining interviewees appreciated functionality and mentioned only easiness on their lists. The results indicate that even when a company is trying to create certain types of emotions for its customers it does not automatically mean it will function as such. People are different and people appreciate different things. People may also judge depending on the mood they are at the moment - or how hungry they are.

Mental level

The mental level is the last and top level. A positive and powerful emotional reaction to a unique experience may lead to the experience of a personal change bringing about fairly permanent modifications to the subject's physical being, state of mind or lifestyle. In this respect, the individual feels like a new person and embraced either as part of his own personality or world-view, something new and advanced. Through a unique experience, one can adopt a new hobby, way of thinking or find new resources within oneself. (Tarssanen 2005, 13-14.) This is the most demanding part of the experience triangle and may still not be fulfilled even though all other levels are achieved accordingly. This level is also hard to measure and something like self-interpretation would be too difficult for this study. Instead, the interviewees were asked to tell spontaneously about one of their most memorable visits to Comico.

These two stories were told with great passion, which could indicate that Satu and Saara had actually experienced something unique.

> *I was living in Oulu at the time and came to Rovaniemi to spend the weekend. I hadn't seen my good friend for over half a year and we decided to have dinner together before joining our other friends. It was a stormy night in February and it was cold and dark outside. We stayed in Comico eating (the pancakes for dessert were heavenly!) and talking for hours and hours! The warm living roomy kind of atmosphere was really enhanced by the raging storm outside.* (Satu, 27)

> *It was May Day's sing-along night. We decided to stop by in Comico even though the show was nearly over. The place was totally crowded and the singing could be heard all the way down the street. The air inside was almost misty from the heat. We could not find seats so we sat down on some stairs in the corner and crabbed a songbook from the nearest table. We sang as we had never sung before and joined the crowd for the loudest cheering for the band at the end of the night. A great place to stop by before going clubbing.* (Saara, 24)

6.2 Experience in a restaurant: welcome to the theatre

Using metaphors to communicate important concepts is nothing new. The language of business is filled with metaphors, and marketing is not an exception. A metaphor is capable of transferring qualities from a familiar phenomenon to one that is unknown. For example, the metaphor of service as a "flower" depicts complementary service elements such as hospitality, care taking, billing and other activities surrounding the core service. Another widely accepted metaphor in the service literature is to present service as "theatre", a framework that can be used to describe and analyse the components of a service experience. (Grove & Fisk 1992, 249.) A service encounter bears all the hallmarks of a theatrical production: front stage, front line, audience and the process itself. The customers come to contact at the front stage with the setting, atmosphere, decorations, lighting, the use of space and such. In

other words, the front stage is concerned with the physical evidence of the service; the shopping environment and premises. Customers meet the service employees at the front line in the role of actors dressed accordingly and with the help of a script they deploy necessary skills and attributes to impress the audience. The audience is the customers with certain expectations for and perceptions of the performance. Finally, the process is the manner in which the service is delivered and the actions that shape customers' experiences (the performance). (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 112.)

6.2.1 Business idea – the script

The term 'script' is used in services marketing and management literature. Harris, Harris & Baron (2003, 186) define 'the script' as "actions to be taken by service staff in particular situations". Basically, scripts tell employees how to act accordingly in service situations. People experience hundreds of scripts as part of everyday life, e.g. travelling by air, visiting a dentist, eating in a restaurant or telephoning a call centre. In these and many other service situations knowledge of the script helps us understand and become involved in the sequence of events as well as how we and others are expected to behave. One of the best-known examples and one to which most people can relate is the restaurant script (Table 1) developed by Schank and Abelson in 1977. As with other scripts, it has standard roles to be played, standard objects, ordinary conditions for entering upon the activity, a standard sequence of scenes or actions and some normal results from performing the activity successfully. (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 112-113.) The basic script used in Comico's service process follows the script as it is shown in Table 1. There seems to be a minor complication at the fourth scene, in exiting. A waiter or a waitress brings the bill to the table in most restaurants. Customers are expected to pay at the counter in Comico. This is very confusing for the first time visitors and can create awkward situations. Once used to it, some also like it.

> *It was very confusing the whole thing about paying at the counter during our first visit. First we thought that the place just had bad customer service. It would help if they would notify about it. Add it in the menu or so, make a joke about it.* (Saara, 24)

Paying at the counter leaves a feeling that I've visited a fast food restaurant. (Hannu, 25)

Paying at the counter is a good thing. I can leave whenever I want and I don't need to wait for the waitress to come and get the bill and go again to get the change. (Satu, 27)

We had to queue in line to pay. It was weird. (Jenni, 26)

Table 1: Theoretical restaurant script (adapted from Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 114).

Name:	Restaurant	**Roles:**	Customer
Props:	Tables		Waitress
	Menu		Cook
	Food		Cashier
	Bill		Owner
	Money		

Entry Conditions:	Customer has money	**Results:**	Customer has less money, Owner has more money, Customer is not hungry, Customer is satisfied/dissatisfied

Scene 1: **Entering**
Customer enters restaurant
Customer looks for table
Customer decides where to sit
Customer goes to table
Customer sits down

Scene 2: **Ordering**
Customer picks up menu
Customer looks at menu
Customer decides on food
Customer signals waitress
Waitress comes to table
Customer orders food
Waitress goes to cook
Waitress gives food order to cook
Cook prepares food

Scene 3: **Eating**
Cook gives food to waitress
Waitress brings food to customer
Customer eats food

Scene 4: **Exiting**
Waitress writes bill
Waitress goes over to customer
Waitress gives bill to customer
Customer gives money to the waitress
Customer leaves restaurant

Lovelock (2001, 371) suggests that blueprints can help to identify failure points within a service organisation. A well-constructed blueprint enables to visualize the process of service delivery. This is done by depicting the sequence of front stage interactions that customers perceive when they encounter the service provider's facilities and equipment, together with supporting backstage activities hidden from the customers and not part of the actual service experience. The theoretical restaurant script (Table 1) is a good example of such a blue print: The script displays the major elements of service, both core product and supplementary services. It also shows the principal interactions with customers and a plausible sequence in which they might take place. This is very helpful to clear up the elements of the service, finding possible missing ones and showing the sequence in which these elements are delivered. Blueprints can also highlight the points where failures are most likely to occur. (Lovelock 2001, 371-372.) There will be more about identifying failures within a service concept later in the thesis (paragraph 7.3).

Harris, Harris & Baron (2003) identify two different types of scripts: a functional and a dramatic script. The *functional script* represents a "top-down" structure for codes of behaviour within an organisation. Its simplest forms are such as text scripts for telemarketers or people working in customer service. Functional scripts also provide the basis for evaluating the performance of employees. These scripts have been criticized for being too manipulative and controlling because employees will become indifferent about their jobs if they are not allowed to use their own personalities when confronting a customer. These scripts play only a small role in practice, as they do not reflect the reality of the "dramas" that employees deal with on a day-to-day basis. The functional script is the management's attempt to create a play within a play where actors are supposed to play a certain character in their functional role. The *dramatic script* is defined as a blueprint for the imaginary theatrical production, which works as an interior map to be decoded by the theatrical team. The "coded" script contains instructions for the characters how to perform in an experience. As a contrast to the functional script, the dramatic script captures the complexity of the experience essential to the performance. (Harris, Harris & Baron 2003, 186-187.) Working in a restaurant does not require specific functional scripts as telemarketers do. There are several different roles in a restaurant. An employee needs to recognize his role in order to perform his part successfully. Table 1 presents several roles, such

as cashier, waiter, owner and cook. One of the cooks in Comico as well as the manager had received good comments for their motivation and sense of humour. The interviewees were satisfied how the service process was carried out in general, but it seemed like the dramatic script is somewhat missing in Comico. Whereas the functional script provides instructions how to act, the employees with their own characters and personalities should create the dramatic script. The interviewees missed the little extra something to make the service experience worth remembering.

> *The service process functions just fine, no complaints. The waiter's grumpiness disturbs sometimes but he's still polite.* (Satu, 27)

> *Friendly staff, no complaints. Yet there is nothing memorable about them either.* (Joonas, 25)

> *Everything works just fine if they're not busy. In that case they tend to forget compliments, which in my opinion is quite understandable.* (Erkka, 22)

Comico has a strong theme, which they are not using as efficiently as they could. It seems like the Mexican theme has only reached the menu, the bar and the orange walls. The theme should reach Comico's employees as well. The dramatic script needs to be tailored to suit Comico's needs. The next chapter (page 47) will tell how they are going to do it.

Image 4: Comico menu cover (Appendix 5).

Dramatic scripts are said to be multi-layered on four levels in the theatre concept, each level revealing more of the complexity of the encoded experience. The four levels include the drama, the playtext, the subtext and the metatext (Figure 5). The drama is the most essential interpersonal experience in the theatre, also known as the story. The playtext is the coded version of the drama that includes details about the characters and the physical environment in which the action takes place. That is, what people say and do, how and where they say or do. Beneath the playtext lies the subtext, which refers to the thoughts and feelings behind the words in the script. These interpretations give space for the actor's own personality and life experiences to be adapted to his performance. This process is often described as a transformation process between the actor's character and actor's "self". The actor fills out the script with his own life experiences in the process. The metatext is the final interpretation of the performance made by the audience, referred also as "the superobjective" or

"the creative goal" of the performance. Opinions about the metatext are usually defined after the theatrical performance and only then it can be decided whether the creative goals have been successfully achieved. (Harris, Harris & Baron 2003, 187-188.) The starting point is the story and here the story is the theme. Comico has already created many fine stories through the adventures of Poco, Paco and Loco (Images 1-4). The management should determine what they try to communicate with their customers and how they think they do it. The management should also explain the employees, how they want things to be done and what they expect from their employees. These are the details needed for the playtext. After defining the story and the details how the story should be told, the rest is left for the actors and actresses of the story: the employees. An employee needs to identify his strengths and use his life experience while creating his character. Maybe one of the merry Latin friends Poco, Loco and Paco can provide a role model. The audience then interprets this subtext, which employees have created for their role.

> *We went there during daytime and we were the only customers. The cook was shouting to us from the kitchen and made suggestions to take this and that and he was trying to guess which one of us girls would take the chicken salad. None of us did. We truly enjoyed the different and funny reception (Riikka, 22)*

This example shows how the cook made female interviewee's visit memorable by adding a bit of his personality to the service experience.
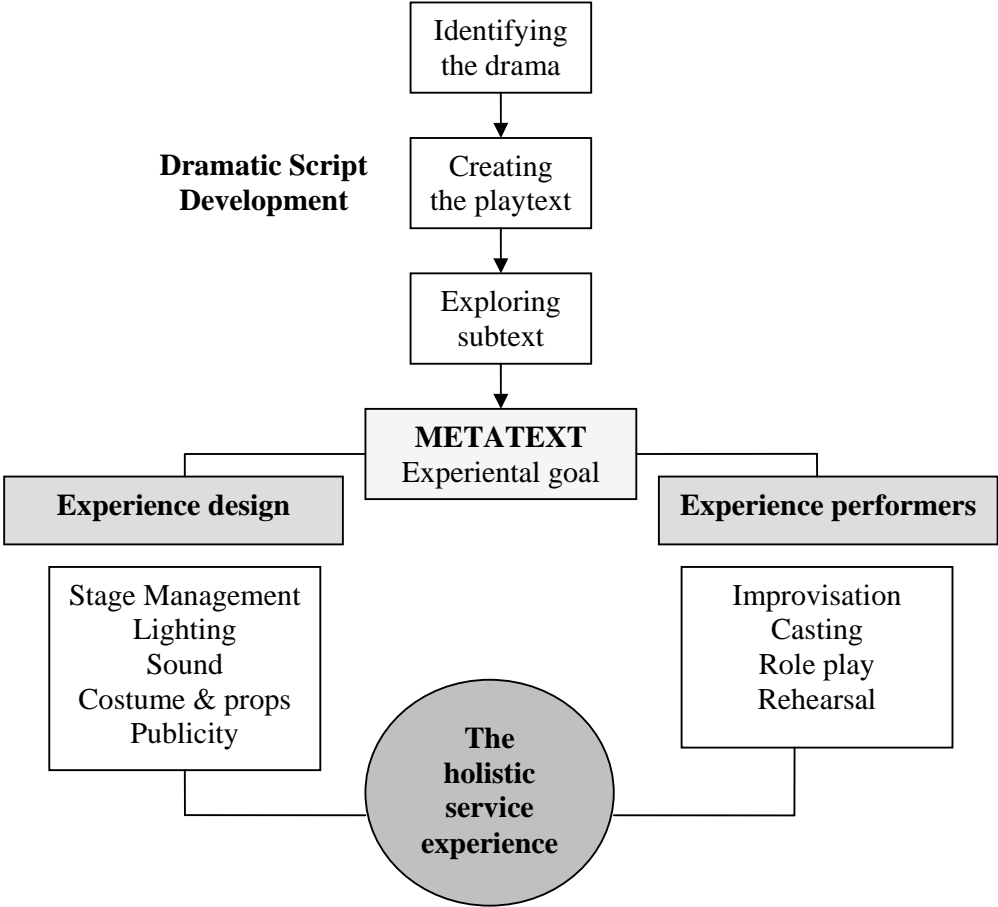
```
                    ┌──────────────┐
                    │  Identifying │
                    │   the drama  │
                    └──────────────┘
                            │
                            ▼
  Dramatic Script    ┌──────────────┐
    Development       │   Creating   │
                     │ the playtext │
                     └──────────────┘
                            │
                            ▼
                     ┌──────────────┐
                     │   Exploring  │
                     │    subtext   │
                     └──────────────┘
                            │
                            ▼
                     ┌──────────────┐
                     │   METATEXT   │
                     │ Experiental  │
                     │     goal     │
                     └──────────────┘
```

Experience design   **Experience performers**

Stage Management	Improvisation
Lighting	Casting
Sound	Role play
Costume & props	Rehearsal
Publicity	

The holistic service experience

Figure 5: Creating a theatrical service experience: the framework (Harris, Harris & Baron 2003, 189).

The desired effect on an audience can be created when all the aspects of performance are considered in the drama script. The same aspects of a theatre performance can now be adapted to a retail/service concept. Figure 5 provides the framework for such an application, which represent a two-stage process. The first stage involves developing and analysing the dramatic script as described above. The second stage involves carrying out the intended theatrical experience. Once the experiential goal has been determined, the intended experience can be created "using the two central strands of the organisational process". Those are the operations management (experience design) and the human resource management (experience performers) working together to transfigure the experiential goal into a clearly focused and intended effect on the customers, in the form of their holistic service experience. (Harris, Harris & Baron 2003, 188-189.)

Even though Comico has hired professional performers, there is no reason why other customer service employees could not perform as well as explained above. Many suggestions were made to improve the experience design in Comico. Comico should think about some visual details that could spice up the Mexican theme. Latin cultures are very outgoing, loud, spicy and colourful. Some interviewees were thrilled about the idea of employees wearing big Mexican hats, but after few laughs they agreed that big hats would not be practical in a restaurant, which can be a hectic working environment. Small costume investments could be bright scarves and bracelets for waitresses to wear. Doing this would stimulate the customer's senses: scarves for eyes and clattering bracelets for ears. Having an open kitchen creates many possibilities but also some threats. Instead of leaving the restaurant smelling like grease, the customer could smell spicy flavours in their clothes instead. Or maybe Comico should consider buying better fans.

> *I love the open kitchen but my clothes smelled an awfully lot like grease after we had left the restaurant.* (Saara, 24)

6.2.2 Staff – the actors and actresses

Not all service sector employees interact with customers, but those who do heavily influence the customer's service experience. They do this in three ways: they offer cues to the customer, they create first impressions and finally, they create "the cognitive framework that shapes the way in which the service is interpreted and evaluated". Staffs that interact with customers are often referred to as either customer contact staff or front-line staff. It must be kept in mind that not all front-line employees play an equally important role in the service delivery process. Figure 6 illustrates the degree to which the service offering is customized and the extent to which the customer contact staff exercise judgement in meeting customers, needs. The bottom-left corner is where service is standardized and front-line employees are not empowered to use their judgement when meeting with a customer and front-line staff play only a minor role in the service experience, as the ticket cashier at the cinema. The front-line staff at the top-right corner is very important to the customer

experience. These services are characterized by a high degree of customisation and the customer contact staff is expected to use their judgement in order to fulfil customer expectations e.g. a marriage guidance counsellor. (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 131-132.) There are two types of service employees in Comico: waiters and performers. The waiters and waitresses create the customer contact staff and the performers refer especially to the sing-along band. The contact staff has high influence on the customer experience. Having a bad waiter can really spoil an evening in a restaurant. Instead, having a great waiter can make the evening memorable. Getting drinks on time, getting orders correctly to the cook and making sure that customers are having a good time are not as easy as one can imagine. Even though the job itself is based on a simple routine, how the service is delivered is very crucial for the customer experience. The sing-along band provides its audience customized service since they get to decide the collection of songs (songbooks), but they can only play what the audience wants (low judgement).

High customisation

Sing-along Band

Marriage guidance counsellor

Little contact/
staff judgement

High contact/
staff judgement

Cinema cashier

Contact staff

Low customisation
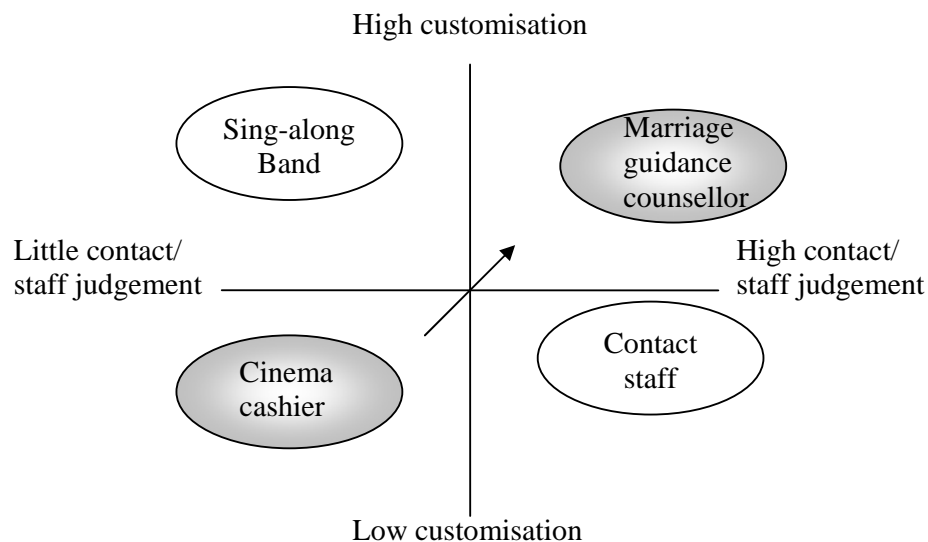
Figure 6: The importance of front-line staff (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 132).

Carù and Cova (2007, 42-44) talk about guides rather than employees, especially in a service concept. Using guides is a good way to provide support in service organisations, such as restaurants, theatres or hardware stores. The very idea of having a facilitator who is there to ease consumer immersion into an experiential context is quite pervasive in experiential marketing nowadays. Some evoke a guide's

figure to express the subtle role that should be played by a particular staff member in order to make immersion easier especially if the staff member appears genuine i.e. when consumers believe that staff members are doing what they are doing because they are passionate about it, not just because they are paid to do it. (Carù & Cova 2007, 42-44.) The contact staff is responsible to make customers feel welcome and to show how the place is going to treat you as a customer. A restaurant's character can be identified within minutes after arrival: The way employees are dressed, the way they talk and behave. Will we be seated? Can I take my jacket to the table with me? Am I dressed well enough? These questions run through our minds when visiting a new restaurant and answers to them determine the service type. It is the customer himself who defines the quality of the service.

6.2.3 Facilities – the stage

Mudie & Pirrie (2006) use the term 'service setting' to describe the tangible physical environment in which a service is experienced. The service environment gives vital tangible and intangible clues that help customers, employees, stakeholders and opinion formers understand the character and ideology of the service. The environment can portray a strong and consistent character to both employees and customers. The design of the service environment is an essential process to go through, because it can communicate desirable qualities that give the company a clear positioning and differentiation in today's competitive marketplace. There are no clear answers that determine how a service setting should or should not be designed. From a customer's point of view it is a matter of taste. Nevertheless, service organisations need to develop an understanding of customer responses to layout, furnishing, colour, light and so on. The research should focus on overall impressions and feelings (Table 2). (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 66-67.)

The interviewees were asked which emotions they went through when thinking about Comico. The comments from four interviewees related directly to eating, the rest of the comments focused on atmosphere and overall satisfaction. Most commonly used phrases were "relaxed" and "having fun". Two female interviewees also mentioned the feeling of being overfed. It should be also mentioned that three female

interviewees mentioned with great astonishment that portions were too big for them. Unfortunately there are no such comments from male interviewees, which would give the size criteria a better judgement. After all, men usually have bigger appetites than women.

Hungry! (Hannu, 25)

Openness, relaxing and freedom. (Taneli, 23)

Satisfaction. (Jani, 28)

Relaxing, having fun with good friends. (Satu, 27)

Table two has listed the most commonly perceived feelings and emotions in business designing. The atmosphere in Comico is perceived as "warmth" as highlighted in the table below. The second closest descriptive word for atmosphere is "lively" referring to entertainment such as sing-along nights and other performances. The reactions to the generated atmosphere were "happiness, enjoyment" and "comfort" in Comico.

Table 2: Atmosphere and feelings (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 67).

Environmental atmosphere generated	Reaction in terms of customer feelings
Elegance	Status
Professionalism	Trust, security
Welcoming	**Happiness, enjoyment**
Sombre	Depressed, gloomy
Forbidding	Anxious
Warmth	**Comfort**
Lively	Inviting

The interviewees were pleased with Comico's choice of furnishing and use of space. The booths were selected to be best of furnishing and the diversity best of space. More booths were requested as they create the cosy atmosphere and give privacy from other customers. Incoherence was thought to be the biggest disadvantage.

The floor design is great. It's good that they have the bar right by the entrance. (Henna, 24)

More booths! (Jani, 28)

The interviewees had many ideas to improve Comico's appearance. The general opinion was to unify the theme. Some wanted more booths, some thought they were too big and took too much space. There was even a comment that suggested keeping the premises clean; she thought the place was dirty and needed a housekeeper. Another suggestion was that Comico could use red bricks in decoration and some old wood.

Elements such as lighting, music, noise, colour, temperature and scent affect our senses. Service providers should consider these factors in the design of the environment since they can play a significant role in achieving desired behavioural responses. In addition, the atmosphere of a place affects purchase behaviour in three ways.

1. Attention-creating medium (use of colours and noise in order to stand out).
2. Message-creating medium (communicating with the audience).
3. Affect-creating medium (use of colours and noise to create an appetite for certain goods, services or experiences). (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 66-74.)

Lighting is often a key element in the design of a service setting. When considering lighting design for a service setting the following factors must be taken into account: day lighting, colour, the nature of the activity to be performed in the space and the desired mood. (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 66-74.) Only two interviewees had any comments on the lighting. This is because lighting was not considered as an important factor in the minds of the interviewees, or lighting was generally good, as it had not caught their attention.

The lighting is quite all right, but if one happens to sit face towards the kitchen, the blinking halogens will give you a headache. (Hannu, 25)

The place could be a little dimmer. (Saara, 24)

Much like music, colour can also evoke moods and emotions such as excitement, happiness, serenity and sadness. Referring to colours when describing our moods, like 'feeling blue' or 'seeing red', is no coincidence as the symbolic nature of colour has for centuries fulfilled a role in religion, magic and communication. There are numerous theories about the way in which colour works. Colour can only be measured in relation to other colours and especially to its neighbour in any successful lighting design. Colours have optical and emotional values. Warmth and coolness are easily distinguished by a colour choice so that red, orange, yellow and their colour families are warm while green, blue, violet and their colour families are cool. Red also indicates danger, excitement and stopping having the affect of increasing blood pressure, whereas green indicates peacefulness and safety. Colour psychology has discovered connections with colour and a type of business. Red is used in restaurants, especially in those serving fast food. Red has said to stimulate diners to eat more quickly. Orange is barely used; yellow has said to have positive affects on concentration, though too much yellow can also have a stressing influence. Green is the symbol of natural world and is used when the desired effect is relaxation - excellent colour choice for diners. Blue symbolizes authority, truth and wisdom - ideal for banks. (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 71-74.)

Comico uses the warm colour family of red, orange and yellow. When considering the stressing influence of those colours, it could partly explain the tangled elements in Comico's interior. Comico's atmosphere is described to be relaxing even though colours that communicate completely other emotions, such as danger and concentration, surround the customers. Whatever Comico is trying to communicate, the signals are mixed. If Comico wants to create a relaxed atmosphere, it should consider using colours such as green and blue. Red and orange are still usable during performances when the atmosphere changes from relaxing to exciting.

Why is the yellow concrete wall so popular? (Taneli, 23)

The walls are too colourful. (Jenni, 26)

The red benches remind me of a bordello. (Erkka, 22)

Having understood an individual's need for repeated immersions, retailers have been trying since the 1980's to transform their point-of-sale into shopping experiences. A great deal of work has been done on shopping environments including the way sales spaces are designed to try and re-enchant customers. A company has to ensure that the experiential context is simultaneously secure and presented with a theme, which need to be materialized. This involves creating theatrical effects and staging the company's product or service offer and putting the customer on stage. (Markkanen 2008, 95-96; Carù & Cova 2007, 42.) When designing the outlook of a "theatre", it is important to be able to capture customers' emotions. These efforts resolve around sensorial and imaginary devices that serve to over stimulate a consumer's senses and imagination. Business facilities are the package of the service or the product being offered. Shopping environments are designed for people not for products. Shops, restaurants and coffee shops are places to meet with friends, places with people coming and going, spending time or just rushing through. Hereby point-of-purchase (POP) can then be changed to point-of-people. (Markkanen 2008, 96.)

The same message has been repeated over and over again throughout the study. The theme is not consistent. The interviewees had not found the connection between the Latin kitchen and the ice cream bar in Quentin Tarantino's movie Pulp Fiction. The manager was asked how he perceived Comico's theme; he said the place was a good mixture of a Latin cuisine and a programme restaurant. The interviewees had not found the connection between these two. Could it be that Comico was meant to tell a story of a stand-up comedian, as the name Comico suggests? Could it be that the Latin cuisine is only additional to the other? In that case the theme is presented the wrong way to the customers and the management should standardise the theme or try to enhance the entertaining character of the restaurant.

6.2.4 Customers - the audience

According to the performance metaphor, consumers behave as if they were audiences responding to or participating in performances with products, services, retail environments and commercially staged experiences. A consumption performance assumes a plot-like form with a narrative dimension involving anticipation, tension and resolution. It even has rhetorical purpose and enlists participants in the action. Classifying consumer performances (Figure 7) differentiates the type of participation included by the consumer into the consuming experience and whether the service takes place in a naturalistic, realistic setting or an artificial, fantastic setting. (Arnould 2007, 187.)

Realistic environment

Skill Performance, e.g. chess, jury trial, golf

Thrill Performance, e.g. trekking, skydiving, white water rafting

Passive consumer

Active consumer

Stand-up comedy

Show Performance, e.g. Concert opera, theatre, beauty pageant

Sing-along Night

Festive Performance, e.g. carnival, sporting charity event

Fantastic environment
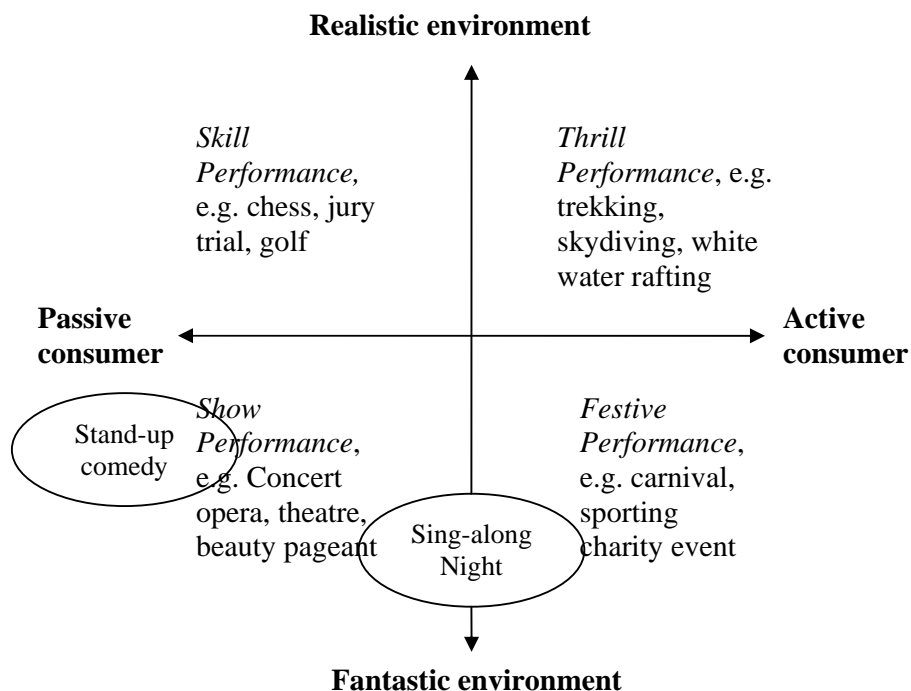
Figure 7: Classifying consumer performances (adapted from Arnould 2007, 187).

Skill performance is the staged display of competence in a naturalistic setting for the benefit of a passive observer in the professional service concepts of lawyers and accountants, for instance. *Thrill performance* refers to the active participation by the consumer in naturalistic activity such as adventure trekking. *A show performance* has elements of spectacle providing complex visual images and environments where the

interest does not lie in the outcome but in the process. Such performances could be rock concerts or theatre performances. Festival-like performances allow for more interchange in the roles of the audience and the performer meaning that consumers are no longer acting as consumers but as the producers of narrative. Therefore participation level in *festive performance* is very high. (Arnould 2007, 187-188.)

The term "audience" within a service concept could not be more descriptive than it already is in Comico. In addition to the basic service processes of eating and drinking, the focus must lie in the entertainment and theatrical performances that take place in Comico. Reasons for Comico's success in the restaurant entertainment are diverse. As mentioned earlier in this study, consumers no longer want products and services to be made ready for them. Instead, consumers want to take part in the consumption process as much as they can. For example, consumers search for participation in travelling where museums have changed to snow mobile safaris. Another example is how the demand for individual clothing, such as self-designed shoes, is ever growing. These can be the reasons why young adults prefer going to a sing-along night in Comico instead of movies. The level of participation in a sing-along night is illustrated in Figure 7. The event lingers somewhere between a show performance and a festive performance since the audience can attend to the singing if they want to. The choice is yours.

The level of guest participation during a performance can be determined to be either passive or active (Figure 7; see also Figure 8). *Passive customer participation* takes place when customers do not directly affect or influence the performance. Such participants are symphony goers who experience the event as pure observers. *Active participation* takes place when customers personally affect the performance or event, like skiers who actively participate in creating their own experience or people who go to hockey games and add value to the event by simply being there. Another dimension of experience describes the type of connection or environmental relationship that unites customers with the event or performance shown in Figure 8. At one end of this spectrum lies absorption, which engages the customer's attention by bringing the experience into the customer's mind like when watching TV, he is absorbing the experience. On the other hand, if the customer "goes into" the

experience, as when playing a virtual reality game, he is immersed in the experience. (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 30-31.)

According to the responses the level of participation in Comico's basic restaurant concept is active. The customers can go straight to the tables without having to wait for a waiter. The waiters do not check on customers during the meal; a waiter comes when asked. The bill is not brought to the table; it is paid at the counter before exiting. The role of the customer is more active than usually expected (Table 1). However, it seems that customers' participation in Comico cannot be considered active since in order to do so they would have to "personally affect the performance or event" (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 30-31.) It seems somehow unreasonable to ask Comico's customers to walk into the kitchen and tell the chef how they want their steaks to be done. It can be that Pine and Gilmore would say Comico's customers cannot call themselves active participants, but in this study they can.

> *The staff won't bother me unless I need something.* (Erkka, 22)

> *I'm used to pay at the counter so it's cool, fits the place.* (Riikka, 22)

> *I'm glad they don't have someone showing me to the table.* (Hannu, 25)

Absorption

Stand-up
comedy

Entertainment | **Educational**

Passive
participation

Active
participation

Aesthetic | **Escapist**

Sing-along
Night

Immersion
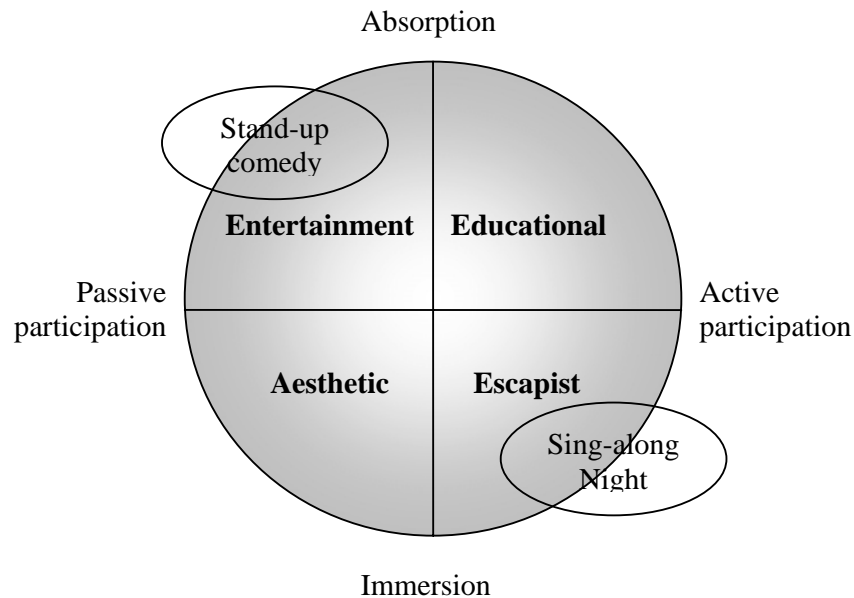
Figure 8: The experience realms (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 30).

6.3 Experience realms

The four "realms" of an experience – entertainment, education, escape and aestheticism – are shown in Figure 8. Experiences are usually linked strongly with entertaining and *entertainment* as they occur when passively absorbing experiences through senses like viewing a performance or listening to music. While many experiences entertain, there are the other three realms of experience: educational, escapist and aesthetic. *The educational realm*, as the name suggests, has a very strong emphasis on learning by doing. Unlike entertainment education involves active participation by the individual. Educational events must actively engage the mind or body for physical training. The third realm, t*he escapist realm* environments are theme parks, casinos, online chat rooms and even a game of outdoor paintball. The individual becomes an actor, able to affect the actual performance rather than playing the passive role of watching and observing. "The guest of the escapist experience is completely immersed in it, an actively involved participant" (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 33). The fourth and the last experiential realm is *the aesthetic realm*. Aesthetic participants throw themselves emotionally in the experience but without

having any effect on it leaving the environment untouched. In this category experience choices would be standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon, visiting an art gallery or museum. Individuals immerse themselves but remain passive in aesthetic experiences. (Pine & Gilmore 1999, 31-36.) The experience is perfect when all the four realms are combined, although most businesses only focus on one or two of them (Markkanen 2008, 36).

The examples Pine and Gilmore use are quite detailed, which small ordinary businesses may find difficult to relate to. Maybe the trick is not to worry if the business does not fit to any realm exactly, but to try to persuade the business to a chosen direction based on one of the realms. Comico's stand-up comedians and live performances can undoubtedly be situated in the realm of entertainment. The sing-along nights arise a challenge, because the entertaining realm is on the passive side and people attending to a sing-along night are most likely active than passive. The escapist realm is the closest realm to a sing-along night because rather than observing the performance the customers can take part in it. They become actors as well as the stars of the evening!

7 MANAGEMENT OF SERVICES

Services have several dimensions: Service can be personal, a machine can provide a service or a product may include a hidden service. Personal service can be experienced at a store check out and mechanical service at an automated car wash. Hidden services are functions within a company and invisible to the consumer, such as invoicing or handling complaints. Interactions are usually present in services and have a fundamental quality although the parties involved are not always aware of this. Services are intangible and "something which can be bought and sold but which you cannot drop on your feet." (Grönroos 2007, 51-52.) Unlike tangible goods, services cannot generally be seen, tasted, felt, heard or smelled before being consumed (Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 3). Comico's service is personal and interaction is a

fundamental part of their service process. The communication between the contact staff and customers is essential par of the service and even the food preparation is not hidden from the customers as Comico has an open kitchen. Mudie and Pirrie (2006) claim that services cannot be seen or smelled before being consumed. Obviously they have not visited a restaurant recently since anyone entering a restaurant can enjoy the delicious smells coming from the kitchen and the delightful sight of different portions that other customer are already having. Unless the authors suggest that after entering the restaurant customers are already consuming.

Three basic service characteristics can be identified in most services.

1. Services are processes consisting of activities, rather than things.
2. Services are to some degree produced and consumed together.
3. The customer participates in the service production process at least to some extent. (Grönroos 2007, 51.)

Marketing activities are usually structured around the '4 P's' *(product, price, promotion and place)* whereas service activities acquire the addition of three more P's: *people, physical evidence and process*. Each of the three P's is at central importance in services. Both customers and service personnel need to be physically present in the service process thus the personnel's appearance and behaviour at the service encounter is of particular concern. Services are characterized as processes consisting of a series of activities where a number of different types of resources – people as well as other types of resources – are used often in direct interactions with the customer, so that a solution is found to a customer's problem. Customers become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem by participating actively in the service process. (Grönroos 2007, 53-54; Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 5-6.)

Several scholars define services are essentially performances that create the customer's experience: The manner in which the service is performed can be a crucial component to the service from the consumer's point of view. Service performances consist of employees, customers and settings. In addition, service performances evolve as the service components get mixed and weaken if any of these components fail to support one another. The customer's involvement in the service process is unpreventable and therefore the service performance involves a great deal

of uncertainty how the process will be carried out. Furthermore, employees can be carefully selected and well trained, but there will yet remain uncontrollable factors, which will effect on service quality. Exceptions frequently become the rule in service delivery. Customers often expect service providers to learn each individual customer's needs or wants, to respond to their special request, and to treat their service circumstance as unique. After all, empathy is one of the five cornerstones of service quality from the customer's point of view (see SERVQUAL model). In brief, adaptation in the service performance is expected and very much appreciated. (Grove & Fisk 1992, 250.)

Comico's activities within the service process can be found in this study in Table two: the restaurant script. It describes in detail the activities the staff and customers go through during the service experience. The service is also produced and consumed together in Comico as the prepared food is usually also consumed in their premises, same for the drinks. However, those who take a doggy bag home with them will consume the rest of the food at home. The interviewees also agreed to have an active role within Comico's service process. Unpredictable factors can have a negative influence on a service performance. Internal and external factors create most threats in restaurant business, but there are also those risks that are utterly uncontrollable. A sudden shortage of staff will slow Comico's service process, as does unpredictable customer peaks or rush hours. Other possible threats could be for example misunderstandings created through lingual and cultural differences, food poisonings, late and wrong suppliers' deliveries and power failures. Drunken customers are susceptible to fight with each other. Employees can prevent this by being vigilant and not serving more alcohol for those who have had enough already. This is a good example how the employees' alertness can prevent unpleasant incidences that may influence service quality.

7.1 Service quality

One of the major ways a service organisation can differentiate itself is by delivering higher quality than its competitors and doing this consistently. Most service industries have now joined the customer-driven quality movement, like

manufacturers before them. (Kotler & Armstrong 2004, 302.) Services being processes more than tangible goods make it difficult to manage quality control and do marketing in the traditional way as there is no preproduced quality to measure or control before it is delivered to the customer. Getting a hair cut is an exception since the customer is involved in the service process the entire time. Still, most parts of service processes are invisible. A customer does not only receive a service but also participates in the service process at least on some level. Because of this services cannot be stored. If an airplane leaves the airport half full, the empty seats cannot be sold the following day and there is an issue of bad capacity planning. Even though services cannot be kept in stock, one may try to keep customers in stock with good customer service. If a restaurant is full, a waiter can try to keep customers waiting at the bar until there is a free table. In addition, intangibility is a characteristic of services. A service is considered as a subjective experience but when asked to describe a service, such words as 'experience', 'trust', 'feeling', and 'security' are used. Evidently customers perceive services on a very abstract level. (Grönroos 2007, 53-54; Mudie & Pirrie 2006, 5-7.)

Comico's manager agreed it is difficult to manage the service process during rush hours, which usually affect service quality with late deliveries and slow service. Some of the reasons are small kitchen and difficulty in predicting peaks in customer amounts.

> *Delivering the food is sometimes slow and getting a beer during sing-along nights is impossible!* (Taneli, 23)

> *The employees do just fine unless they're busy.* (Riikka, 22)

The interviewees were also asked to list descriptive words about Comico. The collection was colourful and lively, yet not as abstract as authors (Grönroos 2007; Mudie & Pirrie 2006) suggest. The most used words were "funny", "relaxed" and "warm". "Funny" obviously refers to feelings and atmosphere. Having an evening out with good friends is surely fun. Perhaps the employees or the band are fun/funny in interviewees' opinion; even the name Comico refers to a comedian. "Relaxed" refers to the atmosphere and service, maybe even the entire service process. Colours

of red and yellow were also listed. The manager was asked to name the same list and his idea of Comico is "happy", "funny", "colourful" and "tasty". The manager and customers' view over Comico are quite similar. This means Comico has succeeded in interpreting the desired quality and atmosphere to its customers.

From the customer's point of view the most vivid impression of service occurs in the service encounter, or the "moment of truth", when the customer interacts with the service firm. It is in these encounters that customers receive a snapshot of the organisation's service quality and each encounter contributes to the customer's overall satisfaction and willingness to do business with the organisation again. Some services have few service encounters and others have many. The Disney Corporation estimates that each of its amusement park customers experience about 74 service encounters and that a negative experience in any one of them can lead to a negative overall evaluation. (Zeithaml 2000, 86.) Consequently, after achieving the moment of truth it is replaced with a moment of opportunity. If action is not taken during the moment of opportunity and the customer has gone, a quality problem has occurred. Customers experience a whole set of moments of truth when visiting a service organisation. (Grönroos 2007, 81-82.)

There were good examples of moments of truths and moments of opportunities during this study. For example, if service had been good and food delicious but not receiving the bill to the table at the end of the evening when expected, the overall evaluation could have a negative result. Then again, a moment of opportunity can take place if customer has a special request, such as having a candle on the table. If the staff will grant this wish, the overall quality can be perceived good and caring.

> *The staff immediately arranged us a long table, even though we had shown up with a big group without calling them beforehand.* (Jenni, 26)

> *They could bring the water to the table right away as they come take our orders.* (Saara, 24)

> *Last time we went there the manager remembered us and knew we were students. It was nice.* (Hannu, 25)

7.2 Total perceived quality

Quality perception is more than just the experiences of the quality dimension that determine whether the quality is perceived as good, neutral or bad. Good perceived quality is obtained when the experienced quality meets the expectations of the customer. That is, the quality expected. If expectations are unrealistic, the total perceived quality would be low even if the experienced quality measured (in an objective way) is good. As shown in Figure 9, the expected quality is a function of a number of factors namely marketing activities like marketing communication as well as other factors: word of mouth, company/local image, price, customer needs and values. Marketing communication includes advertising, direct mail, sales promotion, websites, Internet communication and sales campaigns, which are all directly controlled by the company. Accordingly, the company can only indirectly control the image, public relations and word of mouth factors. The image also includes the customer's prior experiences. External impact on these factors may also occur, but they are basically a function of the previous performance of the company, supported by advertisement for instance. Needs and values that determine the customer's choice also have an impact on expectations. (Grönroos 2007, 76.)
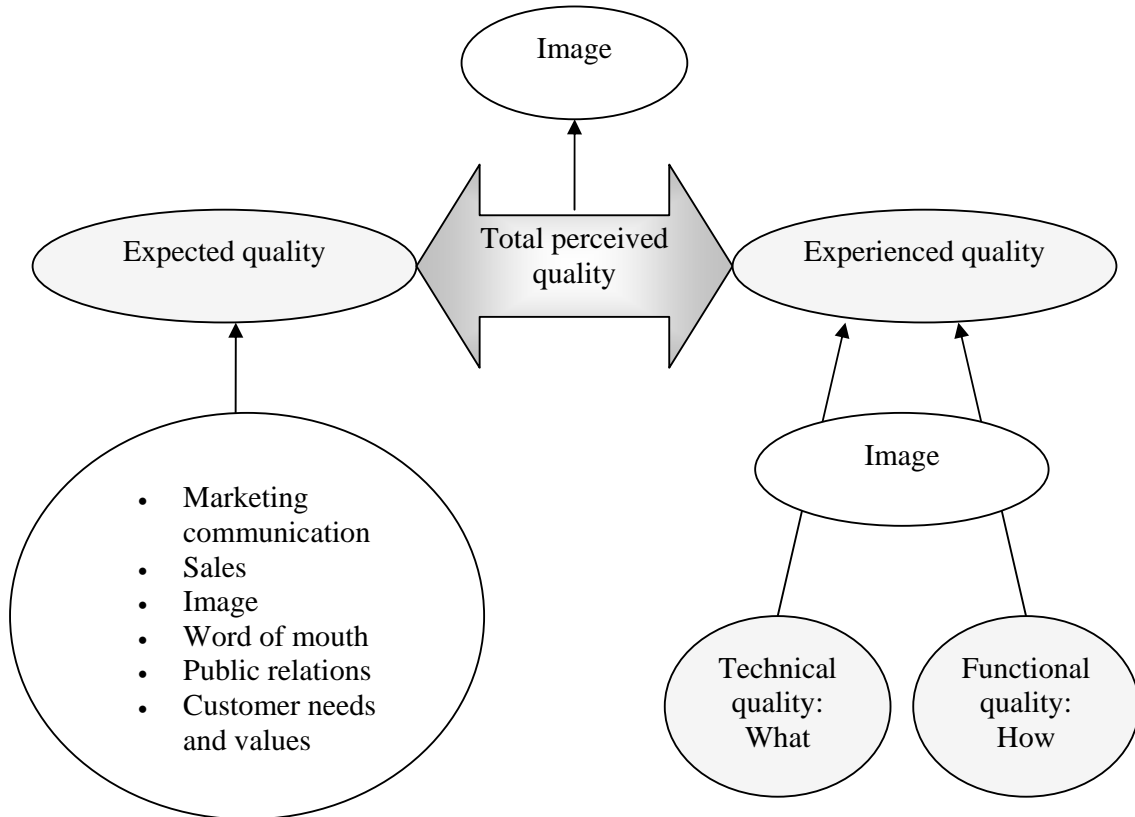
Figure 9: Total perceived quality (Grönroos 2007, 77).

So far this study has been focusing only on the experienced quality. It is also important to consider the expectations that customers have over Comico. Seven out of ten interviewees ranked good food as number one expectation they had for Comico. The second most important expectations were atmosphere and student discount. The reason how the interviewees first ended up in Comico was because of a recommendation from a friend. Word of mouth is an important marketing channel for Comico. Mr. Näsman also agreed that word of mouth is considered important, especially in connection with the food. Manager believed that customers would tell other people if they have enjoyed Comico's cuisine. There are reasons to believe that word of mouth is also spreading the word about Comico's 15% student discount, which is tempting for students with low income. Perception over image is based on previous visits. Comico's image will be redone in fall 2008 when the business goes through some renovations. They will be expanding the space with 40 square meters and they will also open an indoor terrace for their new cafeteria.

7.3 Gap analysis for service quality

An often-asked question is how good the optimal quality of a given service should be? The answer depends on the strategy of he company and the expectations of the customers for whom its services are intended. These two factors are dependent on each other. If the strategy of a service provider is to be the best on the market and to cater to customers who demand excellent service, then such expectations should be created among such customers and after that such service should be provided. If company has the strategy to provide lower quality service to less demanding customers at a lower price, then the level of service quality is lower, expectations as well. If expectations and experiences meet, the perceived quality is still good. (Grönroos 2007, 112.)

Five potential shortfalls – or gaps – within a service organisation can be identified, one being the most threatening to the company: the difference between what customers expected and what they perceived was delivered. The other shortfalls are:

- Not knowing what customers expect
- Specifying service quality standards that do not reflect what management believes to be customer's expectations
- Failing to ensure that service performance matches specifications
- Not living up to the levels of service performance that are promised or implied by marketing communications.

It is crucial to identify the specific causes of each gap and then develop strategies to close them. (Lovelock 2001, 369.)

The gap analysis model (Figure 10) demonstrates how the service quality emerges. The model offers a great way to improve and manage quality problems within a company. The model is divided horizontally into two sections in a way that the upper section includes phenomena related to the customer, whereas lower section is related to the service provider. (Grönroos 2007, 113.)

CONSUMER
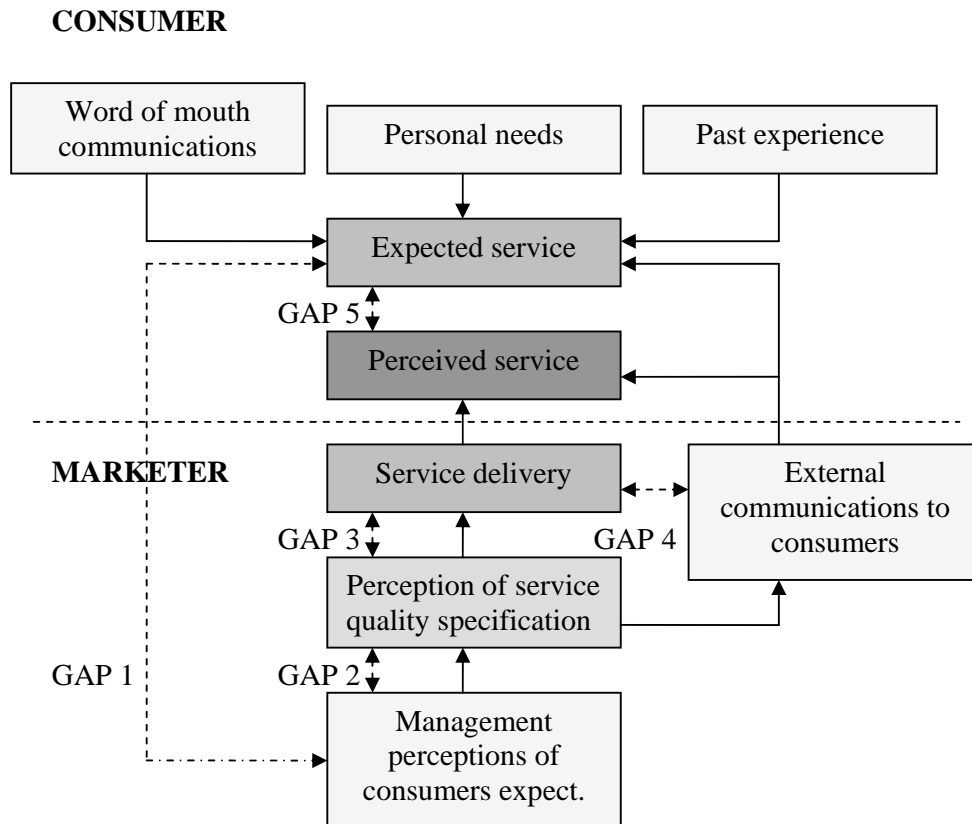
Figure 10: Conceptual model of service quality – the gap analysis model (Grönroos 2007, 114).

Gap 1

Gap 1 illustrates the difference between the customer expectations of service and the company understanding those expectations. Many reasons exist for managers not being aware of what customers expect. Managers may not directly interact with customers or be willing to ask about expectations, which may lead to a chain of bad decisions that result in perceptions of poor service quality. The authority of making adjustments in the service quality should be delegated to empowered teams (in a very large company) and front-line employees. An inadequate marketing research orientation is one of the critical factors. When the management does not acquire accurate information about the customer's expectations, Gap 1 is large. Formal and informal methods to capture information about customer expectations must be

developed through market research. Besides, the front-line employees often know a great deal about customers and if management does not understand what they know, the gap widens. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000, 482-483; see also Grönroos 2007, 115.)

Comico's management is interested in knowing what customers expect and they update this knowledge by interacting customers on a daily basis. In addition, this study provides Comico valuable insights since such research has not been conducted in Comico before. Mr. Näsman, the manager, is in direct contact with customers as well. The interviewees had the following expectations over Comico: food, student discount, entertainment and relaxed atmosphere. Manager's view was rather similar as in his understanding about Comico's customer expectations were food, entertainment and good food of good quality with the right price.

Marketing research was conducted for Comico's benefit before starting the business. Comico's business idea was based on that particular research, which was carried out in a nightclub called Tivoli, also owned by the student union of university of Lapland. The research had one hundred respondents and the data was gathered during theme evenings, which attracted also people outside Tivoli's usual customer group. Even though the research was done with Comico's interests in mind, a new research should be done with Comico's own customers, even if the customer groups in both the companies are similar. The individual interaction between customers and front-line employees would function as the informal method of gathering information. As a formal method of data gathering, short enquiries could be used to measure customer satisfaction and expectations. The enquiries could be placed on the tables together with pencils. Responding would take only approximately 2-5 minutes and would include the opportunity to give feedback, suggestions and other comments. See the SERVQUAL model in the next chapter for more detailed information (paragraph 7.4). This kind of research would reach more than just ten customers, like this study. It is obvious that Comico needs opinions of many other customers as well, since the interviewees used in this study gave very diverse answers and not always in a good way. More than once the interviewees said one thing and then right after overrode it.

Gap 2

Unsuitable quality designs and standards exist in service organisations for a variety of reasons. The key factors leading to Gap 2 are: poor service design, absence of customer-defined standards and inappropriate physical evidence and 'servicescape' (page 77). The management may perceive that customer expectations are unreasonable or unrealistic and therefore standards will not achieve the desired goal. When service standards are absent or when the standards in place do not reflect customers' expectations, the quality of service as perceived by customers is likely to suffer. In contrast, when there are standards reflecting what customers expect, the quality of service they receive is likely to be enhanced. By setting customer-defined performance standards has a positive effect on closing the Gap 2. Another factor involved in Gap 2 is physical evidence, meaning here everything from business cards to reports, Internet presence, equipment and facilities used to deliver the service. 'The servicescape', the physical setting of the service, must be appropriate. Restaurants, hotels, theme parks and health clubs are good examples of communicating about the service and making the entire experience pleasurable. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000, 485; see also Grönroos 2007, 116.)

Both the interviewees and the management described Comico's service design as relaxed and informal. Even when the overall opinion over the service was considered generally good, there were still come flaws within the design. Paying at the counter divided the interviewees' opinions in two: some liked, some did not. The furnishing and the colours communicate the physical setting conveniently. Booths and sofas welcome customer for a comfortable and private restaurant visit. The employees approach the customer with a loose yet professional attitude and the funny characters in the menu give the final touch to the urban atmosphere. However, the physical evidence delivers the theme only partially. The management needs to specify its idea of the theme and then unify this vision into more approachable version. The manager seems to be aware of this on some level as he hopes to standardise their theme during the renovation in fall 2008. Several suggestions have been made for decorative improvements and the researcher searched the Internet with some key words for possible ideas that Comico have not thought of. Such keywords were "Latin restaurant", "Mexican restaurant" and "Mexican music". The search results then

guided to other sites and eventually the following list of improvements is influenced by image results from www.google.com and music videos from Latin superstars such as Carlos Santana and Shakira on www.youtube.com.

Elements that stood out in Latin theme

- A wall made of red bricks
- More green colour
- Street lamps; lamp posts, light bulbs
- Mexican hats
- A big wooden wine shelf
- Old posters; black and white pictures
- A jukebox (does not need to work)
- Big old mirrors
- A guitar
- A tambourine
- Wall fabrics

Gap 3

Gap 3 is the difference between the development of customer-driven service standards and actual service performance by the company employees. Even when guidelines exist for performing services as well and treating customers correctly, high-quality service performance is not a certainty. In order to close Gap 3, companies must ensure that all the resources needed to achieve the standards are in place. The standards must be supported by appropriate resources (people, systems and technology) and must also be enforced to be effective (by people). Some reasons for the Gap 3 are: employees who do not clearly understand the roles they are playing, wrong employees and failure to match supply and demand. Other factors can be customers' lack of knowledge of their roles and responsibilities or problems with service intermediaries. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000, 486; see also Grönroos 2007, 116-117.)

Comico defines its service profile as follows: "The service is performed with a relaxed and brisk style fit for the Latin theme; the 'temperament' can be seen in the positive and energetic attitude of the employees". The interviewees recognised the professionalism of the employees but were somewhat missing the joyful and friendly approach towards the service encounter. Comico should stress the importance of the roles its employees are playing, especially when the models for such happy and humoristic behaviour are Paco, Poco and Loco. The management is aware that service gets slower during rush hours, yet they have not found the correct pattern to predict customers' behaviour. The management's view is that customers are asked whether they wish to receive the bill to the table or pay at the counter. According to the interviewees, this was not the custom. If this should be the standard, it should be made a consistent part of the service for all customers. By doing that, misunderstandings could be avoided and the overall service quality would not suffer.

Gap 4

When promises do not match performance, Gap 4 emerges. The promises made by a service company through its media advertising, sales force and other communications raise customer expectations. Broken promises can occur for many reasons: over promising in advertising or personal selling, for instance. (Grönroos 2007, 118.) Promises do not mean same things to everybody. Different people have different preferences, taste, income and mood, which all affect how customers comprehend the promises made by the service company. The interviewees had no common denominator for how their expectations were created through advertising and whether those promises had been carried out. Some said they had missed advertising totally, some were happy about the discount. Some interviewees were still missing the Mexican theme. All agreed that the food was as good as promised.

> *I had the expectation they'd have cheap beer, which they didn't.*
> (Taneli, 23)

> *I understand it's hard to create a Mexican atmosphere in Finland.*
> (Hannu, 25)

I don't feel like being in Mexico. (Saara, 24)

Gap 5

The final and the most important gap is Gap 5: 'the customer gap', between customer expectations and perceptions, which can be fixed if all other four gaps are closed on time. Customers perceive they get what they think they will and should. The fifth gap may, of course, also be positive, which leads either to positively confirmed quality or 'overquality'. (Zeithaml & Bitner 2000, 488-489; Grönroos 2007, 118.) Even if all four gaps are closed, it still does not necessarily mean that the fifth gap is closed as well. There are still individual's needs and past experiences that effect the overall service performance. For instance, it is quite hard to make a vegetarian enjoy the place with all the strong smells of meat and grease coming from the kitchen. Or maybe someone just had a really bad evening in there and would not want to return to Comico for the bad memories, like a break-up with a girlfriend. Or maybe someone just had too much to drink and would feel embarrassed and uncomfortable just to be there. These are something that Comico has very little influence on.

The interviewees were asked what kind of emotions they go through when they thought about Comico. What they should have been also asked is how is their mood usually like when they visit Comico. Do they mostly go to see a sing-along performance after they have enjoyed a beer or two already beforehand or do they go and eat when their stomachs are empty? This could have shown the connection between various answers, such as frustration over slow service can be enhanced when blood sugar is really low and stomach is screaming for food. Or, maybe an evening out while enjoying alcoholic drinks can enhance positive emotions they are already having. As one conclusion, the service may not be any slower than it should be – waiting is just more painful if the customer is really, really hungry.

7.4 SERVQUAL model

Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry developed a survey research instrument called SERVQUAL to measure customer satisfaction with different aspects of service quality. It is based on the premise that customers can evaluate a company's service quality by comparing their perceptions of its service with their expectations. The scale contains 22 perception items in its basic form and a series of expectation items, reflecting five dimensions of service quality. The five dimensions are:

1. Tangibles (appearance of physical elements)
2. Reliability (dependability, accurate performance)
3. Responsiveness (promptness and helpfulness)
4. Assurance (competence, courtesy, credibility and security)
5. Empathy (understanding customer, personal attention)

An overall quality score can be calculated based on the difference between expectations and experiences over the 22 attributes. If this score shows that experiences are below expectation, the lower the perceived quality is. However, more important than calculating the overall score may be the scores on the individual attribute scales, perhaps summarized over determinants. (Grönroos 2007, 84; Lovelock 2001, 364.) The SERVQUAL technique is applicable across a broad range of service industries and can easily be modified to take account of the specific requirements of any company (Palmer 2001, 222). Although SERVQUAL has been widely used by service companies, doubts have been expressed with regard to both its conceptual foundation and methodological limitations. The findings of analyses present that SERVQUAL measures only technical quality and does not give stable results. Zeithaml, Berry and Parasuraman's achievement in identifying some of the key underlying constructs in service quality should not be undermined. (Lovelock 2001, 367.)

The SERVQUAL model provides an organised framework for the research suggested in the previous chapter (Gap 1). It must surely take more than a couple of minutes to go through 22 attributes for both expectations and experiences, which means that the attributes need to be summarised to a simpler form to suit Comico's needs. It would not provide as exact information as the entire model, but it would put the company

on the right track. The questionnaire should consist at least of five questions, one from each dimension. There is a suggestion for such a questionnaires in Appendix 4. By doing this Comico could evaluate and measure service quality more efficiently than just by interacting with customers at the counter. It would also shake up those employees who have not been performing the service as expected. In order to find out how each employee is performing manager could get employees nametags and tell them to introduce themselves in the beginning of the service process. In this case the survey should also include a space where a customer can write down the name of the waiter. This method would provide more exact information on how Comico's employees really behave.

In order to develop an appropriate list of attributes or factors of good service quality useful for managerial purposes, they have to be short, yet still provide a comprehensive list of aspects of good quality. According to Grönroos (2007), there is such a list, a "check list" of some sort also known as the seven criteria of good perceived service quality, which are the defined as following:

1. Professionalism and Skills

   Customers realize that the service provider, employees, operational systems, and physical resources have the knowledge and skills to solve their problems in a professional way.

2. Attitudes and Behaviour

   Customers feel that the service employees are concerned about them and interested in solving their problems in a friendly and spontaneous way.

3. Accessibility and Flexibility

   Customers feel that the service provider, its location, operating hours, employees and operational systems are designed in a way so that it is easy to get access to the service and that they are prepared to adjust to the demands and wishes of the customer in a flexible way.

4. Reliability and Trustworthiness

   Customers know that no matter what happens, they can rely on the service provider, its employees and systems to perform with the best interest of the customers at heart; and most of all, keep their promises.

5. Service recovery

Customers realize that whenever something goes wrong or something unpredictable happens, the service provider will immediately and actively take action to keep them in control of the situation and find a new, acceptable solution.

6. 'Servicescape'

Customers feel that the physical surrounding and other aspects of the environment of the service encounter support the positive experience of the service process.

7. Reputation and Credibility

Customers believe that the service provider's business can be trusted, and that it gives value for money and stand for good performance as well as possess values, which can be shared by customers and the service provider.

These seven criteria of good perceived service quality can be viewed as guidelines based on empirical and conceptual research as well as practical experience. (Grönroos 2007, 90.)

8 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Now, it is time for the final lesson. Even if Comico does not produce self-designed shoes or serve rain within their facilities; they do produce experiences in Rovaniemi in a way that no other does. Comico could use Pottery Café's idea of letting customers paint their own cups yet the focus lies on what they already do, how they do and, most importantly, how can they do it even better? The aim of this thesis was to determine how customers perceive experiences during their restaurant visit in the case company Comico and whether Comico truly serves experiences for its customers. Experience is a diverse concept. Even when having an experience is up to the individual there are still certain rules that can be followed in order to get even close to such feelings. Some businesses may possess the resources without even lifting a finger, like a souvenir shop by Grand Canyon whereas the rest of them need to get smart. Comico had figured this out many years ago when the idea of an

entertaining theme restaurant was first discovered. Mr. Näsman had looked into his competitors and had agreed that they all looked alike and provided the same service. Comico had the courage to be something different and provide an option.

Reliability of the research

There are no specific and binding instructions how qualitative data should be reported but the report should pursue to be clear. A qualitative research is evaluated based on its repetitiveness and appreciable attributes. The researcher's scholarly handle on the topic and the method are at central focus when examining the internal validity of the research material. The external validity is based on the assumption that the interviewees have provided truthful information for the research. (Nieminen, 1997.)

The research material used in this study was collected by interviewing customers of the case company. The method has its limitations and weaknesses. It is more expensive than a questionnaire because the interviews and the analysis demand more time and the interviews provide also irrelevant material from the research's point of view. Using interview is also a demanding method and requires good interviewing skills from the researcher. The first two interviews in this research were shorter than others. This is most likely because of the development of the researcher's interviewing skills during the interviews. It was easier to make specifying questions towards the end of the interviews, which resulted as more diverse answers.

The researcher proves reliability with several original illustrations and comments, which the researcher has translated from Finnish to English as accurately as possible. The combined logic of these empirical observations and resolved categorisation have given the direction and provided the reliability for this study. The quotations are included in this study to make the text more alive and to communicate the attitudes and feelings that the interviewees had towards the given topics. Few interviewees are given the floor more often than others but all interviewees are presented in the text. Small amount of respondents is usual for a qualitative research. The results might have been more reliable if more respondents would have been included in this study.

Operating with only ten interviewees made it difficult to generalise some given opinions.

The problem with the reliability of the content analysis is that the researcher cannot observe the analysis process objectively as the results are based on the researcher's subjective view over the topic. The reliability problems within the content analysis can be connected to misinterpretations or decoding of the data. However, there is no only one scientific truth and the interpretation is influenced by the researcher's personality, feelings and intuition. (Nieminen 1997, 216.) The researcher of this study is from the same age category and the same life situation as the interviewees and can therefore identify with certain opinions, such as the importance of student discount, atmosphere and taste preferences. The likenesses with the interviewees can both exploit and harm the content analysis.

Conclusions and recommendations

This study was successful in solving the research problems. Comico's business idea has been investigated thoroughly during this thesis and the result is obvious: Yes, Comico does fulfil the requirements of an experience service provider. Customers perceive Comico as a unique entertaining theme restaurant, but the clear answer whether they truly underwent experiences is still unknown. Finding an answer requires more likely philosophical discussion than a business thesis. Therefore the dilemma of an experience can be left to researchers in other fields of science. The primary research question was to determine how they perceive experiences during their visit in Comico and these results can be found in the text. It must be said that it is impossible to interpret how and why customers perceive certain feelings and emotions they have over the case company. By following the suggestions that have been made can enhance perception of experience. Lighting, advertising and other customers are the least affecting components on the perception of experience. The female interviewees' had a negative attitude towards the interior of the place, whereas the male interviewees shared a more permissive attitude.

Based on the final content analysis few conclusions could be made regarding the service process and actions carried on behalf of the staff. The customers have doubted the motivation of the employees and the management's energetic employees seem to have gone someplace else. The focus lies in the role game: The management should define the rules of the game and to deliver consistent service whether it means asking how customers wish to pay or how many times waiters are expected to check on a dinner party. A recommendation by an interviewee was to arrange a 'kick-off happening' for the first-year students in the beginning of the school year to receive more visibility and acquire new customers. Providing an easy way to give feedback could also be in place.

Customers are no longer satisfied as pure observers and they wish to take part in the process. Comico has succeeded to give a role to its customers through sing-along nights. The idea could be pushed even further by providing an open stage where anyone could perform. As the interviewees had not visited a stand-up show or any other live performance Comico could consider new ways to attract those who have not felt enough interested to visit them. One night with a free entrance for those with a student card could attract curious customers. As a new advertising trick Comico could hire students to hand out flyers and promote Comico to other students.

This study has brought forward innovative ways to think and ways to act which may seem naïve and unprofessional. Making up stories and playing role games do not sound like scholarly insights for a successful business. However, several examples illustrate that when there is nothing new to discover old tricks need to be reused. Think about fashion: Now that all possible urban designs have been used during the past decades it is time to bring back some of the old fashion. This year the fashion forerunners have decided to take us back to the 1960's (Vogue 2008). Going back in time has been made personal in this context. By remembering the child within us can provide new prospects to us as individuals or to businesses as competitive advantages. Who would not like to be like Peter Pan and never grow old? There is no reason why a business could not perform like a good old cartoon movie or a bedtime story. Comico is already on its way there with a comic book as a menu. Besides, grown people come to Rovaniemi around the year to meet their childhood hero Father Christmas even when they have stopped believing in him a long time ago. A

sing-along night carries a similar kind of childhood memory for its visitors: Singing together like in elementary school could some people consider a bit unusual. No, not unusual in Comico at all.

Even when Comico does not stand out from the more famous and more popular crowd of experience businesses like theme parks and technology based virtual experiences, Comico still has the competitive advantage on its own market. The tools to operate more efficiently on the experience market are described in the text. This thesis provides an adaptable framework for any restaurant management wishing to change its regular service performance into more experiential theatre performance. Even when Comico's customers have given the comments for this study, the basic restaurant script is still universal. Anyone with an open mind and enough courage should take an advice, no matter what field of business they are in.

Suggestion for further studies is to conduct a quantitative research over customer satisfaction in Comico. Further studies could also explore restaurant experiences from a wider perspective from the experience industry's viewpoints. That is, to interview managers of different theme restaurants and compare their ideas and views on how customer needs are changing and how these expectations should be met in the future. It would also be interesting to investigate senses more deeply within the business context.

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LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Interview with Comico's customers

APPENDIX 2: Interview with Comico's management

APPENDIX 3: Example of content analysis

APPENDIX 4: Customer satisfaction survey

APPENDIX 5: Comico's menu

Interview with customers of Comico

CUSTOMERS

1. Background information

How often do you visit Comico?

Why do you visit Comico?

What makes Comico different from other restaurants?

What makes Comico special?

What made you visit Comico for the first time?

How do you feel about Comico's advertising and what kind of image do you think they are trying to create over advertisements?

2. Business idea

How do you think the service process is carried out in Comico?

> greeting
>
> ordering
>
> delivery
>
> customer attention
>
> paying

What would you like to see improved in the service process?

3. Staff

What do you think about the employees in Comico?

> professionalism
>
> motivation
>
> commitment
>
> outfit
>
> personality

Do you think Comico's staff pays enough attention to its customers?

What changes you would like the staff to make in order to increase customer satisfaction?

4. Service environment

What do you think about Comico's overall impression?

> lighting
>
> music
>
> noise

What do you think about Comico's choice of space?

> furniture
>
> bar
>
> size

What do you think about Comico's decoration?

> colours
>
> materials
>
> style
>
> textiles

Your suggestions for improvements?

5. Customer's role

How would you describe your participation in the service process?

> seating
>
> waiting to the tables/self-service
>
> paying the bill

Do you share your experiences in Comico with others? If you do, what?

Have you recommended Comico to others and have had them interested in visiting Comico?

What things do you recommend with others?

6. Sing-along nights

Have you visited any sing-along-nights of Comico? If you have, why? If you have not, why not?

If you have:

       Did you sing along?

       Have you requested a song?

       What was your opinion over the band?

       What would you like to be done differently?

       What is the best thing about sing-along nights?

7. Other program

Have you visited any other show in Comico? (Stand-up comedy, acoustic live performance, etc.)

If you have, who/when/why did you? If not, why?

If you have:

       What did you think of the performance?

       Did it fulfil your expectations?

       Would you recommend to others?

8. Expectations and satisfaction

Have you been satisfied in Comico?

What kind of expectations do you have when coming to Comico?

Has reality met the illusions created by advertising?

9. Other questions

Which adjectives would describe Comico best?

Think about Comico – what emotions do you get?

Which school grade would Comico get from you? (From four to ten)

What is the very best thing bout Comico?

Does Comico offer you experiences? If does, what kinds of?

Tell spontaneously about one of your visits in Comico.

10. Finally

Age

Profession

Marital status

Thank you for your time!

Interview with the manager of Comico

MANAGEMENT

General information

1. What do you think to be the most important criteria for customers to choose Comico for their restaurant visit?

2. How do you advertise your restaurant and how often?

3. How important do you think your advertising is for your restaurant?

4. How important do you think word of mouth is for your restaurant?

5. Comico's website is only in Finnish. Do you feel translating to other languages is unnecessary?

Business idea

6. How would you describe Comico's theme and how does it differ from other restaurants in Rovaniemi?

7. How do you feel theme and decoration support one another? (Colours, materials, style, textiles, etc.)

8. Are you planning any changes? If yes, what kinds of changes?

Service process

9. How is the service process carried out?

10. Is it clear for customers that they are expected to pay to the bar themselves?

Staff

11. Are employees producing the theme in any way? If yes, how? If not, why?

12. What are the uniform's like? How were they selected?

Sing-along nights

13. How did you come up with the idea of a sing-along night?
14. How often are they held and what is the number of customers during those shows?
15. How and where do you advertise sing-along nights?
16. Would it be possible to arrange sing-along night from a private request? (For example by a student union)

Other program

17. How popular are stand-up comedian and other live performances you have? What is the number of customers during those evenings (approximately)?
18. What is the average price for these performances?
19. How and where do you advertise your performers?
20. Would it be possible to provide a sort of "menu/package", which would include a show, food and a drink for one price? (Suggestion made by interviewees)
21. Would it be possible to provide offers such as happy hour during a live performance? (Suggestion made by interviewees)

Other questions

22. Which adjectives would describe Comico best?
23. Think about Comico – what emotions do you get?
24. Which school grade would Comico get from you? (From four to ten)
25. What is the very best thing bout Comico?
26. Does Comico offer you experiences? If does, what kinds of?
27. Do you measure customer satisfaction? If yes, how? If not, why?

Resolving research material

CONTENT ANALYSIS (Example)

4. Service environment

What do you think about Comico's overall impression?

Original expressions	**Resolved expressions**
Cosy, good lighting	
Place is small and idyllic	Atmospheric
Decoration is cosy, space is hallow	
Atmospheric	
Music plays quietly enough for conversations	
Music is not too loud	Quiet
Not too noisy	
Cheap	
Too colourful walls, tacky	Messy
Confusing, a little bit of everything	

A suggestion for measuring customer satisfaction

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

Dear customer,

We hope that you can find the few minutes required to complete this questionnaire

and help us improve our service. Please circle one number for each of the six items

that follow.

We appreciate your help!

1 I feel that Comico's character and convenience are (decoration, facilities):

-2	-1	0	1	2
Much less than I expected	Less than I expected	Just as I expected	Better than I expected	Much better than I expected

2 The availability of the service is (waiting time, getting a waiter):

-2	-1	0	1	2
Very disappointing	Disappointing	Just as I expected	Better than I expected	Much better than I expected

3 The service performance of the employees (helpfulness, promptness):

-2	-1	0	1	2
Very disappointing	Disappointing	Just as I expected	Better than I expected	Much better than I expected

4 Professionalism and competence of the staff:

-2	-1	0	1	2
Very disappointing	Disappointing	Just as I expected	Better than I expected	Much better than I expected

5 The staff paid enough attention to me (personal attention):

-2	-1	0	1	2
Very disappointing	Disappointing	Just as I expected	Better than I expected	Much better than I expected

6 The food was

-2	-1	0	1	2
Very disappointing	Disappointing	Just as I expected	Better than I expected	Much better than I expected

How important the following parts of the service are to you

1 Comico's character and convenience are (decoration, facilities)

-2	-1	0	1	2
Not at all important	Not important	No opinion	Important	Very important

2 The availability of the service is (waiting time, getting a waiter)

-2	-1	0	1	2
Not at all important	Not important	No opinion	Important	Very important

3 The service performance of the employees (helpfulness, promptness)

-2	-1	0	1	2
Not at all important	Not important	No opinion	Important	Very important

4 Professionalism and competence of the staff

-2	-1	0	1	2
Not at all important	Not important	No opinion	Important	Very important

5 Personal attention

-2	-1	0	1	2
Not at all important	Not important	No opinion	Important	Very important

6 The food

-2	-1	0	1	2
Not at all important	Not important	No opinion	Important	Very important

What did you eat? _____

Other comments, suggestions: _____

_____

_____

_____
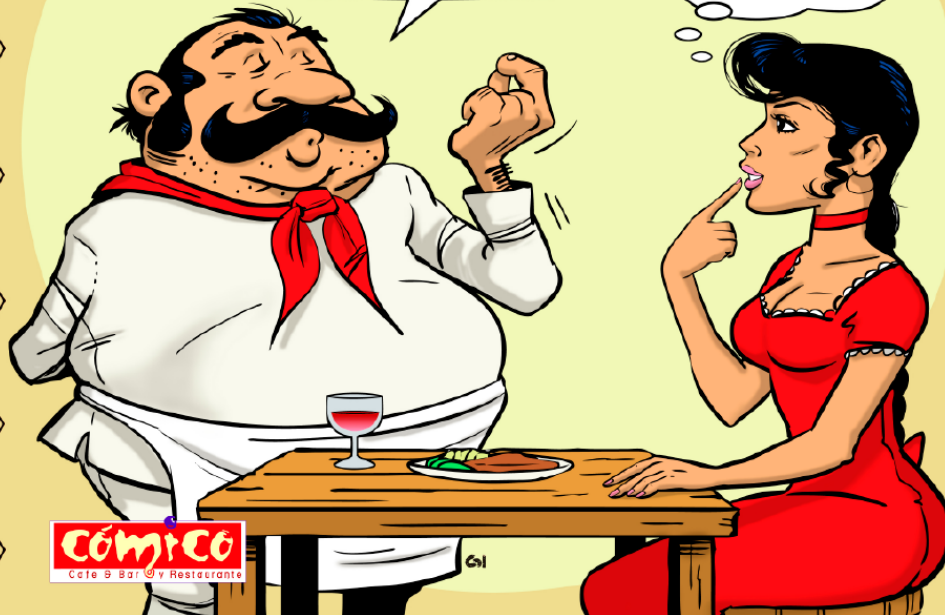
Thank you for your time!

TERVETULOA! BIENVENIDO!

KÄSISSÄNNE ON "KOOMIKON" RUOKALISTA, JONKA RUUAT JA JUOMAT ON LUOTU NAUTITTAVAKSI OMAN VAPAAN HALUNNE MUKAISESTI. LISTALTA LÖYTYY RUNSAASTI ERIKOKOISIA, VAPAASTI YHDISTELTÄVISSÄ OLEVIA ANNOKSIA. MONET RUUISTA ON LUOTU SYÖTÄVÄKSI KÄSIN, PERINTEISEEN TEX-MEX TYYLIIN.
JOHDATUKSEN NAUTINTOIHIN ANTAVAT MEKSIKOLAISET YSTÄVÄMME *PACO, POCO JA LOCO*, JOTKA AIKOINAAN PERUSTIVAT RAVINTOLAN TÄNNE LAPPIIN JA ANTOIVAT OMAT HERKULLISET RESEPTINSÄ CÓMICON KÄYTTÖÖN!
RAVINTOLASSAMME ON SALLITTUA MYÖS NAUTTIA VAIN PIENIÄ ANNOKSIA, JUODA PELKÄSTÄÄN VIINIÄ TAI VAIKKA NAUTTIA KUPPONEN CAPPUCCINOA.
TOIVOTAMME TEILLE NAUTINNOLLISIA HETKIÄ!

SISÄLLYSLUETTELO

FROZEN MARGARITA 6.90
VALITSE MAKU! MANSIKKA, MANGO TAI PASSION.
TEQUILA, TRIPLE SEC, LIME.

MEZCAL 5.50
PERINTEINEN MEKSIKOLAINEN
PEHMEÄ KAKTUSVIINA.
NAUTITAAN SUOLAN JA SITRUUNAN KANSSA.

3

SIDE ORDERS & SMALL BITES

KAIPAATKO SIE PIENTÄ NAPOSTELTAVA SEURUSTELUN LOMAAN?

SIE VALITA NÄISTÄ MAKOISAA HYVÄÄ!

SIDE ORDERS

XTRA POTATOES 2,40
VALITSE RANSKALAISET-, RISTIKKO-, LANKKUPERUNAT TAI COMICON LOHKOPERUNAT.

XTRA DIPPI 0,50
CREME FRAICHE, CHILIMAJONEESI, VS-MAJONEESI, CURRYMAJONEESI, JUUSTOKASTIKE, SALSA TAI BBQ-KASTIKE.

ONION RINGS 4 KPL 2,90

JALAPENO PEPPERS 3 KPL 3,90

MOZZARELLA STICKS 4 KPL 3,90

QUESADILLAS 4 KPL 3,90

NACHOS & SALSA 3,50
RAPEITA MAISSILASTUJA JA SALSAA.

NACHOS GRANDE VEGETARIAN 7,90
NACHOS GRANDE CHICKEN 9,20
NACHOS GRANDE BACON-BEEF 9,20

KAIKKI NACHOS GRANDE -ANNOKSET SISÄLTÄVÄT SALSAA, PUNASIPULIA, JALAPENOJA, JUUSTO-KASTIKETTA JA CREME FRAICHEA. [KAIKKI: G,VL]

ONION RINGS 5,20
FRITEERATTUJA SIPULIRENKAITA, VALKOSIPULI-MAJONEESIA SEKÄ MAISSILASTUJA. [L]

MOZZARELLA STICKS 5,20
MOZZARELLA JUUSTOTIKKUJA, CHILIMAJONEESIA SEKÄ MAISSILASTUJA. [VL]

HOT CHEESE JALAPENOPEPPERS 5,90
JUUSTOTÄYTTEISIÄ JALAPENOPIPPUREITA, CREME FRAICHEA SEKÄ MAISSILASTUJA. [VL]

CHICKEN WINGS W / NACHOS 5,50
  -"-   W / LANKKUPERUNAT 6,50
  + 6 KPL EXTRA WINGS +3,20
6 KPL MUHKEITA BROILERINSIIPIÄ JA CREME FRAICHEA. VALITSE TULINEN TAI MIETO KASTIKE. [G,VL]
HOX! MYÖS XXX-HOT-KASTIKE WINGSEILLE. OTA JOS USKALLAT! JOUDUT ALLEKIRJOITTAMAAN SOPIMUK-SEN, JOSSA OTAT VASTUUN SYÖMISESTÄ OMIIN KÄSIISI! .... XXX-HOT-KASTIKE +1,-

ESCARGOTS GARLIC-GORGONZOLA 7,90
ETANOITA TIRISEVÄLLÄ PANNULLA, MAUSTETTUNA VALKOSIPULILLA JA SINIHOMEJUUSTOLLA. [VL]

GAMBAS CAJUN-AIOLLO 7,90
JÄTTIKATKARAVUNPYRSTÖJÄ TIRISEVÄLLÄ PANNULLA, MAUSTETTUNA CAJUN-VALKOSIPULIVOILLA. [VL]

COMICO COMBO PIENI TAI ISO 8,20 / 10,90
CHEESE QUESADILLAS, ONION RINGS, JALAPENO-PEPPERS, MOZZARELLA STICKS, MAISSILASTUJA, SALSAA, CHILIMAJONEESI-KASTIKETTA JA CREME FRAICHEA. [VL]

COMICO PLATTER PIENI TAI ISO 8,70 / 11,50
MOZZARELLA STICKS, RIBS-PALOJA, ONION RINGS, WINGSEJÄ, RISTIKKOPERUNOITA, SALSAA, VALKO-SIPULIMAJONEESIA SEKÄ CHILIMAJONEESIA. [VL]

SWEET POTATO SOUP PIENI TAI ISO 4,50 / 7,50
KERMAINEN BATAATTIKEITTO RAPEIDEN NACHOJEN KERA. VALITSE PIENI TAI ISO KULHO. [VL, G]

G=GLUTEENITON L=LAKTOOSITON VL=VÄHÄLAKTOOSINEN

TEX-MEX SPECIALS

1.

2.

VIPS!

3.

VAPS!

4.

VIUH!
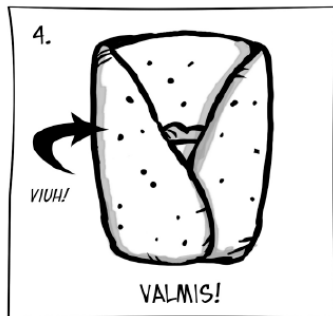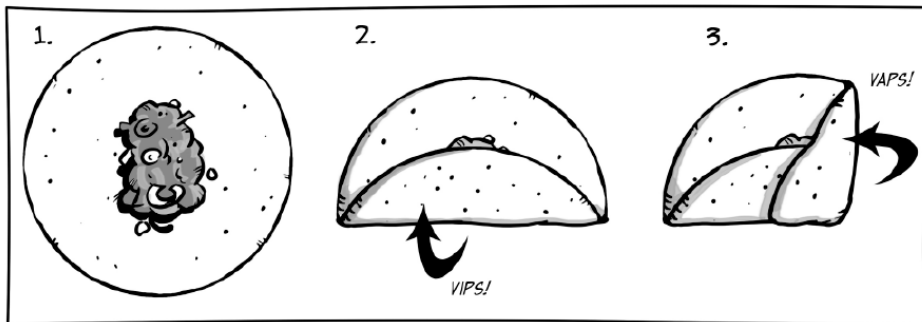
VALMIS!

BURRITOKSEN JA FAJITAKSEN ERO
BURRITOS ON ISO LÄTTY, JONKA HERKUT OVAT VALMIIKSI ANNOSTELTU. FAJITAKSESSA HERKUT ANNOSTELLAAN ITSE.

HOLA! FAJITAS ON HELPPO SYÖDÄ, KUN SIE KÄÄRIT LÄTYN TÄMÄN OHJEEN MUKAAN!

BURRITOS
CÒMICON BURRITOKSET SISÄLTÄVÄT 10 TUUMAISEEN VEHNÄTORTILLAAN KÄÄRITTYNÄ SIPULI-PAPRIKA-PAISTOSTA, SALSAA, LISÄKSI PÄÄLLÄ CREME FRAICHEA, JALAPENOJA SEKÄ JUUSTOKASTIKETTA. TARJOILLAAN SALAATIN KERA.

OPTIOT:

VEGETARIAN 9,20
BATAATTIA, TOMAATTIA, KESÄKURPITSAA JA HERKKUSIENIÄ [VL]

CHICKEN 9,90
SUIKALOITUA JA PARILOITUA BROILERIN FILEETÄ. [VL]

BEEF 9,90
SUIKALOITUA JA PARILOITUA HÄRÄN FILEETÄ. [VL]

SHRIMP 9,90
GRILLATTUJA KATKARAPUJA. [VL]

FAJITAKSET
CÒMICON FAJITAKSET SISÄLTÄVÄT PAPRIKAA JA SIPULIA KUUMALTA PANNULTA TARJOILTUNA. LISÄNÄ VEHNÄTORTILLOJA, SALSAA, JALAPENOJA, GUACA-MOLEA JA CREME FRAICHEA.

OPTIOT:

VEGGIE 14,80
GRILLATTUJA KASVIKSIA JA HALLOUMI -JUUSTOA, HERKKUSIENIÄ SEKÄ PAPUJA. [VL]

CHICKEN 15,80
PARILOITUA BROILERIN FILEETÄ. [VL]

BEEF 16,50
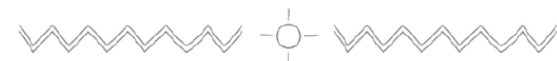PAISTETTUA HÄRÄN FILEETÄ. [VL]

SEAFOOD 15,90
LOHTA JA GRILLATTUJA KATKARAPUJA. [VL]

FAJITAS COMBO 16,90
VALITSE 2 TÄYTETTÄ EDELLISISTÄ! [VL]

BIGGER BURGERS

GRINGO! TÄMÄ PUEBLO* ON MEILLE MOLEMMILLE LIIAN PIENI...

...NIINKUIN PIHVISIKIN OVAT...

HAH! KÄSITTELYNI JÄLKEEN TULET MUISTUTTAMAAN ETÄISESTI LIHAA!

AI NIINKUIN TARJOILEMASI TUOTTEESIKO?

*KYLÄ

VAROITIN SINUA! RUUALLA EI PELLEILLÄ! MAISTA TÄTÄ, LUOPIO!

KLAK!

PUF!

LAATUA!

VIUH!

HUI! ANTAUDUN! OLET PAREMPI JA SILLÄ SIPULI!

CÒMICO BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ REILU YLI
180 G KOKOLIHAPIHVI, PEKONIA, SALSAA,
JALAPENOJA, SUOLAKURKKUA, VALKOSIPULI-
MAJONEESIA, PUNASIPULIA, SALAATTIA JA TOMAATTIA.
TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN JA PIHVIRANSKALAISTEN
KANSSA. [L]

COMICO CHICKEN BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ MEHEVÄÄ
PARILOITUA BROILERIN FILEETÄ, PEKONIA, SALSAA,
JALAPENOJA, SUOLAKURKKUA, VALKOSIPULIMAJO-
NEESIA, PUNASIPULIA, SALAATTIA JA TOMAATTIA.
TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN JA PIHVIRANSKALAISTEN
KANSSA. [L]

HALLOUMI BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ REILU YLI
180G KOKOLIHAPIHVI, GRILLATTU VIIPALE HALLOUMI
-JUUSTOA, CHILIMAJONEESIA, PUNASIPULIA,
SALAATTIA, JA TOMAATTIA. TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN
JA PIHVIRANSKALAISTEN KANSSA. [VL]

BEEF BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ REILU YLI
180G KOKOLIHAPIHVI, JUUSTOKASTIKETTA,
CHILIMAJONEESIA, PUNASIPULIA, SALAATTIA JA
TOMAATTIA. TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN JA PIHVI-
RANSKALAISTEN KANSSA. [VL]

BLUE CHEESE BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ REILU YLI
180G KOKOLIHAPIHVI, GORGONZOLA SINIHOME-
JUUSTOA, CHILIMAJONEESIA, SALSAA, SUOLAKURK-
KUA, PUNASIPULIA, SALAATTIA JA TOMAATTIA.
TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN JA PIHVIRANSKALAISTEN
KANSSA. [L]

CHICKEN BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ MEHEVÄÄ
PARILOITUA BROILERINFILEETÄ, JUUSTOKASTI-
KETTA, CURRYMAJONEESIA, PUNASIPULIA, SALAAT-
TIA JA TOMAATTIA. TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN JA
PIHVIRANSKALAISTEN KANSSA. [VL]

VEGGIE BURGER 11,70
ISON HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄN VÄLISSÄ VIIPALE
GRILLATTUA HALLOUMI JUUSTOA, TUORETTA GRIL-
LATTUA ANANASTA, ONION RINGS, CHILIMAJONEE-
SIA, PUNASIPULIA, SALAATTIA JA TOMAATTIA.
TARJOILLAAN COLESLAWN JA PIHVIRANSKALAISTEN
KANSSA. [L]

DOUBLE BURGER 20,90
VALITSE EDELLÄ MAINITUISTA BURGEREISTA KAKSI!
NE TUODAAN VALMIIKSI PUOLITETTUINA.
MAINIOSTI MAISTELTAVA VAIHTOEHTO KAHDELLE!
[VL]

CRISPY & GREEN

SALADS
COMICON SALAATIT SISÄLTÄVÄT ERILAISIA VIHREITÄ
SALAATINLEHTIÄ, MARINOITUJA KASVIKSIA, TOMAATTIA,
PAPUJA, KAKTUSTA JA CÒMICON RESEPTILLÄ VALMIS-
TETTUA SALAATINKASTIKETTA. LISÄKSI LEIPÄÄ.

OPTIOT:

GRILLED HALLOUMI 10,30 VL

CHICKEN 11,60 L

BEEF 11,90 L

SEAFOOD 11,60 L

*RAPEAA, TÄYTTÄVÄÄ JA MAUKASTA!
JUURI NE ASIAT MISTÄ NAINEN PITÄÄ....
SAMAN VOI SANOA MYÖS NÄISTÄ SALAATEISTA!
...TOSIN SALAATIN KANSSA EI TARVITSE
HUOLEHTIA LINJOISTAAN, HIH!*

*JUANITA! MIE OON VALMISTANUT
NÄÄ SUL' PALAVA RAKKAUS
RINNASSAIN...
AV, SAANHAN TARJOTA SIULLE
PARASTA VAIN!*

10

TASTY CHICKEN

*"HUOKAUS"
KUKKOKIEKUU...*

*PSST, KAIJA. KANA
SANO "KOT KOT"
EI "KUKKOKIEKU".*

*VAI NIIN... ENTÄ JOS
TÄMÄ "POLLO" EI ALA
TEIDÄN KOTKOTUKSIIN!?*

IIH!

ZIT!

*VAROKIN
MUNIMASTA!*

KOTKOT KOOOT KOT KOT..

HALLOUMI CHICKEN 12,90
YRTEILLÄ MAUSTETTUA GRILLATTUA BROILERIN-
FILETTÄ, PARILOITUA HALLOUMIJUUSTOA, LÄMPIMIÄ
KASVIKSIA, MUHENNETTUA PERUNAA JA MANIOKKIA.
[G, VL]

SWEET CARIBBEAN CHICKEN 12,90
GRILLATTUA BROILERINFILEETÄ, KERMAINEN BATAAT-
TIKASTIKE, RIISIÄ, LÄMPIMIÄ KASVIKSIA JA TUOREITA
HEDELMIÄ. [G, VL]

GARLIC CHICKEN 12,90
GRILLATTUA BROILERINFILEETÄ, KERMAINEN VALKO-
SIPULIKASTIKE, LÄMPIMIÄ KASVIKSIA SEKÄ VALKO-
SIPULIPERUNAT. [G, VL]

CAJUN CHICKEN 12,90
GRILLATTUA BROILERINFILEETÄ CAJUNPOLTETTUNA,
MAUSTEVOI, GRILLATTUA KAKTUSTA, LÄMPIMIÄ
KASVIKSIA SEKÄ MAALAISLOHKOPERUNAT. [G, VL]

11

MEATBALLS DE LOCO

COMICON JÄTTIMÄISET LIHAPULLAT ON TEHTY TALON OMAN SALAISEN RESEPTIN MUKAAN. NE ON VALMISTETTU 100% NAUDANLIHASTA. VALMISTUKSESSA ON KÄYTETTY MM. SIPULIA, KAKTUSTA, PAPUJA SEKÄ MAISSIA JA NE ON SIVELTY LOCON OMALLA TULISELLA MAUSTESEOKSELLA.
ANNOKSET TARJOILLAAN COMICON ISOJEN MAALAISLOHKOPERUNOIDEN KERA.
VOIT VALITA ITSE ANNOKSEEN KASTIKKEEN!

MEATBALLS BEBÈ 1 KPL 9,90 [G, VL]

MEATBALLS CHICO 2 KPL 11,90 [G, VL]

MEATBALLS GRANDE 3 KPL 14,90 [G, VL]

KASTIKEVAIHTOEHDOT:

1. PIPPURI   2. TUMMA PEKONI   3. VALKOSIPULI   4. CHILIMAJONEESI

12

13

TRES HOMBRES SKEWERS

COMICON RUNSAAT JA MEHUKKAAT LIHAVARTAAT ON PITKÄÄN HAUDUTETTU JA GRILLATTU YHDESSÄ KASVISTEN KANSSA PACON, POCON JA LOCON OMIEN MIELTYMYSTEN MUKAAN KOLMELLA ERI TYYLILLÄ. HALUTESSASI VOIT VALITA VAIKKA KAIKKI KOLME VAIHTOEHTOA VARTAASEESI!
VARTAAT TULEVAT KERMAPERUNOIDEN SEKÄ PIPPURI- JA VISKIKASTIKKEEN KERA.

OPTIOT:

CHICKEN & GAMBAS 18,50 [G, VL]

BEEF & CHICKEN 18,50 [G, VL]

BEEF & GAMBAS 18,50 [G, VL]

BEEF, CHICKEN & GAMBAS 19,80 [G, VL]

GAMBAS = JÄTTIKATKARAPU

COMICO CLASSICS, FISH & STEAKS

AY CARAMBA!
MIE SANOO SIULLE MONTA,
MONTA KERTA!

OLÉ!

SWEET DREAMS

POCO! EIHÄN TUO RUUSU OLE MIUN KUKKAPENKISTÄ!?

LOCO! ONKO TUO *SUKLAAKAKKU!?* TULEHAN KÄYMÄÄN SISÄLLÄ!!!

PACO, TUO ON LEMPIBIISINI... ETHÄN SOITA SITÄ, POR FAVOR?

NUUH!

ON SULLA MUODOT VEEENUKSEN! DAA DIRLAN DIRLAN DAA!

CHOCOLATE CAKE BLACK & WHITE 5,80
CÒMICON OMAN KEITTIÖN VALMISTAMAA SUUSSA SULAVAA SUKLAAKAKKUA, JOSSA KERROKSITTAIN TUMMAA- JA VALKO- SUKLAATA. LISÄKSI CHILI-MANSIKKA- KASTIKETTA. [VL]

CHEESE CAKE 5,00
TUOREJUUSTOKAKKUA JA APPELSIINI-MINTTU- SIIRAPPIA.

CREME BRULEE & TEQUILA-CRANBERRY SYRUP 5,20
KLASSIKKO MAUSTETTUNA TEQUILA- KARPALO-SIIRAPILLA [G,VL]

BLUEBERRY PANCAKES 5,20
PANNUKAKKUJA, VAAHTERA- JA MUSTIKKA- SIIRAPPIA, VANILJAJÄÄTELÖÄ. [VL]

MILKSHAKE 3,90
PEHMEÄ PIRTELÖ. VALITSE MAKUSI! VANILJA- MANSIKKA- TAI SUKLAA.

FROZEN MUDSLIDE 6,90
VANILJAPIRTELÖ MAUSTETTUNA 2CL BAILEYS IRISH CREAM & 2CL KAHLUA. MAINIO DIGESTIIVI TUKEVAN ATERIAN PÄÄTTEEKSI!

18

CREOLE FISH 12,90
GRILLATTUA LOHTA CAJUNPOLTETTUNA, MAUSTEVOI, YRTTINEN PERUNASALAATTI, LÄMPIMIÄ KASVIKSIA JA TEQUILA-KARPALOSIIRAPPIA. [G, VL]

GARLIC STEAK 17,80 XL 400G / 23,90
200 G HÄRÄN ULKOFILEEPIHVI, MUHENNETTUA PERUNAA JA MANIOKKIA SEKÄ MAUKAS

KIDS

NYT KAIKKI PIKKU IPANA TARKKANA! SUURI TAIKURI TAIKOA NYT SOMBREROSTA ESILLE KANAN!

ABRAKADABRA...

PUF!

TADAA...

PELLEN HAMPURILAISATERIA 5,90
JAUHELIHAPIHVI, KETSUPPIA, HAMPURILAISSÄMPYLÄ JA RANSKALAISET PERUNAT. [L]

PELLEN JUUSTOHAMPURILAISATERIA 5,90 [VL]

LOCON LEMPEÄT LIHAPULLAT 5,90
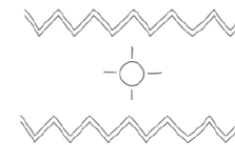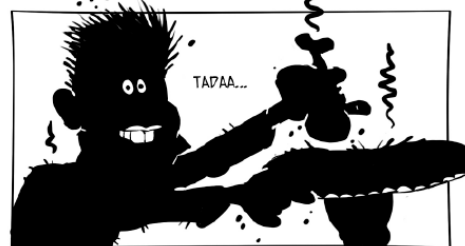KEITTIÖMESTARIN OMAT LASTEN LIHAPULLAT SEKÄ RANSKALAISET PERUNAT. [VL]
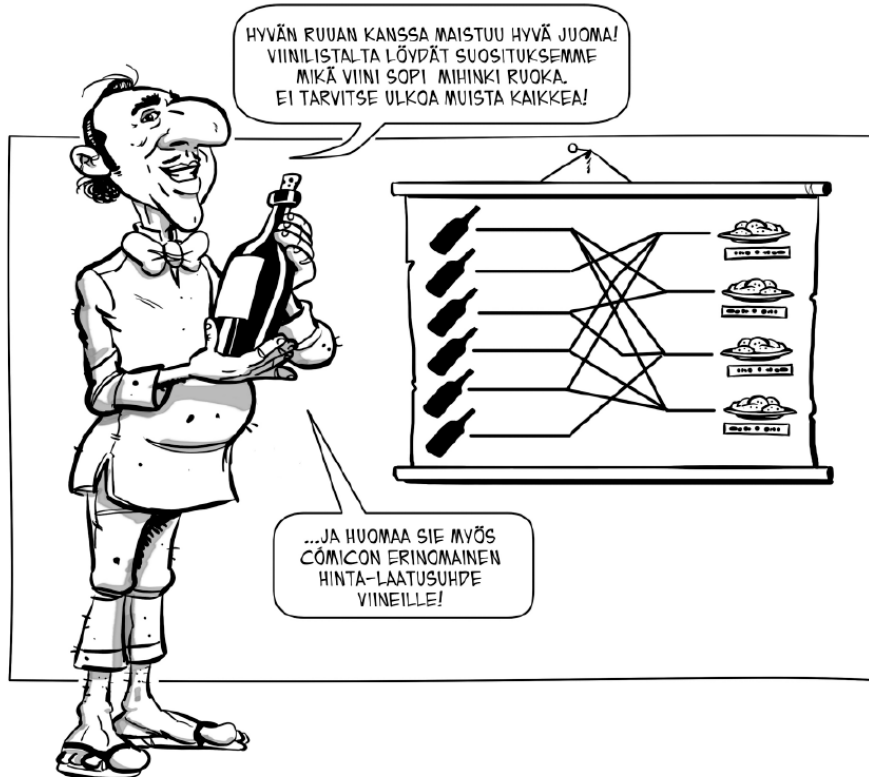
TAIKURIN GRILLAAMAA BROILERIA 6,90
GRILLATTUA BROILERIN RINTAFILETTÄ, RANSKALAISIA PERUNOITA, CURRYMAJONEESIDIPPI SEKÄ SALAATTIA. [L]

POMPPIVAN HÄRÄN PIHVI 8,50
PAISTETTU 120G HÄRÄN ULKOFILEEPIHVI, RANSKALAISIA PERUNOITA, MAUSTEVOI JA SALAATTIA. [G, VL]

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WHITE WINES

WHITE WINES

	12CL	PLO
BERINGER CALIFORNIA COLLECTION CHARDONNAY	4,80	24,80

100% CHARDONNAY. BERINGER VINEYARDS, CALIFORNIA, USA.
KUIVA, HUNAJAA, VANILJAA, MIELLYTTÄVÄ. ESIM. SEAFOOD FAJITAKSEN TAI –SALAATIN KERA!

	12CL	PLO
GALLO SIERRA VALLEY COLOMBARD	4,50	21,80

100% COLOMBARD. E. & J. GALLO, CALIFORNIA, USA
PUOLIKUIVA, RAIKAS, HAPOKAS, MAUSTEINEN. MAINIO APERITIIVI & SEURUSTELUJUOMA!

	12CL	PLO
JACOB´S CREEK DRY RIESLING	4,80	23,90

100% RIESLING. ORLANDO WINES, SOUTH EASTERN AUSTRALIA.
KUIVA, RAIKAS, SITRUSAROMINEN. ESIM. SEAFOODIN OIVA KAVERI!

	12CL	PLO
MONTANA MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC	4,80	24,30

100% SAUVIGNON BLANC. MONTANA WINES, MARLBOROUGH, NEW ZEALAND.
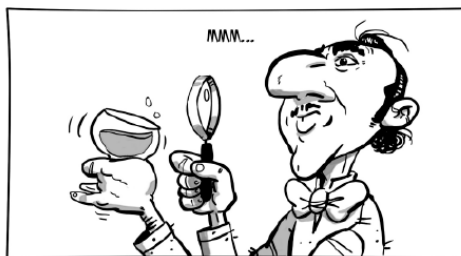KUIVA, TIIVIIN HEDELMÄINEN, RAIKKAAN HAPOKAS.
VUODEN VIINI 2005!
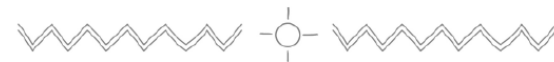
RED WINES

VIININ MAISTAMINEN

1. KATSO

VIININ MAISTAMINEN ALKAA TUIJOTUKSELLA. KALLISTA LASI HIEMAN KYLJELLEEN, KOSKA SIE NÄKE VÄRIEROT PARHAITEN LASIN REUNASSA. MOITTEETTOMAN VIININ TULISI OLLA KIRKASTA.

2. HAISTA

PYÖRITÄ VIINIÄ KEVYESTI LASISSA. NÄIN AROMIT IRTOAVAT VIINISTÄ PAREMMIN. NUUHKAISE REILUSTI, MUTTA ÄLÄ PIDÄ NOKKAASI LIIAN KAUAN LASISSA. KOETA MIETTIÄ KUINKA VOIMAKAS VIININ TUOKSU ON JA MILLAISIA TUOKSUJA SIE VIINISTÄ LÖYDÄT. VIININ MAHDOLLISET VIRHEET LÖYTYVÄT MYÖS USEIN HAISTAMALLA.

3. MAISTA

OTA REILU KULAUS VIINIÄ SUUHUN. PURSKUTTELE. MILTÄ VIINI MAISTUU? KIINNITÄ HUOMIOTA JÄLKIFIILIS VIINI NIELAISUN JÄLKEEN. ONKO VIININ MAKU HARMONINEN VAI HÄIRITSEEKÖ JOKU KOKONAISUUTTA?

|	12CL	PLO
TANGUERO TEMPRANILLO BONARDA	4,50	20,70
55% TEMPRANILLO 45% BONARDA. FINCA FLINCHMAN, MENDOZA, ARGENTIINA. TÄYTELÄINEN, VOIMAKAS, HARMONINEN. MAINIO YLEISVIINI!		
GARABATO	4,80	22,90
100% TEMPRANILLO. BODEGAS BRIEGO, RIBERA DEL DUERO, ESPANJA KESKITÄYTELÄINEN, PEHMEÄT TANNIINIT, TASAPAINOINEN. LIHAN KAVERIKSI!		
FINCA FLINCHMAN SHIRAZ	4,50	20,90
100% SHIRAZ. FINCA FLINCHMAN, MAIPU MENDOZA, ARGENTIINA. KESKITÄYTELÄINEN, RUNSAS, PITKÄ JÄLKIMAKU. PIPPURISELLE LIHALLE!		
CABALLERO DE LA CEPA	4,80	22,80
100% CABERNET SAUVIGNON. FINCA FLINCHMAN, MENDOZA, ARGENTIINA. TÄYTELÄINEN, RUNSAS, INTENSIIVINEN. GRILLATTUJEN PIHVIEN KAVERIKSI!		
TIEMPO BRIEGO	5,60	26,90
100% TEMPRANILLO. BODEGAS BRIEGO, RIBERA DEL DUERO, ESPANJA TÄYTELÄINEN, VOIMAKAS, MAUSTEINEN, TAMMINEN. MAINIO PIHVIVIINI!		
BERINGER NORTH COAST CLEAR LAKE ZINFANDEL	5,90	29,80
100% ZINFANDEL. BERINGER BLASS WINE ESTATE, CALIFORNIA, USA. TÄYTELÄINEN, HEDELMÄINEN, SUKLAATA, PIPPURIA. HIENO VIINI GRILLATULLE LIHALLE!		
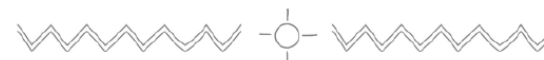
SPARKLING WINES / CHAMPAGNE

	20CL	PLO
CORDON NEGRO BRUT	5,50	23,80

KUIVA, MELKO VOIMAKAS, HAPOKKAAN TASAPAINOINEN.
FREIXENET, CAVA, ESPANJA. LAADUKAS VALINTA LÄPI ATERIAN.
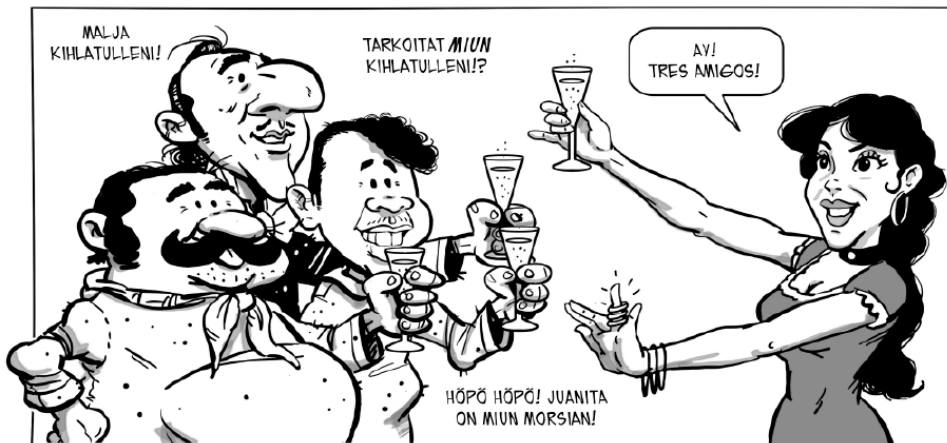
CARTA NEVADA SEMI SECO — 22,30
PUOLIKUIVA, TASAPAINOINEN, REHEVÄ, HAPOKAS.
FREIXENET, CAVA, ESPANJA. MAINIO APERITIIVI!

LANSON BLACK LABEL — 39,80
KUIVA, VOIMAKAS, HIENO, TÄYTELÄINEN, HEDELMÄINEN.
LANSON PERE & FILS, CHAMPAGNE, RANSKA. JUHLAA LÄPI ATERIAN!

CÒMICO FREESTYLE DRINKS

JÄÄVESI 0,50 / HLÖ
BON AQUA KIVENNÄISVESI 2,20
VIRVOITUSJUOMAT 0,4L/0,5L 2/2,50
(COCA-COLA, -LIGHT, SPRITE, FANTA)
KAHVI 1,50
ESPRESSO 2,20
CAPPUCCINO 2,80
LATTE 2,90

HANASTA:
CARLSBERG III 0,5L/0,33L/0,75
4,50/3,20/6,30
STELLA ARTOIS LAGER 0,5L/0,25L 5,20/2,70
CROWMOOR CIDER 0,33L 4,50

PULLOSTA:
SOL III 0,33L 4,50
SAN MIGUEL IV 0,33L 4,50
BUDWEISER III 0,33L 4,20
BROOKLYN LAGER IV 0,355L 4,50
GUINNESS DRAFT 0,33L 4,20
HOOEGAARDEN 0,33L 4,50
GOLDEN CAP CIDERS 0,33L 4,50

CAIPIRINHA 5,80
CACHACA 51, LIME, SUGAR.

CAIPIROSKA 5,80
SMIRNOFF RED, LIME, SUGAR.

FROZEN MARGARITA 6,90
VALITSE MAKU! MANSIKKA, MANGO TAI PASSION.
TEQUILA, TRIPLE SEC, LIME.

SPANISH SHOT 4,00
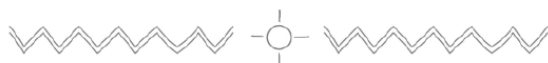LICOR 43, MUSTIKKAKEITTO, KERMAFLOAT.

MEZCAL 5,50
PERINTEINEN MEKSIKOLAINEN PEHMEÄ KAKTUSVIINA.
NAUTITAAN SUOLAN JA SITRUUNAN KANSSA.

CAFE GRAND COLOMBIA 6,00
GRAND MARNIER, KAHLUA, KAHVIA, KERMAFLOAT.

SPICY HOT CHOCOLATE 6,00
CAPTAIN MORGAN SPICED, KAAKAO, KERMAFLOAT.

LOUISIANA SMOOTHIE 6,00
SOUTHERN COMFORT, PEHMISJÄÄTELÖÄ,
ESPRESSOA.

VAN MUST 5,00
VANILJAVODKAA, DE KUYPER BLUEBERRY,
RUSSIAN, SPRITE JA LIMEÄ.

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