

Sports Event Management and Development Case Tekojärvihölkkä

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Case Tekojärvihölkkä

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This thesis studies sports event management and development. A running event called Tekojärvihölkä in Vantaa is used as a case example here. Tekojärvihölkä was organized the fourth time in 2011. It is organized by an association called Ylästön Urheilijat -59 ry that was the mandator of this thesis. The previous year Tekojärvihölkä had 54 participants and this time the aim was to exceed the figure 100. In the theory section the essential elements of an event are differentiated and handled in detail. The main focus points in developing Tekojärvihölkä 2011 measured in participation number and visibility are marketing and sponsorship. Moreover, customer behaviour is studied to see its importance when customers make decisions to attend an event and estimate it. The research question was framed as following: "How can the increased marketing and sponsorship improve the visibility of Tekojärvihölkä?"

The research part was carried out using a quantitative method, a survey. The survey questionnaires were distributed to the participants of Tekojärvihölkä on the event day, 28th of May 2011, right after the run. The feedback percentage was 42. The results were analyzed using Microsoft Excel and SPSS. The results revealed that the average customer of Tekojärvihölkä is a male aged 17-44 living in Vantaa. As a total, Tekojärvihölkä was estimated as a successful event. According to the respondents the running route was beautiful and comfortable to run, there was a nice hometown spirit in the atmosphere and the arrangements were successful. Although the participation number of 100 was not exceeded in 2011 yet the number nearly doubled from the previous year. This year the total number of participants was 98.

Three out of four were taking part in Tekojärvihölkä for the first time. The same number also enrolled at the spot. The most important marketing channels were the web pages of the event and running calendars, word-of-mouth and posters. Significantly the most visible partner was the fitness centre Elixia that had its own stand at the spot. The timing of the event was shifted from autumn to spring this year. Nearly all of the respondents were satisfied with this change. In terms of future participation two out of three were sure they will participate again if the event is organized. One out of three was not quite sure yet.

Key words: sports event management, marketing, sponsorship, customer behaviour, Tekojärvihölkä

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Tämä opinnäytetyö tutkii urheilutapahtuman järjestämistä ja kehittämistä. Esimerkkitapauksena on vantaalainen juoksutapahtuma Tekojärvihölkä. Tekojärvihölkä järjestettiin neljättä kertaa vuonna 2011. Järjestäjänä toimii Ylästön Urheilijat -59 ry, joka oli myös tämän opinnäytetyön toimeksiantaja. Edellisenä vuonna Tekojärvihölkällä oli 54 osanottajaa. Tänä vuonna tarkoitus oli ylittää luku 100. Tapahtuman olennaiset elementit on eroteltu ja käsitelty yksityiskohtaisesti teoriaosuudessa. Markkinointi ja sponsorointi toimivat tärkeimpinä Tekojärvihölkän 2011 kehityskohtina, kun mitataan tapahtuman osallistujamäärää ja tunnettavuutta. Myös asiakaskäyttämisen merkitystä on tutkittu tapahtumaan osallistumisen ja sen arvioimisen kannalta. Tutkimuskysymys muotoiltiin seuraavasti: ”Miten lisääntynyt markkinointi ja sponsorointi voivat parantaa Tekojärvihölkän tunnettavuutta?”

Tutkimusosio toteutettiin käyttämällä kvantitatiivista tutkimusmenetelmää, kyselytutkimusta. Kyselylomakkeet jaettiin Tekojärvihölkän osanottajille tapahtumapäivänä, 28. toukokuuta 2011, heti juoksun jälkeen. Vastausprosentti oli 42. Tulokset analysoitiin käyttämällä Microsoft Excel ja SPSS-ohjelmaa. Tulokset paljastivat, että keskimääräinen Tekojärvihölkän asiakas on 17-44-vuotias mies, jonka kotipaikkakunta on Vantaa. Kokonaisuudessaan Tekojärvihölkä arvioitiin onnistuneeksi tapahtumaksi. Vastaaajien mukaan juoksureitti on kaunis ja miellyttävä juosta, ilmassa on mukava kotipaikkakunnan henki ja tapahtuman järjestelyt ovat onnistuneet. Vaikka 100 henkilön osallistujamäärää ei vielä ylitettykään tänä vuonna, osallistujamäärä lähes kaksinkertaistui viime vuodesta. Tänä vuonna kokonaisosanottajamäärä oli 98.

Kolme neljästä osallistui Tekojärvihölkään ensimmäistä kertaa. Sama määrä myös ilmoittautui tapahtumaan paikan päällä. Tärkeimmät markkinointikanavat olivat tapahtuman nettisivut ja juoksukalenterit, ”puskaradio” ja julisteet. Merkittävästi näkyvin yhteistyökumppani oli liikuntakeskus Elixia, jolla oli oma pöytänsä tapahtumassa. Tapahtuman ajankohta siirrettiin syksyltä keväälle tänä vuonna. Lähes kaikki vastaajat olivat tyytyväisiä tähän muutokseen. Tulevaisuuden osallistumiseen liittyen kaksi kolmesta olivat varmoja, että he osallistuvat uudelleen, jos tapahtuma järjestetään. Yksi kolmesta ei ollut täysin varma vielä.

Avainsanat: urheilutapahtuman järjestäminen, markkinointi, sponsorointi, asiakaskäyttämisen, Tekojärvihölkä

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1 Introduction

This thesis studies what it takes to organize a running event and how to develop a small-scale event to grow measured in the participation number and visibility. TekojärviHölkä is a fresh event organized the fourth time in year 2011. It is organized voluntarily by the association behind the event, Ylästön Urheilijat -59 ry. The idea is to offer well-being and sports experiences to local people. Most of the members of Ylästön Urheilijat are enthusiastic friends of running themselves as well. Mere profit-making is not the aim of TekojärviHölkä.

The idea for the thesis was made up in autumn 2010. Behind the idea was the interest towards sports and in particular, running, of the writer of this thesis, Sini Sahala. S. Sahala, among the other friends of running of Ylästön Urheilijat, is dedicated to running and takes part in running competitions annually. The chairperson of Ylästön Urheilijat, Juha Sahala is a family acquaintance of S. Sahala so there was the knowledge of the event as a participant and desire to help to make the most out of TekojärviHölkä. All the experiences from event management, marketing and sponsorship during the higher education could be utilized and processed even further in the form of a thesis about sports event management and development.

For the thesis project two books have been used as a help: Creative Thesis Writing by Juha T. Hakala and Toiminnallinen opinnäytetyö by Hanna Vilkkä and Tiina Airaksinen. The theory of this thesis is constructed around event management immersing to sports event management. There is Masterman's theory about event planning process (see figure 1) and information about stakeholders, brand and visibility. Since TekojärviHölkä 2011 was developed concentrating on marketing and sponsorship, theory about them is included. In addition to traditional marketing mix, also new forms of marketing are handled such as online marketing including Facebook marketing. Successful sponsorship includes successful negotiation tactic and the advantages of the sponsorship agreement must be considered both from the event's and sponsor's point of view. One of the new trends of sponsorship is ambush marketing. Customer behavior and customer decision-making models are studied in order to find out how customers make their decision to attend an event.

The functional part starts from chapter 6. The history of TekojärviHölkä and Ylästön Urheilijat is handled first. The sub headings of chapter 6 describe the love for running and running history of S. Sahala and include running vocabulary. Enthusiastic runners know that longer running competitions require a few-day carbohydrate tanking-up and they know the sweetness of "flow" when the concentration is optimal and the sense of place disappears. The event planning process is started from the first event management meeting to implementing the event and research and feedback analysis in chapter 7. TekojärviHölkä is also split into

SWOT analysis which stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The estimation, brand and future of Tekojärviölkkä are considered in the final chapter, chapter 8, conclusions. This chapter provides recommendations for following years reflecting the theory part. Also the previous Tekojärviölkkä that was implemented in 2010 acts as a comparison object.

There are two pictures about Tekojärviölkkä 2011 in the middle of chapter 6. An acknowledgement of them is dedicated to the photographer, Aila Sahala. In the end of the thesis there are also four appendices. The first one of them is the questionnaire that was used as a study method in this thesis and distributed to the participants of Tekojärviölkkä on the 28th of May. The second and third appendices are the flyer and poster that were used in marketing the event. The fourth appendix is the newspaper article that was published in Länsi-Vantaan Vartti on Wednesday, the 1st of June.

2 Sports event management

According to Getz and Goldblatt, there are certain attributes that can be connected to events. These attributes are “special”, “unique”, “one-off”, and “beyond everyday experience”. That is, events are something different compared to routine activities. This definition by Getz and Goldblatt is still commonly understood and used. (Goldblatt 1990 & Getz 1991.) The Chambers Dictionary defines events as something that happens. There is an incidence or occurrence that is a memorable one. Usually there is also some programme involved. (The Chambers Dictionary 1998, 560.) Other attributes possessed by events are intangibility, perishability, ritual or ceremony, fixed timescale, ambience and service, labour intensiveness and personal contact and interaction (Shone & Parry 2004, 13).

Events can be classified into different groups based on their size. Events range from local or community events to major and mega events. Local events mean that they are mainly targeted at local audiences. Their aim is to provide sociality, fun and entertainment. They help local people to increase the feeling of belonging and sense of group. Local events range from sports events to art experiences. (Bowdin et al 2006, 15-18.) This thesis is about a local event so major and mega events will not be explained here.

The history of events is long. Religious fests like Easter and Christmas are being celebrated from the beginning of the Christian calendar. Special events have brought something unique to everyday life. Special events can be divided into personal events (birthdays, weddings and anniversaries), organizational events (charitable, political, commercial and sales), cultural events (ceremonial, heritage, sacred, folklore and art) and leisure events (recreation, leisure and sport). (Shone & Perry 2004, 4.) This thesis handles leisure events and, in more specific, sports event.

When it comes to sports events, the history dates back to the ancient Olympic Games. The Olympic Games may have existed from the 10th or 9th century BC. The purpose of sports events is contest, competition and challenge but it is also about companionship and colleagues, in particular with team sports. Sport events range from international contests like the Olympics to community events for children and non-athletes. Concerning professional sports men and women are commonly well paid and they earn their living by doing sports. Professional sports attract a lot of participants, audience, media and sponsorship. Success in professional sports often generates huge celebrations within the home community. They are also common topics among the inhabitants. (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 15.) Hinch and Higham state that even rather small sports events can generate a vast amount of money for the communities they are located in (2004, 47).

Since the 1960's, the industries of sport, recreation and tourism have expanded drastically. This means that more and more skilled event managers are needed. Event managers are needed for the largest international contests to the smallest community events. To be able to conduct the tasks of an event manager, self-determination and the ability to think through is required. Experience is an additional spice absorbed during a life span. (Mallen & Adams 2008, 7-8.)

2.1 Event as a process

Organizing an event is a process that has a beginning and an end. First of all, there has to be an aim. What is the event going to achieve and why is it held in the first place? The objectives can have something to do with economic, social, political, cultural, environmental or sports benefits. After the objectives are set it is time to consider the whole concept. This means deciding the location and venue of the event, required facilities and target market. The objectives must be SMART. SMART is an abbreviation of words specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timely. Moreover, all the stakeholders are to be identified. Stakeholders mean all the parties that have some interest in the event. Stakeholders include customers, suppliers, partners, investors, staff and external influences. Customers are the participants, audience, advertisers and sponsors. Suppliers bring all the necessary equipment for the event organizers. Suppliers mean, for example, catering, legal advice, emergency services and transportation. (Masterman 2009, 58-59, 63.)

At feasibility stage the event is tested. The persons responsible for the delivery of the objectives are to be identified. The resources are searched such as finance, personnel, facilities, marketing and so on. Also, the implementation and legacy of the event are considered. Budget is created and partners are identified. After this stage it is decided whether to proceed or not. If it is decided to proceed, that is, organize the event, next comes the phase of implementation. (Masterman 2009, 59-60, 68.)

In the implementation phase the plan is executed. The implementation phase is dynamic and goal-oriented. It is about coordinating and getting all the people involved "in the same page". Everyone involved is given a responsibility area and meetings are held. People are given enough guidance but the event manager ultimately keeps all the strings in hands and controls that everything runs smoothly. Forming timelines and controlling that they are observed is important. What is more, different risk possibilities are to be taken into account. Efficient risk management helps to react rapidly if something unexpected happens. One example could be sudden injury of some participant. (Mallen & Adams 2008, 98-110.)

Lastly, every event needs an evaluation phase. After the event is over, it is worthwhile to have a meeting with all the necessary stakeholders. The purpose of proper evaluation is to find out what went good and what could be improved in the future. First of all, the objectives set before the event are to be evaluated and see whether they were met. Secondly, there is always something to improve as well. Event evaluation can be done from numerous perspectives: sponsors, staff and volunteers, mystery guests, visitor observation and so on. (Shone & Parry 2010, 245-247.) The event planning process can be seen from figure 1.

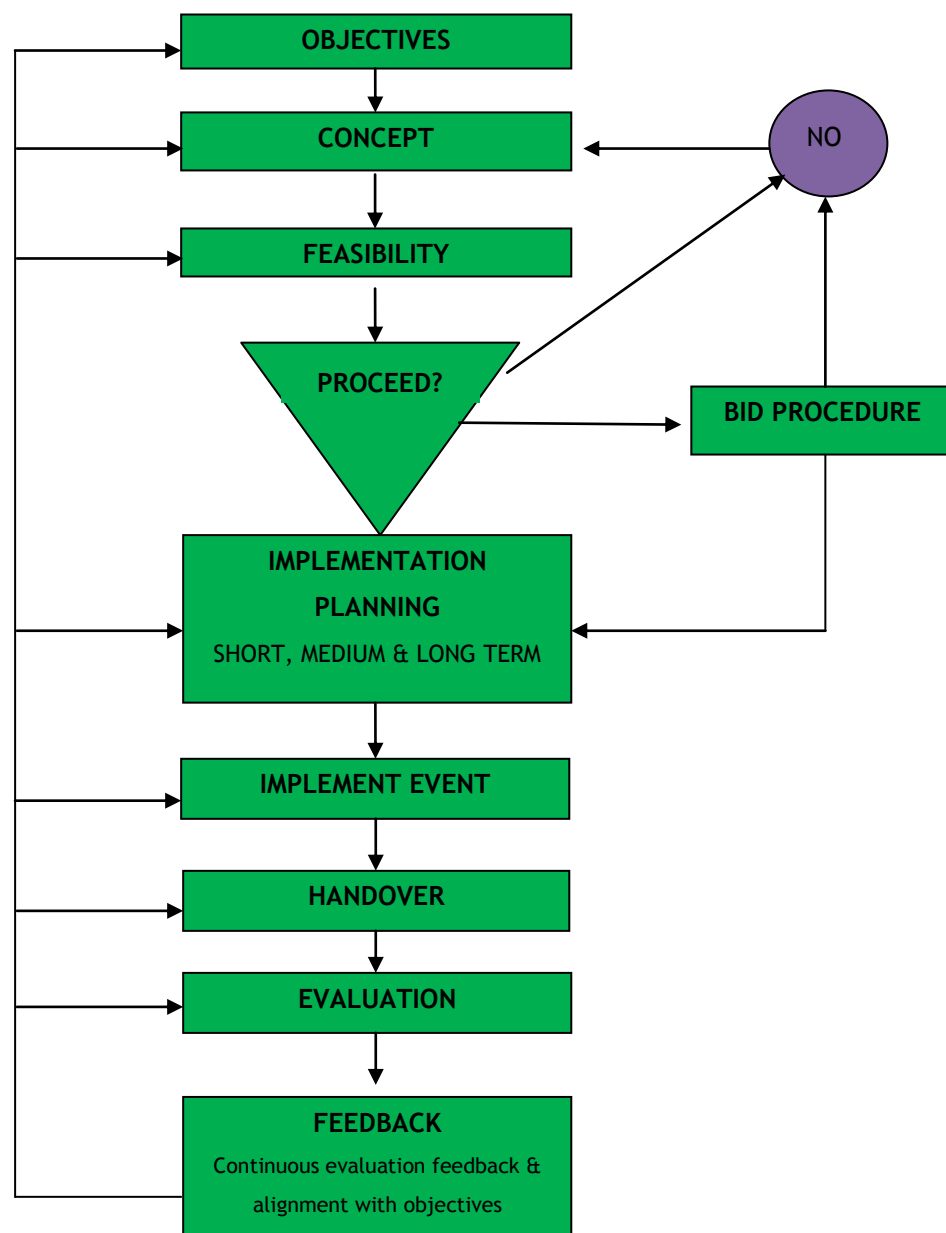


Figure 1: The event planning process (Masterman, 2003a, 2003b, 2004.)

2.2 Event as an experience

We have moved from production industry to service industry. Services are characterized by intangibility, perishability, inseparability and heterogeneity. Therefore, it is impossible to standardize services. They are something that cannot be touched and everyone perceives them differently. Quality is a vital aspect but if everyone perceives services differently how the quality can be measured? For example, someone thinks quality is a modest two-star hotel with only the basic amenities while someone else needs a five-star luxury hotel in order to talking about quality. Quality has something to do with the previous experiences, expectations and attitudes of the individual. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 211-212.) See also chapter 5.1 Quality and customer satisfaction.

One crucial moment in the service process, as the name already suggests, is the moment of truth. This is where the customer and service provider have a social confrontation. When the service provider is at his/her best the service will be first-class. This will likely affect the customer who will experience uplift as well. The positive reaction again affects the service provider and we can talk about virtuous circle. This is where both the parties produce good service. Vice versa, if the stance of either party is negative it may result in vicious circle. (Normann 2002, 68.)

The service management system has five main components: the market segment, the service concept, the service delivery system, the image and the culture and philosophy. The market segment refers to the special types of customer groups to which the products or service is designed. The service concept differentiates the core service and peripheral services. The core service is the most important. The service delivery system means the distribution of the service. It includes three subcomponents that are personnel, client and technology and physical support. The image is important in market positioning and cost efficiency. Image is an information tool that helps staff, clients and other stakeholders to perceive the organization behind the service. In the long run the image depends on what the service provider actually offers and who are the customers but in the short run the image can be shaped with small efforts. The culture and philosophy is the environment where the service process is maintained, controlled and developed. This environment shapes the values towards which the organization is orienting. (Normann 2002, 58-60.)

2.3 Stakeholders

Stakeholders are the ones who have any interest in the event organized. Stakeholders expect the event to meet their expectations and needs. Different stakeholders expect varying issues from the event. The bigger the event the more there are stakeholders involved. (Hoyle 2002, 103.)

Events can be organized by government sector, corporate sector or community sector. Depending on the sector also the motives for organizing an event vary. Government sector events include cultural, social, economic and tourism benefits. The benefits can be observed in a larger scale, concerning the whole city or country. Some examples in Finland could be Helsingin juhlatiivat and the May Day. Government events gain large participation and in most of the activities there is free entry. Corporate events can be divided into two. Companies and corporations can either sponsor some government or community events and gain publicity, or then they can organize own events where they can launch new products, enhance their company image or increase sales. Although several corporate events may be free of charge they are usually targeted at smaller public than government events. Community sector events are targeted at some specific user group. These events may be car club meets, photography or sewing occasions. The purpose is to offer enrichment into people's life. (Bowdin et al 2006, 99.)

The stakeholders mean the host organization, the organization who is the implementer of the event, media, sponsorship, event management, co-workers, volunteers, suppliers and participants and spectators. The host organization should have a specific aim in mind why the event is held in the first place. Host community means the environment where the event is organized. It may mean the whole country, city or a sub-group within the community. (Berridge 2007, 17.)

Media is in help in attracting visitors to the event. Media can mean traditional marketing such as TV, radio or magazines or online marketing such as Internet and social media. By knowing the target audience it is easier to target the marketing to right channels. On the other hand, there is always a risk that the media picks the one small thing that happens to go wrong and turns it into a disaster. Misinterpretations happen every now and then. (Shone & Parry 2004, 149, 185.) Marketing will be dealt in chapter 3 Marketing.

Sponsorship has increased dramatically during the last decades. There has been a shift from primarily a public relations tool to common goodwill and enhancing corporate image. Sponsors as stakeholders mean a relationship where both the event organization and the sponsor should benefit equally. The event organization can gain funding and other support from spon-

sors. Sponsors, then again, gain brand awareness and can thus improve their sales. It is important to find out the values of the sponsor organization and the exact needs and wishes that the sponsor organization hopes to achieve. Sometimes the needs may be completely different from what the event can offer to them. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris, McDonnell 2006, 104.) More about sponsorship will be dealt in chapter 4 Sponsorship.

Event management is the implementer of the whole event. Event management decides the aim of the event and also bears the risk if something goes wrong. Acquiring the personnel and contacting the partners is the duty of the management. Finally, there is a person who is named as the event manager. (Masterman 2009, 23.)

Co-workers work under the orders of the event manager of the event. They must be trained properly so that they know their job title and job description. The better the event manager is to coordinate some of the tasks to co-workers the more independently they are able to work and make decisions without always turning to the superior. Co-workers may be required to possess some personal skills such as extroversion, positive attitude and initiative. Job specific skills can be trained. (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 54-55.)

Volunteers have a crucial role in major events. At the moment, the Olympics have the largest number of volunteers. Volunteer program needs a life cycle that includes recruitment, registration, screening, orientation and training, assignment, accreditation and recognition. All of these stages are important if the event is wished to be succeeded. The event manager has a major responsibility in here. The 4W's of volunteering are the following questions that need an answer. "What kind of" responsibilities does the volunteer have and is the job short-term or long-term? "When" is the volunteer needed, once, every day etc.? "When and how" does the organization benefit by having a volunteer? "Where" is the volunteer needed? (Mallen & Adams 2008, 54-58.)

Suppliers take care of the supply of equipment, services, materials and ticketing. Suppliers mean all the logistics of the event and with large events the supply sector is comprehensive. Pre-planning is crucial. When do the elements must be acquired? Moreover, sometimes there may be problems with transportations so plan B should be considered. What if the flowers will not reach the place in time? How are they acquired then? Also, the information of the right contact person should be available. (Shone & Parry 2004, 136-138.)

Finally, there are participants and spectators that are the precondition for every event to exist. The needs of the audience must be carefully observed. The event management should aim the event to be memorable, meaningful and magical. The event must be connected to emotions of the participants. (Bowdin et al 2006, 106-108.)

2.4 Brand

Successful events need a strong brand. A brand is not just the name or symbol of the event. It includes all the emotions, both tangible and intangible, that the customer connects to the event. There is also value involved. By knowing the brand people know what to expect from the product or service. Brands promise certain quality. Strong brands are the key to long-term customer relations. Brand experiences is the means how the stakeholders of the product see the brand. Some elements can be controlled. These include the products and services, advertising, retail environments, websites and so on. Some elements, then again, are uncontrolled. Some examples of these are media comments and word of mouth. Strong brands need consistent customer communication and holistic experience. (Frampton 2007, 14-16.)

According to Clifton and Simmons, the name is the most important attribute of the brand. Anything else can be changed but the name should remain the same. Changing the name of products and services is uncommon. Company name changes are also rare but happen more often than service name changes. Companies usually change their names if the ownership changes or if the name seems somehow to be misleading. Since we are moving from production industry to service industry it is even more difficult to please customers and create authentic customer satisfaction. For example some service providers like banks have found it really challenging to differentiate since the core product is the same. (Clifton & Simmons 2003, 16-17, 22.)

Great brands are built from certain aspects. First of all, there has to be a compelling idea. This is how the attention of the customer is captured and loyalty is built by meeting and un-filled need. Secondly, there must be a resolute main purpose and supporting values. There has to be a clear goal and objectives how to reach the goal. Thirdly, especially when it comes to bigger organizations, the brand must direct all the decision-making in the management level. Once the organization is aware of what the brand is all about, it will give a direction to the organization. Moreover, brands must offer trust, commitment and mutuality. Mutuality means a two-way bond between the brand and customer. (Clifton & Simmons 2003, 66-67, 99.)

2.5 Visibility

Estimating the right visitor number is essential in creating the budget. If the event is organized the first time some advice can be taken from other similar events. Also, if the event is organized already before but this time in a different place or at a different time it is worthwhile not to pursue direct comparison. (Kauhanen, Juurakko & Kauhanen 2002, 47.)

Visibility can be measured through three different channels. First, any person within the event team can be appointed to observe the visibility. Second, the event team may outsource the visibility research to some other party. It is also possible look for a student from tertiary education to make a thesis out of the event as was the case in this thesis. (Kauhanen, Juurakko & Kauhanen 2002, 47.)

3 Marketing

American Marketing Association defined marketing as a process of planning and implementing the price, promotion and distribution of products and services to produce exchange and fulfill individual and organizational goals (American Marketing Association 2004). Marketing is the term that is given to describe the interaction between the organization and its customers. The term comes from the times when traders and buyers gathered to a marketplace to exchange goods. Customers buy from the sellers. It is a transaction process where the seller benefits by gaining value in the form of money from the customer and the customer satisfies his/her need by getting an experience. There is sometimes a negative nuance connected to marketing. Sometimes it is seen as persuading people to buy items that they actually do not want. Marketing can be seen as exaggeration and even cheating. Nowadays the competition in markets is fierce. The same product has many manufacturers, which causes a pressure to manufacturers to identify their product and create a strong brand. (Blythe 2008, 2-3.) See also chapter 2.4 Brand.

Marketing concept can also be defined as the organization to meet and exceed customer needs better than competitors. Customers must be offered value and customer satisfaction. It is about establishing, developing and commercializing long-term customer relationships. The core function is to attract and maintain customers at a profit. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 3.) According to Kahle and Close the customer is the starting point and ending point (the alpha and omega) of marketing (2011, xiii).

3.1 Marketing analysis

As with event planning there must also be marketing planning before the actual marketing process. Macro-level research studies political, economic, socio-cultural, technological and entertainment environment. Micro-level research studies human resources (HR), physical and financial resources. Moreover, the SWOT analysis is included. (Bowdin et al 190-193.) The abbreviation SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths and

weaknesses describe the internal (micro-environment) and opportunities and threats the external (macro-environment) of the event. (Masterman 2009, 217.)

The five W's of marketing come from questions "Why?", "Who?", "When?", "Where?" and "What?". The opening message is vital. The marketing should tell in the first place "why" the person should come to the event. What benefits are there? "Who" is the target audience the event is marketed. Timing is everything. "When" is the marketing conducted? The time of year, days of week and time of day is considered here. "Where" is the location where the event is promoted. "What" means what the event is all about. Every event is unique but there should also be refreshment and excitement involved. (Hoyle 2002, 33-41.)

3.2 Market segmentation, targeting and positioning

In order to target the marketing effectively it is worth identifying different customer segments. The segments are geographical, socioeconomic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural segments. Geographic segmentation means differentiating customers based on the location. For example, heavy clothes are more sold in north than south. Socioeconomic segmentation separates customers based on their social class and monthly income. Wealthier people are prepared to pay more for expensive commodities such as clothes and experiences. Demographic segmentation is most commonly used in markets because the relevant information can be picked from government statistics. Demographic segmentation divides people based on their lifestyle, age, salary and occupation. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 92-95; Blythe 2008, 77-78.)

Psychographic segmentation is about different personalities. This segmentation is likely to be the hardest since it is hard to access on a large scale to customers' psychological traits. In other words, the accessibility is the most difficult issue in psychographic segmentation. Behavioural segmentation is a useful and trustworthy way in segmenting. This lifestyle analysis seeks to segment the way customers spend their time and what viewpoints they have about certain issues. The utility of behavioural segmentation is that it takes some elements from behavioural and some from psychographic segmentation. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 92-95; Blythe 2008, 77-78.)

Different customer groups can also be identified based on the time they were born. 'The baby boomers' were born after the Second World War. They are seen as hard workers obeying the rules. Generation X means people who were born between years 1966-1976. Generation X is characterized by high levels of skepticism. They are highly educated but very selective. Generation Y is 'the echo boomers' who were born between years 1977-1994. They are sophisti-

cated and technologically wise. They are immune to traditional marketing and require creative ways to become convinced of a product or service. People born in 1995 or after are called the generation Z. They grow in the jungle of technology. It is still hard to estimate what they will be like but technologically certainly more savvy than their predecessors. (Generations X, Y, Z and the Others...Social Librarian Newsletter.)

Targeting means identifying the segment or segments who would be potential customers for the event. To whom it is decided to be marketed? However, it is to be remembered that sometimes the target market may follow the event from TV or Internet. Sometimes, there are incidents that overlap with the event. It is important to realize that usually there is not just one target market but several. As the target market is known it is easy to focus the marketing to certain channels. For example, if an event for elderly people is held, Internet rarely is the most effective marketing tool. (Shone & Parry 2004, 152-153.)

In positioning the product or service is placed so that it seems meaningful in the target customer's mind. It is about finding a gap in the markets. For instance, when the customer is in search for a product which is not expensive but which has sufficient quality, it is the product that first comes into the customer's mind. Positioning is highly important but difficult. It is difficult because nowadays the supply greatly exceeds the demand and manufacturers fight for customers' money. People experience information overload so the right advertising strategies seem to be useful in positioning. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 120-122.) Below (in figure 2) there is a positioning map which observes the current competition of a certain product and gives advice to position a new product coming to the market. The spots are placed randomly. They describe the market gap of the certain product.

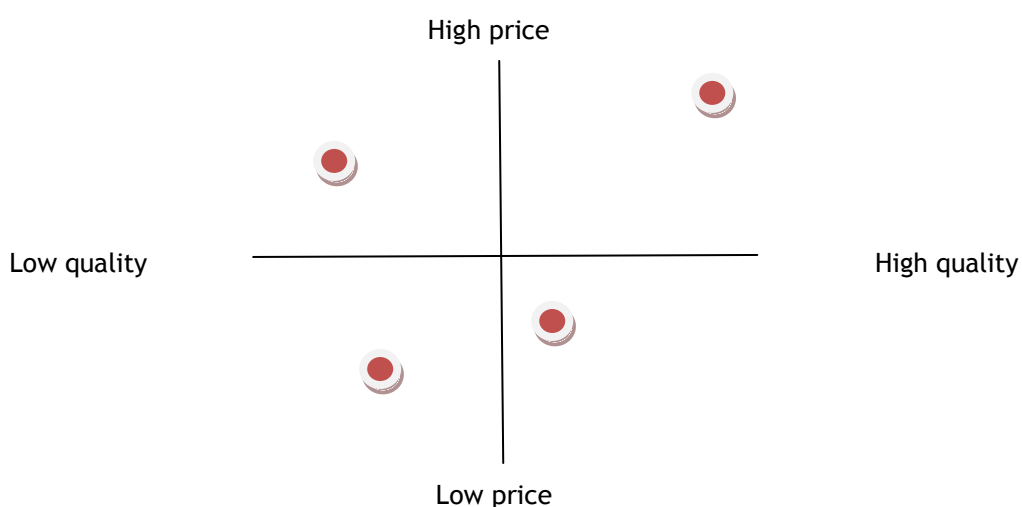


Figure 2: Positioning map (Sahala, S. 2011.)

3.3 Marketing mix

Marketing mix is referred as the 4P's that need to be carefully considered in every event. The 4P's mean product, place, price and promotion. Unlike services products are usually thought to be tangible. This means that they can be seen with bare eye, touched and tried. However, events are not tangible, only some of the elements in it are. Often, people choose to attend an event based on its image. The event must offer elements that satisfy customer needs. (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 98-99.)

Organizing an event always requires some money so monetary issues are taken into consideration although the main goal of the event would not be to gain profit. Here it is crucial to observe the competition environment. Who is offering similar services and at which prices? What is the total demand for the event? Also, what is thought to be the value of the event? Every organization has its own goals. Some organizations try to make as much money as possible. Some, then again, operate to break even financially. This means that just enough money will be acquired from the audience not to make loss. Prices must reflect the cost that is needed to produce and market the event. Otherwise the organization will make loss. However, it must not be forgotten to neglect the audience ability to pay. Sometimes it is useful to reduce the prices in order to attract more audience. (Hoyle 2002, 13-15.)

Place means both the location of the event and the channels that are used to market the event, methods of transportation and the inventory levels to be maintained. The aim is to make sure that the goods are at the right place at the right time with proper quantities. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 10.) When it comes to marketing it is to be found out which marketing channels are the most effective ones. Nowadays, Internet enables the information flow to anyone who has an access to it. What is more, it allows ticket sales elsewhere than merely at ticket offices. (Masterman 2009, 227-228.)

The promotional mix consists of personal selling, advertising, public relations (PR) and sales promotion. Advertising is defined as a paid message that is published in a media. Advertising is a non-personal communication tool since it is targeted at masses. It is used when the product is standardized and not tailor-made, there are many user groups, the amount to be purchased is relatively small and the sales are made using retail shops instead of direct to users. Advertising is mostly arousing interest and getting the customer's attention. When referred to AIDA, advertising represents the first A and I, attention and interest. (Blythe 2008, 193-195.) See more about AIDA in chapter 6.2 Customer decision-making process.

Sales promotions are activities used in short term in order to increase sales temporarily. There is a risk if sales promotion is executed too often. Customers may consider it to be a

part of the core product and when it no longer exists they look for another service provider. Sometimes, most customers would buy the product anyway so they do not benefit from sales promotion. In this case, the promotion is wasted. Moreover, if discounts are often used, it may damage the brand image since usually price is a sign of quality. (Blythe 2008, 201-203.)

Public relations are concerned with employees, local community, shareholders, the media, government and pressure groups. Public relations enhance good relationships with the community and government and attract good employees. It may also help to increase sales. The advantage of PR compared to advertising is that the placement of news is not paid by the organization. This increases reliability. On the other, it is possible that the news item will not be published since it is not considered to be newsworthy. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 232-234.)

Personal selling is likely to be the most effective marketing tool. There is a direct interaction between a salesperson and customer. Unfortunately, personal selling is also the most expensive tool for the organization. Therefore, this method is only used in case of more expensive technical equipment that requires a long decision-making process. (Blythe 2008, 204-206.)

In addition to the 4P's 7P model includes three more P's. People mean that all the service elements are dependent on people. Process means the sequence of service delivery. Physical evidence includes the tangible elements of events and services. Although services and events are mainly intangible some tangible elements can be perceived such as the decoration and documentation like receipts. (Blythe 2008, 10.)

3.3.1 Viral marketing

Viral marketing is not a part of the traditional marketing mix but it is an effective tool. It can mean either word-of-mouth or online marketing. The internet is a forceful tool in reaching people rapidly around the whole world. Viral marketing on the internet can mean chat rooms, blogs, Facebook, Twitter and so on. (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 120.)

As with public relations the aim is to reach credibility by non-paid advertisements. The advantages of viral marketing are easiness, low cost, wide accessibility and high and rapid response rate. Viral marketing is an effective tool spreading positive word-of-mouth but it may also damage the image of an event very rapidly as people tend to share their negative feelings with friends. (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 120.) Viral marketing can also be referred as buzz marketing (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 270).

3.3.2 Internet and Facebook marketing

Internet marketing can include web page or viral marketing, banner ads or newsletters, e-commercials, linking, e-mail and so on. The web pages of the event should be structured clearly. They should be stylish and easy to navigate in. They should be consistent but also personal. Elaborative web pages are not needed but they should be attractive enough to motivate potential customers to read them. There should be relevant contact information so that the customers can stay in touch and ask for further information if needed. Also, frequently asked questions (FAQ) may sometimes be good to be included. Web pages can also have one channel for feedback giving. (Hoyle 2003, 60-73.)

Event banner ads are paid ads that are published in someone else's web pages. Newsletters are one of the most suggested forms of Internet advertising. Newsletters are rather inexpensive and have higher return on investment (ROI) than other ads. E-commerce means encouraging the web site visitors to buy something while visiting the page. Linking is cooperation with other sites. In the site there is a hyperlink that exports the customer to a new site. Online surveys and discussion groups resemble viral marketing. (Hoyle 2002, 65-73.)

Facebook is a part of social media. Facebook is an effective tool in targeting members by location, sex, age, language, education and so forth. People enter their profile data voluntarily and based on this data the persons can be tracked easily. There are numerous groups where people can join based on their personal interests and viewpoints. Marketing in these groups is targeted exactly to the people interest in the message. (Facebook Marketing 2010.)

4 Sponsorship

Sponsorship can be defined as renting the image of an individual, a group, an occasion or other action and utilizing it into specified marketing communication or other purposes. This definition is formed from the sponsoring company's viewpoint. Very often sponsorship and charity are mixed although they mean different things. Philanthropists rarely expect utility from his/her donation and the publicity plays no significance. Moreover, charity is not based into agreement like sponsorship. (Kauhanen, Juurakko & Kauhanen 2002, 69.)

Skinner and Rukavina define sponsorship as any form of marketing. It is an activity that unites the buyer and seller and gives equal benefit to both parties (2003, 2). The International Chamber of Commerce International Code on Sponsorship clarifies the concept as any commercial agreement between the sponsor and sponsored party where there are mutual bene-

fits. There is a financing support in order to form a link between the sponsor's brand, image or products in return to rights to promote the sponsored party. (Bowdin et al 2006, 228.)

The first steps in sponsorship in Finland were taken in the 1960s. In the 21st century the challenges lay on new innovations and developing sponsorship cooperation. New solutions are constantly searched. Competition is fierce and sport associations fight for good sponsors. Vice versa, sponsors fight for good sport associations. (Alaja 2001, 20.) According to Skinner and Rukavina, sporting events that are able to rise above the rest in kind attract the most sponsorship (2003, 10).

In a good and equal sponsorship relationship both parties benefit. At its best, the relationship is harmonic. The sport target who is searching for sponsorship cooperation should acknowledge the ideology and the code of action of the company. The goals of sponsorship cooperation are always individual and tailor-made for each relationship. The company usually wishes to gain recognizability and positive image as environmentally friendly, for example. Product marketing goals mean that the company aims to develop its product image by connecting it to the sport target and reaching the desired customer segment. Companies also are in search for new partners when sponsoring an event. During the event sponsors can create networks. It would be important to build own VIP-areas to sponsors especially when it is about bigger events. Sometimes the companies are not well aware of their goals and subjective emotions may overcome rational argumentations. (Alaja 2001, 24-25.)

4.1 Sponsorship process

Sponsorship cooperation can be explained from root to tale using SUMMA action program. The first S stands for planning. It is about analyzing the current situation, product mapping, goal placement, categorizing sponsor companies, building service packages for the sponsor and pricing them, mapping sponsor companies, searching for the right contact person, composing a partnership agreement and organizing the sponsor relations to a specific person or compartment. Next comes the sales. This is the phase when the contact person is contacted and preparation for the negotiation is made. The main ideas are explained orally and the contact person has the possibility to ask further questions. It is to be remembered to maintain positive attitude although an agreement would not be reached. (Alaja 2001, 36-39.)

The next stage is enabling. Now all the issues agreed in the negotiation stage are implemented. The literal partnership agreement is drawn up. Effort is put in commitment and creating a good spirit. The partnership is to be cherished and maintained. It means implementing all the procedures that have been agreed. All the crucial issues are to be reported to the sponsor.

(Alaja 2001, 40.) It is also pleasant to give something extra to the sponsor. The thing is to under-promise and over-deliver. (Skinner & Rukavina 2003, 171.) The last stage is earning. There the sponsor results are measured both economically and based on quality. Analyzing the results compares the results to the goals set and looks for the greatest divergences. Sponsors expect return on investment (ROI). Reporting is done literally both to the own organization and the sponsor. Thanksgiving is the climax for the whole partnership and prerequisite for future cooperation. (Alaja 2001, 41.)

Some examples of the benefits the sponsor receives are naming rights. The sponsor can get media coverage, internet exposure and extensive on-site dominance. There may be banners and video presentations at the spot. Promotional items like T-shirts may be distributed. For the employees of the sponsor company they may be benefits like tickets or invitations to the event. (Skinner & Rukavina 2003, 57-58.)

4.2 Sponsorship negotiation

To attract sponsors the event should be positively positioned in the minds of the community. It should offer something that the competitors do not. However, competitors should be observed and some elements modified from them if possible. The planning should be creative and the event should be taken to new levels annually. It is worthwhile to break down the event and observe what could be sold to sponsors. Next, the companies to be wished to contact should be identified and investigated their business philosophy and current sponsor parties. The company's perspective must never be overlooked. One important aspect is to remember that the sponsorship relation should always be a win-win. This means that both parties benefit equally. (Skinner & Rukavina 2003; 17-18, 31, 40.)

When in search for sponsors it is useful to apply demographics. Local companies are usually the most interested in supporting local events. Timing is important in contacting the sponsors, especially when it comes to bigger sponsor deals. Companies make their budget months in advance. It cannot be expected much if the proposition comes a month before the event. The approach should be businesslike. If sending material to the potential sponsor, it should not be too broad. Only cash should not be wished to gain. Other possible in-kind support is possible too. (Skinner & Rukavina 2003; 49, 65.)

Negotiation is important in reaching sponsorship agreement. Falkinger defines negotiation as an incident where there are two or several parties who have both common and different views and who gather to handle different suggestions in order to reach an agreement. An efficient way is to identify the goals to be reached and limit them to three. Usually there is the

main argument and additional arguments that support the main argument. Proper preparation for the negotiation situation gives self-confidence and increases the possibility to reach wished goals. Acquiring information and making notes is worthwhile in the preparation stage. (2003; 19, 31, 42, 53, 60-61.)

There are different negotiation models. In distributive bargaining the parties have a fixed pool of resources and both try to maximize their share of the resources. The model is usually a win-lose situation. Another party benefits over the other one. Sponsorship agreements usually take the form of integrative bargaining. It means a win-win or mutual-gains approach. In integrative bargaining process both parties strive to integrate their interests as well as possible. In the final agreement both will benefit equally. Interest-based bargaining takes the collaborative negotiation even further. There the negotiators see themselves as joint problem solvers who look for solutions to common issues of interest or problems. BATNA means the best alternative to a negotiated problem. Great BATNA gives power over the negotiation but it should never be revealed to the other party. (Carrell & Heavrin 2008; 54, 83-84, 99, 109.)

4.3 Sponsorship from the company's point of view

Large companies get tens of sponsorship suggestions daily. The reception, handling, decision-making and decision-making announcement is a long process. Companies need several months in the process. Many companies have created clear policies for with what kind of events they are ready to cooperate with. The size and nature of the event play a crucial role in here. Nowadays also ethical viewpoints are important. In addition to factual elements emotion has its role in the selection process meaning that some minor issues may affect whether the sponsorship suggestion will be accepted or rejected. (Alaja 2001, 26.)

The selection criteria start from the general policies the company has created. It includes how many partners the company has in general, what the length of these partnerships is and the form of the event. The image of the event should reflect the image of the company. The target groups both of the event and the company should be identical. Naturally, the action of the event should be societally acceptable. For example, doping is a by-product in some sports events. Usually the company wants to see the event as growing and wealthy. Besides the financial success the event should be successful measured in the eyes of the customers. (Alaja 2001, 27.) More about customer behavior can be read in chapter 5. Important characteristics for a successful event are reputation, image, media coverage, organizer of the event, cooperation, development possibilities and authenticity. Moreover, the price-quality relationship must be in balance. Not any company is in favour of a relationship that is unprofitable. (Alaja 2001, 28.)

4.4 Trends in sponsorship

Sports has been a dominating area in sponsorship. However, nowadays we are expanding from sports sponsorship to other industries such as financial institutions and florist shops. The growth of sponsorship as a whole means a shift from individual sponsorship transactions to long-lasting relationships. Sponsorship marketing today is not just traditional newspaper advertising but also on-site communication and multiple media like TV, radio and Internet. Sponsorship programs have been developed from ready-made packages to tailored relationships, which means that each relationship is unique and reflects the needs and desires of both parties involved. There is also a growing tendency to broadcasting. Events that are not broadcasted are less attractive to sponsors since they do not receive as much exposure. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2006, 230-231.)

What is more, technical development has enabled the expansion of TV channels and thus many sports are able to being broadcasted, even the smaller sports events. Also, the commercialization and globalization have enabled companies engage both in active and also amateur sports. (Bowdin, Allen, O'Toole, Harris & McDonnell 2006, 230-231.) In this thesis the focus is on amateur sports.

The growth of sponsorship has also brought out a new issue, ambush marketing. This means the trial of some companies in trying to associate themselves to an event although they are not an official sponsor and have not paid anything for the sponsorship. This activity is allowed as long as the logo, symbol or mascot of the event is not used. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 236-237.)

5 Customer behavior

Customer behavior means the study why people buy the service or product and how the decision is made (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 6). In the service management concept the customer appears twice. First, customers are divided into different customer segments. Second, customers are a part of the service process itself. It is the total service process that the customer evaluates. Both the problems and satisfactions are a part of it. The concept of 'client participation' was defined by Toffler. He sees it as increasing integration between consumption and the functions of production. (Toffler 1980.) Another explanation was suggested by Zeleny (1978). He sees increased self-service the only possibility to maintain the quality of people-intensive services. The costs are increasing constantly and, thus, it is the only option to move to self-service industry. (Normann 2002, 115-116.)

Service process can be measured through three phases of participation: before, during and after. These phases can also be named as pre, actual and post. First, the marketing creates the initial impression of the event. Second, there is the actual event day. Thirdly, there is the post stage where emotions are reflected. Service encounter means every encounter the customer has with the event including pre, actual and post phases. Interaction between the customer and event includes three key factors: flow, time and expression. Time provides the frame within which the event is experienced and activities chosen. Flow is connected to the feelings that people experience during the different stages of the event. Satisfaction is most likely to be reached when people are able to engage in the event actively. Expression of the event is dependent on many things. These include past encounters, personal attributes, technical skills and social skills. A person taking part to an event for the first time may perceive it completely differently than person who has already experienced the event in previous years. (Berridge 2007, 69-72.)

5.1 Quality and customer satisfaction

Quality is an important aspect in the service delivery process. However, sometimes it may be hard to measure quality in services since the experiences are usually highly subjective among different people. Quality is perceived during the service process and the event personnel has an important factor here. It is their attitude and behavior that is estimated by the customer. Afterwards, quality is measured by customer feedback. (Bowdin et al 2006, 299.)

Quality and customer satisfaction are important for three reasons. First of all, satisfaction leads to positive word-of-mouth, which brings new customers. Secondly, putting effort into long-term customer relationships a steady source of income is generated. It is easier to maintain the existent customers than acquiring new ones. Marketing is often costly. Thirdly, dealing with complaints is time-consuming and expensive. It also impairs the image of the event. Complaints are to be dealt rapidly in order to maximize the percentage of customers still coming back. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 213.)

The SERVQUAL technique introduces a model which helps to estimate service quality across a range of service industries. This model was first introduced in 1985 by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry and it includes five dimensions. First, there are all the tangible elements: personnel, physical facilities and equipment. Second, there is reliability: the capability to perform the promised service accurately. Thirdly, responsiveness means the willingness of staff to help customers and provide prompt service. Fourth, assurance emits the courtesy, trust, confidence and knowledge of the employees. Fifth, empathy means that the employees show genuine caring attitude towards the customers. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 214.)

5.2 Motivation

Customer motivations are based on needs. Customers are in need for something extraordinary to everyday life. One motivation theory was introduced by Maslow in 1943. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs different motives are categorized inside of a pyramid. On the bottom level there are physiological needs: hunger, thirst and sleep. The second level is safety. This is protection from illnesses and injuries. On the third level there are belongingness and love. People need to feel accepted by other people and be close to people they care about. Esteem and status lay on the fourth level. People need to feel prestigious and valued in the eyes of other people. The highest level is self-actualization. It is the desire to self-fulfillment in doing things that the person likes to do. Usually the bottom level needs must be fulfilled before people strive for fulfilling higher level needs. (Jobber & Fahy 2009, 67.)

Motivators are the factors that make the customer to participate in the event. The motivators generally in the event industry can be divided into cultural (sightseeing and experiencing new cultures), status (fashionability or exclusivity), personal development (learning a new skills or increasing knowledge), personal (visiting family or friends or making new friends), emotional (adventure, romance, nostalgia or fantasy) or physical (exercise and health, relaxation or sun-tan). Often there are multiple motivators instead of only one. Motivators depend on the customer segment. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 53-55.) Customer segments can be divided into geographical, socioeconomic, demographic, psychographic and behavioristic segments (see chapter 4.2 Market segmentation, targeting and positioning).

Amateur sporting events differ from professional sporting events in many senses. The audience of amateur sporting events is offered a chance to support the ones they care about. It is about enhancing the community spirit. Whereas professional and active sporting events are more concentrated on external values like competition and glory, amateur sporting events touch the internal values like self-fulfillment and accomplishment. They are connected to motivators such as social interaction, family, empathy and entertainment. (Lynn & Close 2011; 185, 193-194.)

5.3 Influences on the decision-making

There are three main segments affecting the decision-making: personal factors, psychological factors and social factors. Personal factors include demographic factors, situational factors and level of involvement. Demographic factors include for example age, gender, occupation and of the customer. Situational factors mean changes in the customer's life. These changes

can be a pay rise, for instance. Emotional attachment to the service is referred as the level of involvement. (Blythe 2008, 56.)

Personal factors is the first segment of the decision-making. The second segment is psychological factors. Perception, motives, attitude, personality, ability and knowledge are knitted here. Social factors fill the third segment. Every person is surrounded by other persons who have an effect on the person. Social factors include general norms, values and information. People are affected by reference groups. Reference groups are the ones people connect themselves with. (Blythe 2008, 56-59.)

Customer decision-making is affected by many parties. At the core there is the customer itself. Next layer is the view of friends and families. Then comes the marketing activities and influences of the media. There are also political, social, economic and technological factors that may have an influence concerning bigger events. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 64.) See figure 3.

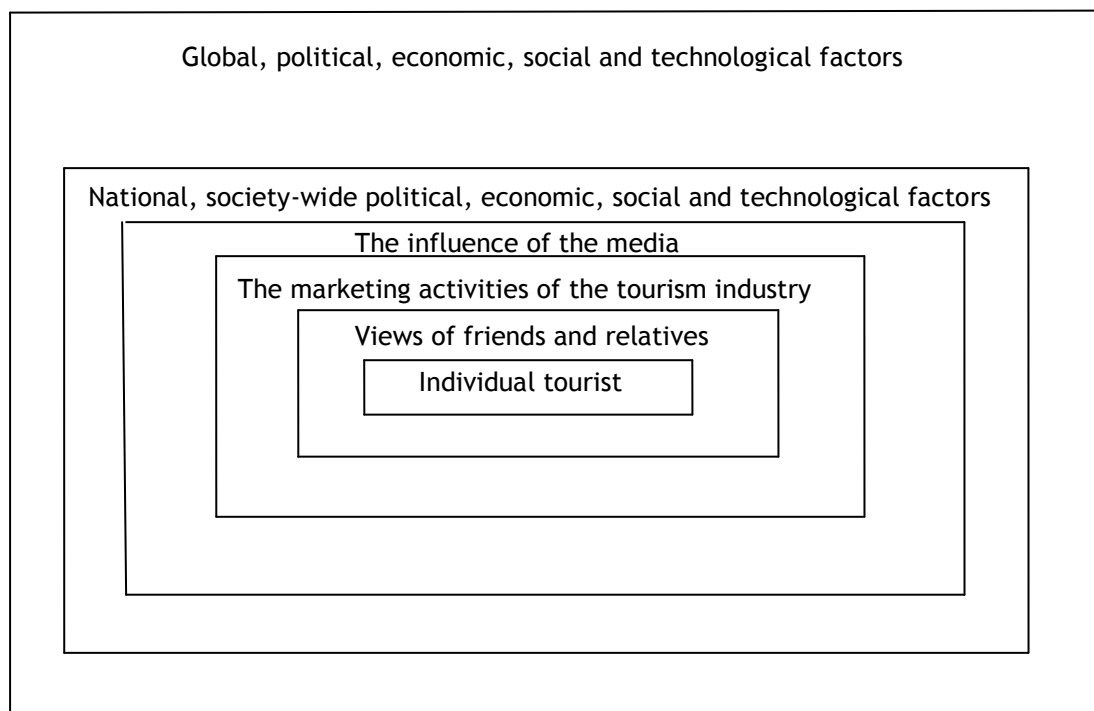


Figure 3: External determinants of tourist behavior (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 64.)

5.4 Customer decision-making models

Below there are two different examples for customer decision-making process: AIDA and PIECE. AIDA is an abbreviation of words attention, interest, desire and action. The purchasing process starts with getting the customer's attention. The message sent to a customer should break through and catch the attention of the customer. Otherwise the process cannot go further. The message must be interesting or it will be ignored. If the customer perceives the message to be appealing then it comes the desire to acquire the product or service. If the desire is strong enough, action will be taken. Different elements of marketing mix (=advertising, sales promotion, personal selling and public relations (PR)) aim to implement different stages of AIDA. (Blythe 2008, 192-193.) See also chapter 3.3 Marketing mix.

PIECE is an abbreviation of words problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, choice of purchase and evaluation of post purchase experience. Also this process may be used for a customer attending an event. Customer-oriented research is essential in finding out customers' needs and wants. It is an error not to conduct customer-oriented research and merely assume to know what the customer wants. (Raj, Walters & Rashid 2009, 94.)

6 Tekojärvihölkä - running event in Vantaa

6.1 *Five medals in the trophy case* (Background)

Running event Tekojärvihölkä was organized the fourth time this year. The event took place in Ylästö, Vantaa, as in previous years as well. The start and finish was at the comprehensive school of Ylästö. Ylästö is located some 10 kilometres from the station of Tikkurila and some 20 kilometres from Helsinki central railway station. The school can be reached either by train and bus or directly by bus from Helsinki central railway station. In previous years the event was organized in autumn but this year the timing was shifted to spring, 28th of May, to see if more participants would be tempted to come. Before setting the date, the running calendar of Juoksija magazine was searched in order to find any overlapping running events.

The name of the event has remained the same during the four years. The only word that has dropped from the name is Silvola. In 2008 when the event was organized the first time it was known as Silvolan Tekojärvihölkä. The distances run this year were 7 and 14 km.

The organizer of Tekojärvihölkä is an association called Ylästön Urheilijat -59 ry. As the name reveals the association was founded in 1959. Ylästön Urheilijat enables different inter-

ests and sports experiences to host residents. The aim is to develop community spirit in Ylästö. In other words, financial issues are not the priority but it is more about charity based action. Behind there are also values like sports ethics, fair game and equality. (Ylästön Urheilijat 2011.) Ylästön Urheilijat has 540 members and the activities arranged by the association attract some 500 people weekly. Porridge fest before Christmas attracts most people measured in numbers, nearly 300. However, the chairperson of the association, Juha Sahala, sees Tekojärviölkkä to be the most important event.

Ylästön Urheilijat also have their own web pages. However, the site is rather basic and would need to be modified in order to attract more visitors. The most visitors of the site come from Vantaa and Helsinki. More viable web pages could include more pictures, icons and links to other sites. The administrator of the site is the chairperson Juha Sahala.

6.2 *Make it to the top three* (The goal for year 2011)

This year the aim was to grow the participant number of Tekojärviölkkä drastically. The first time the event was organized, in 2008, there were only a dozen of runners. In the next years there were about 50 runners. The original aim for this year was 300 but since the number would have been six times more than in the previous year it was later thought to be utopian. Finally, the aim was to exceed 100. The tools that were used as a help were increased marketing and sponsorship.

There were discussions with J. Sahala during the year 2011. The discussions were implemented face-to-face, by phone or via e-mail. J. Sahala also gave an idea to consider how many participants the facilities could bear. The student rate of the school is 520 (Ylästön koulu 2011). The figure could be used as a help as estimating the maximum number of participants.

Based on previous discussions among the members of Ylästön Urheilijat, it was assumed that the target group of Tekojärviölkkä appreciates comfortable running route, clear route-marking, result service, refreshment points, washing possibility and prizes. Also these issues were taken into account when creating Tekojärviölkkä 2011.



Picture 1: *Make it to the top three* (Sahala, A. 2011.)

6.3 *Nutrition tanking-up - more carbohydrate* (From idea to implementation)

The actual thesis process was begun in 2011. During the spring there were altogether four meetings among Ylästön Urheilijat where the event planning process was observed. The meetings were held at the home of J. Sahala, in Ylästö. Everyone had their own area of responsibility. Ms. Sini Sahala was the one who was responsible for marketing and sponsorship. She also designed a feedback questionnaire for the participants of Tekojärvihölkä.

The first step was taken among sponsor seeking in February. In the beginning, only sports stores were sought as sponsors. What was asked from the stores were prizes that could be distributed at the event or financial donations. Stadium and Top-Sport became partners. Stadium donated 12 drinking bottles and Top-Sport a bag full of sports commodities such as socks, drinking bottles, drinking belts, a book and the bag itself.

Marketing was started in March. It was thought that three months is a suitable time for the marketing process. If the process is begun too early it will exhaust the customer and if it is started too late it will not reach all the possible customers. S. Sahala designed an A3-poster for Tekojärvihölkä. J. Sahala was responsible for designing the A4-flyer. The flyers were distributed during April around Vantaa, Helsinki, Espoo and Kerava. They were placed in sports

arenas, running paths, gyms, groceries, universities and universities of applied sciences. The distribution area was the whole capital city area because it was expected to gain participants from this area. S. Sahala got help from the members of Ylästön Urheilijat when distributing the flyers. The posters were distributed in Vantaa, rather close the event area. The flyer and poster can be found as an appendix 2 and 3 in the end of the thesis.

In addition to flyers and posters, the event was advertised in the web pages of Ylästön Urheilijat, urheilutapahtumat.fi, juoksufoorumi.fi, Juoksija magazine and Facebook where it was posted on a wall of a running forum. It was also posted on the home wall of J. and S. Sahala. What is more, it was published in Menovinkki.fi and the newspaper of Vantaan sanomat. Also word-of-mouth was used as a marketing tool.

Although people of all ages were a part of the potential customer group, not any marketing was targeted at people who were 16 years or younger. This was due to the fact that this customer group would have brought less money than older participants. In the end of the Tekojärvihölkä-run every participant got a participation medal, the price of which was 5€. The participation fee for persons who were 16 years old or younger was 5€. Thus, Ylästön Urheilijat could have not gained any profit if all the participants had been children.

More sponsors were still sought in April and May when the event was approaching. The sponsors were contacted via e-mail, telephone or face-to-face. Before contacting the sponsors their web pages were studied in order to find an appropriate negotiation tactic. Sports stores that were Intersport, Stadium and Top-Sport and fitness centre Elixia were contacted face-to-face whereas bigger organizations such as Dexal, Dove, Gatorade, Helsingin vesi, Tallink Silja Valio and Viking Line were contacted via e-mail or in their web pages by sending a direct sponsor request. Some companies like Herbina, Holiday Inn and Valintatalo were contacted by calling.

Tallink Silja and Viking Line both provided a voucher to a Helsinki-Stockholm-Helsinki cruise. Valintatalo Ylästö donated a cardboard box of bananas that were given to all of the participants after the run. Elixia was the most visible partner. Elixia had its own stand with two promoters on the event day. Elixia also distributed vouchers to Elixia, hand lotion, ice stick and nail polish. All the prizes in Tekojärvihölkä were able to be covered with donations from the partners.

It had to be considered carefully which organizations to contact. There had to be some kind of a link between the organization and Tekojärvihölkä. The location acted as a strong combiner. Other attributes were similar values and the connection to running. Running can be

combined with clothes and other accessories, nutrition, hygiene, other forms of sports to support running, lifestyle and so on.

Local sports stores offered a natural connection since they were able to provide suitable prizes for the participants. Due to the locality it was also thought they could feel connection to the event. Helsingin vesi was also attracted to become a sponsor due to the psychological link. The running route of TekojärviHölkä was right next to the area of the organization. Elixia as a fitness centre offered a supporting form of sports to running. S. Sahala is also a member of Elixia. Dove and Herbina were a part of the hygiene side. Dexal, Gatorade, Valintatalo and Valio were concentrated on nutrition. Tallink Silja and Viking Line were connected to a lifestyle which is enjoyment and freedom encouraging. The brand of Holiday Inn was actually not connected to the event. The organization was contacted since S. Sahala works for it. The combination link was thought to be financial aid providence.

Some of the organizations did not respond at all. Among these were Dexal, Gatorade and Valio. Dove mentioned they are supporting bigger programs such as UNICEF World Food Program and they had to refuse from single sponsorship requests. Helsingin vesi responded that the organization cannot act as a sponsor like companies because it finances its action with the help of the water and waste fees received from local inhabitants. Helsingin vesi has annually some partnership agreements that it takes part in. The organization mentioned that with the time frame given it has not the possibility to participate in TekojärviHölkä. Holiday Inn Helsinki Messukeskus refused since as a part of the leading hotel and restaurant organization in Finland, Restel, it generally does not sponsor. Moreover, the target group of TekojärviHölkä could have not offered potential customers for the hotel. The participants of the event mostly come from the local area and thus, do not need accommodation possibility in the capital city area.

During May all the relevant literature for the thesis was studied. It included theory about event management, marketing, sponsorship, negotiation, customer behavior, service and quality and functional thesis writing. A participant feedback questionnaire was created. The questionnaire was a survey part of the thesis and it was aimed to gather information about where the participants heard about the event and how did they feel about it as a whole. The questionnaire was distributed to the participants right after they had finished running.

6.4 *Running in flow - your feet will take you to the moon* (Behind the scenes)

Implementing an event requires a skilled and motivated personnel. Ylästön Urheilijat -59 ry is the association behind TekojärviHölkä. The chairperson of the association is Juha Sahala. In

addition to the chairperson there are vice chairperson, treasurer, secretary and 9 other members. That is, in total the association consists of 13 members. S. Sahala also acted as a vice member in spring 2011 when conducting her thesis about Tekojärvihölkä.

Everyone had their own area of responsibility when creating Tekojärvihölkä 2011. J. Sahala was responsible for holding meetings among the members, creating timelines and distributing task areas. He was also responsible for renting the school facilities. S. Sahala was responsible for marketing and sponsorship, in other words, responsible for all the external contacts. She was also responsible for creating the feedback questionnaire for the participants as a part of her thesis.

Other task areas were event announcement to the police, acquiring the participation medals and running drinks, marking the running route, first aid on the event day and “hiring” a person for that task, finding an announcer for the event and designing and printing the enrollment forms. J. Sahala took care of the advance enrollment on the web pages of Ylästön Urheilijat.

6.5 *Crossing the finish line - fight till the line* (The event day)

Saturday 28.5. was half a cloudy and half a sunny day with a temperature of 15 degrees. The start of the run was at 3pm and the enrollment started at 2pm. The organizers gathered to the spot at 12.30. Before the run the prize tables were placed outside right next to the finish, the stand of Elixia was built, bananas from Valintatalo were picked and “Start” and “Finish” sheets were hung in lampposts.

As the enrollment approached five persons took responsibility of the process, including S. Sahala. Two persons distributed the enrollment sheets to the participants, two collected the sheets back and the enrollment fees and one assorted the sheets to their own participation group. Altogether there were 10 participation groups. For 7 km there were series for boys and girls who were 16 years old or younger and general series for male and female. For 14 km there were the general series for male and female, male and female aged 45-59 and male and female of 60 years old or older. (Tekojärvihölkä 2011.)

Most of the respondents of the feedback questionnaire, 78 %, enrolled on the actual event day. This was also the case with the whole participation group. In total, the number of participants was 98. Among the organizers there were two persons who would have taken part in the run if they had not been needed behind the scenes. One of these was S. Sahala. This is how the figure 100 would have been reached, which was the goal for Tekojärvihölkä 2011.

However, the figure was nearly doubled from the previous year when there were only 54 participants.

There was one man with a stand selling sport shoes at the spot. He had heard about the event and asked J. Sahala a permission to come. Since the connection to the event was natural there was no nuisance for the event nor the seller. Without asking a permission it would have been about ambush marketing. See chapter 4.4 Trends in sponsorship.

As the participants were sent to the running route the organizers concentrated on putting all the enrollment sheets to right groups and preparing to mark down all the running times. The fastest runners completed the route in 30 minutes. This was the route of 7 kilometres. The three best runners in each series were given a prize and each participant received a participation medal. There was also one blind walker and his assistant in the 7-kilometre route. They took the time of over one hour and were the last to reach the finish. S. Sahala distributed questionnaire forms to runners that had finished and enjoyed their juice and banana. Elixia's stand was right next to the table of S. Sahala. Some of the participants stopped and took a look at the stand but not quite many though.

After all the participants had left the organizers started to collect the tables, detach information sheets and take care that the environment looks like it was before the event. The organizers thanked each other and stated that the day had been successful.

S. Sahala had agreed with Länsi-Vantaan Vartti that the newspaper will publish a small article of the event. J. Sahala wrote the article which was published in the magazine the next Wednesday, 1st of June. The article can be found as an appendix in the end of this thesis. Unfortunately the article was published leaving the results out.



Picture 2: *Crossing the finish line - fight till the line* (Sahala, A. 2011.)

7 Research

In this thesis both quantitative and qualitative survey methods were used. The participants were given a questionnaire where there were both quantitative and qualitative questions. However, most of the questions were quantitative. A questionnaire as a research method was able to give more answers compared to interviews, for example. It also saved time as the questions did not have to go through with an interviewer but they could be distributed to the participants so that they could fill them individually.

The structure of the questionnaire was divided so that there were pre, actual and post related questions of the event. Pre-related questions involved marketing, enrollment and motivation to enroll. See chapters 3 Marketing and 5.2 Motivation. Actual-related questions involved quality, timing and sponsorship. See chapters 5.1 Quality, 3.3 Marketing mix and 4 Sponsorship. Post-related questions concerned future participation and development ideas for the organizers. See chapter 5 Customer behavior. In the beginning there were the general questions: gender, age and hometown. The questionnaire can be found as an appendix 1 in the end of the thesis.

Quantitative methods are used when the number of items to be researched is large. They are used when there is not much money and time in hand. Quantitative methods are more quickly analyzed than qualitative methods with help of different programs such as Statistical Package

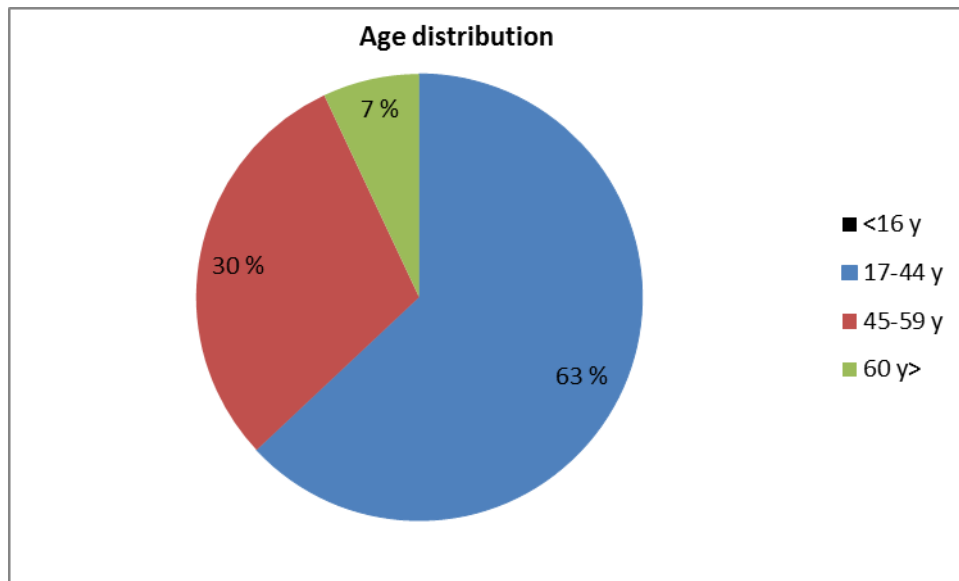
for the Social Sciences (=SPSS). Strictly speaking, the difference between quantitative and qualitative methods can be seen so that quantitative methods concentrate on numbers whereas qualitative do not. Some examples of quantitative methods are questionnaires, structured interviews and systematic observation. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 8-9.)

Qualitative methods aim to understand things. They answer to questions like “What?”, “Why?”, “Where?”, “How?” and “What kind of?”. Qualitative research is concentrated on experiences and emotions. (Altinay & Paraskevas 2008, 75.) The sample to be researched is smaller than in quantitative study methods. The material is acquired in natural circumstances. Some examples of qualitative study methods are interviews, observation, letters, diaries and biographies. (Finn, Elliott-White & Walton 2000, 68, 73-82.) In this thesis close-ended questions were a part of quantitative study methods while open-ended questions were a part of qualitative study methods.

The questionnaire was distributed to the participants of TekojärviHölkä right after the run. S. Sahala was responsible for distributing, collecting and when required, clarifying the questions or going them through with the respondent if the respondent could not see the questions. There was one respondent with whom the questionnaire was turned into an interview. There were 98 participants taking part in TekojärviHölkä 2011 and 41 of them answered to the questionnaire. In other words, the feedback percentage was 42. After the answers had been received, they were inserted to SPSS and Microsoft Excel where tables were made.

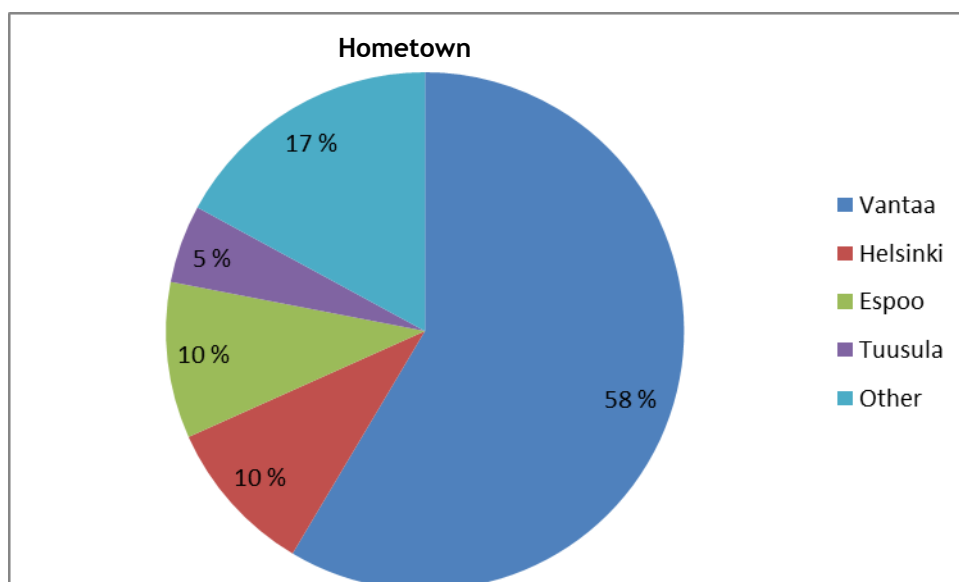
7.1 Results

66 % of the respondents of the questionnaire were male and 34 % female. This represented quite well the total number of participants out of which 68 % were male and 32 % female. None of the respondents was 16 years old or younger. 63 % were young or young adults, in other words, from 17 to 44 years old people. 30 % were middle-aged people, from 45 to 59 years old. Only three of the respondents were 60 years old or older. See graph 1 below.



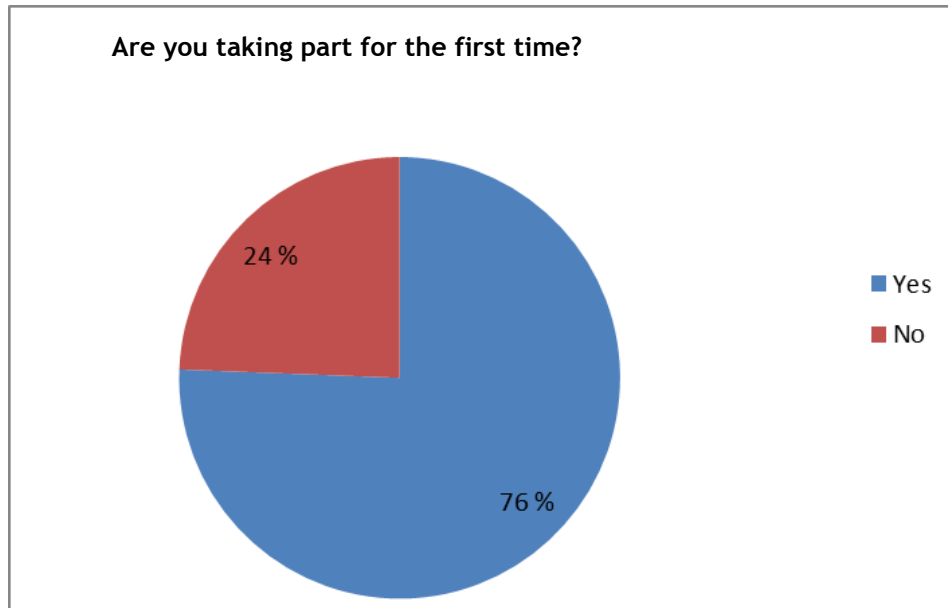
Graph 1: Age distribution (n=40)

Most of the respondents admitted Vantaa being their current hometown as can be seen from graph 2. 20 % came from the neighboring cities, Helsinki and Espoo. The rest of the respondents came from Tuusula, Sipoo, Järvenpää, Nurmijärvi, Kirkkonummi, Lahti, Kouvola and Jyväskylä.



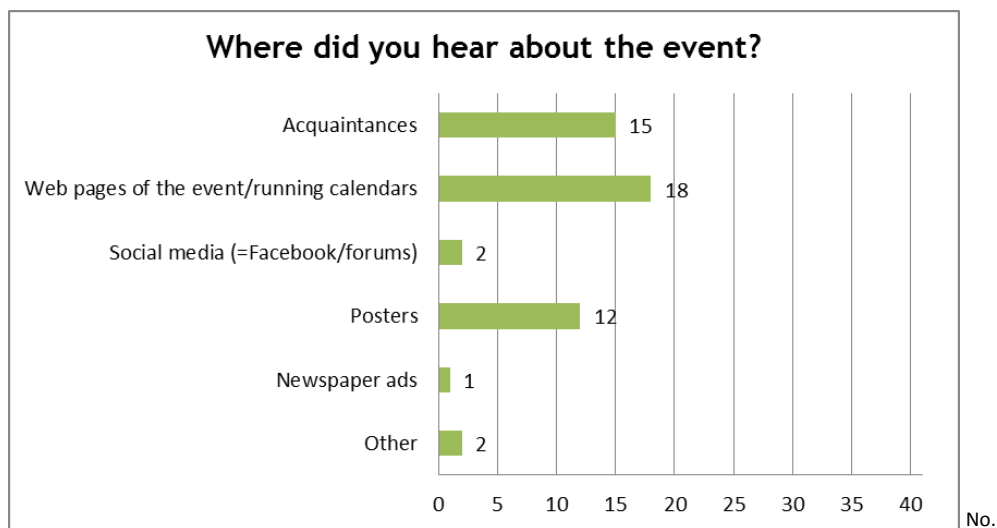
Graph 2: Hometown (n=41)

Only 1 out of 4 had participated in Tekojärvihölkä in previous years. Most of the respondents, 76 %, took part in the run for the very first time, which can be seen from graph 3.



Graph 3: Participation (n=41)

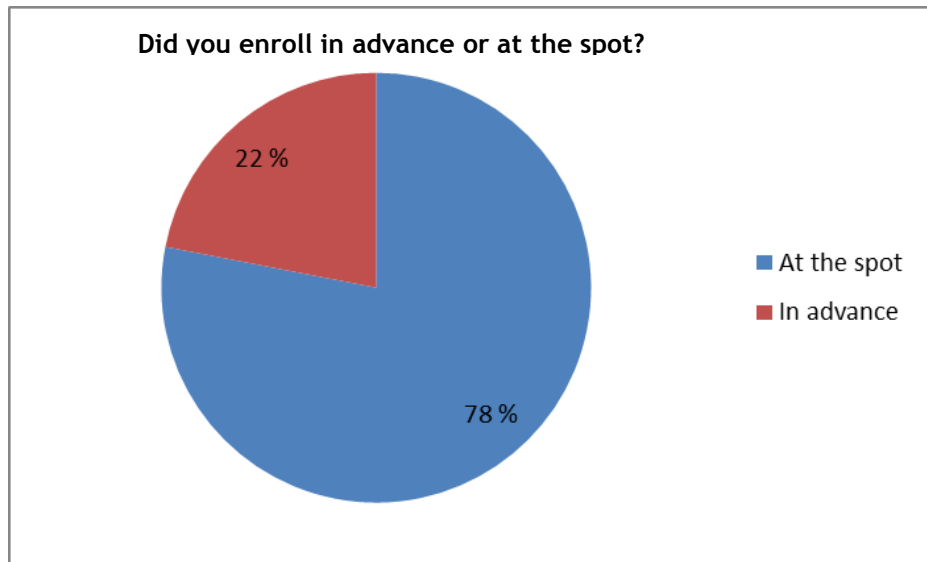
It was interesting to find out from which marketing channel the respondents had heard about the event. The marketing channels were divided into word of mouth (acquaintances), the web pages of the event or running calendars, social media (Facebook and forums), posters, newspaper ads and other. Graph 4 reveals that the web pages of the event and running calendars, posters and word of mouth were the most crucial marketing channels.



Graph 4: Marketing channel

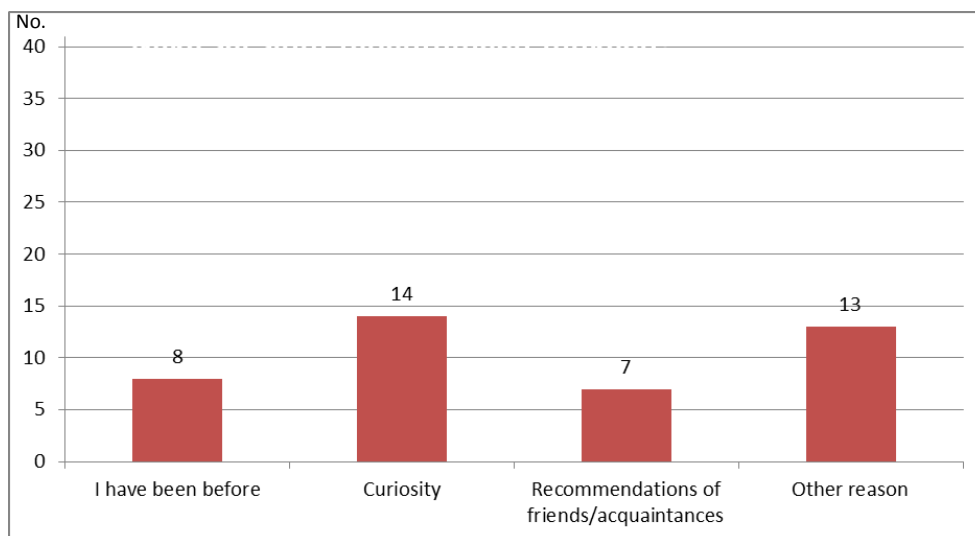
The advance enrollment for Tekojärviölkkä ended three weeks before the event took place, on the 8th of May. The advance enrollment fee was 10 euros for adults and 5 euros for persons

who were 16 years old or younger. The enrollment fee on the actual event day was 15 euros or 13 euros with Juoksija-card for adults and the same 5 euros for persons who were 16 years old or younger. Despite the slightly higher enrollment fee, 78 % of the respondents enrolled on the actual event day. See graph 5.



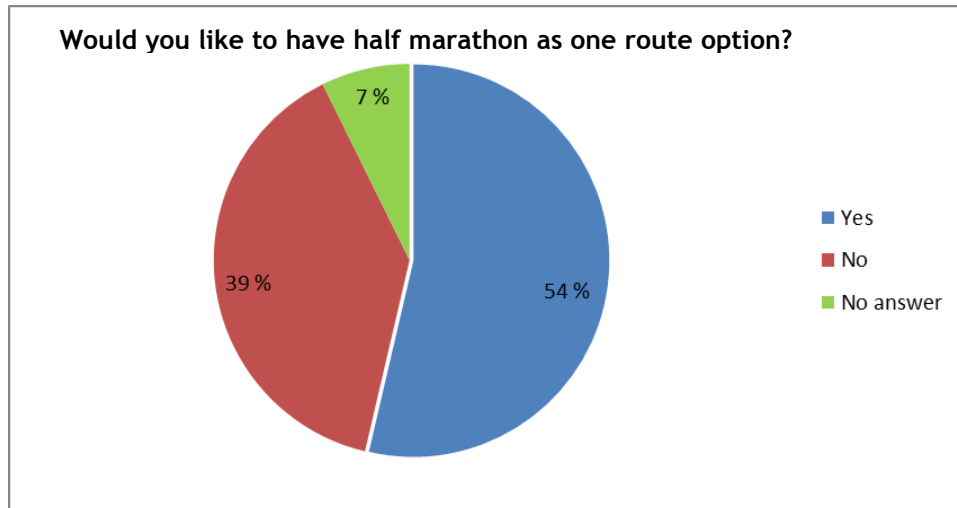
Graph 5: Enrollment (n=41)

The motivation for enrollment was enquired next, see graph 6. 8 of the respondents had participated in TekojärviHölkä before and saw this to be a reason to participate again. 14 participated out of curiosity and 7 out of recommendations of friends and acquaintances. 13 of the respondents mentioned they had some other motivation.



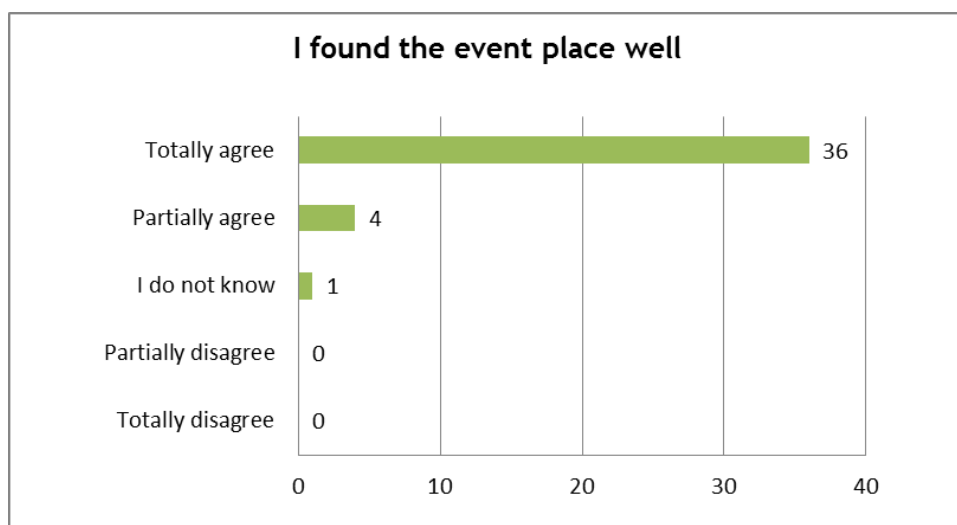
Graph 6: Motivation for enrollment

Ylästön Urheilijat has considered adding half marathon, that is, 21 kilometres, in addition to 7 and 14 kilometres. The association wanted to find out if the respondents were interested in this third route option. Graph 7 shows that slightly over half, 54 %, said “yes”. 39 % said “no” and 7 % gave no answer in this question. Women were a bit more eager when it came to half marathon.

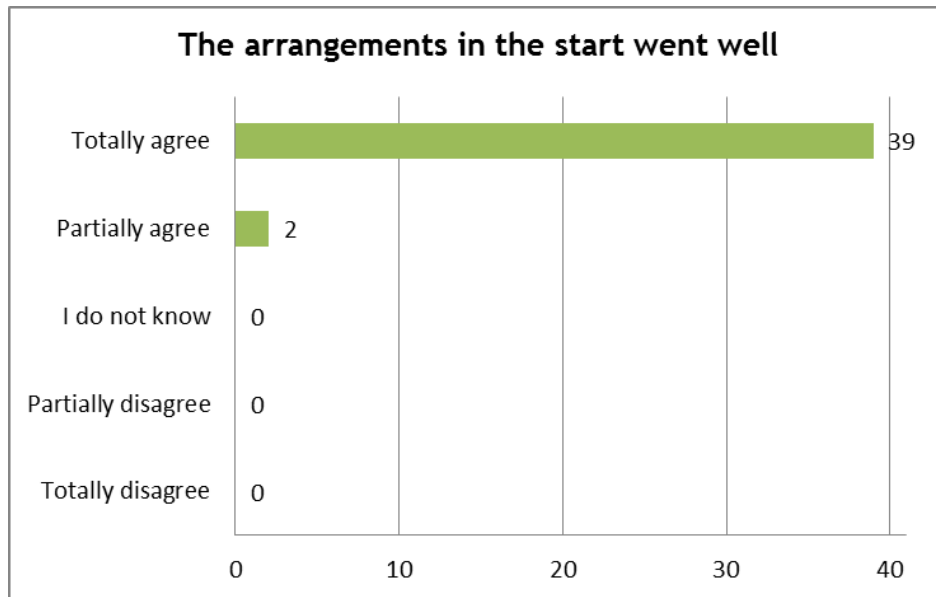


Graph 7: Half marathon (n=41)

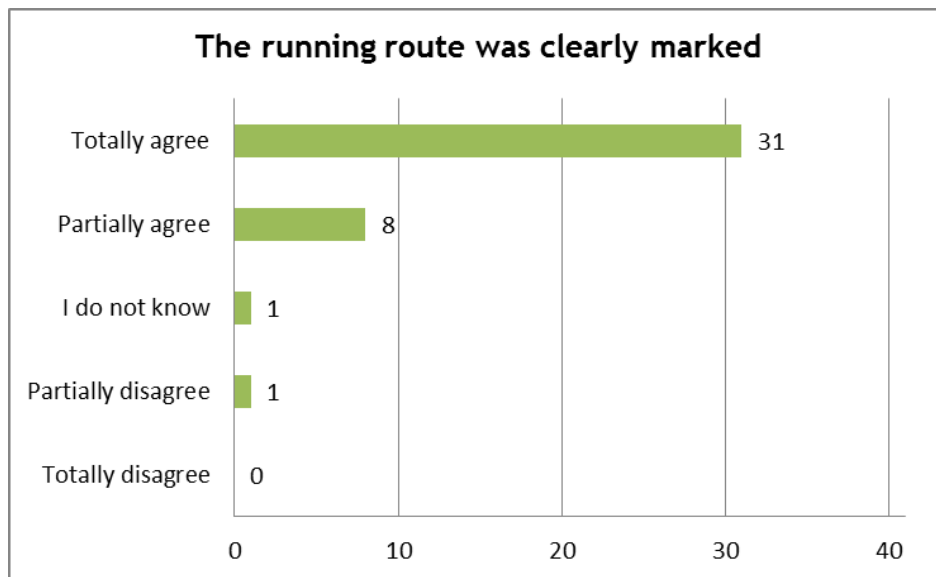
Next, the respondents were given seven claims about the successfulness of the event. The claims were in the form of a Likert scale where number 5 represented “Totally agree” and 1 “Totally disagree”. The seven claims can be found below in graphs 8-14. In general, Tekojärviölkkä was estimated really successful.



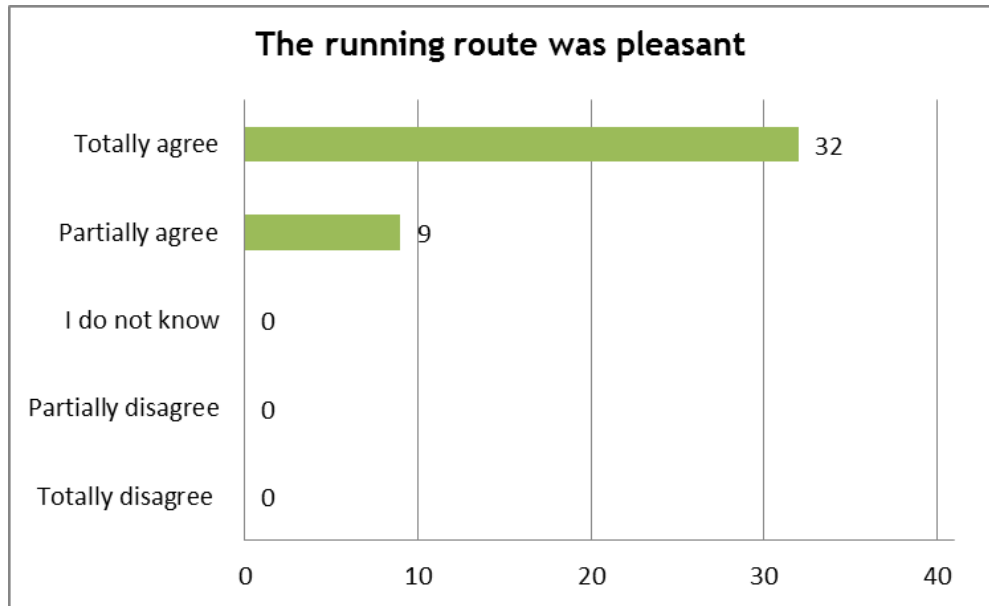
Graph 8: Finding the venue (n=41)



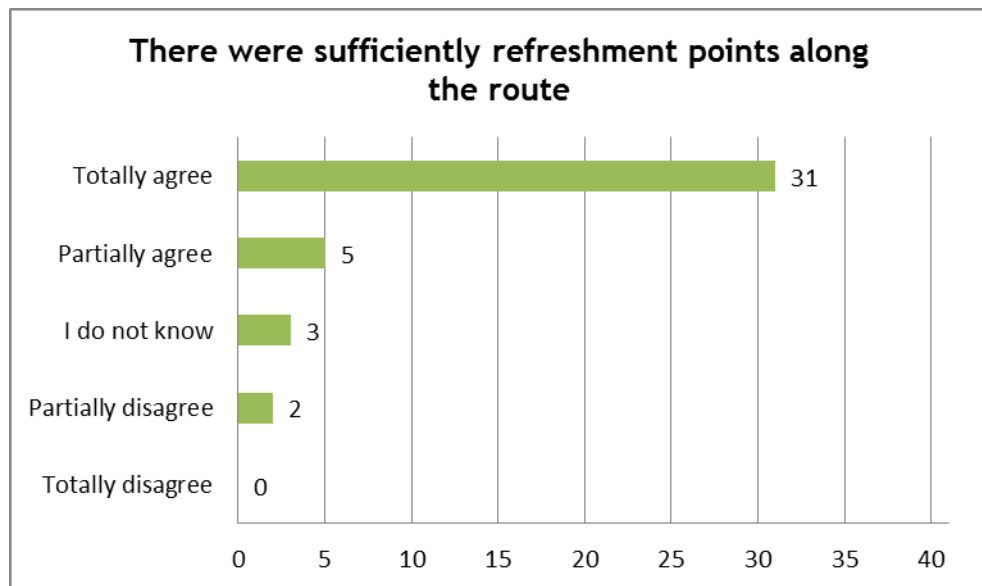
Graph 9: Start (n=41)



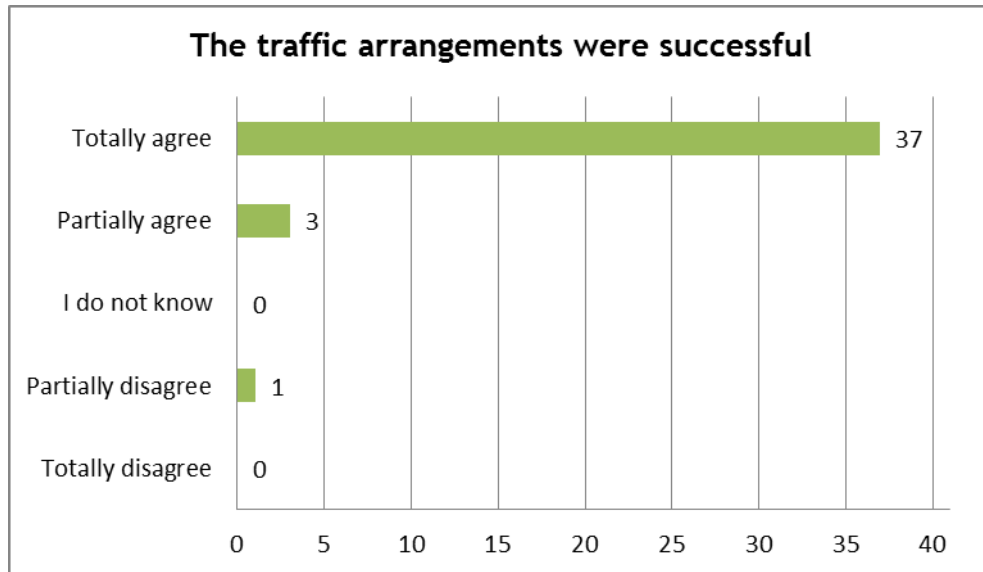
Graph 10: Route marking (n=41)



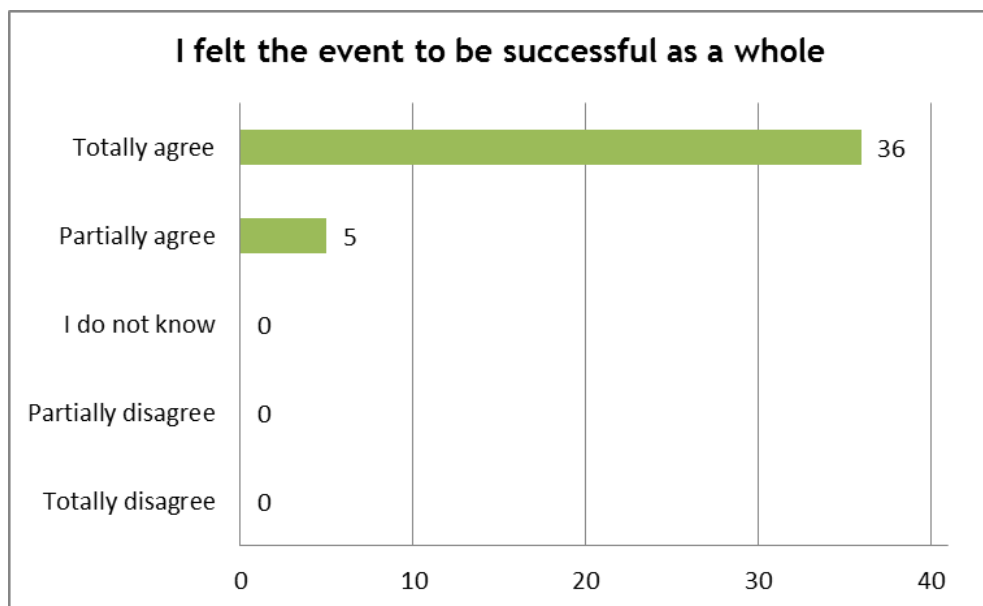
Graph 11: Pleasantness of the route (n=41)



Graph 12: Refreshment points (n=41)

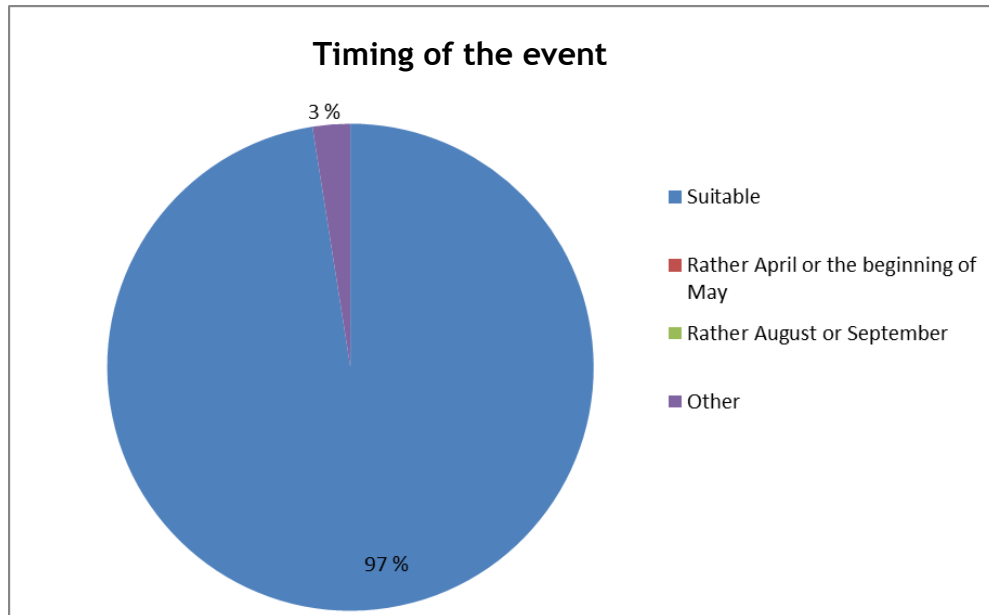


Graph 13: Traffic arrangements (n=41)



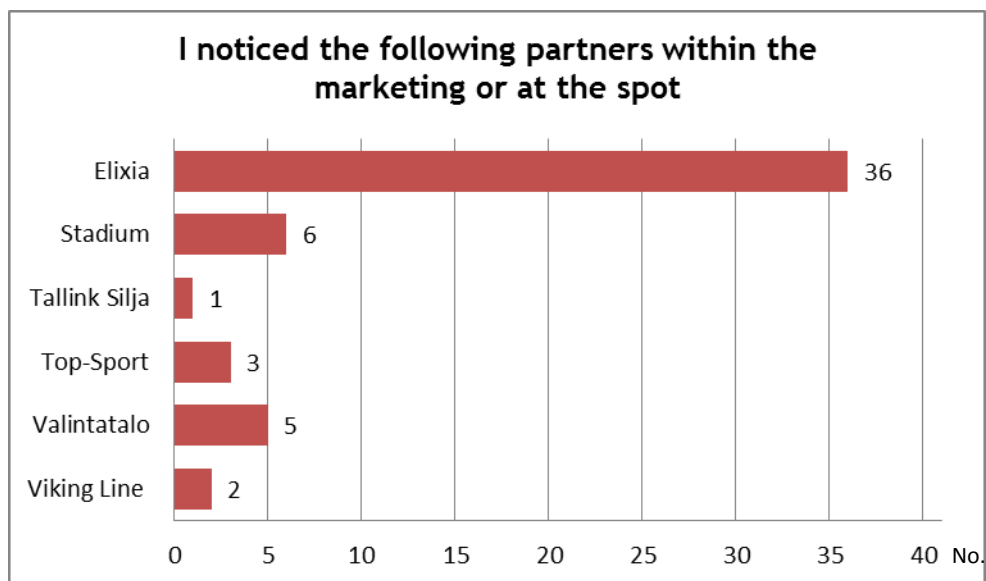
Graph 14: Total successfulness of the event (n=41)

In the previous years Tekojärviölkkä was organized in autumn. This year the timing was shifted to spring to see if it would make any difference concerning the number of participants. Nearly all of the respondents, 97 %, uttered spring to be ideal time for the event. The middle-summer (June and July) were not included as an option since Ylästön Urheilijat does not want to have the event during the middle-summer, partially due to heat, partially due to numerous other running events during that time. The timing is represented in graph 15.



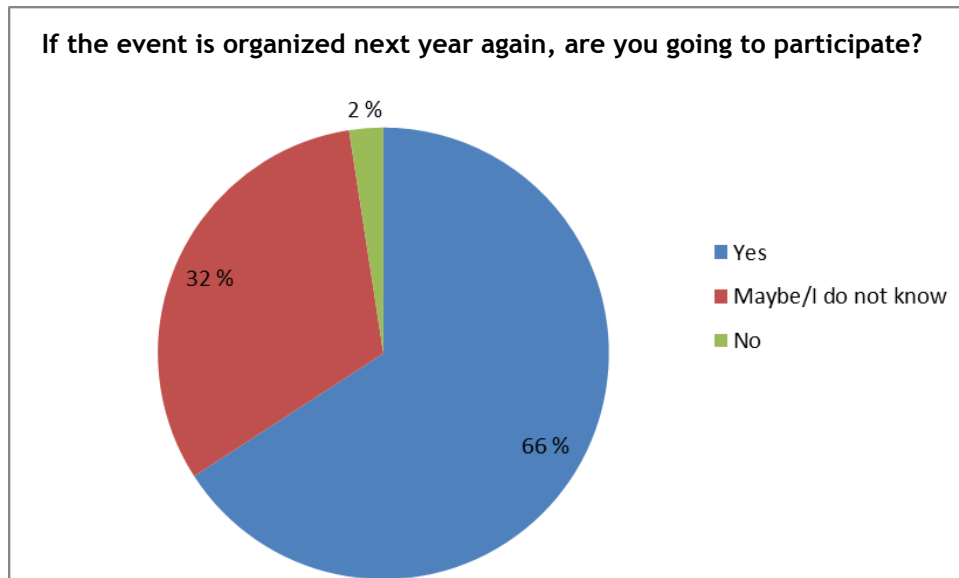
Graph 15: Timing of the event (n=41)

Altogether Tekojärvihölkä got six partners who provided prizes and refreshments for the participants. These partners were Elixia, Stadium, Tallink Silja, Top-Sport, Valintatalo and Viking Line. Elixia also had their own stand where they marketed the organization. The respondents were asked which of these partners they recognized within the marketing or at the spot. Nearly all of them recognized Elixia but the others were only recognized by some. See graph 16.



Graph 16: Partners

In terms of future participation 2 out of 3 of the respondents said they would participate again if the event is organized. 1 out of 3 said they would maybe participate. Only one person admitted not to participate if the event is organized next year. See graph 17.



Graph 17: Future participation (n=41)

7.2 Analysis

As a whole, Tekojärviölkkä that was arranged the fourth time this year was a successful event. This was also the opinion of those 36 respondents out of the 41 respondents that filled the Tekojärviölkkä feedback questionnaire right after the run. The rest 5 respondents partially agreed that the event was successful as a whole. When it comes to the participation, the number nearly doubled compared to the previous year. This year the number of runners was 98 whereas it last year was 54. Although originally the goal was to exceed 100, this increase was nearly 100 in percentages and thus, rather high. If the growth continued this way, the event could attract over 500 participants in three years.

Based on the results, the event seems to attract more men than women. Two out of three of the respondents were men. The age distribution of the participants was based on the competition series in the run. Boys and girls that were 16 years old or younger had their own series. Also the participation fees were lower for these groups. The general series for both men and women were persons aged 17-44. There were also own series for persons aged 45-59 and over 60 years or older. Altogether there were ten different series for the runners. 61% of the participants were aged 17-44.

Nearly 60 % of the respondents came from Vantaa where the event was organized. Some 25 % came from the neighboring cities; Helsinki, Espoo and Tuusula. The rest 15 % came from Nurmijärvi, Kirkkonummi, Lahti, Sipoo, Järvenpää, Kouvola and Jyväskylä. When creating a typical user for TekojärviHölkä he would be a man aged 17-44 whose hometown is Vantaa. This is useful to know when planning the marketing and sponsoring next time.

What was maybe surprising was that 76 % of the respondents participated in TekojärviHölkä the first time. Only 24 % had taken part in the event previously. Based on this it could be estimated that the increased marketing had helped in attracting new customers. This leads to the different marketing channels that were used. These included flyers and posters, the web pages of the event/running calendars online, social media (=Facebook/forums), newspaper ads and acquaintances. The most successful marketing tools were the web pages of the event and running calendars online, flyers and posters and traditional word-of-mouth (=acquaintances). Social media did not prove its power within this event. This may result from the fact that the average user of TekojärviHölkä is not an average user of Facebook or social media in general. Facebook is in favour of youngsters and young adults whereas it is more unknown for persons as the age rises. The average user of TekojärviHölkä seemed to be a middle-aged man. Only one respondent had spotted the ad from newspaper so this is also not likely the best possible marketing tool.

When it comes to the flyers and posters, at first it was thought that they will be printed using some printing house. S. Sahala searched some web pages of different printing houses and also received an offer from Mallipaino Oy. However, using any printing house would have eaten the budget too much. Thus, the flyers and posters were printed without an outside help. In the beginning it was also planned if the event will be made more professional by using electric timing for the runners. S. Sahala contacted T:mi Kokkens which is specialized in all sports but in particular orienteering, skiing, skiing orienteering and running (T:mi Kokkens 2011). Also this outside help would have eaten the budget quite a lot. Besides, the organizers of TekojärviHölkä could not estimate the exact participation number so any risk could not be taken. Nevertheless, if the event is still organized and if it still grows, electric timing would be more than professional, it would be more untroubled for the organizers and participants.

Although the enrollment fee for the event was slightly higher on the actual event day, 78 % of the respondents enrolled then whereas only 22 % enrolled in advance. Thus, it was hard to estimate the actual participation in advance. 34 % of the runners took part out of curiosity. 20 % had participated before and admitted this to be the reason to participate again. 17 % were motivated to participate due to the recommendations of friends and acquaintances. The rest of the respondents had some other reason like the easy access, training before some other competition, family visit, beautiful route pictures, variation for the long run of the week or

hobby. It seems that Tekojärviölkkä could find its profile as not so competitive but rather as an experience for local keep-fit enthusiasts. It could offer variation and a middle-goal for the ones who are striving for bigger competitions such as a marathon. Moreover, the prices are low compared to many other running competitions. This year the prices were even lower in order to attract more customers. Next year Ylästön Urheilijat has planned increasing the prices.

Ylästön Urheilijat has also considered adding half-marathon as one route option. The respondents were asked whether they would be into this possibility. Slightly over half, 54 %, considered it to be a good idea. One of the respondents added that an even route on asphalt would be a prerequisite. 39 % thought it is not a good idea while 7 % gave no answer. Thus, it seems that half-marathon could find sufficiently runners. On the other hand, the routes for 7 and 14 kilometres are ideal routes in the nature with beautiful landscapes. Half-marathon would offer new challenges in finding a nice route in similar landscapes. Also, the event still being as small as now makes it worth considering if it is too much to have three different route options. Then again, if the event continues increasing as rapidly as compared to last year there could be enough runners for all the routes. Possibly some age series could be pruned.

Tekojärviölkkä was appreciated high in terms of the arrangements on the happening day. The participants found well to the happening place, the arrangements in the start went well and the traffic arrangements were succeeded. Most of the respondents also agreed that the running route was pleasant and it was clearly marked. However, some respondent mentioned it would be good to have a painted route line for the whole route. Moreover, another respondent wished more runners in order to get company. Again, most of the respondents felt that there were sufficiently refreshment points along the route. However, one respondent hoped third refreshment point to the 14-kilometre route. Along the 7-kilometre route there was one and along 14-kilometre route two refreshment points.

Although the timing of Tekojärviölkkä was shifted from autumn to spring this year it did not show any disadvantages concerning the number of participants. Vice versa, the participation nearly doubled. Based on the feedback received from the participants, it would seem that Tekojärviölkkä offers variation for weekly running schedule and preparation for numerous other running events organized during summer. Thus, it would be worthwhile organize the event next time also in spring.

In order to come down with costs, different organizations were contacted with the idea of forming sponsorship agreements. It had to be considered carefully which organizations would be the most needful. Due to the sport element local sport accessorize stores were contacted

like Stadium, Top-Sport and Intersport. Also other local organizations, that were thought of having some contact with the event, were contacted. Among these were Valio, Helsingin vesi, Dexal, Dove, Tallink Silja, Viking Line, Holiday Inn Helsinki Messukeskus, Herbina and Valintatalo Ylästö. Tekojärvihölkä was provided by prizes and the sponsors were provided by visibility in marketing and the event. Since the support the sponsors gave was relatively small, the visibility offered to them was not huge.

With Stadium Itäkeskus longer-term sponsorship was negotiated. Stadium mentioned they have some 80 partners they cooperate with. Stadium said they are interested in cooperation if the event is big enough and it is located in a good spot. If Ylästön Urheilijat had been a member of the organization Stadium could have been involved in Tekojärvihölkä. This year bigger sponsorship deal with them would have not been possible due to time limits but everything was negotiated keeping an eye on following years. What was found out was that longer-term sponsorships take time so they should have been prepared already during the previous year when organizations are creating budgets.

The final partners of Tekojärvihölkä were Elixia, Stadium, Tallink Silja, Top-Sport, Valintatalo and Viking Line. What was positive was that all of these were recognized at least by one respondent. Still, all the other organizations were recognized by maximum six respondents whereas Elixia was recognized by 36 respondents. This was due to the fact that Elixia had their own stand, where they marketed the organization, in the event. Elixia was also visible in the poster of Tekojärvihölkä. Although not many participants visited the stand of Elixia the organization surely got visibility. Stadium and Top-Sport were visible in the flyers and posters and the sponsored prizes. Tallink Silja and Viking Line both provided one cruise voucher as a prize and their only visibility was this voucher on the prize table. Valintatalo Ylästö provided a cardboard box of bananas and got the logo of the organization on top of the cardboard box.

More feedback about Tekojärvihölkä 2011 can be found in an online running forum. There the participants give acknowledgement for the route and the possibility to give feedback right after the race but, according the participants, the route-marking could have been clearer. (Tekojärvihölkä 28.5.2011.)

7.3 Reliability, validity and representativeness

Reliability means that the same study can be repeated and similar results are achieved (Reliability 2006). In this thesis not all of the questions could be used if the event was organized again. Marketing channels and sponsors unlikely would be the same and therefore the ques-

tions about marketing and sponsorship should be modified. Many other questions like participation, enrollment, motivation for enrollment, arrangements on the event day and future participation could be used again, though, as a comparison to this year.

Validity refers to the degree the study measures what it is ought to measure. External validity is about generalizing while internal validity is about study design, what was measured and how. (Validity 2011.) The external validity in this study is not rather precise since the questionnaire was designed for Tekojärvihölkä only. Vice versa, internal validity is precise since the questionnaire form was designed only for Tekojärvihölkä.

Representativeness is a term used in sampling terminology. It means the sample to be researched reflects the whole population. (Sampling Terminology 2006.) In this study the population was all the participants of Tekojärvihölkä. The sample drawn from here was the respondents answering the questionnaire. In total, 68 % of the “population” were male and 32 % female. In terms of the sample, 66 % were male and 34 % female. Moreover, also the age and hometown distribution were likely to be representative. Most of the sample were aged 17-44 living in Vantaa.

7.4 SWOT analysis for Tekojärvihölkä

SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. When it comes to Tekojärvihölkä, strengths of the event are low-cost participation fees. According to both the organizers and respondents of the questionnaire the route is beautiful and comfortable to run. The arrangements have been successful. As also in previous years, also this year everyone had their own area/areas of responsibility, which has brought clarity both among the organizers and participants. There is also a nice hometown spirit in the atmosphere in Ylästö.

The weakness of Tekojärvihölkä is that the event has not gained much visibility yet. Compared to numerous other running events around Finland Tekojärvihölkä is still small although it nearly doubled its participation number from the previous year. Moreover, the location may be hard to access for people who do not live in the neighbouring area. It takes 30 minutes by bus from Helsinki central railway station to reach the place. One issue is with the name. There is a negative nuance in it. “Teko” means artificial and “hölkä” jogging. As an attractive fresh and pure running event the name fails to bring any association to the real nature of the event. On the other hand, the name of the pool around which the route of the event is run is named Silvolan Tekojärvihölkä so in that sense the name is ideal. The event is named according to the pool.

The opportunity of TekojärviHölkä is to attract even more local people do sports and increase the feeling of belonging in the form of healthy lifestyle. Since the participation number nearly doubled in one year it could exceed 500 in three years' time. In the future, the event could find a place among other well-known similar running events in the capital city area. There is no point comparing TekojärviHölkä with so-called mass events like Naisten Kymppi and Helsinki City Run. TekojärviHölkä could find its place between Aviapolis-run in Vantaa and Vantaa Marathon. Last time there were some 60 participants in Aviapolis-run (Aviapolis-juoksu tulokset 2011) and some 1300 participants in Vantaa Marathon (Vantaan marathon 10.10.2010 - Tulokset, Results).

The possible threat for the event is that the facilities of the event cannot bear than maybe 500 participants which is also the number of students in the event place, the school of Ylästö. If the event continues growing there should be a limit for the participation or bigger facilities should be searched for. Another thing is that event organizing is always a time-consuming process for the organizers. There is a risk that there is no enthusiasm to organize the event in the future. A summary of the SWOT analysis is represented in figure 4.

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - low-cost prices - beautiful and comfortable route - well organized - nice hometown spirit 	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - not yet visibility - remote location - name
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - increase healthy lifestyle of local people - increase feeling of belonging - find a place among other well-known running events in the capital city area 	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - too small facilities in the future if the number of participants drastically rises - no enthusiasm to organize the event in the future

Figure 4: SWOT analysis for TekojärviHölkä (Sahala, S. 2011.)

8 Conclusions

To sum up, Tekojärviölkkä 2011 was a successful event. Although the goal to exceed 100 participants went under with 2 participants, the participation number nearly doubled from the previous year when there were 54 participants. Next year it could be more than possible to lightly exceed 100. If the linear growth continued the same, the number of 500 could be reached in three-year time.

On the other hand, 500 is likely to be the maximum participation number when considering the facilities of Tekojärviölkkä. 500 is also the number of students in the school of Ylästö where the event has been held. 500 would mean that the figure would quintuple from this year. To enable such a large number the arrangements should be organized slightly differently. First of all, most of the participants should enroll in advance. If possible, the enrollment at the spot could be removed completely as long as Tekojärviölkkä gained enough recognizability so that people really would enroll in advance.

Secondly, more parking space would be needed. The participants could be instructed to park to the sandy playing-field of the school. Thirdly, more personnel would be needed with the possible enrollment process at the spot and with guiding the participants in general. There was already this year an announcer to send the runners to the route and welcoming them back but the voice of the megaphone was not loud enough. The announcement should be more prompt. This year it was only a trial. Electric timing could seriously be considered next time. This would increase reliability in the timing process and make it more convenient for the organizers as well as for the participants. What is more, there were altogether some 4 toilets in the school facilities but if the participation number drastically increased, there should be a few portables outside.

According to the online running forum (Tekojärviölkkä 28.5.2011) it was seen as a positive variation to give feedback right after the event. However, the feedback form could also be inserted in the web pages of Ylästön Urheilijat. Not everyone is interested in filling a paper after a hard physical effort. This was a suggestion of one participant as he was asked to fill the feedback questionnaire.

The marketing increased drastically from the previous year. In the previous years the only marketing tools had been word-of-mouth and online marketing in the web pages of Ylästön Urheilijat and Juoksija magazine. This year 2011 the marketing expanded from these two sections to social media (=Facebook and forums), posters and flyers and newspaper ads. The three most popular marketing channels were word-of-mouth, web pages of the event and running calendars and posters. Thus, it was worthwhile designing, printing and distributing

posters. In the future the attention could be drawn to marketing even more with posters and running calendars and forums online. The power of word-of-mouth cannot, naturally, be forgotten either. The user group of Facebook, vice versa, does not exactly seem to meet the user group of TekojärviHölkä.

If organized next year, the discussion about the event could be started early before the event approaching in the own web pages of Ylästön Urheilijat. According to J. Sahala, new web pages of the association will be opened in October 2011. In this new discussion forum the participants can share their opinions about the running route, prizes and so on. This will increase client participation. See chapter 5 Customer behavior.

In terms of financial issues in general, this year the prices were rather low. If the event is still organized the prices will be raised. The reason for the lowness of this year was simply to attract people to come and try. This tactic was about sales promotion. See chapter 3.3 Marketing mix. Next time it could be possible to develop new pricing policies. One thing would be to award lower prices for the members of Ylästön Urheilijat. This would attract more local people to come.

Next, the adequateness of the sponsors can be observed. Stadium and Top-Sport as sports stores provided a natural link to running. They were offered visibility in the posters and flyers of TekojärviHölkä. Valintatalo concentrated on the nutrition side in the form of bananas and got visibility in the banana box as the logo was placed on the box. Tallink Silja and Viking Line both provided one cruise voucher and their only visibility was on the prize table. Cruise vouchers are suitable for nearly every event and they could also be connected to running lifestyle which is enjoyment and freedom encouraging.

Elixia was the most visible partner. Elixia offered a connection to running in a supporting form of running. Elixia does not have any fitness centre in Vantaa but 4 fitness centres in Helsinki and 2 in Espoo. The other centres are located in Turku, Tampere and Jyväskylä. However, not many of the participants visited the stand of Elixia. It can still be hoped that the organization gained some visibility. It may be that the target group of Elixia does not exactly fit into the target group of TekojärviHölkä. The average customer of Elixia is a female who takes part in group sports and tries to lose some weight or a male who is pumping more muscles. The average customer of TekojärviHölkä, then again, can be described as a running-loving male from the local area. He is training for another upcoming competition or taking part in the event as a variation for his normal runs. In general the partners of TekojärviHölkä had been successfully chosen since all of the prizes could be covered with sponsor donations.

Naturally, the sponsorship agreements should be tighter compared to this year. In order not to make loss as the participation number increases long-term sponsors should be tempted to become partners. One possibility could be Stadium as mentioned in chapter 7.2 Analysis. A long-term relationship would require a negotiation process that is started months in advance. In order to offer a win-win situation in the sponsorship relationship as suggested in chapter 4.2 Sponsorship negotiation, more local organizations could be contacted such as a masseur. The relationship could be a voucher versus visibility and free enrollment to the event.

The improvement ideas are presented in a nutshell below:

- Enrollment in advance only
- More parking space
- More personnel
- Prompt announcement
- Electric timing
- A few portables outside
- Concentration in posters, web pages of the event and running forums when marketing the event
- Discussion forum and feedback form to the web pages of Ylästön Urheilijat
- New pricing policies (lower prices for the members of Ylästön Urheilijat)
- Long-term sponsorship agreements (e.g. Stadium)
- Local sponsorship agreements (e.g. a masseur)

As a fresh event TekojärviHölkä has not created a strong brand yet. However, the event has potential to this since the feelings of it are mainly positive both according to the organizers and participants. The running route is beautiful and comfortable to run, there is a nice hometown spirit in the atmosphere and the arrangements are successful. In chapter 2.4 Brand it was stated that anything else of the brand can be changed except for the name. (Clifton & Simmons 2003, 16-17). This makes it worth considering does the name TekojärviHölkä arouse a negative nuance as suggested in chapter 7.4 SWOT analysis for TekojärviHölkä. If the answer is “yes” is it still worthwhile to change the name? This could be pondered next time if the event is organized.

In the future it would be interesting to see what happens to the participation number and what the proportions between first-time participants and others are. Is the event able to maintain its existent customers and how can new possible customers be attracted to enroll? Social media and Facebook did not prove its power within TekojärviHölkä this year but the situation may change in following years. Maybe there are new viable social media tools such as Google+.

Coming back to the research question presented in the abstract: “How can the increased marketing and sponsorship improve the visibility of TekojärviHölkä?” this study certainly provided useful data for Ylästön Urheilijat. Through this study it could be detected that by putting more effort into marketing the participation number and visibility can easily be increased. Sponsorship donations help to come down with costs and give more visibility. There is more concealed potential with sponsorship agreements compared to this year. The tighter the agreements the more TekojärviHölkä can get visibility through the partners.

In a personal level, conducting an objective study was the main goal and from the author’s point of view, this goal was reached. The study case was observed from the organizers’, sponsors’ and participants’ point of view that represent the main stakeholders of TekojärviHölkä. Co-operation skills were developed when negotiating with Ylästön Urheilijat and with various organizations, some of which became partners. The responsibility for individual work was to be taken and as long a process as writing a thesis is a preliminary timetable for the year-long process was to be planned.

The most challenging part of the thesis was the sponsorship process. It took a lot of time to consider all the possible partners and then study their values and compare if the values could be connected to the ones of Ylästön Urheilijat. Finding the right contact person and deciding the right negotiation tactic, time and tool also were issues of consideration.

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Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

KYSELY TEKIJÄRVIHÖLKÄSTÄ

Olen Sini Sahala, Laurea-ammattikorkeakoulun matkailun opiskelija ja teen opinnäytetyötäni Tekojärvihölkin järjestämisestä ja kehittämisestä. Vastaamalla oheiseen kyselyyn autat minua ja Ylästön Urheilijoita parantamaan tapahtumaa, joten palautteesi on arvokasta. Vastaukset käsitellään anonyymisti.

Taustatiedot

Sukupuoli ☐ Mies ☐ Nainen

Ikä ☐ <16 ☐ 17-44 ☐ 45-59 ☐ 60>

Kotipaikkakunta

☐ Vantaa ☐ Helsinki ☐ Espoo
☐ Kerava ☐ Jokin muu, mikä? _____

Ennen tapahtumaa

Oletko mukana tapahtumassa ensimmäistä kertaa?

☐ Kyllä ☐ En

Mistä kuulit tapahtumasta?

☐ Tuttavat
☐ Tapahtuman nettisivut/juoksukalenterit
☐ Sosiaalinen media (=Facebook/forumit)
☐ Julisteet
☐ Lehtimainokset
☐ Muualta, mistä? _____

Ilmoittauduitko ennakoon vai paikan päällä?

☐ Ennakoon ☐ Paikan päällä

Mikä sai sinut tapahtumaan mukaan?

☐ Olen ollut aikaisemminkin
☐ Uteliaisuus
☐ Ystävien/tuttavien suositukset
☐ Jokin muu syy, mikä? _____

Haluaisitko matkavalikoimaan puolimaratonin?

☐ Kyllä ☐ En

Tapahtuman aikana

Arvioi seuraavat väittämät asteikolla 5-1.
Laita jokaisen väittämän kohdalle vain yksi rasti.

5=Täysin samaa mieltä, 4=Osittain samaa mieltä, 3=En osaa sanoa, 2=Osittain eri mieltä, 1=Täysin eri mieltä

Väittämät	5	4	3	2	1
Löysin hyvin tapahtumapaikalle.					
Lähdön järjestelyt sujuivat ongelmitta.					
Juoksureitti oli selkeästi merkattu.					
Juoksureitti oli miellyttävä.					
Huoltopisteitä reitin varrella oli riittävästi.					
Liikennejärjestelyt onnistuivat.					
Koin, että tapahtuma oli kokonaisuudessaan onnistunut.					

Viime vuonna tapahtuma järjestettiin syksyllä. Tänä vuonna ajankohta siirrettiin keväälle. Mitä mieltä olet nykyisestä ajankohdasta?

☐ Sopiva
☐ Mielummin huhti-toukokuun alku
☐ Mielummin elo-syyskuu

Havaitsin tapahtuman markkinoinnissa tai tapahtumassa seuraavia yhteistyökumppaneita:

☐ Elixia ☐ Stadium ☐ Tallink Silja
☐ Top-Sport ☐ Valintatalo ☐ Viking Line

Tapahtuman jälkeen

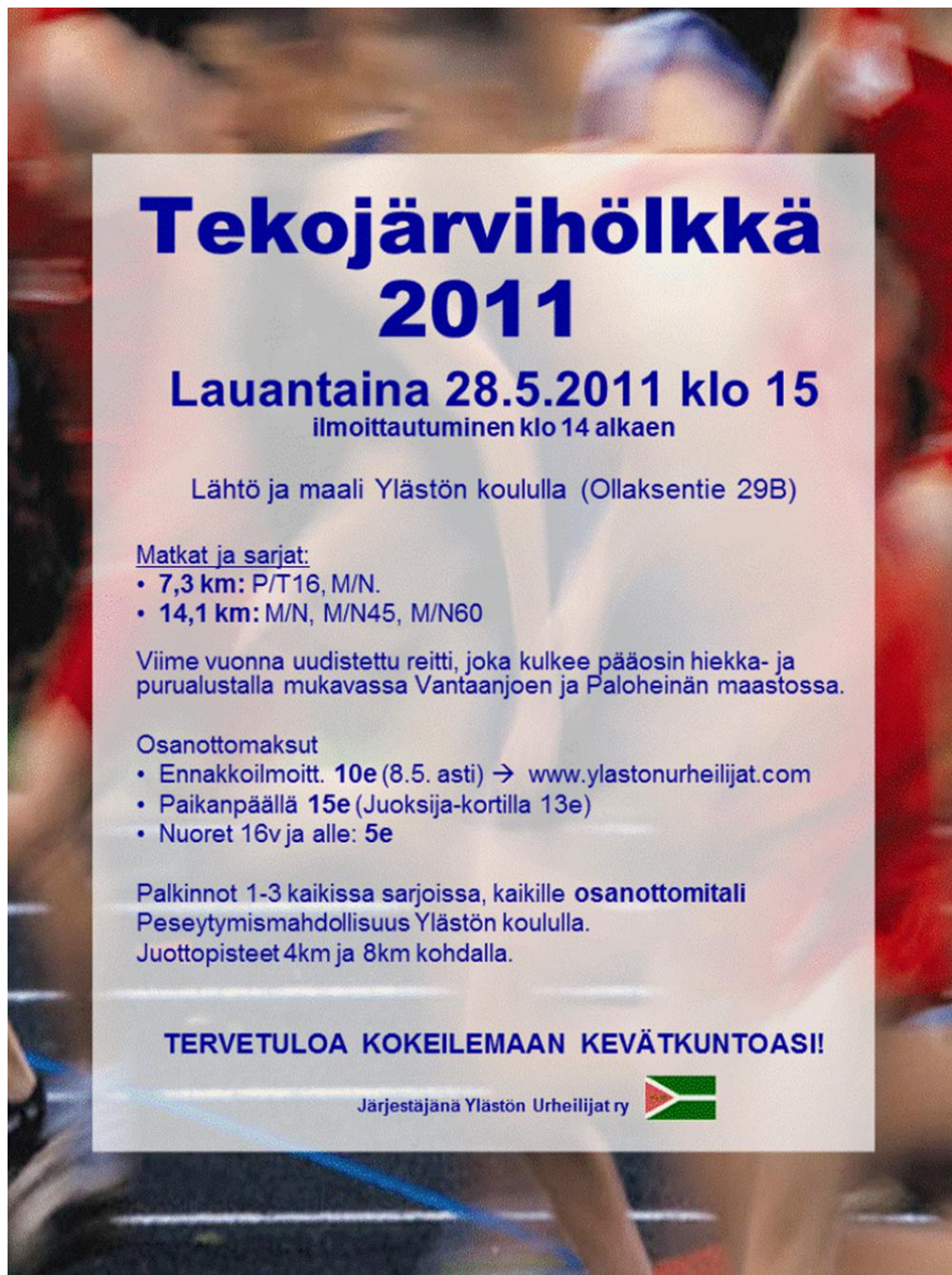
Jos tapahtuma järjestetään ensi vuonna uudelleen, osallistutko silloin?

☐ Kyllä ☐ En osaa sanoa
☐ En, miksi?

Kehitysideoita/vapaa palaute tapahtuman järjestäjille (jatka tarvittaessa kääntöpuolelle):

Kiitos!

Appendix 2 - Tekojärvihölkkä flyer

The flyer is a white rectangular card with blue and black text, placed over a blurred background of people in motion. The title 'Tekojärvihölkkä 2011' is in large, bold, blue font. Below it, the date and time 'Lauantaina 28.5.2011 klo 15' are in bold black, followed by 'ilmoittautuminen klo 14 alkaen' in a smaller black font. The start and finish location 'Lähtö ja maali Ylästön koululla (Ollaksentie 29B)' is in black. A section titled 'Matkat ja sarjat:' in blue underlines lists two distances: '7,3 km: P/T16, M/N.' and '14,1 km: M/N, M/N45, M/N60'. A paragraph describes the route as a newly updated path through sand and gravel terrain in Vantaa and Paloheiniemi. The 'Osanottomaksut' (entry fees) section lists: 'Ennakoilmoitt. 10e (8.5. asti) → www.ylastonurheilijat.com', 'Paikanpäällä 15e (Juoksija-kortilla 13e)', and 'Nuoret 16v ja alle: 5e'. The awards section states 'Palkinnot 1-3 kaikissa sarjoissa, kaikille osanottomitali' and 'Peseytymismahdollisuus Ylästön koululla. Juottopisteet 4km ja 8km kohdalla.' The bottom features the slogan 'TERVETULOA KOKEILEMAAN KEVÄTKUNTOASI!' in bold blue, the organizer 'Järjestäjänä Ylästön Urheilijat ry' in black, and the Finnish flag logo.

Tekojärvihölkkä 2011

Lauantaina 28.5.2011 klo 15
ilmoittautuminen klo 14 alkaen

Lähtö ja maali Ylästön koululla (Ollaksentie 29B)

Matkat ja sarjat:

- **7,3 km:** P/T16, M/N.
- **14,1 km:** M/N, M/N45, M/N60


Viime vuonna uudistettu reitti, joka kulkee pääosin hiekka- ja purualustalla mukavassa Vantaanjoen ja Paloheinän maastossa.

Osanottomaksut

- Ennakoilmoitt. **10e** (8.5. asti) → www.ylastonurheilijat.com
- Paikanpäällä **15e** (Juoksija-kortilla 13e)
- Nuoret 16v ja alle: **5e**

Palkinnot 1-3 kaikissa sarjoissa, kaikille **osanottomitali**
Peseytymismahdollisuus Ylästön koululla.
Juottopisteet 4km ja 8km kohdalla.

TERVETULOA KOKEILEMAAN KEVÄTKUNTOASI!

Järjestäjänä Ylästön Urheilijat ry 

Appendix 3 - TekojärviHölkä poster

Haluatko tulla testaamaan kevään juoksukuntosi?
Haluatko tulla juoksemaan HCR:n jälkeiset
maitohapot pois?
Haluatko tulla nauttimaan hyvästä seurasta luonnon
keskellä?

Jos vastasit edes yhteen kysymykseen "Kyllä" tule
rohkeasti kokeilemaan

TEKOJÄRVIHÖLKKÄ

28.5.2011 klo 15

 Lähtö ja maali Ylästön koululla
Ollaksentie 29 B Vantaa 

- Ilmoittautuminen paikan päällä klo 14 alkaen:
T/P 16v 5€, muut 15€ (Juoksijakortilla 13€)
- Matkat: 7 km & 14 km
- Palkinnot: Osanottomitali kaikille, palkinnot kunkin sarjan 3 parhaalle

Paikan päällä myös:
Arvomme liikuntalahjakortteja!

ELIXIA
Liikunta- ja hyvinvointikeskus

Lue lisää ylastonurheilijat.com ja tule mukaan!

Tapahtumaa tukemassa: **stadium** **TOP-SPORT**

Ylästön Urheilijat -59 ry

Appendix 4 - Newspaper article

Pääkaupunki.fi



Tekojärvi-hölkä veti jälleen väkeä

VIIME lauantaina hyvässä säässä juostu Tekojärvi-hölkä keräsi lähes puolta enemmän osallistujia kuin viime vuonna. Kuntoilijoita oli mukana lähes sata. Juoksijoita oli saapunut ympäri Suomen, vaikkakin suurin osa tuli pääkaupunkiseudulta.

Hyväntuulinen tapahtuma kierrätti nytkin juoksijoita kahta eripituista, 7,3 ja 14,1 kilometrin lenkkiä upealla luontoreitillä pitkin Vantaanjoen vartta. Lähtö ja maali olivat Ylästön koululla.

Jussi
