



Connecting a terrace to main restaurant through branding: Case Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki Patio

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<p>The commissioner of this thesis is Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. The idea stemmed from a general and personal interest to improve the commissioner's summer terrace, the patio. The thesis process begun in March 2018 and finished in December 2018.</p> <p>The objective of this thesis is to create a set of improvement proposals to strengthen the Hard Rock Cafe brand at the case company Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's patio. The proposals will help the commissioner to plan the next season and to consider the options that increase the visibility of the brand at the patio.</p> <p>The thesis starts by introducing the commissioner. Then the theoretical framework is built around brands and branding. Continuing from the theory, methodology and limitations of the thesis are presented. Next, the conducted research will be introduced, and the results explained and analysed. Research results form a base for the improvement proposals that are divided into brand- and non-brand related matters. Lastly, discussion and evaluation of the thesis are presented.</p> <p>Results of this thesis prove that by branding the patio according to the proposals, multiple benefits can be gained. Recognition becomes easier, better quality can be guaranteed and profits can be increased to name a few.</p>	
Keywords	
brand, brand building, improvement proposal, temporary terrace, Hard Rock Cafe	

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1 Introduction

The restaurant industry is a low margin industry with a lot of competition. New restaurants are merging quicker than ever and the old ones are forced to fight for their place in the industry. To be able to survive, a restaurant today must evoke emotions in their customers. Whether it's trust, excitement or any other feeling, the emotion sets apart two individual restaurants. This type of differentiation is the key to success. Values, ways of operating a business or atmosphere can be introduced to customers via their personal experience even before they enter the premises. Via various trails of social or traditional media, messages from a company to the customer can be transmitted. A style of marketing, branding, can be used for this purpose.

Differentiating through a brand is complex these days. A mere logo or the product or service itself is not enough to attract customers to a company's products. Beyond visuals and features, companies are expected to show their values and how they operate in a transparent way. All of this can be transmitted from the company to the customer through branding or brand management, but it poses a real challenge. In the era of social media shaming, companies need to carefully strategize their actions and react in an accordingly in unfortunate cases.

The topic of this thesis revolves around restaurants, branding and especially strengthening the brand presence at the case company Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's patio (the terrace). The restaurant complex is the only representation of the brand in Finland and a part of the Hard Rock International's Nordic franchise group. Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki represents a strong and globally renowned brand that has its roots deep in the American culture. The brand is carefully implemented in the restaurant, the bar and the merchandise shop (later referred as the rock shop) located all under the same roof at Aleksanterinkatu 21. However evident the brand is inside the complex, Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's newest addition, the patio, does not meet all the requirements of the brand. Therefore, this thesis was initiated to discover suitable ideas to strengthen the brand presence at the patio.

The case company for this thesis is Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. The thesis was commissioned by bar manager Nikita Vasilev and the aim was to improve the patio and lift it up to meet the standards of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. Selection of the case company was practical. I was employed by Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki at the time of the thesis process. This allowed thorough access to information about Hard Rock Cafes in general, the Helsinki

location and the patio and its previous seasons. Beyond employment, I have personal interest towards taking responsibility and advancing in my career, in a field not so familiar, through this practical thesis project.

This thesis is divided into six main sections without counting in the beginning and the end. At first, the case company is introduced thoroughly from global to the local level. Then the theory base is presented as a comprehensive summary to branding and brand building. Consequently, the Hard Rock Cafe brand is described. Moving on from the brand section, the used methodology is explained alongside the limitations of this thesis. Next the research about the patio's state and its' brand state in the season 2018 are introduced. Finally, the improvement proposals are suggested.

2 Case company Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki

This chapter presents different levels of Hard Rock Cafe descending from top to bottom. Firstly, the chapter begins with a short introduction to the general history of Hard Rock Cafe. Secondly, the Helsinki location and its patio are introduced along the ownership model of the Cafe. The patio is introduced more in detail as it is the focus of this thesis. Thirdly, the market environment is briefly introduced. Fourthly, the research purpose is explained.

Hard Rock Cafe was founded by 1971. Two Americans, Peter Morton and Isaac Tigrett, build a business around a good burger in London. Under unstable conditions, the two managed to turn the burger joint to a successful multinational chain. Today Hard Rock International operates cafes, hotels and casinos all over the world under the ownership The Seminole Tribe of Florida. In the summer of 2018, 185 cafes, 25 hotels and 12 casinos operate globally in over 70 countries. (Hard Rock 2018b.) Hard Rock has seen some ups and downs in its' history. Despite the strong global presence, the chain has had to close all in all 45 locations but has simultaneously opened new locations. (Tice 2010.)

2.1 Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki

Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is a part of the Nordic franchise group of Hard Rock International. Along Helsinki there are locations in Gothenburg, Stockholm and Oslo (Kuisma & Niemi 2016, 8.) The chain's only location in Finland is in Helsinki, at Aleksanterinkatu 21. The Cafe consists of a Rock Shop, a bar and a restaurant. The restaurant and bar combined, 240 seats are available for customers. In private functions, 300 people is the maximum. During summer time, approximately from April to September, the company operates a patio outside the restaurant premises (Kuisma 13 November 2017.)

The patio is a reasonably large terrace with its 235 square meters that take place right next to the statue of the Three Smiths. Due to its central location, the patio has high foot traffic and great potential to increase the number of customers. The selection varies from food items to a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks including special coffee. Drinks and coffee are made outside on the patio and the food items are delivered from the kitchen upstairs. The patio was found in 2016 when the rental agreement owner changed from Royal Ravintolat to Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. In the exchange, tables and chairs were sold too. (Vehkasalo 11 May 2016.) City Magazine describes the patio as a "good place for tourists and locals", "American-style with a Finnish twist" and "central and easy-going" (City 2016; City 2017).

In detail, the patio consists of a shipping container that functions as a bar/cafe, tables and chairs and decorative items such as sunshades as seen in Image 1. The image gives an overview of the patio and it helps the reader to understand better to what I refer to later in the text. The area is surrounded by light rope fences and plants to separate the area from the pavement. Roughly estimated the bar itself is four meters in width and two in depth. The container was built in 2016, and first it was rented but later on purchased as a part of the company's property. The container includes equipment for coffee and cocktail making, taps for beer, fridges for wine, soft drinks and special beers. There is also space for a small bottle bin, a roller cage for keeping limited stock and a dishwasher. The self-made Figure 1 was designed to imitate the blueprint of the patio container and help to place the stations on their correct place.



Image 1. Hard Rock Cafe patio (Ihana Helsinki 2018)

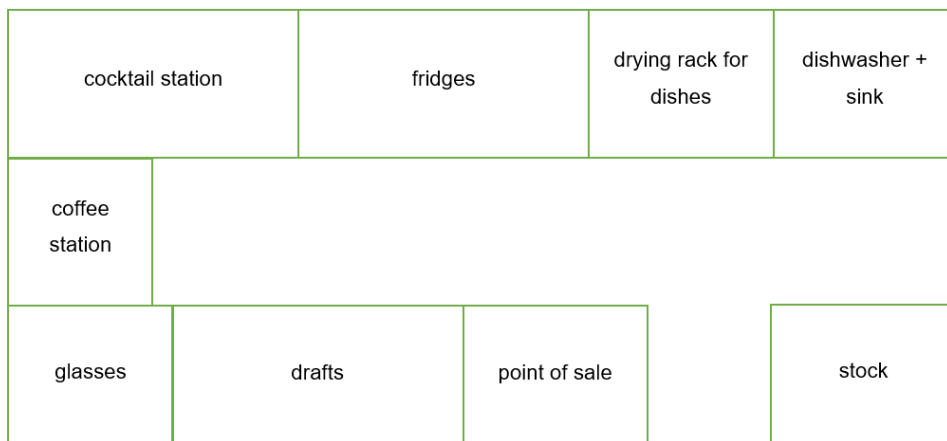


Figure 1. Blueprint of the patio

2.2 Market environment

Market environment in the vicinity of the statue of Three Smiths is competitive. Many restaurants operate in the area throughout the year and open their terraces every summer. Image 2 displays the quantity of restaurants, bars and cafes near the statue. Of all the restaurants visible in the display, the following can be considered as competitors to Hard Rock Cafe patio since they have an outside terrace that serve food; Virgin Oil, Stone's, Iguana and La Famiglia. Consequently, by going further from the statue, more options and competitors appear. For the purpose of this thesis competitors are limited to the extremely near restaurants since it would be too broad and difficult to pay attention to the all restaurants in the vicinity. La Torrefazione, Sport's Academy, Fazer Café and Praha are excluded from the competitors this time since they don't either serve food or have an outside terrace. Moreover, few competitors are missing from the display that are located nearby Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. On Mannerheimintie there is another Iguana restaurant. Close to Iguana is one of the main competitors is O'Learys Baker's. Also, Kiila Food & Bar is missing from the display, which too is located on Mannerheimintie. Stockmann Roof should be also mentioned as they feature a terrace on the top floor.

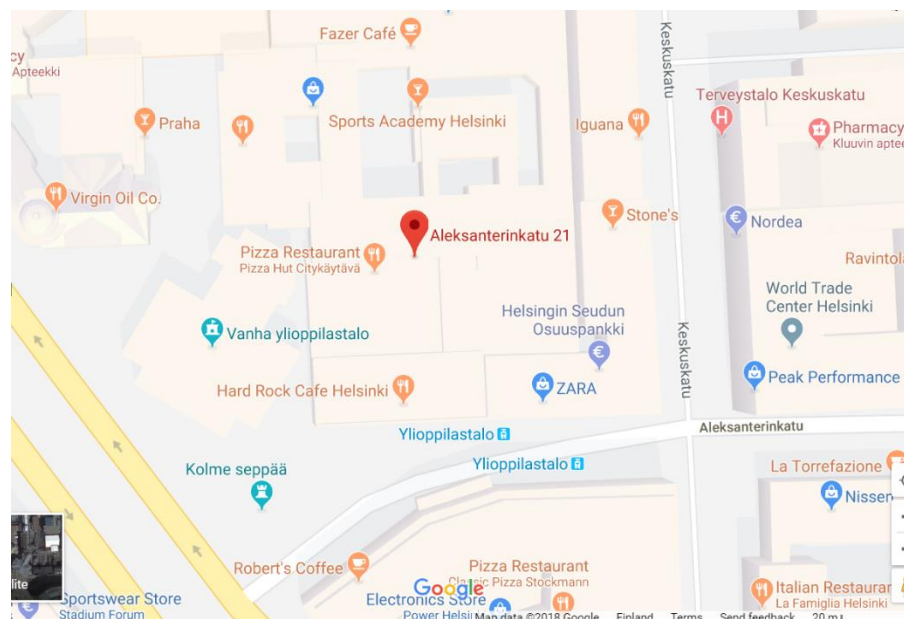


Image 2. Competitive environment on a map (Google Maps 2018)

Both differences and similarities can be found between the chosen competitors and Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. Virgin Oil, Stone's, Iguana, La Famiglia, Kiila, O'Learys Baker's and Stockmann Roof are all located under 500 meters from Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. All of them operate a terrace during the summer that serve food. Moreover, half of the competitors also have a point of sales on their terraces (Virgin Oil, Stone's and La Famiglia). In

relation with food, O'Learys Baker's and Iguana resemble most Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki menu. Their menus can be categorized as American/Mexican as they serve burgers, different types of steaks, fajitas and quesadillas to name a few. Food and beverage prices are similar in all competitor restaurants mentioned.

However, in contrast with Hard Rock Cafe, most competitor terraces are connected to their main building. The only exception is Kiila Food & Bar. Kiila has a separate terrace that is accessed from the pavement. Also, another differentiator is the location. Hard Rock Cafe is located in the intersection of two biggest streets in the centre of Helsinki as the others are located on smaller streets. Terrace size of competitors also differs from Hard Rock Cafe. With only Virgin Oil competing in the same size category as Hard Rock, the others are considerably smaller than Hard Rock patio. Kiila and O'Learys Baker's terraces being the two smallest of the competitors.

Therefore, the main competitors can be identified. First of all, Virgin Oil is a significant competitor due to its similarities with the food menu and the comparable size to Hard Rock Cafe terrace. It's also located on the same busy street, Mannerheimintie. Second is Stone's. Alike food menu and a decent sized terrace makes Stone's a good contestant to Hard Rock Cafe patio. Third and fourth, come Kiila Food & Bar and O'Learys Baker's. Despite the smaller terraces, both offer good food and drinks and seem popular within the locals.

2.3 Research purpose

There is general interest in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki to improve the state of the patio into its best version for the season of 2019 (Vasilev 2018). Discussions with staff of Hard Rock led to the discovery of the brand imbalance between the patio and the inside. In-house staff described the patio as "quite modest" and "too simple to be a part of Hard Rock Cafe" (Bidgood 2017; Tcivina 2017). Additionally, in discussions with non-employees of Hard Rock, it was identified that the ownership of the patio was unclear to many. Discussions with friends revealed the uncertainty in the ownership of the terrace located in the Three Smiths statue. They often confused the owner of Hard Rock Cafe patio to some of the surrounding competitors, such as Vanha Ylioppilastalo. (Montilla 2018; Berg 2018.)

The thesis is needed to connect the restaurant complex's all active parts. A clear Hard Rock Cafe brand in the patio is necessary for customers to recognize the brand, raise ex-

pectations and receive authentic experiences. The brand will add value to customer's patio experience and they are able to connect their experience precisely to the Hard Rock Cafe brand.

This thesis was conducted as a case study. The method was chosen due to the following facts. The fact that Hard Rock Cafe brand is global, it brings a vast amount of detailed limitations. Moreover, the case limits applicability and reinforces the status of a case study, to only cases where the terrace is apart from the main business. Also, the location next to Stockmann and the statue of the Three Smiths and their popularity, makes the location even more a centre of attention. Therefore, the case can be described as unique and likely it would be difficult to benefit from the suggested ideas in other restaurants and their terraces as they are specifically tailored for Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and its brand. The thesis is product-oriented, and its final product is a set of improvement proposals to the commissioner. The proposals will include ideas to strengthen the brand at the patio in areas which it is currently lacking in. The company has requested improvement ideas, and through this thesis the ideas that will be suggested are based on theory, supported by current and specific research and carefully thought out.

The objective of this thesis is to create a set of improvement proposals to strengthen the Hard Rock Cafe brand at the case company Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's patio, to narrow the current brand gap existing between the patio and the restaurant and to help customers recognize the brand more effortlessly on the patio.

To reach the objective of the thesis, main research question was formed; how to strengthen the Hard Rock Cafe brand at the patio? To support the main question and to ease the improvement proposal ideation, sub research questions were formed. The sub questions as follows; what parts of the brand are not adequately presented at the patio and what changes or ideas could correct that? With one main and two support questions, a direction for the thesis was established.

The set of improvement proposals will focus on ideas supported by theory, in-house information and my own working experience on the patio. These ideas will be explained and justified why they suit for Hard Rock Cafe patio. The proposals will not consider how the implementation would be completed or how valuable it would be to the commissioner. The implementation and its extent will be left to the consideration of the commissioner. The implementation process was decided to be ruled out since it would broaden the scope of the thesis too much and I cannot personally guarantee that the changes will be implemented.

3 Branding

The concept of branding is first explained through various academic sources. The concept is examined both in narrow and broad sense to gain a better understanding of the concept as an entity. After defining branding, short introduction to history of branding is given. Lastly, the benefits of branding to restaurants are briefly presented.

3.1 Definitions of branding

Branding is an act of creating, promoting and managing a brand. Brands can be understood in narrow or broad sense. In narrow sense, brand is a name or a tangible symbol that represents the product or the company. In this sense, the brand is an object of customer emotions. In broad sense, brand is an intangible asset of which worth cannot be estimated until it's connected to a product that can be sold. (Seetharaman, Nadriz & Gunalan 2001, 243.)

Branding can also be understood as an identifier. According to West, Ford & Ibrahim (2015, 189), branding is what companies are identified for. Another supporting definition is given by Walters & Jackson (2014, 7), "a brand is an identifying mark, an encompassing idea that captures the essence of the enterprise". Ultimately, creating a brand and branding is an attempt to distinguish own services and products from others (Lancaster & Withey 2006, 115). On top of identification, brands root products to their company and eliminate the chance of being mistaken from another similar product (Aaker 1991,7).

According to Cohen (2011), branding is a marketing message in a form of colour, graphics or sounds to create an emotional connection in between the customer and the company. Moreover, a brand is a combination of tangible and intangible components, such as a promise, a personality or a logo. Agreeing with Lancaster & Withey (2006, 15), Cohen supports that branding is an attempt to differentiate similar products but specifies that the attempt is conveyed through a marketing message.

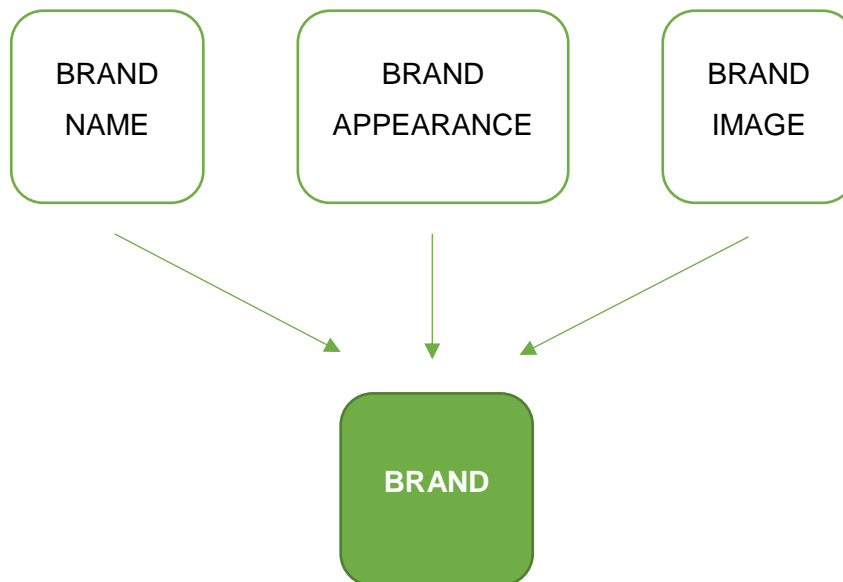


Figure 2. Sections of a brand (Modified from Lancaster & Withey 2006)

More in detail, brands can be explained by dividing different sections of a brand in to sub-sections. Brands can be distinguished in three sections that complement each other and together form the brand as seen in Figure 2. First, brands can be differentiated based on their name. Secondly, differences can be identified by brand appearance. Companies use visual aids for their brands to create clear differences between them and their competitors. Thirdly, brands can be recognized from others based on their image. (Lancaster & Withey 2006, 115.) Companies create the image for their own brands. These brand images are perceived by the customers in their own way. Brand image is the total of how well impressions meet customer expectations. (OVO 2018.) Example of a clear distinction can be identified in between Hilton and Ibis hotel chains based on their image. Hilton is known for being luxurious and on the contrary Ibis is renowned for being the affordable choice of accommodation.

However, branding is not a mere set of names, logos and pictures that are connected to the brand. As mentioned, branding is an effort to distinguish in the market by benefitting from many different aspects. It is an effort to represent the company values using specific logos and slogans that appeal and resonate to particular customer needs. Meeting the exact demand of the customer with the offer of the brand, the customer can perceive that the brand offers added value to them. (Lancaster & Withey 2006, 115.) Added value perceived in a brand can influence the decision to prefer one company over the other to fulfil a need with a service or a product (West & al. 2015, 190).

Branding can be separated based on the acting party. Brands are built by companies. Companies create brands, their image, their identity and even their personality. Through creation and management of the brand, the company is in charge. In contrast, customers act too in relation to brands. They can be loyal, aware of the brand, perceive it based on personal opinion and act on their perception. Companies try to impact on customer decisions but ultimately, the purchase decision is made by the customers.

3.2 The past, present and future of branding

Branding first meant leaving a mark to pottery in Ancient China 4000 to 5000 years ago or burning a searing brand to cattle as a sign of ownership (Rajaram & Shelly 2012, 101). Academic connection to branding appeared considerably later. In 1920s, the first definitions of branding were stated. Without theory, the term remained vague. A decade later in 1930s, marketing research began to exist with hints towards branding research. Certain companies, such as Ivory Soap and Plymouth Cars, were one of the first companies to have been linked to branding in the United States. (Bastos & Levy 2012, 354.)

After the World War II, consumers all around the world were awoken. During the war enormous amounts of produce were created for war purposes. Post war, the produce was released for the public without limitations which led into a major surge in buying. Consumers were purchasing more leisure-related products than ever, such as radios and sports gear. (De Vries 2008, 264.) The markets opened for the company perspective as well. As a result, new companies entered the markets. Coca-Cola was challenged by Pepsi-Cola and McDonald's attacked by Burger King. (Bastos & Levy 2012, 355.) With more and more companies on the market, companies had to differentiate themselves to survive. Thus, an opportunity for marketing managers to benefit from branding was presented. According to Bastos & Levy (2012, 357), the most significant point in history of branding occurred in mid-1990s when every other company begun to showcase their values in their advertisement, use celebrities to promote their products and to compare brands to people. After that, academic research of branding surged.

Farquhar (1994, 11), predicted the future of branding being impacted by two consumer trends, brand pessimism and the hope of simplified choices in the next decade. Customers would not blindly choose a brand anymore but opt for a one that suits their specific needs. Moreover, the abundance of brands in the 2000s would cause consumers to start simplifying their choices and to rely on brands that have remained popular for years. In contrast, Andreasen (2006, 105) predicted that companies and organizations alike started

to realize the value of their brand. Simply advertising a campaign with the brand name, attention would be guaranteed. (Andreasen 2006,105.)

All the mentioned predictions have become true during the 2000s. Customers are pickier towards brands and they seek for easy and understandable products that have a reliable image. Companies too have managed to benefit from branding through brand extensions. These extensions are simply launching other products under the main brand that already indicates quality. As an example, Starbucks who started actively selling their own line of coffee, coffee merchandise and souvenir coffee cups under the main brand of the coffee shops.

The trend of the 2010s of brand building still follows the basic idea; identify what the brand stands for, who is the target market and how to reach them. However, some changes can be seen due to technological transformations. Social media must be considered the number one tool to reach and maintain markets. (Ferriss 2017, 69.) Interactive online behavior; posting, liking pictures and commenting, are stated to improve the perceived image of the brand (Gharache & al. 2015, 3455). Facebook alone had over 500 million users in 2012 who spend time and share their stories on the website (Bastos & Levy 2012, 361). In the 2010s, customers are prone to move on from one company to another. They expect immediate answers and support conscious choices. (Dev 2012, 9.) Additionally, humanity, unique personality and friend-like behavior will help the brands to remain popular. In unfortunate occasions, such as informing about faulty products or apologizing for issues or employee misconduct, social media is the number one channel to be used to handle negative public situations. (Ferriss 2017, 65.)

Faganel & Janeš (2015, 95) predict that for branding to survive to the 2020s, it needs to evolve. Firstly, aesthetics will be a key concern when planning the marketing of a product. Consumers will be highly demanding and expect unique visual experiences to attract their interest. Secondly, technology will continue to shape how marketing is conducted. New ways of clever marketing will be discovered by the week. For example, use of 360-degree cameras, drones, augmented reality are ways to improve the customer experience (Morin, 17 July 2017). Thirdly, the consumer appreciation towards anti-marketing is respected. Consumers will be tired of constant bombarding of advertisement and choose to only see what they want. (Faganel & Janeš 2015, 95.) However, to fight the negative attitudes towards marketing, live videos and podcasts are predicted to return in 2020s. These types of marketing message will try to bring back authenticity by reminding us of face-to-face recommendations. (Morin, 17 July 2017.)

3.3 Branding benefits for restaurants

Specifically, for restaurants, there are multiple benefits of branding. Restaurant industry is a highly competitive area and differentiation is the key to success. Proper branding can have an impact on customer perception, behaviour and seizing new opportunities in the field. Customers tend to favour strong brands over weak ones which should be the driving factor in pursuing a better and more stable brand. Branding in the long run can help to gain more loyal customers that help the business to survive. (Dabeva 2012, 257.)

From the intangible perception to actions, branding can have an impact on customer behaviour. For instance, McDonald's birthday parties have been available for years. Long history of the product can be seen as an indication of a decreased risk, for example avoiding poor service, long waiting times or unsatisfactory food. For customers long availability of the product or service can be a sign of consistency that can be considered as a guarantee. Moreover, customers tend to weigh less on the price tag if the brand is seen as strong. A customer may think that the brand is worth the money, even in a case where the competitor is offering similar products or services for a more affordable price. (Dabeva 2012, 257.)

Not only customer actions matter. Acts towards social responsibility, such as philanthropy, can persuade the customer to prefer a specific brand. Companies can donate to charities or help in an environmental catastrophe to boost their image in the eyes of the customers (Dabeva 2012, 257.) Moreover, increased efforts towards sustainable products and processes are encouraged in the restaurant industry (Dev 2012, 9). New way to dispose waste or recycle would be an example of such. Not only does it save resources but it's a great selling point in restaurant marketing. Finland experienced its first zero waste restaurant, Nolla, opening in February 2018 (Rantanen 22 December 2017). The new restaurant has gained attention in both traditional and in social media which indicates that sustainability is still an ongoing trend.

Additionally, new business opportunities can arise as a result of successful branding (Dabeva 2012, 257). Brand extensions of the original brand can help the new product line to ride on the fame of the original brand. Also, associations of the brand in general can indicate of (good) quality of the new product. (Aaker 1991, 20). For instance, Hard Rock started as a diner-style cafe, but it has expanded to organizing concerts and selling their own merchandise from the famous logo shirts to pins. Whole new markets and customer segments were entered with innovative products that gained popularity by being known for Hard Rock Cafe brand and the quality of it. Furthermore, Aaker (1991, 20) states that loyal

customers can help to prove quality by spreading the message. For instance, Hard Rock Cafe pin collectors have various sites and communities online to discuss about their interests and the brand (Geraghty 2014.)

4 Brand building

In this chapter the concept of brand building is introduced. Brand equity was chosen due to its popularity as a method of building brands. The theory of brand building forms the base for further research in this thesis. Brief explanation of the key theories take place first. Then, the core of brand building by increasing brand equity is introduced and discussed according to their initiator, by customer or the company. Last but not least, the advantages and disadvantages of increasing brand equity are explained.

In the 1990s, key features were identified to build and sustain a successful brand that apply to this day. According to Farquhar (1994, 9), three factors are the foundation of a great brand. The factors are universal awareness, global availability and proper trademark protection. Later on, other authors, such as Aaker (1997) and Keller (2001), have created their own theories of how to build a successful brand. Aaker bases his theory on the idea of brand equity. A brand has equity when it's recognized (Seethraman, Bin Mohd Nadzir & Gunalan 2001, 244). Aaker (1991, 15), states that brand equity consist of loyalty, awareness, perceived quality, associations and other proprietary factors. Furthermore, Keller states that strong brands can be built by following the customer-based brand equity model (later referred as the CBBE model). The process of this model begins by founding a unique brand identity, building and transmitting brand meaning, acknowledging brand responses and managing brand relationships.

4.1 Brand awareness, association and perception

Companies are in charge of releasing new brands and products behind them. However, it is the customers who are aware of them. For companies, the ultimate goal for a brand is to be the "top-of-mind" brand, a brand that comes to mind first. Coca-Cola is the prime example when speaking of sugary beverages (Farquhar 1994, 9–11). According to Keller (2001, 9) "top-of-mind" brands have brand salience. Salience is a distinct factor of the brand and refers to how easy it is to recognize and recall it. In order to help customers to remember a brand, its' crucial to be reminded of the core factor of the brand, its identity. Brand identity is created to state who and what the brand represents and to differentiate the brand from competitors (OVO 2018). With the identity, favorable aspects of the brand can be highlighted. Moreover, recognition of the product or the brand will likely influence the customer as they are prone to opt for something familiar than the unknown (Aaker 1991, 19).

After a customer is aware of a brand, he or she forms an idea of the brand and makes connections in their own mind. Cheng-Hsui Chen (2001) states that brand association is the key component in building strong brands. Associations can be described as links between a brand or its parts to a memory (Keller 2001, 8). These associations can be positive, negative, strong, weak, necessary or differentiating to name a few. (Aaker 1991, 21). Companies can try to create links in between customers' memory and their brand but it's ultimately up to the customer to make the final association. Fortunately for companies, the human-like characteristics, or personality traits (Aaker 1997, 352), of a brand help customer to relate to products more effortlessly. (Strategic Direction 2014, 11.) Jennifer Aaker, (1997, 352) has identified five most typical categories for personality traits that are used to describe brands. The categories are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. When a brand is associated with one of the mentioned categories, the link between memory and the brand tends to last a longer period than without the association to a personality trait.

Perception is the last aspect of customer-driven brand building. All perceptions of a brand are formed individually (Aaker 1991, 18). Customers interpret brands in their own way based on their personal experiences and heard recommendations of the brand. Customers may also compare the brand to a similar brand to set them in order from best to worst. The perception is not judged by the details and functionalities of the product but more through an overall idea of the brand's quality. (Aaker 1991, 19.) Complementing theory is offered by Keller (2001, 14–15). Aaker's theory of perception is continued with responses. Keller (2001, 15) suggests that after founding a perception of the brand, there is inevitably a response. These responses are also individual and are built from personal experiences and will have an impact on the purchasing decision.

4.2 Brand availability, meaning and protection

According to Farquhar (1994, 9) availability is the first matter to consider when a company builds a brand. After creating the product or service to represent the brand, the services must be distributed. Without distribution, the products would not be purchased, and no sales would be made. It's recommended that products should be distributed through more than one channel to avoid distribution errors. Therefore, availability in various distribution channels is crucial.

Brands always represent something and in contrast customers always seek for meanings (Keller 2001, 9). With branding, companies are able to create wanted meanings for their brand's products. By using visuals, marketing messages and presenting the preferred

company values, an ideal meaning can be conveyed for the customer. (Keller 2001, 9.) Customers tend to compare these brand meanings to their own values and lifestyle choices and select which one match with their life. Therefore, purchasing a specific brand can be seen as an expression of the customer's choices and even an extension of the self when the product becomes a part of customer's identity. (Strategic Direction 2014,10.) For example, use of an Apple phone can send a message to others that the user is wealthy and up to date with technological trends.

Lastly, protection is a company-initiated attempt to shield a brand. Protection can be described as shielding from the competitors in any way possible. Aaker (1991, 22) has identified proprietary factors that prevent companies from copying the best ideas and assets from their competitors. Trademarks and patents are established to protect the brand by legally restricting others from using similar intangible and tangible parts of the brand or the product. Trademarks restrict detailed components of the brand such as names and appearances. Patents can prevent direct competition if the patent is detailed enough. (Aaker 1991, 22). Going beyond trademarks and patents Farquhar (1994, 9–11) suggests taking caution when in cooperation with other companies.

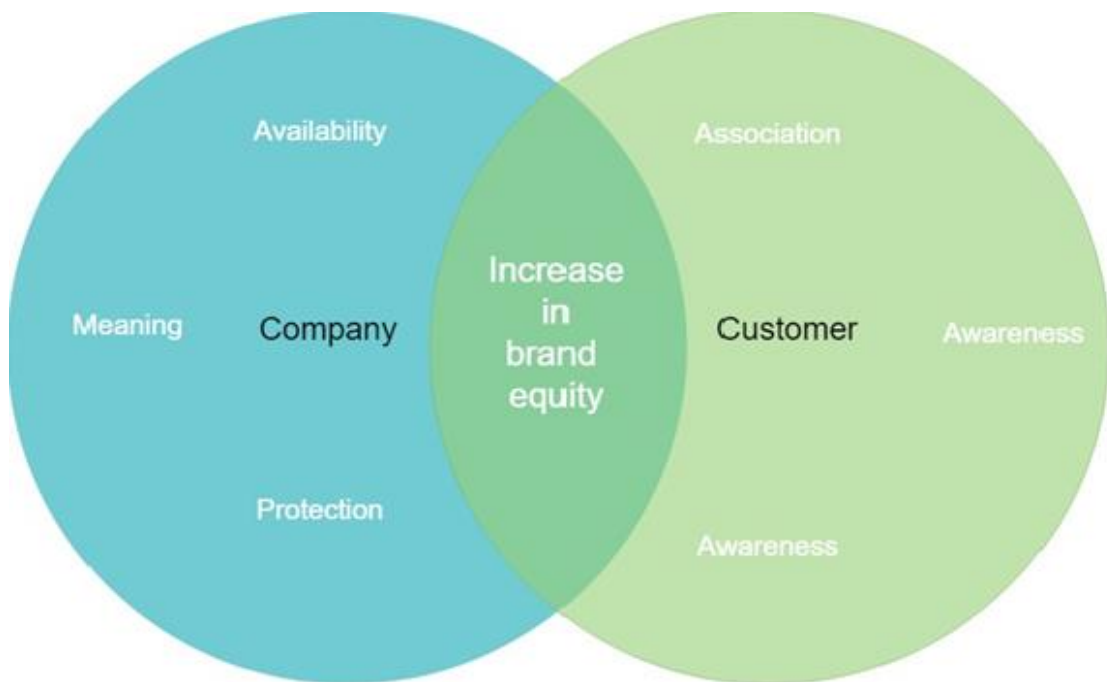


Figure 3. Relationship of company- and customer-initiated actions to brand equity (Modified from Farquhar 1994; Keller 2001; Aaker 1991; Aaker 1997)

Figure 3 was designed to illustrate the actors of brand actions and their relationships to each other. However, this does not mean that company-initiated actions are not in contact with customer-initiated actions. Instead, all actions are connected. For every action, there

is a response or a counteraction from the other party. The figure is designed to clarify which brand building action is initiated by which party. As a result of both company-initiated and customer-initiated actions, an increase of brand equity can be achieved.

4.3 Advantages and disadvantages of brand building

The featured theories focus on increasing brand equity. The goal is to make the brand more known and resistant towards competition. According to Keller (2001, 20) increase in brand equity can add value to customers and the company behind the brand. Aaker (1991, 16) specifies the benefits to customers and companies. First, brand equity can help customers to interpret the brand, process the brand-related information and to have an emotional connection with it. Second, the more known the brand is, the better confidence customers will have in a purchase situations. Third, positive brand associations and good perceived quality can boost user experience as customers can feel proud or better about themselves by using the product. (Aaker 1991, 16.) For companies, improved brand equity provides a chance to increase cash flow. It can constitute towards efficiency in marketing, loyalty of customers, potential higher profit margins, and possibilities for brand extensions, trade leverage and competitive advantage. (Aaker 1991, 17.)

However, the mentioned advantages are not easy to achieve. Talented minds and high risks with financial and time resources are needed to succeed (Rizwan Alam 2016, 147). With the world moving as quickly as it is, products appear and disappear as they lose their purpose and value (Farquhar 1994, 12). New and more convenient ways of distribution, marketing and product design are defeating the classic ways which makes it more and more difficult for brands to stay current. Furthermore, more affordable, yet simultaneously of good quality, products and services are demanded by the customers (Rizwan Alam 2016, 148) which causes distress in companies.

5 Hard Rock Cafe brand

To begin with, a brief introduction to the history of the brand is written. Furthermore, all the six brand pillars are introduced thoroughly. Pillars are divided into a core of four and two additions. On top of that, the company's operational values are presented. Last but not least, the disadvantages of a global brand are considered.

Hard Rock Cafe brand has been built through its history. The brand consists of pillars that are the corner stones of how the company operates their business. Hence, figure 4 is introduced. The four main pillars presented with a green background; menu, music, memorabilia and merchandise, are accompanied by the supporting pillars; multimedia and monument. All these six pillars are highlighted to reach Hard Rock Cafe's main mission: to create authentic experiences that rock. Main source used for introducing the pillars is Hard Rock Cafe website. The website features a detailed timeline and description of the pillars. Additional sources were added to represent more point of views to the Hard Rock Cafe brand.

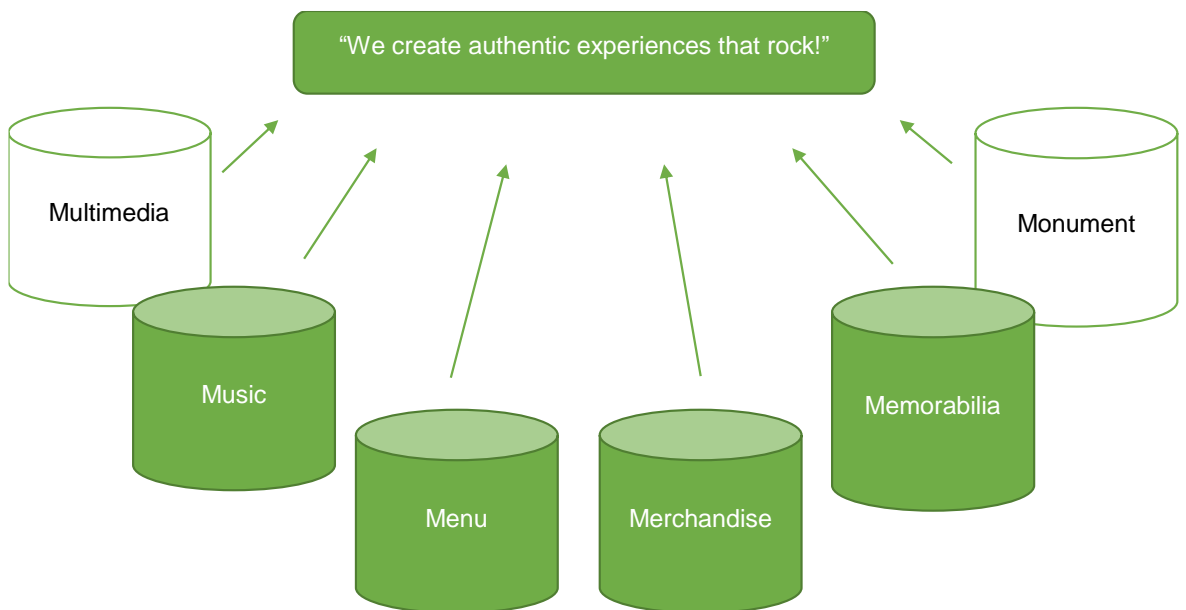


Figure 4. Hard Rock Cafe brand pillars (Modified from Hard Rock Cafe 2018b)

5.1 The four core pillars

The brand was built on six pillars, or six M letters, of which each represent the essence of Hard Rock. Historically, the first addition to the brand was music. Just two years after founding the first diner, Paul McCartney & The Wings played a gig at the original Hard Rock Cafe in London. Music today is one of the most visible parts of Hard Rock Cafe

around the globe as over 15000 live music events occur every year. (Hard Rock 2018b.) Music has become such a permanent part of the brand that today the company owns vast live venues. From grand shows with world-class musicians to intimate shows with aspiring musicians, the Cafes are a home to music. (Geraghty 2014.)

Merchandise was the second addition to the brand. A local football team requested for sponsorship from Hard Rock Cafe and in return they came with the idea of printing the newly found Hard Rock Cafe logo to their shirt. After the match, the extra shirts were returned to the Cafe and given away to customers. Success was immediate, and shirts were taken on as the first merchandise item in the Cafe. (Hard Rock 2018b.)



Image 3. Logo t-shirt (Rockshop.com 2018)

The iconic shirt is represented in Image 3. In time, the merchandise selection has grown from shirts to tableware and beyond. Wearing a merchandise product can be considered as a personal recommendation from the customer (Mortimer 2008). Today loyal fans of the brand stock up on collectible glassware, bottle openers and most of all pins. The latter has sparked its own fan group that travel around the world to buy and trade pins. In addition, the staff of Hard Rock Cafes are encouraged to join the pin collecting. Either being rewarded a pin or two or by purchasing them, Hard Rock Cafes are full of serving staff who support the pin collecting business. (Geraghty 2014.)

The third pillar, memorabilia, was initiated by Eric Clapton. He gave his guitar for the London Cafe to mark his regular spot. Soon, the lead guitarist of the Who, Pete Townshend, sent his guitar for the Cafe. The domino effect escalated over the years and Hard Rock Cafe International owns today over 80 000 pieces of memorabilia that are all donated by celebrities of the music industry. (Hard Rock 2018b.) Memorabilia from the world's most famous rock and pop stars is presented in the Cafes. Memorabilia items are donated Rihanna, Madonna, Elvis Presley to more local stars varying in each cafe (Foster 2014).

Menu represents the fourth pillar of Hard Rock Cafe brand. The whole idea of founding an American style diner was based on making a great burger. Today the demands are high

for produce, food preparation and service. The ingredients are mostly fresh and made in-house. At the beginning Hard Rock Cafe was solely focusing on American cuisine. Now the selection has expanded to represent local cuisines in each country where Hard Rock is present. (Hard Rock 2018b.) In addition, Hard Rock launched its own World Burger Tour to highlight the local burgers from all around the globe. The tour allows the menu to be expanded with more global flavors for a limited time only. In 2018, the Tour returned from a break. (The Hotel Times News Bureau 2018.)

5.2 The two added pillars

When Hard Rock Cafes begun to expand, the outlook of the Cafes became a relevant topic. The company wanted for the Cafes to resemble monuments, which makes it the fifth pillar of the brand. The buildings themselves represent the values of bringing good music and food to people all over the world. Some of these buildings, such as London or Pattaya, have achieved a status of a landmarks. Usually the Cafe buildings are impressive, built for attention and to ease recognition of the brand. For instance, by building one floor high guitar statues in front of the Cafes. (Hard Rock 2018b.) The company has decided to take the guitar theme even further by building a hotel of a shape of a guitar in Florida (Wachs 2017).

Multimedia was the final pillar of the Hard Rock Cafe brand. The cafes, hotels, casinos and live venues are equipped with top of the line technology to help guests interact with the company and enhance their experience at the Cafe. In the United States, the Cafes are employed by VIBE hosts that control the mood of the Cafe by adjusting lighting, music and lights to create more memorable experiences for their guests. (Hard Rock 2018b.) Moreover, the latest customer paging systems and interactive touchscreens have been introduced in Hard Rock at Las Vegas and later on in other Cafes too (PCS n.d.).

5.3 Hard Rock Cafe operational values

Beyond the main pillars, Hard Rock Cafe brand is based on their main mission: “We create authentic experiences that rock!” (Hard Rock 2018a). The company values, being honest and professional, encouraging towards everyone, taking responsibility of achieving results, innovating to reach brand excitement and “delivering amplified service” by exceeding customer expectations, work as guidelines for daily. These guidelines hint of the company culture. The aim is to be explicit with the values and culture in order to differentiate and be clear about the message that Hard Rock Cafes are sending. (Knight 2013.)

Lastly, philanthropy is a significant part of the brand. Hard Rock identifies as a company whose duty is to give back. From campaigns seen around the Cafes, such as Pinktober to raise awareness for breast cancer (Hard Rock 2018b), to Hard Rock Heals Foundation – a music-related charity, philanthropy has set its roots deep in to the company's culture. Millions have been donated to help individuals through music, in causes such as hunger, natural disasters and human trafficking. (Hard Rock 2018c.) Additionally, customers can support the cause by sleeping at Hard Rock hotels, purchasing tickets to concerts and by acquiring a selected piece of merchandise (Harrison 2016).

5.4 Disadvantages of a global brand

Global brands are challenging to operate and maintain. The bigger the brand, the more challenging it is to manage. Hundreds or even thousands of employees, multiple levels of management, strict guidelines, strategies and standards are norms in these companies. Just managing these thousands of people causes issues daily. Changes are difficult and slow to implement within global brands since the style of management requires multiple approvals and implementations to suite the local conditions.

According to Griffin (2018), a company which includes multiple levels of management in their operations can be considered as a tall organization. The structure of a tall organization makes the organization relatively slow when it comes to decision making. Layer after layer of different employee levels results in slow communication in between the top and the bottom layer. Countless briefings, emails and meetings in different levels of employment are required to turn an idea into a fully functional campaign. Vice versa, campaigns derived from bottom to up are slow to execute. The projects need to suit the style of the company, fulfill detailed requirements and finally to be approved. Tall organization itself decreases the speed of decision and proves the inability of making quick changes in global brands.

Inflexibility can be considered as one of the main disadvantages of a global brand. It can cause challenges in the operational phase. A company usually has one strategy to build its' brand better (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 1999). With global companies this means that their attempt to improve their brand will be similar no matter the country or city to protect the brand's focus. This strategy is conveyed in the form of guidelines which in global brands must be very detailed. Strictness in standards and ways of operating are attempts to protect the brand from stretching too far from its core. In local levels this can be seen as receiving very detailed but not localized instructions. Therefore, challenges are met daily on local levels to match the brand requirements while adjusting them to the local customer

base. Challenges can appear in the form of not having access to ingredients for food or cocktails or inability to convey marketing messages precisely in the local language.

As brands tend to represent themselves in a similar way in each country, challenges can be faced. The same brand has different meanings in different countries and not necessarily a similar approach will work in all of them. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 1999.) Consequently, brand meanings and customer assumptions made based on them, shape how brands are seen in different countries. For example, in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, the Finnish customers who are not familiar with the brand, tend to categorize the restaurants' music in accordance with its name (Vasilev 30 June 2018). As a result, these customers only expect to hear hard rock or metal music in this restaurant which may have an impact on whether or not they decide to pay a visit.

The restaurant industry is heavily reliant on employees. When an employee enters a global brand, the orientation process is thorough. It usually involves an introductory booklet, tests, training shifts and checkups during the first few months. No matter how good the orientation process is, still the individual employee is the first point of touch to the brand which can make or break the customer connection. Unfortunately, the turnover rate of employees is usually high in restaurants. The companies are investing a lot of energy to the orientation process to guarantee that their employees represent the brand as well as possible. When an employee resigns, the company is losing money by losing their initial investment in the orientation and the acquired skillset that the employee learned.

6 Methodology and limitations

First, the purpose of my research is explained. Second, the used types of data gathering methods are introduced. Third, descriptions of the specific methods and their justifications is presented. Fourth, the methods used to analyse data, both quantitative and qualitative, are explained. Fifth, the limitations of my thesis are given.

6.1 Secondary and primary data collection

Data collection was completed by collecting primary and secondary data. Both collection methods were equally important for gathering the final data for this thesis. Figure 5 is a self-made figure that indicates the process of data collection. Primary and secondary data were collected simultaneously. This data was benefitted in writing the academic base and executing my own research. Finally, data was used to create suggestions for the commissioner.

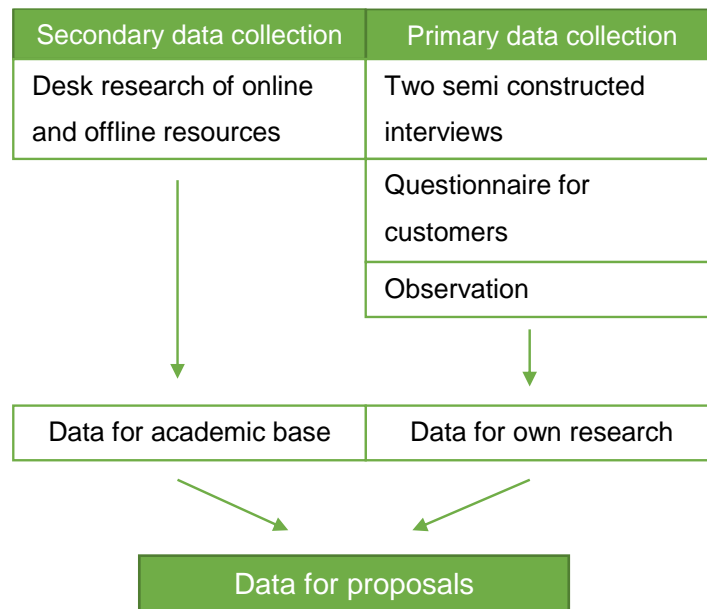


Figure 5. Data collection process for thesis

As secondary data collection method desk research was used. Academic definitions and theories for the theory base were acquired through studying both online and offline sources. Books, academic articles and websites, both academic and commercial were used to gather information. Second, the non-academic information was collected from current employees of the company, available online sources and by benefitting from personal knowledge and observation of the company.

To gather data for my research, primary data was collected. Necessary information was collected by conducting two semi-constructed interviews and through a questionnaire directed to the customers. Interviews were chosen as a data collection method to gain clearer and more deeper understanding of the Hard Rock Cafe brand than just by examining it online.

6.2 Qualitative research; interview, questionnaire and observation

Qualitative research is often used in the fields of social sciences and psychology. However, it is suitable for other fields due to its' flexibility and case focused approach. The goal is to interpret the phenomena or a case in its' local form (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 2). It can be used in examining temporary cases in which peoples' opinions are beneficial to the case. (Flick 2014, 22.) Methods used in qualitative research vary from face-to-face interviews to questionnaires, observation to analysing documents and from benefitting from own experiences to reading about others' (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 14).

Interviews allow to research the brand subject more thoroughly as it is possible to ask the interviewee to specify their answers and to reveal underlining motives (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 35). Interview is essentially a conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee which results in interaction. The goal is to receive information from the interviewee and to analyse it. (Ruusuvuori & Tiittula 2005, 23.) Unfortunately, interview technique consumes a lot of time resources and the results may be challenging to analyse since there is no set structure. (Hirsjärvi & Hurme 2008, 35.) Since there was be only two interviews, the time consumed was not major.

The questionnaire was selected to complement the interviews by bringing a third and external point of view to the data mix. The focus was to highlight the customer opinions. According to Hirsjärvi & Hurme (2008, 44), questionnaire is a structured interview that is presented the same way to every recipient. It is suitable in situations where facts are needed, and it can be predictable what kind of facts the recipients can give. Questionnaire is an efficient method because it does not consume a lot of time resources and it is commonly known.

Limitation of a questionnaire is the decreased willingness to reply. The vast quantity of questionnaires people is offered has decreased the response rates significantly. (Hirsjärvi, Hurme 2008, 35–36.) To guarantee the interest towards the questionnaire, the commissioner offered three 50-euro gift cards to Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki.

6.3 Analysis methods

For the qualitative analysis part of the thesis more open-minded methods were used regarding the interviews. The thesis nature as a case study encouraged to rely on intuition and deduction. The most significant identifier to analyse matters was repetition of them in the interview transcripts. Moreover, directly patio related answers were considered important. For analysing the questionnaire results, a quantitative method was used. The mean was calculated for each question. Based on the mean of each question, conclusions were made.

6.4 Limitations

The first limitation of this thesis is applicability. As the thesis will be conducted for a case company Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, it is likely not fully applicable for other restaurants. Some parts, such as the suggestions, may be more applicable but overall the thesis is modified to suit the case company's needs. The second limitation is my personal connection to the case company. I will be employed by the case company during the thesis project which may have an unconscious impact on objectivity. Due to prior work experience at the case company, opinions, emotions and assumptions have already been established and it may be challenging to discard those during the writing process. However, in the name of academic honesty, the best possible attempt will be made.

7 The state of the patio and its branding in season 2018

In chapter six, a research about the current and brand state at the patio was conducted. First, the course of research and its' topic, the state of the patio and its branding in season 2018, is introduced. Second, the findings of this research are presented.

7.1 The course of research

The research in question included personal observation, conducting one questionnaire to the customers, two semi-constructed interviews to the staff members of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki and analysing the data received. The research was conducted in the time period of August 2018 (interviews) to November 2018 (questionnaire).

In the beginning of the research, observation was used to get an overview of the state of the patio. Then, the two interviews took place. One interview was held with a patio worker, Mr. Bidgood, and the other with the bar manager at the time, Mr. Vasilev. The two conducted interviews for my thesis were both individual interviews because I wanted to make sure both parties could speak freely. These interviewees were chosen based on status, their knowledge of the company and experience. The interviewees work on different levels in the company, one on the lower level and the other in management. Moreover, both had worked for more than two years in the company that guaranteed their competence when answering brand- and operations related questions. The transcripts of these interviews can be found in Appendices 1 and 2.

Lastly, the questionnaire was sent to inquire about the Hard Rock Cafe brand in general and the customer satisfaction at the patio. My questionnaire included Likert scale and one open-ended question. The open-ended question was chosen to allow the recipients to speak freely, and the scaling questions to bring structure and to ease the comparison of the data. The questionnaire for customers included 10 statements about Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's patio and the Hard Rock Cafe brand in general. On top of that, one open-ended question was used to encourage free opinions. Answers to the statements were presented on a Likert scale of agreement. 1 meant strongly disagree, 2 disagree, 3 undecided, 4 agree and 5 strongly agree. In the beginning, age and gender were asked for statistical reasons. The questionnaire was answered by 84 respondents and therefore can be considered reliable. 61 (73,8 %) of the respondents were female and 22 (26,2 %) male. In most statements, the option strongly agree (5) was the most popular which can be considered as a positive sign.

7.2 Findings

All the figures under sections 7.2, 7.2.1., 7.2.2, 7.2.3 are self-designed and based on the research. Also, all the statements were compulsory in the questionnaire, hence 84 replies in each. The open comment option was voluntary and there were eight comments overall. All the comments are presented below

- Very long queue to order drinks from the terrace bar, every time I visited.
- 👍.
- A bit overpriced.
- It is vital to me that it is a Hard Rock terrace and it influences my decision as a customer strongly.
- More music.
- Faster service.
- Kiva paikka keskellä keskustaa 😊.
- Vertaa nice people Android great place.

Age

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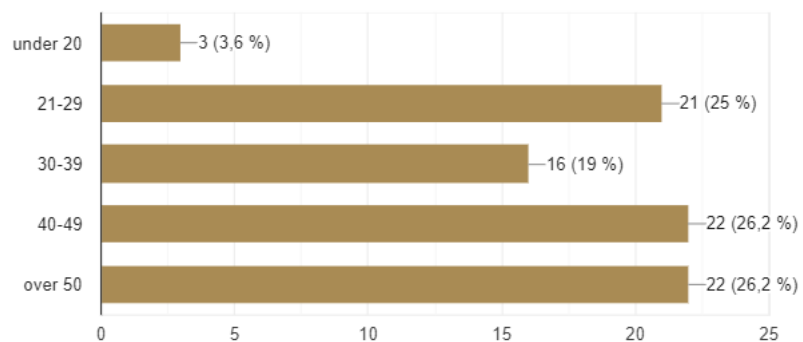


Figure 6. Age range

The age range for the questionnaire respondents is quite varied as can be seen in Figure 6. Categories of 40 to 49 and over 50 were most active by both having 22 respondents. Usually, these are the most active groups in responding to questionnaires in general. The second category is the 21 to 29, the third 30 to 39 and the last the under 20. This indicates that all the age groups are interested in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki patio and all must be considered as potential customers.

7.2.1 Changes of previous seasons

The patio has been operating for three seasons in 2018. It was first opened in 2016, by the bar manager of the time. At the time, the goals were ambitious, and it was evident in the menus. The cocktail menu was complex and wide. The idea was to have a terrace with a selection of good food and drinks. Also, the kitchen prepared special menu items

only for the patio. Unfortunately, challenges came across as some of the ingredients for the cocktails never arrived and the kitchen was struggling to keep up with the wide selection. Therefore, action was taken for the next season (2017) when the bar manager changed. Special food menu items were discarded as it proved to be too much extra work in a busy kitchen. Moreover, the drink and cocktail menus were reduced and simplified. Furthermore, in the season of 2018, the bar manager changed to Nikita Vasilev. Large menu items, such as Jumbo Combo (large appetizer plate) and Fajitas, which are difficult to carry, were removed from the patio food menu. Yet again the cocktail menu was simplified. (Vasilev 30 July 2018.)

Other changes that have had an impact on the patio's current state deal with workforce and equipment. The amount of workforce has varied according to the bar manager in duty. At times, there has been only two shifts a day, one opening and one closing. Other times the patio has been scheduled with four staff members. Most of the workforce has been only employed for the summer, which doesn't guarantee their level of professionalism. (Vasilev 30 July 2018.) The second big change has been the furniture. With the exchange of rental rights of the location in 2016, tables and chairs exchanged ownership too. However, the furniture was not adequate. Both the tables and chairs were unstable which caused irritation in personnel and in customers. As a result, 2018 patio season was introduced with couple of hundred of new chairs and tens of new tables. As for the equipment inside the patio bar, not a lot has changed from its opening. A frozen yoghurt machine was tested in season 2017 but it was also removed from the selection because of low sales and high upkeep costs. (Bidgood 27 July 2018.)

Some issues arose during the interviews. First of all, the sewage solution has caused problems. On a hot summer day, the sewage doesn't take enough water at the run off point. That causes the water to stop and to smell in the drain. However, the sewage system belongs to the city and there is "so much a business can do at this point", according to Bidgood (27 July 2018.) Second obstacle is the city planning. Ideas of improvement of the outlook of the patio have been presented to the city planner a few times. Unfortunately, they've been not accepted due to very strict regulations on the location. (Vasilev 30 July 2018.) Third, the size of the patio bar has been discussed. The space is limited, and extra room has been requested by the employees. A new placement of the current stock could create more room and release pressure from the key point in between the dishwasher and the point of sales. (Bidgood 27 July 2018.)

7.2.2 Current state

With few minor changes, the patio resembles its' first version in 2016. Some of the furniture and equipment may have changed but the core remains the same. No larger investments in sight, the patio is expected to be as profitable in 2019 as it was in 2018. The bar container is functional yet would be more functional with more room (Bidgood 27 July 2018).

The clientele of the patio is varied. The location is very central, and it has an impact on the clientele too. Customers vary from tourists to locals, and from old to young. Tourists usually come by during the morning as the vast cruise ships dock to Helsinki. Regulars are usually office workers who stop for afterwork or elderly who have been visiting the same spot for years. Locals may stop just to meet their friends for one drink and move on. (Bidgood 27 July 2018.) Youngsters order non-alcoholic drinks and desserts and hang out for quite a while. Young adults stop by for a drink or two and adults might order some food and a bottle of wine. (Vasilev 30 July 2018.)

In the busiest days, up to four workers were on duty in the season of 2018. To improve and expedite operations, shift scheduling with more staff has been tested in 2018. High staffing costs have been justified with high sales numbers and flexible working hours. Since the Finnish summer is unpredictable, flexibility has been the key to success. Towards the end of the season, fluidity of work has improved, and specific processes have been found useful. For example, the timing of the filling stock and breaks, as well as task division to seller, blocker and cocktail/coffee maker has proved its functionality.

I am happy with the service received at the terrace.

84 vastausta

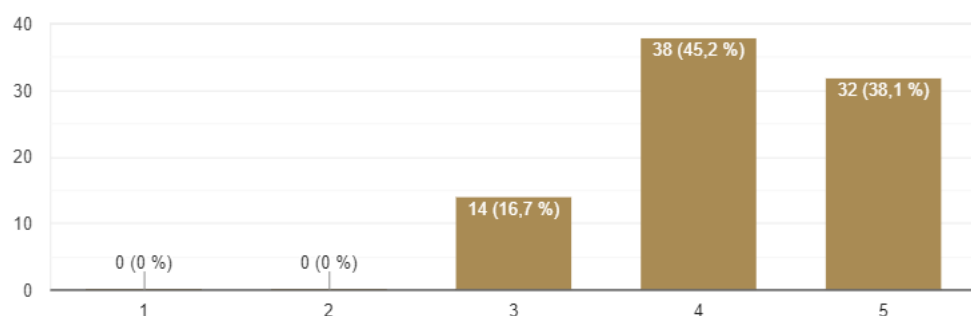


Figure 7. Customer satisfaction

The level of customer satisfaction in 2018 can be seen on the figure above. The statement resulted in 14 of the respondents to be undecided with their opinion. 38 agree with the

statement and the rest 32 strongly agree with the statement. In relation to other statements, the agree (4) option was the most popular answer. Usually, the most popular answer was strongly agree (5) which indicated that the level of service could be slightly improved.

Furthermore, two out of eight comments of the open comments were directed to customer service. One comment demanded faster service and the other mentioned that the queues were long very time they visited.

I get value for my money when purchasing products at the terrace.

84 vastausta

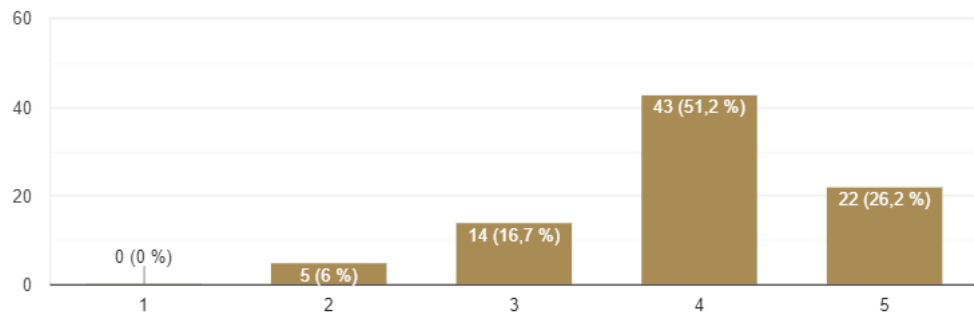


Figure 8. Value for money

Opinions about the value of money was inquired in the questionnaire. Figure 8 represents the result that the statement resulted in. The majority of respondents agreed with the statement and therefore it can be concluded that value and money meet at the patio. However, disagreement can be identified. Two of the respondents did not feel that the services and products are adequate for the price. These five respondents represent the age groups of 20 to 29 and 30 to 39 which can explain their replies. These age groups tend to have to have lower income rate than the older groups who were more satisfied with value for money at the patio.

I am satisfied with the drink menu on the terrace.

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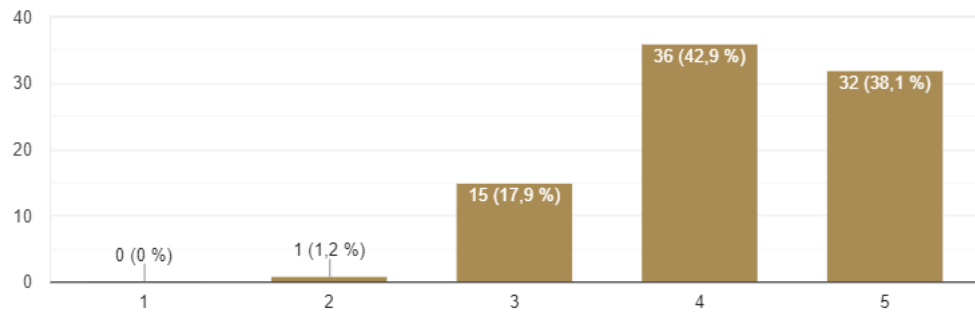


Figure 9. Satisfaction of the drink menu

Despite the fluctuating opinions on value for money, customers seem content with the drink selection at the patio. The result is clear and can be noticed in Figure 9. Again, the agree (4) response was the most popular. Moreover, the strongly agree was the second popular response. These clearly indicate that the selection is varied, and most respondents are satisfied with it.

The figures 10, 11 and 12 measure if respondents would recommend the patio, return back in general or return back if the patio was under different ownership.

I would recommend the terrace to my friends and family.

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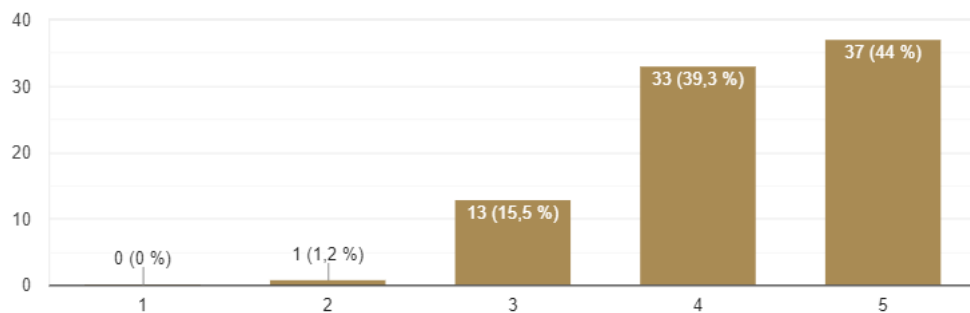


Figure 10. Recommendation

44 percent of the respondents would strongly recommend the patio for their friends and family. Also, 39,3 percent of the respondents agrees with statement and therefore recommends the patio. High recommendation percentage, seen in Figure 10, can be a sign of overall satisfaction. As mentioned earlier, recommendation is a personal sign of approval. Recommendations are to be considered as free marketing for the company.

I would return back as a customer.

84 vastausta

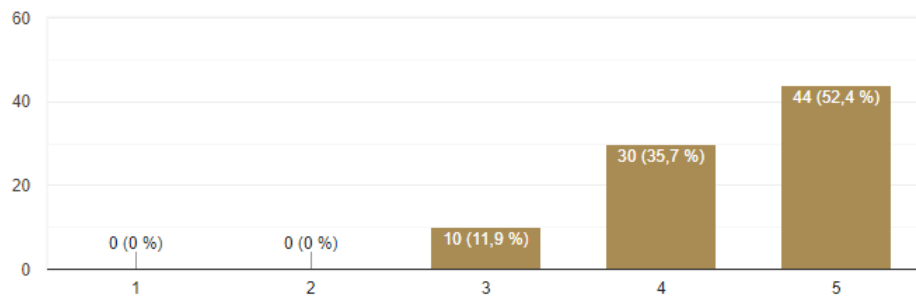


Figure 11. Returning customers

88,1 percent of the respondents would return as customers to the patio which can be identified as another sign of overall satisfaction. The results visible in Figure 11 point out that only one in ten respondents would not be sure whether to come back or not. There may be different reasons for these respondents to be unsure of their return. It could be the unpleasant smell, long queues or the price range which all have been mentioned earlier as displeasing factors of the patio.

I would return if the terrace was under different ownership.

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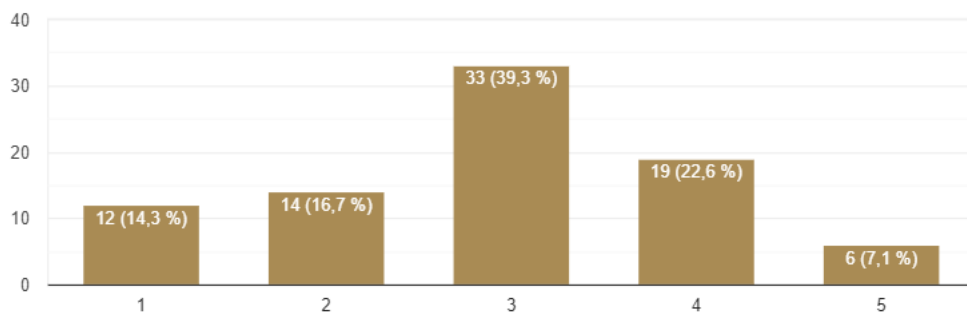


Figure 12. Impact of ownership

Impact of ownership was the most dividing statement which can be noticed in Figure 12. Most commonly, respondents don't know how a different owner would impact on their opinion about returning. However, there was one comment that clearly states out the respondent's opinion: "It is vital to me that it is a Hard Rock terrace and it influences my decision as a customer strongly". Considering all replies and the comment, the results suggest that the ownership does not matter as much as initially thought. There has always been a terrace of some sort in that location which can decrease the importance of a specific brand.

7.2.3 Brand state

Branding is a combination of visual clues, marketing efforts, an attempt to differentiate, and all the rest of how a brand is managed. In Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki patio branding in its' simplest form, as a mere logo, can be seen in the walls of the bar, on employees' clothes and on the menus. However, the use of logos is still quite modest. More broadly speaking of branding, it can be seen in how the patio differs from its competitors.

After examining the Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's marketing channels, Facebook was identified as the key channel. Consequently, the patio was featured in Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki Facebook site for three times during the patio season of 2018. Three DJ events and a charity event of which drop off point was the patio (otherwise patio was not part of the event). From May to end of August, patio was mentioned in 8 out of 35 posts (Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki 23 August 2018), making it featured in 22 percent of the posts of the summer. The posts had also lots of "likes" compared to the other posts on the site. These factors suggest that patio is interesting as a topic and marketing attention should be focused there even more.

I recall the Hard Rock Cafe logo effortlessly.

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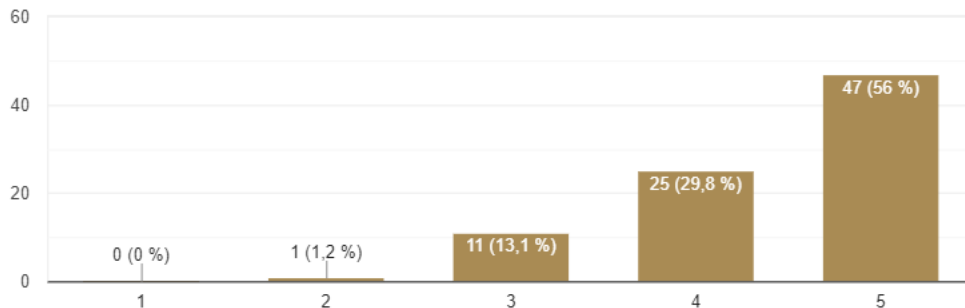


Figure 13. Logo recognition

Figure 13 represents the results to the statement: I recall the Hard Rock Cafe logo effortlessly. Over 50 percent of the respondents recall the logo easily by preferring the option strongly agree (5). Hard Rock Cafe being a global brand has likely had an impact on the replies. Only one respondent could not recall the logo effortlessly which means that the logo is commonly known amongst the respondents.

I am familiar with the Hard Rock Cafe brand.

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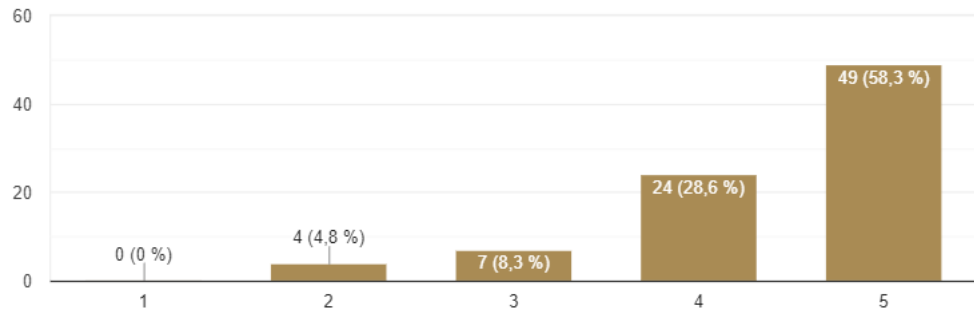


Figure 14. Familiarity with the brand

Following a similar response rate as the previous figure, the brand of Hard Rock Cafe is well known among the respondents as proven in Figure 14. 73 out of 84 respondents are familiar or very familiar with the brand. This suggests that the more familiar customers are with the brand, the more likely they are to return. For example, often customers of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki explain how many and which Hard Rock Cafes they have visited. These customers feel proud of their memorabilia, multiple travels and their appreciation towards the brand.

The patio is also a home to other brands which may have an impact on how well customers recognize the Hard Rock brand. Suppliers and partners are known to donate things as an appreciation of the cooperation and to guarantee their own visibility in the city center. (Vasilev 30 July 2018.) In the season of 2018, branded gifts included sunshades, menu stands, blankets and a blanket container.

I am clear of which terrace belongs to Hard Rock Cafe.

84 vastausta

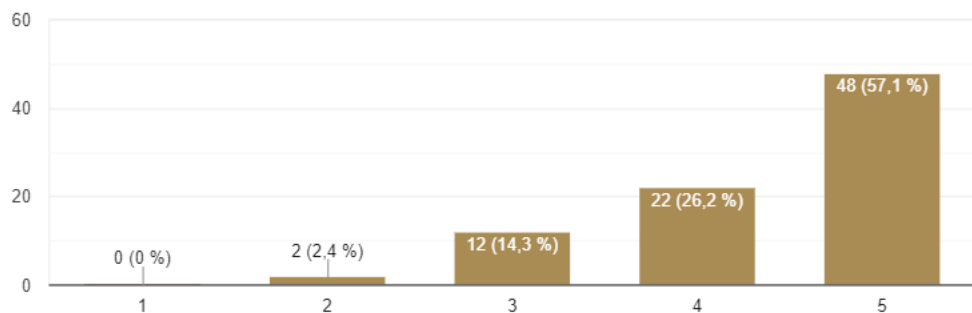


Figure 15. Ownership of the patio

Despite the other logos, the respondents are confident about which terrace, in midst of the competitor terraces, belongs to Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. This can be detected from Figure 15. However, during observation confusion became evident. Tens of customers came looking for the terrace owned by Vanha Ylioppilastalo, located in the second floor. It may be unclear to who that terrace belongs to since there is Hard Rock Cafe logo right by this terrace. Unfortunately, that Vanha's terrace lacks in branding and consequently leads to confusion. Therefore, more visible branding at the patio should be considered to avoid the confusion of which terrace belongs to who.

Differentiation from competitors such as Vanha Ylioppilastalo and its terrace, Iguana terrace and Stockmann Roof, can be identified in few matters. First, food is a crucial part of the Hard Rock brand in general. Hard Rock food is American in style, large in portion size and comforting in feeling. (Vasilev 30 July 2018.) The globe-wide menu can be seen as an advantage since it's likely to be familiar to the customers. Second, the location is one of the most central in Helsinki. The statue of the Three Smiths is a crossing with high volumes of foot traffic that are exposed to the patio. These people can be thought as potential customers. The location itself has been an advantage sales-wise as it has hosted different terraces long before the Hard Rock franchise was even found in Finland. (Bidgood 27 July 2018.) Third, the name can be identified a differentiator. A global brand is likely to be more of a household name than a local company.

I consider Hard Rock Cafe terrace as a place for everyone.

84 vastausta

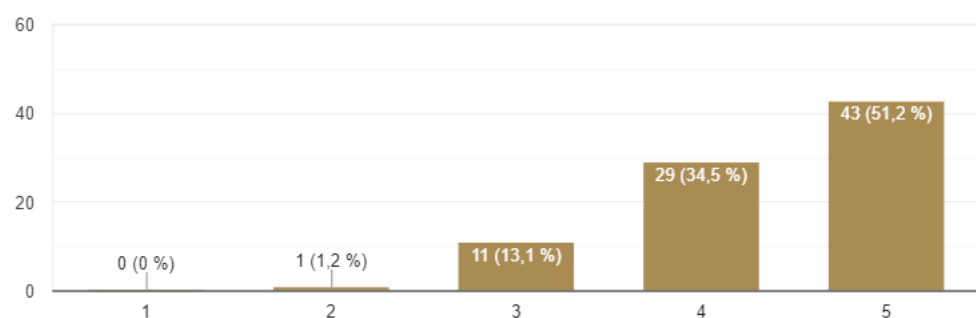


Figure 16. Acceptance

The patio's theme, even with Hard Rock logos, is quite modest. It's far from the restaurant itself with color-coded lights, patterned chairs and tables, cues of music and of course the whole interior. According to the bar manager (Vasilev 30 July 2018.), the lack of concept allows all people to feel welcome. Even the questionnaire respondents vouch for that the patio is for everyone as can be seen in Figure 16. Moreover, the Hard Rock Cafe brand is

all about accepting everyone as they are and thus more branding and accepting everyone should be seen more on the patio too.

8 Improvement proposals

This chapter will introduce improvement proposals based on the results of my research. First brand-related proposals are given. Second, non-brand related proposals are suggested. Lastly, issues that appeared are discussed in the considerations part of proposals.

8.1 Brand-related proposals

As mentioned, more social media content about the patio is recommended. Engaging content that encourage customers to voice their opinion is preferred. Furthermore, engagement cannot be reached with just the company's logo and its' motto, but it should reflect the company's values to appeal to customers' feelings. This can be executed in the form of polls, questions, videos and more. The style of the content should be honest, represent the brand and give a surprise every once in a while. Generic tone of the posts could be more straight forward and exciting. More specifically, posts on Facebook and Instagram should be timelier. Slight suggestions of afterwork should be published around four o'clock on a weekday and weekend vibes should be promoted in the afternoon. More posts should also take time during the evening to attract people scrolling their Facebook feed at home wondering what to do tonight.

Continuing with marketing, events are a prominent way to attract attention to the patio. DJ nights were a success in season of 2018 which indicates there is a demand for music-related events. Furthermore, a comment suggesting more music was made in a questionnaire reply. Enforcing music with small-scale concerts would also support the general theme of music at Hard Rock Cafes and help customers to realize that music is an important factor for the Hard Rock brand. Gigs with minimal setup such as acoustic shows would be possible to execute. By introducing a more varied entertainment selection, there is a chance to polish the image of the patio. Inevitably, gigs require financial resources but profits from drink and food sales increase simultaneously. In terms of organizing the concerts there will be extra duties to cover. Luckily, Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki is already hiring the services of a sound technician which could be benefitted in the concerts at the patio too.

The key of recognizing a brand is benefitting from a distinct element. The salience of the brand should be repeatedly showcased and brought to customers in new ways. As mentioned earlier, differentiation is the key to market success. In the case of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, the differentiators are the menu and the logo. Menu is a differentiator in the market environment based on its global status and wide selection. The Hard Rock Cafe logo

itself is worldwide. By emphasizing these two differentiators, the brand could be strengthened at the patio.

For the patio season 2019, more logos should be added around the premises. As the city planning follows strict rules in the walking center of Helsinki, large logo displays may be impossible to execute. Making sure that patio staff is wearing logo work wear is the simplest solution to adding the brand presence. It can be strengthened even more by offering more logo merchandise such as caps or scarves to the staff to wear. In contrast, repeating the logo in separate menus is a possibility. This would require a small investment towards printing weatherproof menus and purchasing a mailbox or any similar solution to store the menus. This mailbox can be attached straight to the core of the patio container or it can be a stand-alone version that allows changing the location of the mailbox if it is not suitable.

By adding separate menus, customers are able to skim through the menu before ordering. Some customers want to take their time with menu and order when they feel ready. Also, the queue at the patio is directed to the right side of the container which also features the drink menu. Unfortunately, occasional long queues prevent customers from seeing the drink menu attached to the right side of the patio container door as seen in Image 4 (next to the Finnish flag). By allowing the customers to take time by looking at the menu on a table or to save time by taking it with them to the queue, customers can choose their preferred way and feel bit more appreciated of the given freedom. Therefore, adding separate menus must be considered. This will add slightly to the workload, but the benefits gained weigh more than collecting and keeping the menus tidy on daily basis.



Image 4. Patio container (Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki 13 April 2018.)

In regards of the drink menu at the patio, many changes have been seen during it seasons. From complex to simple, hot to cold and from popular to not popular, for season 2019 there is still room for improvement. The lack of Hard Rock Cafe cocktails is evident at the patio. As a Hard Rock Cafe extension, at least a limited selection of signature cocktails should be available. On top of global Hard Rock Cafe cocktails, a small selection of cocktails should be available to meet the current needs of the customers. These cocktails must cater to all customer groups. In an ideal situation all shaken cocktails would be removed, and the selection would consist of only stirred cocktails with only few ingredients and a simple garnish. A prime example of a such cocktail would be hit cocktail Aperol Spritz that is still expected to remain popular in 2019. Simple cocktails and limited ingredients would reduce fresh produce waste and guarantee that all staff members are able to execute the cocktails without trouble. For beers, ciders and wines, the selection of 2018 was sufficient and varied. Selling the surplus at the end of the season also proved to be a successful idea and should be continued.

With Hard Rock cocktails, the official Hard Rock standards come to question. In the season of 2018, cleaning and cocktail making standards were already updated to a higher level than before. However, they are still not sufficient with the level of standards that can be seen for example upstairs at the actual restaurant. These global standards not only focus on matters such as cleaning but to everything that is done every day. Everything from how many centiliters of sugar is put to a Mojito to how to greet a guest is specified in guidelines.

The patio is no match to the upstairs restaurant/bar because of its functions. There was only one point of sale, no table service at all and mostly unexperienced staff. These matters reduce significantly the possibility of fulfilling the Hard Rock Cafe standards in signing up members for loyalty programs, double checking with the customers and upselling on tables for instance. Also, the nature of the patio, it being very popular and busy during warm and sunny days, must be considered with standards. The level of performance and efficiency is limited to the demand of the day. On slower days, more attention to service and cleaning can be directed but on the busy days staff can solely focus on serving customers as quickly as possible.

At the patio, a more experienced member of the staff must be appointed in charge. This person would ensure that the required standards are met on daily basis. Their responsibility would be to report to the supervisor if anything's missing or going wrong. This person would be closely involved in the training of new staff and specifically training for the crucial operations at the patio.

Meeting the standards is not just about operations in this case. It is also about agreeing on which standards are doable at the patio. The fact that the patio is now what it is, does not mean it could not improve to the required level. By cleaning up the operations, the patio can be a functional addition to the Helsinki cafe which can provide quality service and drinks. The management in Helsinki need to discuss the issues revolving the patio with the chain management and try and agree on what is plausible to reach within the classic Hard Rock Cafe standards. The chain management is already aware of the patio's existence but are not up to date with its' current situation. Limitations of the patio must be made clear and understood that making vast changes is impossible. From the patio perspective, the focus of standards should be agreed to shift towards the way of service, cocktail making, keeping produce up to date and cleaning.

Customer service is a key component to a successful restaurant or bar visit. In Hard Rock Cafes this aspect of the experience is crucial. From the moment you walk in, the goal is to feel welcome. This mentality should be visible in the patio too. There is a limit to what extent one can teach customer service and therefore it is important to hire staff that is suitable for the service culture that Hard Rock Cafes support.

Customers of the patio are free to create their own associations and perceptions of the patio. Since these tend to be difficult to change, the focus should be on strengthening a positive image of the company and its patio. Strengthening the image can be done by highlighting the best parts of the brand identity that Hard Rock Cafes presents. It is a place for authentic experiences, a home to Rock'n'Roll spirit and a joint for comforting American cuisine and cocktails. By sticking to what the brand is about, the best results can be reached.

8.2 Non-brand related proposals

The sewage issue needs to be addressed for the season 2019. The stench of the sewer is unbearable, and it has caused discomfort in both staff and the customers. Even if the sewers are under the ownership of the city, actions must be taken before the patio reopens. If the issue can be fixed during the installation of the waterpipe to the sewer, it must be. The smell already has a negative impact on how long customers decide to stay or even if they come at all.

Hard Rock Cafe patio is a temporary summer terrace which remains on its' spot for six months starting from April each year. The demand of staff also increases during this time and consequently summer staff is hired to work on the patio. Summer staff is usually less

experienced than regular staff which limits the selection of cocktails that can be on the patio menu. Even with a training session on cocktail making, the summer staff has seen to struggle with the execution. The capability issues with the staff can be handled by investing more time towards training. Summer staff is also part of the brand and should know the basic idea behind the brand. Encouraging the new staff and for example organizing small selling competitions with an incentive, supports their learning and investment towards their work.

To support fluidity of staff, focus must be placed on the summer staff. Inevitably, summer staff is less equipped with skills and knowledge of the brand which can cause tension and frustration in between summer staff and regular staff. By focusing on training and supporting towards social interaction among staff, some of the difficulties can be avoided.

Medium investments, such as replacing unfit chairs and tables, have proved their benefits. The amount of complaints due to spilled drinks has reduced vastly. For the season of 2019, upgrading the patio container could create a similar effect. One minor improvement is to add "Order here" and "Pick-up here" -signs to hang from the roof of the container. "Order here" -sign on top of the point of sales and the other at the left and side of the bar. This simple idea will streamline transactions at the bar.

An external selling point has been up for discussion. A structure that can collapse from the roof for overnight locked storage would be ideal for the case. It would be placed on the left side of the bar container, away from the statue of the Three Smiths. This structure would be very basic being only equipped with three drafts, 6 kegs (1 of each connected, 1 for back up) and a selling point with card only payment system. It would employ one staff member in the busiest hours. On the season of 2018, weekend days were staffed with four people simultaneously which indicates that a test could be carried out without increasing the number of staff members. The extra selling point would help to reduce queues, increase the sales as more drinks could be sold per hour and serve customers who are want their drafts quickly.

8.3 Considerations

During the research about the patio's current state, a dilemma appeared. Branding Hard Rock Cafe patio has always been problematic. The case company has left branding to a secondary priority due to strict standards that the Hard Rock brand brings along. The more evident the Hard Rock brand, the stricter the selection and the standards how to operate are. (Vasilev 30 July 2018). This dilemma has raised questions on what kind of

branding and its intensity would still benefit the case company. Despite the uneagerness of the commissioner to continue very progressive branding, I see it as a respectable option. It would lift the standards at the patio and make it more orderly place to work. It would unite the upstairs and downstairs and make them more equal. Standards would ground processes, such as cleaning procedures, that need to be completed in any case.

The alcohol law in Finland is very strict. There is a thin line to what is accepted and what is not. Shortly, commercial promotion of alcohol is illegal. Alcohol should not be presented in a way that it promotes health, is targeted for weak groups, such as underaged or heavy users, is a part of a contest, is over 22% in percentages or encourages people to use alcohol. Marketing alcohol is very limited and usually only allowed within the restaurant premises, without facing outside. Here is where the patio comes to question. The patio does not have any walls to hide the alcohol marketing and therefore it is simply not allowed at all. Only featuring the price-list is allowed. However, using an a-stand just outside the premises is allowed. The stand can feature a mild alcoholic product (under 22% of alcohol) and its price. Unfortunately, the location may be an issue. The high foot traffic and presence of underaged people may counteract the approval of the a-stand. When considering online marketing, the options are again limited. For example, marketing afterwork prices for mild alcohol products is approved only if commenting and sharing options are turned off so it does not promote the use of alcohol too much. (Valvira 2018.)

The location of the patio is one of the best in whole Helsinki. Consequently, the patio is very available to customers, both to walk-ins and customers who initially came for Hard Rock. No matter how available the patio is, to reach its full potential the brand presence needs to be strengthened. However, the city planning of Helsinki is quite meticulous. Nonetheless, the intention of adding an extra selling point alongside the bar container can be presented as a proper case. Applying for the permit to build it should be a fully thought-out process. Filling in the application in Finnish and attaching blueprints of the plan and visual sketches of the possible scenery should be added to prove the seriousness of the application.

Suppliers are limited in the case of Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. The main partners with alcohol will continue their partnership for the next season. It eliminates the option of going rogue but still allows a sufficient selection to choose from. Moreover, having stationed in Finland brings its own issues. The alcohol tax is very high which results in high prices and low profit in other than draft products. Also, differentiation with the selection is challenging because the number of suppliers is very limited. This means that most of the restaurants

have a very similar selection no matter Hard Rock Cafe would choose to carry in their selection.

As mentioned, the Hard Rock Cafe brand is built around six M's, music, menu, memorabilia, merchandise, monument and multi-media. (Vasilev 30 July 2018). Strengthening the brand from its core pillars would be challenging. The two first pillars can be executed but with limitations. The rest of the pillars are more complicated to execute. The location apart from the main business complicates the showcase of memorabilia since they would be extremely vulnerable to theft and weather conditions. The patio container is somewhat abnormal from its' surroundings. But to upgrade it to a monument, would require large amount of money. Not to mention the city planning regulations that would likely prevent a monument from being build next to a significant statue. Multi-media would also be vulnerable to unsure weather conditions but can be executed if precautions are taken.

Some of the respondents were unhappy with the price range on the patio. Also, customers have been commenting on the prices being too high. However, the price of food is automatically the same as it is in the restaurant. The brand, location, rent, cost of ingredients and desired profit margin all define the price. The same goes for the patio drinks. Price range on competing terraces is similar and in line with the overall price range in the centre of Helsinki.

9 Discussion and evaluation

This thesis project was conducted as a case study for the commissioner, Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki. The initial idea was to improve their summer patio in any way. After the thesis process was begun, the focus was found in branding. Theoretical framework was built around brands and branding. Framework was followed by the description of the Hard Rock Cafe brand. Next, the methodology of the thesis and the conducted research were explained. Research results were introduced next. Consequently, the improvement proposals were suggested. Lastly, some concerning matters about improvements was discussed.

The suggested improvement proposals handle the brand- and non-brand related matters. These brand related proposals remind of the core of branding, the attempt to differentiate. Since branding is everything that relates to creating, promoting and managing a brand (Seetharaman, Nadriz & Gunalan 2001, 243.), the proposals are as varied as the definition of branding itself. However, in the case of Hard Rock brand, the creating of the brand is bypassed as the brand is already created.

The brand-related proposals include a boost in marketing and in events. Publishing posts on favourable times will attract more attention than before. Also, Hard Rock Cafes are all about music and therefore showcasing it, will promote the brand's presence more at the patio. Furthermore, the use of branding in a simple meaning, by adding more logos to the premises, for example to separate menus, will increase the visibility of the brand. By reinforcing the logo presence and music, the patio and the restaurant will resemble more of each other. From the customer point of view, the brand will be more noticeable by adding some of the signature cocktails of Hard Rock Cafe to the cocktail list. This will internally mean an increase in standard following and learning new processes that are up to the global Hard Rock Cafe standards. Simultaneously, learning new standards will encourage to adapt to processes that are already identified as good practises such as labelling produce with day stickers. Continuing with the customer point of view, staff and the meaning of customer service is crucial. More attention must be directed towards the hiring process, work wear and efficiency of the staff. The happier and more capable the staff, the happier the customers.

The non-brand related proposals are suggested to improve the overall functionality of the patio in the case if the commissioner is not willing to strengthen the brand at the patio. The proposals revolve around the sewage issue, staff and capability, investments and an external point of sales. The sewage issue must be addressed. This will increase the level

of happiness in staff and decrease the number of complaints from the customers instantly. Capability issues relate to the level of professionalism of the temporary staff and their training. An appointed and experienced member of staff should lead by example and work as a supervisor of sort that would oversee daily operations at the patio. Less complex cocktail menu and a sort of supervisor that works along the staff will provide consistency in cocktails and in other daily operations. This lower supervisor will be in charge of quality and fluidity of work. As mentioned, investments have proved their worth in the patio. Signs for ordering and pick-up is an easy and efficient fix to the queue spreading all over the patio front on busy days. Last, the external point of sales would require an initial investment on the space itself and an approval from the city planning office. If succeeded, the external point of sales would increase sales and reduce queues and reduce staff traffic at the bar container.

9.1 Evaluation

The thesis objective, to create a plan to strengthen the Hard Rock Cafe brand at the case company Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki's patio, to narrow the current brand gap existing between the patio and the restaurant and to help customers recognize the brand more effortlessly on the patio, is fulfilled. The research questions (main: How to strengthen the Hard Rock Cafe brand at the patio? sub: What parts of the brand are not adequately presented at the patio and what changes or ideas could correct that?) were answered while analysing the interviews and the questionnaire results. Weak points were identified, and proposals were suggested to improve them.

However, the objective could have been fulfilled more thoroughly. Additional ideas could have helped the commissioner more in planning the season of 2019. Moreover, the dilemma of branding appeared too late in the process. The commissioner admitted to being uneager to brand the patio further in the middle of the thesis process which resulted in difficulties. The focus in brand related proposals shifted in the end to consider also practical proposals that could improve overall operations at the patio.

Lastly, the most significant issues in the thesis process were lack of motivation and too optimistic time allocation. Initially the process begun in the beginning of 2018. The writing process begun in March and continued until the end of November. The final version was published in December 2018. The process could have been quicker but was slowed down with working and studying at the same time.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Interview with the bar manager

1. History

Would you like to tell me about the changes that the patio has seen in these three years?

In these three years, basically I was helping out to open the patio with Julia the bar manager at the time. I mean, first of all the menu has changed. The food menu changed from special menu items made for the patio, that in my opinion were unnecessary, because it was a hassle in the kitchen. Later, we decided to go with our actual menu items. This year we reduced the menu even more and ditched all the complicated items like Jumbo Combo and Fajitas. Also, we decided to put all our burgers to the menu since last year customers were complaining that they wanted specific burgers that were not on the menu at the time. Small nacho plate is the only special item that was kept and it's a high seller still. In regards of drinks, I'd say the first year Julia wanted to have draft cocktails and everything. She got really excited but then we didn't have time for sufficient training or the drafts never came for the cocktails, even though it was already on the menu. Last year, Daniel wanted to keep it simple. This year the idea was to simplify it even more. You'd think with this location everything would sell but it's not true. But we still wanted to have some proper cocktails that are simple to keep up with trends and demand. I've spent few days there too, selling, seeing how it is, making some cocktails and I think that people like the selection. I made the list myself but after seeing it is good.

Would you still make some menu changes if you could?

If I could, I would. If you have proper cocktails, you need proper bartenders, right? And when you don't have proper bartenders, it comes a bit more complicated. When you cannot, due to staff costs, have proper staff. It needs to be simplified even more.

2. Brand

How would you describe the brand?

Overall, I see it as a big diner restaurant with a lot of music and entertainment with a big history behind it. Many know how about the history and how long it has been on the market and I think, the fact that it's international, I think that's one of the reasons people come here. They know what to expect.

Do you think that the customers see that too?

I think the customer who know the brand will definitely. But here in Finland, a lot of people have no idea and have no clue what to expect. Then they come and face a surprise.

Sometimes a good, sometimes a bad one. Anyhow, there is a lot of misunderstanding of the brand in Finland. Let's say it's not the only one because in Korea nobody knows what the brand stands for. Maybe before I worked here, I still had an image of an American restaurant, so I knew what to expect with food and everything. Mostly, people here, think it's too much heavy metal in HRC Helsinki. Not exactly, how it is in terms of music, because we play and support all music. People do seem to know Hard Rock t-shirts. You see them quite a lot. I think it's hard to get into a head of an average customers having worked here. But if I try, I'd say they see a big restaurant with certain standards.

Can you say that the brand is seen on the patio?

So, we can talk about it. I don't think it super seen in there because for us, we have to have HRC brand there, but we don't have to follow specs (set standards) over there apart of the food. Drinks wise it's more free. We also understand, this location has always had a terrace here. And people who come here, have always come here but not for HRC. How I see it. They would come whoever would run it. Therefore, we don't put too much effort on branding there. Also, we don't have HRC selection over there. We want to do something with other stuff, what people like and what follows trends. And whether it's a good or bad thing, it's yet to discuss.

Is it too difficult for the brand to be seen there?

Unfortunately, it is. We have HRC logos and menus, but some tourists have been asking like where is the real cafe because this is not it.

Would branding be a bad thing then?

It's not necessarily a bad thing but we thought we don't have to put so much effort into branding because it will work anyhow. But I've been on a few HRC terraces, in Rome, Stockholm and in Baltimore. It's also a little bit different when you have it next to the actual building, when the terrace is right there. And in here (Helsinki) you walk away from the building. Rome was super branded and they had all guitars and everything on the terrace being covered with glass walls obviously but it was a terrace that can be open all year round.

If branding is causing some difficulties here, is there another direction that the patio could go towards?

It's a HRC terrace so it stays a HRC terrace. At least we have to have our logos on and uniforms. But this is also a little bit complicated to do within our standards, since it's limited what you can do in that little cabin.

3. Brand building

How do you think this terrace differ from others?

Well, in a nutshell. I think that our menu differentiates us. I don't think a lot of the competitors have food. This summer we also tried to something with DJ's on Fridays. It's going

well, you can clearly see that normally people stay for one drink because it's a meeting point and then go on, but now people stay and hangout for a longer time. From the perspective of a brand, we don't do much for branding to differentiate. We have Spotify Business and speakers that play, but does it differentiate much? I don't think so, everybody has it. Branding there does not much differentiate, we have our logos and stuff but mostly it's the menu that makes a difference.

What kind of customer you have?

Yeah, I think that there are regulars, not that many of them. There is the guy who comes like every other day from the two previous summers. And I still think, we would have regulars here because it's such a popular meeting point. What was her name, she was working as a manager here for a while, what was her name? She comes like every other day with her work mates. Otherwise, all the morning hours we have a lot of tourists when the cruise ships come. You can even spot a few now in there. Regulars, we have decent amount and if you wanna talk about age. We see all of them there. We see teenagers come there, youngsters. Why is that? We don't have like a proper concept there and we don't target to anyone specifically. So it's a love all, serve all kind of a situation. Location determines a lot, how I see it. This very very central location matters.

How do tourists end up there?

I feel it's more like they wonder in to there. No one of them know that we have a terrace, it's more like they come here and see it's a good spot to have drink and see trams passing by.

Is there going to be any changes next year?

We gonna have it for sure. We try to get some heaters on it, just to keep people later. And to extend the opening hours. The current hours now are from 11am to 9.30pm is the last call. We going to try to extend it from the end. To try and close it at midnight. Branding wise, I don't know what's it gonna be. I don't think there is gonna be big difference. Tables and chairs we are doing a cooperation with our partners. It's them who help us with the expenses because we sell their stuff. You can see this Kulta Katriina umbrellas which are supernice. It's hard to say what sponsored stuff are we gonna have for next year since they are revised every year. It will remain more or less the same but it's likely going to have one extra selling point. Like a station with the drafts, some drinks and payment terminal. It's gonna be some where on the side, so you can have drafts there.

4. Improvements

Any ideas to implement for next or this summer?

Heaters would be nice. I'd like to have more stuff happening from our side and not just street musicians. Not like once a week but more often. Not necessarily DJ's but live music

and provided by HRC. Coming back to branding conversation, that that way we could provide music, one of the M's. Multimedia would be cool to have a screen there during the World Cup. But maybe next time. It's quite doable, and not so expensive. Then again all these kind of activities and investments, we gonna plan them. And it's good that we have this reliant kind of relationship with the current dj guy who brings them there. When we talk money with him, he's flexible. Most people wouldn't be. Unfortunately, we had to cancel a lot because of the weather but what to do. Climate is one the things we have to deal with here. It would be nice to have some music and maybe even videos. But those are a bit trickier then. Lot of events, not like events events, but something going on all the time. We quite often short with hands, so anyhow it would be extra. The events need to be low maintenance.

Would it be easier if the terrace was connected to the restaurant in here?

Well, you see these other terraces. They are not doing too much with their terraces. Mostly because of all these regulations. The city planner is a complicated person and we had issues with them before, so it's tricky. We gonna have the terrace for a few years because the lease is like 10 years.

Appendix 2. Interview with the patio worker

1. History

Could you tell me about the current state of the patio? You have worked there before, right?

Yes, it's good as in better. It has better fluidity in terms of work.

What do you mean, like more people or?

More people filling in the needed areas such as cocktail making, drink making, kassas and blocking. The whole overall core of having a bar.

Were there any changes from last year? Or from two years ago?

A lot has changed since the first year it opened. Now it is its third year, it has gained its own momentum now. It's good in my opinion.

What you mean by gaining momentum?

Cause the whole team there is basically new. So they all worked together from the start. They all have their own little procedures and processes that are different than upstairs which can only be attained by actually physically working there day in and day out.

But any changes in the physical aspects or the equipment of the patio?

I mean we got some new tables and new chairs which boosted the total capacity that we can keep within the area that's permitted by the city for us. Last year we had few chairs, few tables which ended up causing a lot of people to stand up and finish their drinks before leaving. This year we have roughly couple hundred new chairs, tens of new tables.

Are some of the tables still in need of being replaced?

Yes, those that are not completely broken or terrible are kept. Everything else that has been completely beyond repair has been swapped out.

Besides the tables and chairs, has there been any changes in the bar itself?

The bar itself is basically the same. Except we don't have any fancy things. Like for the first two years we were selling frozen yoghurt. So we had this huge frozen yoghurt machine that did not sell well and the upkeep cost a lot. So this year just decided to get rid of it, just keep it simple. Make desserts from the restaurant, have very limited menu which actually makes it a lot easier for people working downstairs (patio) in terms of profit, and options. It really hasn't affected at all.

You mention that the menu is simple even though there are quite a few items on the menus?

Yeap, keeping things really simplified but the same time varied so you have all these other options if the basic options doesn't really suit you or if the really fancy options don't suite you. We got a good mix of every possible thing we have.

Alright, how about the operations? How is it going?

It's challenging. If the permit would allow us to keep the building (the main restaurant) connected to the actual patio everything would be a lot more smoother. The bar would be a lot more cleaner, the access from the kitchen would be a whole lot easier, maintaining the amount of products that we sell, like stocks that we have on the patio, that could be updated really quickly. But at the moment, due to the fact that the area (patio) is actually secluded from the main building has caused quite a lot of issues such as drainage of the dishwasher and that all is actually preventable. And can be done properly at the patio, but since seeing that it's a temporary fixture. That's why when sewage and plumbing are done they just need a run off point. It could be addressed in a better way though..

Could the sewage problem be addressed?

It can be fixed, but it should've been done at the very beginning. But then again the plumbing issue that is common in Finland, is the size issue of the pipes. It is actually not our complete responsibility. It is partially the city's responsibility to provide access points as the area next to the statue of the Three Smiths belong to city and it's rented from the city. The sewage holes are located in the area so they should provide water in take and out take points. Because the out take is now so bare minimum, when it's this hot, the sewer releases strong stink that isn't preventable unless you put in proper manpower and resources to fix it. But the sewage system belongs to the city and there is only so much that the business can do at this point and because it's only a temporary fixture that is open four-five months, there is just no point to fix it for that short amount of time.

Do you see another way to fix the issue?

It's just one of those things you have to adapt. It can only be fixed again next year before installing the huge container (bar) itself.

Any other issues or concerns that come to mind?

You can only do so much with that small working space. If the container was a bit bigger and organized. It's such a small space. The main cleaning areas, like the sinks are crammed with other stuff. To get things more fluid, is to have a bigger working space, which has been addressed many times to the superiors but yet again it is a temporary fixture. And the costs would be a lot, the container itself is like tens of thousands of euros to rent, and then the rent of the place. Container for now is purchased and property of Hard Rock but due to the fact that is already purchased why sell it and use more money for a bigger one that works?

Also, what matters is a good team. Team is only as good as its weakest member. Everyone knows their responsibilities and what has to be done no matter if they like it. If someone is slacking, their weight has to be dragged by the others. Once that mentality drops, it's nearly impossible to get back up.

How about the economic side of things?

It's quite a surprise that there haven't been any more investments in the last year since it's a huge money maker. On the few months its open, it can make more money than the up-stairs in the whole year. Last year's prediction even suggested that. The daily record was broken in May which was quite a lot of money.

2. Brand

What is the brand of Hard Rock?

It's a brand. I can look at it as charity, as a ngo or as a restaurant or merchandise store that all comes down to the name. It represents its mottos and values, but not in all locations. There are some that can donate to native tribes or et cetera. But all cannot, especially here in Europe, which is kind of sad. If they can, it's diverted towards local causes not the international ones. Once HRC in Helsinki donated towards children's hospital but it was just a drop in the sea. Hard Rock is a huge huge international brand. One of the main founders of Hard Rock traveled to India and used his shares to build a youth school in India, to give back basically. And the other owner wanted to expand to the States, it shows that the company is a two-edged sword, other half strictly about money. Also, brand can help raise awareness if done right. Mostly, I see HRC as a business and a charity.

How would you describe the brand in three words?

Standards for one. It's hard to pick just three but what I see too is attempted diversity in customers and employees. But I choose high standards for the first. Then cooperation that happens between all the cafes and within the cafes, the departments are closer than anywhere else. Hard to think of others.

Is there any value that stands out in daily operations?

Guess its just fluidity of the work. With good team small hick-ups don't matter. Management pushes the importance of teamwork and overall working efficiently is highlighted. Training as well is valued.

How do you think that the customers see the brand?

It has an interesting theme, been consistent ever since opening. Hard Rock is all about the music, love and unity. But do you see it as a customer? Not necessarily. You see fancy stuff around the walls, an American themed restaurant both in food and in drinks. I mean, the problem is with Hard Rock that they are so limited. The laws here are so tight, it's messing up the system. You get however, like a welcoming feeling when you enter.

What you think is the message of HRC?

It started as a place where everyone was welcome and still is. In the light of recent events it's more important than ever.

3. Brand building

What is the differentiating factor from its competitor?

The name definitely. And the location. It's not hidden in behind or top of a building, it's right there. In your face. You come from work, it's there again. There are a lot of advertisement going on around the city for Hard Rock that helps too. Lot of people don't realize it's owned by Hard Rock. They just see it as a terrace with a nice location to have a drink.

What kind of customers you have at the patio?

Other than passerby, HRC is heavily reliant on tourists during the summer. It's made sure that tourists know where HRC is due to maps, ads, discounts and whatnot that are spread at the cruises hips, harbors, airport and basically everywhere. People are sort of following the sun. When the shade comes to the patio, people either go home or to bar, which plays out perfectly as being a transitioning bar.

Besides tourists what other type of customers you have?

There are some regulars at the patio. There are a few people, like the Finnish-Indonesian couple that come by every summer. Also, few business people that come for afterwork. Maybe beers, maybe wine for them. There was also a regular who we had to kick out for harassing people.

How would you describe the patio if it were a person?

Four-year old adult. Messy as hell. But when it comes down to it, they know what to do, they get everything done when it's absolutely needed. And when it's not that needed, no effort is made. Diligent, but at the same time, when they're focusing on other things, just a mess. Priorities are in the right direction but going the wrong way. Outside it looks flawless. All is good, sun is shining, people are drinking and having a good time. But once you get closer, you see the mess, especially during the rush. Receipts all over the floor, bottle caps lying around, the smell lingering. Also, complaints from all nationalities, all age groups have complained about the stench.

What would be the optimal scenario for a customer transaction from the customer's point-of-view?

Quick queue, choices of drinks are adequate and that it's kept simple enough.

4. Improvements

How would you make it more obvious that this is HRC patio? How would you promote the brand more?

I would use more pictures. More pictures in the menus. At the moment, there is just a small logo in the menu and you cannot even take a menu to the tables. I'd also add some pictures to the menu itself. Sure, that's a huge hassle but having one person taking care of the tables all shift would be awesome. At the end of the day, all tables and chairs move and it creates clutter. A labyrinth of chairs is created. Worst case scenario, you have people looking at the menu for 20 minutes and then standing in the line for 20 minutes. Some

days, they can just walk to the bar and order what they want. Then they obviously see the logo at the patio wall, but from outside people can hardly ever see that is actually Hard Rock. But then we have to remember the laws and regulations in Finland. One or two more of beach flags that have the logo, would be nice for the other entrance to the have some recognition too.

Any other improvement ideas?

The way that things are going, as I've worked there before, some bigger space is needed. Some storage for stock and chairs and whatnot would be necessary for smoother way to work. As the cocktail making spot, the coffee machine, and the place for the kegs are all literally next to each other, people need to move before you have access to any of those stations.

Appendix 3. Questionnaire

Osio 1/2



Customer and brand experience at the Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki terrace

This questionnaire is conducted by a Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences student as a part of Bachelor Thesis concerning Hard Rock Cafe brand at Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki terrace. Your answer will be anonymous. If you wish to participate in raffle for 3 x 50 € gift card to Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki, please leave your contact information at the end. Thank you for participation.

Few statements are created to measure the state of the terrace. Please select your answer from a scale from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree.

Kuvan otsikko



Gender *

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say
- Other

Age *

- under 20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- over 50

I am familiar with the Hard Rock Cafe brand. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I recall the Hard Rock Cafe logo effortlessly. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I am clear of which terrace belongs to Hard Rock Cafe. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I consider Hard Rock Cafe terrace as a place for everyone. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I am happy with the service received at the terrace. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I get value for my money when purchasing products at the terrace. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I am satisfied with the drink menu on the terrace. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I would return back as a customer. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I would return if the terrace was under different ownership. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

I would recommend the terrace to my friends and family. *

	1	2	3	4	5	
strongly disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	strongly agree

Any other comments or improvement ideas?

Pitkä vastausteksti

Osio 2/2



Participation for the raffle

Leave your contact information (name, e-mail, phone number) here if you want to participate in the raffle for Hard Rock Cafe Helsinki gift cards. We will contact the lucky winner by e-mail after the answering time has ended.

Name, e-mail, phone number

Lyhyt vastausteksti