Brand renewal and developing member services in a non-profit organization

Riikka Ilmonen
Aito HSO ry (former Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit ry) is a trade union, a non-profit organization that changed its name and look in 2011.

This thesis tries to find out the opinions of the members of the organization on the renewal process and also the members’ opinions on Aito HSO’s member services that include e.g. different kinds of events, training and discounts.

The study was conducted by using quantitative research method in a questionnaire form that was done with Webropol and sent to Aito HSO’s members by e-mail in November-December 2011. There were total number of 344 respondents, who answered to the survey. The survey included also several open comment fields, in which more detailed opinions on the renewal process were asked.

All in all, the results show that the name and look renewal has been a successful process also according to the members’ opinions as over 70% of the respondents had answered either excellent or well to three questions in this section. The current amount of member services was also found satisfactory as 86% of the respondents found the amount adequate.

The free comments made it possible to make recommendations for the organization when thinking about its future. There are three kinds of recommendations for Aito HSO, which include some development suggestions for Aito HSO’s member magazine Aito and their web pages; increasing the amount of member services outside the Capital Region and more services for retired or elderly members; and a continuous follow-up of the new brand.

**Keywords**
Brand, image, perception, non-profit organization, membership
DP for Multilingual Management Assistants

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Aito HSO ry (ent. Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit ry) on ammattijärjestö, non-profitorganisaatio, joka muutti nimeään ja ilmetään vuonna 2011.

Tässä opinnäytetyössä yritetään selvittää järjestön jäsenten mielipiteitä tapahtuneisiin uudistuksiin sekä jäsenten mielipiteitä Aito HSO:n tarjoamiin jäsenpalveluihin, joita ovat mm. erilaiset tapahtumat, koulutukset ja alennukset.


Kaiken kaikkiaan tulokset osoittavat, että nimi-ja ilmeuudistus on ollut onnistunut prosessi myös jäsenistön mielestä, kun yli 70% vastanneista valitsi vaihtoehtoon ’erinomainen’ tai ’hyvä’ tämän osion kaikissa kolmessa kysymyksessä. Myös jäsenpalveluiden nykyiseen määrään oltiin tyytyväisiä, sillä yli 86% vastaajista piti määrää sopivana.

Vapaat kommentit mahdollistivat suositusten tekemisen järjestölle sen tulevaisuutta ajatellen. Tutkija antaa kolmenlaisia suosituksia Aito HSO:lle; ensinnäkin, kehitysedotuksia Aito HSO:n jäsenlehti Aidolle ja järjestön netissävielle; toiseksi, jäsenpalveluiden määrän lisäämisen eläköityneille tai vanhemmille jäsenille ja erityisesti pääkaupunkiseudun ulkopuolella asuville jäsenille; sekä kolmanneksi uuden brändin jatkuvan seurannan.

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1 Introduction

This thesis is made for Aito HSO ry (further “Aito HSO”), a trade union for people with university, professional or other higher-level education. Aito HSO, former Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit, changed its name, logo and look in 2011. Some examples of the new marketing material of Aito HSO can be found in this thesis as Appendix 1. As a member of the trade union it was interesting to find out what are the members’ opinions on the recent change in look and name of the organization.

As Aito HSO is a non-profit organization, whose members pay membership fee, it was also interesting to learn what the members think about the member services that the organization has.

The empirical data of the study was collected between mid-November and mid-December 2011.

1.1 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of several chapters. First of all, the research problem and objectives of the study are defined. The second chapter deals with the different sectors of the society and defines different kinds of non-profit organizations. The third chapter includes information on trade unions in general and gives detailed information on trade unions in Finland. It also presents the organization of which this thesis is all about, Aito HSO.

In chapter 4 the theories of branding, image and perceptions are defined. The fifth chapter explains the making of the study, defines the method chosen for the study and explains the implementation of the study. Chapter 6 presents the results of the study and it is divided into five sections according to the areas the questions handle.

The last part is reserved for discussion, i.e. conclusions, recommendations and evaluation of the thesis process. In that part all the results are summarized, linked to the theories and the thesis process will be evaluated by making a self-assessment.
1.2 The research objectives of the study

The thesis has two main research objectives, which want to find answers to the two questions below, which are:

1) *Do the members think that the brand change process has been successful?*

The problem in the organization is that they do not yet know what their members think about the recent change in the brand process. They do not know whether the new logo does answer to the members’ expectations. As changes in brand mean often changes either in look or name or slogan or in all of the mentioned, in other words, changes that affect the product itself, all these different areas needed to be separately handled to be able to make as accurate findings as possible. That is why these questions were divided in three categories, which were:

- Name and visual look
- Web pages, newsletter and member magazine
- Communication on renewal process

2) *What do the members think about the member services Aito HSO offers?*

The other problem that is trying to be identified is that the organization is somewhat uncertain about the fact that what their members think about the member services they offer.

In a nutshell, the first objective of the study is to find out that the change of the brand has been coherent and that it responds to the members’ needs and wants. The other objective of this thesis is to define the opinions the members have on Aito HSO’s member services and make recommendations to the organization to develop the services more to the direction the members would like to have.
2 Different sectors of the society

The society is divided into four sectors: private, public, third and fourth sector. Basically, the private sector consists of companies that want to make profit. With the public sector is meant, for example; the state, the municipalities, different kinds of social security funds, such as KELA, unemployment funds and public facilities. Typical for these above-mentioned two sectors is the fact that their personnel consists only of employees. This is not usually that typical on the third and fourth sector.

To the third sector belong the organizations and associations, in which decision-making and actions might be more informal than in the two other sectors, for example due to volunteering. The fourth sector is by far the most informal sector, yet, it does have a very important meaning in a private person’s life. The fourth sector consists of several social networks, such as families, households and friends. (Vuokko, P. 2010, 15)

2.1 Non-profit organization

A non-profit organization differs from a regular organization simply with the fact that its first priority is not to make profit. The primary goal is to accomplish its mission. However, it does not mean that it would not have any financial goals to reach for. Non-profit organizations strive to minimize and cover their expenses or shortage, but when in budget surplus, the extra money is collected to improve the implementation of its mission. This leads to the fact that a non-profit organization has two kinds of goals:

1) Implementation of the mission
2) Reaching financial goals to implement the mission

Like other organizations, non-profit organizations try to make results. However, instead of monetary profit, their profit is a social profit. (Vuokko, P. 2010, 20)
2.2 Funding models of non-profit organizations

There are several types of funding models of non-profit organizations. The types and examples of each type will be defined in the following paragraphs.

2.2.1 Charity organizations

The Finnish Red Cross (FRC) is one example of a charity organization. FRC is part of the National Red Cross as well as 185 other Red Cross/Crescent Movement. In the organization, the money is used for curing sick people or trying to supply the catastrophe targets all over the world. FRC has seven principles; Humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity and universality. (Suomen Punainen Riisti)

Usually, when talking about charity organizations, the organization does not get any money from the target group; its most important source of motivation is the accomplished development in the charity target. (Vuokko, P. 2010, 22)

![Figure 1. Model of a charity organization (Vuokko, 22)](image)

2.2.2 A non-profit organization in the public sector

The funding model of public sector non-profit organizations is based on tax income. The government and the municipalities collect taxes from citizens to maintain the services provided by the public sector. A part of the tax income returns to individual citizens as e.g. child benefits, study benefits or social benefits.
This model differs from the other models, because in this case the funding is not based on the citizens’ own motivations, but on a must to pay taxes and uphold the organizations. (Vuokko, P. 2010, 24)

2.2.3 A private non-profit organization

A private non-profit organization strives for its members’ interests. The operation is funded with member payments. The organization might have a head organization, from which it can get materials, advice, wider support and expertise network and maybe even monetary support. In this case, the organization usually gives some of its member payment income to the head organization. (Vuokko, P. 2010, 21)
3 Trade unions in Finland

The main purpose of a trade union is to ensure the benefits and rights of its members. It might include, for example, income development (salaries), employment security guarantees and also promotion of quality in working life. When joining a trade union it is also possible to join its unemployment fund although it is even possible to join the unemployment fund without becoming a member of the union. Joining the unemployment fund is advisable, because, if you become unemployed, the unemployment fund will pay you earnings-related daily unemployment allowance, which is higher than the statutory basic unemployment allowance. (Infopankki)

Trade union members pay a membership fee to the union. Several different professions have their own trade unions, which are part of large central organizations of trade unions. A member will become entitled to earnings-related daily unemployment allowance once he/she has been a member of your trade union for 10 months during employment. Different professions have their own trade unions, which are part of large central organizations of trade unions. (Infopankki)

3.1 Central Organizations for Trade Unions

There are three central organizations for trade unions in Finland, which are:

- SAK (Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions)
- AKAVA (The Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals in Finland)
- STTK (The Finnish Confederation of Salaried Employees)

3.2 Trade Unions for certain professions

The following trade unions are some of the biggest ones in Finland.

- PAM (Service Union United)
- AKT (Finnish Transport Workers' Union)
- JHL (Trade Union for the Public and Welfare Sectors)
PAM is a trade union for all people working in service branches and it has over 220,000 members in Finland. AKT represents the interest of over 50,000 transport professionals. JHL is a member of SAK, with almost 240,000 members. JHL is a trade union for people who work both in public and private welfare services sector. (AKT, JHL, PAM)

3.3 Akava Special Branches

Akava Special Branches (Akavan Erityisalat ry) is an organization that represents the interests of people who work in specialist and supervisory positions in culture, administration and business life. It comprises 25 independent member associations, with close to 27,000 members and it is constantly growing. One of these member associations is Aito HSO that has at the moment approximately 2,850 members. (Akavan Erityisalat)

![Diagram of AKAVA, Akava Special Branches and Aito HSO]

Figure 4. Connection between AKAVA, Akava Special Branches and Aito HSO

The following independent member associations (25) form Akava Special Branches:

- Aito HSO (Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit)
- Art and Culture Professionals Trade Union
- Association of Academic Salaried Employees in Educational Administration
- Association of Distraint Officers
- Association of Managerial Professionals at the Centre for Technical Training
- Association of Employees at the Research Institute for the Languages of Finland
- Association of Finnish Bachelors of Hospitality Management
- Association of Finnish Tax Inspectors
- Association of Managerial Salaried Employees in Finnish Sports Associations
- Association of Maritime College Teachers
- Association of Municipal Experts and Managerial Professionals
- Association of Professional Archives Employees
- Association of Public Administration Executives
- Civil Servants in State Provincial Administration for Education and Culture VSV
- Finncomm Airlines Pilot Association
- Finnish Association of Occupational Therapists
- Finnish Association of Sign Language Interpreters
- Finnish Federation of Dental Hygienists FFDF
- Officers for Academic Unions
- Rescue Administration Officers Association
- SPECIA - The Experts and Managerial Professionals Association
- Specialists in the Youth and Sports Sector
- The Union of Academic Museum Employees in Finland
- Translation Industry Professionals
- Union of Communications Professionals

The list above has been quoted from Akava Special Branches web page and the names of the associations are the official English names of them.

3.4 History of Aito HSO

In 1967 Helsingin Sihteerioristo was founded in Helsinki, Finland. It was founded to educate professional secretaries to the growing business world. The first HSO-Secretaries graduated in 1968. First the school was a private institute funded only by a single supporters’ association. In 1970 HSO Sihteerit ry was founded to serve the secretaries who had been graduated from Helsingin Sihteerioristo. In 1980 Helsingin Sihteerioristo became a part of the Joint Application System and in 1992 it became a part of the Helsinki Business Polytechnic, Helia. From year 2003 until 2011 the name
of the organization was “Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit ry”. In the statutory autumn meeting on 21 November 2010 “Aito HSO ry” was accepted as a new name of the organization and the change took place on March 26, 2011. At the moment there are approximately 2,850 active members in the organization. (Aito HSO ry 2011a)

3.5 Behind the change of the look

Before Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit changed its name to Aito HSO, it was decided to change the look at the same time with the name. There was a need for freshening up visual appearance and making all the materials coherent with each other, because the magazines, brochures and other materials did not have a coherent layout.

Because the organization is rather small, they wanted to get external help with this process and then they came across with Porkka & Kuutsa (“P&K”). Porkka & Kuutsa P&K created a new visual identity for Aito HSO. Slogan ‘hyvä sijoitus osaanseen’ translated into English meaning ‘good investment for expertise’. The new logo, designed by P&K for Aito HSO depicts the organization as the center of knowledge for employers, students, members and other stakeholders. (Porkka&Kuutsa)

![Figure 5. New logos of the organization (Porkka&Kuutsa)](image-url)
Porkka & Kuutsa (P&K) is a design company specialized in corporate identity and branding with over 20 years’ experience. It has made changes in several local and international companies, institutions, products and services to inspire employees, clients and other stakeholders. P&K’s designs create a systematic process, where an internal and external assessment, analysis and definition are done together with the client. Once adopted, P&K guides the employees to implement the new visual identity and brand, yet they do have a new story to tell to their target groups. The P&K process also ensures that management of the new brand and identity is fully maximized in multiple media and usage. (Porkka & Kuutsa)

“The final result provided by P&K defines who you are, what makes you special and where are you going. P&K develop, create and implement a big idea that tells a great story.” (Porkka & Kuutsa)

Figure 6. Logo of Porkka & Kuutsa (Porkka&Kuutsa)

“Organizations are like coals in a pile, they do not differentiate from each other. Our job is to be the pressure increaser in the process. To squeeze and warm until the coal glows and crystallizes into a diamond.” – Antti Porkka (Aito HSO, 9)
4 Branding

This part of the thesis focuses on managing both brands and images by both defining them but also building them.

4.1 Brand, its identity and management

“Brand is a creation of a company” (Lindroos et al 2005, 98)

A brand is a perception of a product. The definition ‘brand’ was acknowledged to describe the manufacturer’s right to one’s own products, to differentiate the product from others. The difference between a brand and a product is the fact that the brand informs about the experience that a customer can expect. (Lindroos et al. 2005, 20-21)

According to Isaac, the definition of the word ‘brand’ is the following: brand is a mix of tangible and intangible values including the product itself, its shape/configuration, the packaging, the brand name, the promotion, advertising and overall presentation. In other words, according to Isaac’s theory, brand is a synthesis of all these elements.

According to Arnold, a brand must be a blend of physical, rational and emotional appeals and this blend must be distinctive and result in a clear personality which will offer benefits of value to customers. Also in this third theory a brand is seen as a diverse definition that has several dimensions.

According to Lindroos, a brand is built from the real value, substance, in which the competitiveness of the company is based on. Also, the combination of the company, its product and its brand needs to be seamless. This can also be linked to the fact that these three should communicate well to form the combination.
As a conclusion on a definition of a brand, as mentioned above, a brand is a mix of several elements, which need to communicate well with each other. In other words, all the brand’s internal and external elements as well as the company and the product itself need to be coherent and synchronized to each other well to promote the brand in a desired way.

### 4.2 The core of the brand

A strong core is a common feature of strong brands, even though they differ a lot from each other. As the core idea of the brand changes, the brand itself also changes significantly. A more or less ‘new’ brand is born. The core needs to be strong to be able to last in the modern world that includes a lot of variables. The ability to maintain flexible is a must. The best brands are able to take advantage of the changes in the environment and adjust to different situations. (Lindroos et al. 2005, 34-35)
According to Lindroos, the core of the brand will define the following features:

- Brand's capability to appeal to the customer
- Brand's value to the customer
- Brand's endurance in time, i.e. its life circle
- Brand's relationship to the client
- Brand's differentiation, i.e. its ability to differentiate in competitive situations

The core of a brand gives a meaning to the fact what a company does or represents with its product or service. From customer’s point of view a strong brand really does something for the customer. (Lindroos et al. 2005, 42)

4.3 Image, perception and reputation

People have only perceptions. All information processing and feelings are done through perceptions. People learn to organize the uncountable amount of marks and products through brands. Brands form a codex, which helps to organize them. (Lindroos et al. 2005, 18)
The forming of perceptions is a process and people tend to talk about perceptions without actually considering what they are based on. The perceptions influence a lot in peoples’ behavior in several different ways. They also develop in a longer period of time, i.e. constantly, meaning that they are never completely perfect. This kind of reforming occurs through e.g. media communications. That is the reason for making perceptions possible in several contexts when trying to develop the brand. (Lindroos et al. 2005, 23-24)
The words ‘perception’ and ‘image’ are more often used as synonyms. Perception or image is the total amount of the perceptions that a person, community or interest group has about the organization or something that is linked to the organization’s actions. (Vuokko 2010, 190)

4.4 Building the image

According to Vuokko, the image can be built without actually building it. But, when it is being built, there are some certain phases that need to be gone through. There are five phases in building the image -process, which are;

- Analyzing the current situation
- Defining the goals
- Developing the organization’s internal actions and communication
- Developing the organization’s external actions and communication
- Following and analyzing the changes and considering follow-up actions

Figure 9. Recipe for a good image
5 Making the study

This part of the study focuses on the empirical data. It explains which research method is used, how the study was implemented and what kind of limitations might occur in the study. This study was made as a survey, and the data was collected with a questionnaire form that was sent to the members of the organization. As Aito HSO makes surveys every now and then, they already had a great layout of their own at Webropol, so the research questions were sent to them to be added to Webropol. After finishing the questionnaire form, the link was sent to all the members of the organization by e-mail.

5.1 Research methods

Quantitative research method is a method, where the information is handled numerically. It means that the things and their features are being handled commonly with numbers. Quantitative research method often answers to questions how many, how much and how often. (Vilkka 2007, 14)

With the word ‘survey’ is meant the kind of forms of questionnaires, interviews and observations, where the data is collected standardized and where the target people form the sample from a certain fundamental set. Standardizing means that if we e.g. want to find out the education of the respondents, it has to be asked from all in the same way. (Hirsjärvi et al. 2010, 193)

5.2 Implementation of the study

This thesis is a traditional thesis, where the quantitative research method is used. There are also some qualitative features used when trying to acquire more detailed opinions from the respondents.

The data was collected by a survey that was sent to all the members of the organization via e-mail. Survey was chosen for the data collection process due to the fact that with a survey it is possible to collect a wider research data; it is possible to get a lot of respondents and several different questions can be asked. (Hirsjärvi et al 2010, 195)
According to Hirsjärvi et al, there are usually three types of question forms used in surveys:

1) *Open questions*, where only the questions are written and there is space for the answer;

2) *Questions with multiple choices*, where there are ready alternatives for the respondents;

3) *Scaled questions (Likert scale)*, where the researcher has made statements and the respondent will then choose whether (s)he agrees/disagrees with the statement.

### 5.3 Limitations to the study

According to Hirsjärvi et al 2010, the research data is most commonly considered as superficial and theoretically modest. Also the following facts are considered as disadvantages:

- It is impossible to know, whether the respondents have taken the survey *seriously*, meaning that have they strived to answer honestly and thoroughly;
- It is also unclear, how good the answer alternatives have been from the respondent’s perspective; misunderstandings are hard to control;
- It cannot be known, how the respondents have concerned themselves to the questions that were asked;
- The loss (not answering) is big in some cases.

In this case, when the research data was collected via Webropol-form that was sent by e-mail, it had to be taken into account, that there might have been errors with the e-mail addresses, for example, due to change of workplace or a leave of absence that might lead to fewer amount of respondents. Also, there were a lot of open questions, which might have a bigger loss especially in some of the last questions of the study if e.g. the respondents have been in a hurry when doing the questionnaire. This is why the person-defining questions were left as the last part of the questionnaire as people usually tend to answer to those questions because the answers in them are clear (e.g. gender).
6 Presenting the results

The questionnaire form (Appendix 6) was divided into five different sections.

1) Name and visual look
2) Web pages, newsletter “Aito asiaa” and magazine Aito
3) Communication about renewing Aito HSO
4) Aito HSO member services
5) Person-defining questions

In these five sections there were totally 12 questions with multiple choices and several open questions, in which it was wanted to get more detailed information about the members’ opinions. Every section ended to a free comment field in which even more detailed comments were asked.

6.1 Name and visual look

With the following six questions it was wanted to find out what are the members’ opinions on the new name and the visual look of the organization.

342 respondents answered to the first question “How does the name “Aito HSO” describe the organization in your opinion?” Approximately a half (48%) of the respondents answered “well”, 29% “excellent” and 18% a little. Only 16 people (5%) said that the name does not describe the organization at all. The results are described also in Figure 10.
The question no. 2 was “What do you think about the organization’s new logo?” 18.5% of the respondents (63 people) said that the logo is excellent and 54.8% (187 people) the logo is good. The questions had a total amount of 341 respondents. The figure below clarifies the situation.

The following question was an open question, in which the respondents wrote the answer themselves. The question ‘What does the renewed logo communicate of the organization?’ This question got over 240 comments, which could be divided into two different categories, those with a positive connotation and those with a negative one. A connotation is typically understood as an emotional or cultural association that a single word or phrase carries.
Question 4 handled with the new visual look of the organization. 338 people answered to this question with the following results: a quarter (23.7; 80) answered that the new visual look is very well succeeded and 57.1% (193 people) answered quite succeeded. 17% did not find the new look that good and 2.1% (7) found the new look totally failed.

The following question in this part wanted to find out what the members think about the new slogan of Aito HSO, which is: “A good investment on expertise” (suom. Hyvä sijoitus osaamiseen). Over 78% of the respondents found the slogan either OK, good or very good. 3 respondents left the question blank. There were 274 respondents who answered to this question.

The last question in this part was also an open question: “If you could change some of Aito HSO’s renewals, which would you change and how?” This question got 168 answers of which 16 were blanks. The most criticized features in the renewing process were the word ‘Aito’ and the new colors. Few respondents criticized the new slogan and also the use of HSO in the name of the organization as some respondents had found it ‘unclear among the corporate world’.

The last field in this section was an open comment field for all comments regarding the look renewal. It got 98 comments of which 17 were blanks. In over a third of the comments the renewal was found as a positive one. Among others it was appreciated that the name came from the members and as a whole the renewal was found very
good. The features that were mostly criticized were again using the word ‘aito’ and the new colors. In this open comment field, the loss can already be seen clearly, when only 71 respondents of the original 344 answered to this one.

6.2 Web pages, newsletter “Aito asiaa” and magazine Aito

The second part of the survey was about the web pages, newsletter and magazine Aito. The most interesting point when doing this part was the question regarding the newsletter “Aito asiaa” due to the fact that it was a quite new concept when the questionnaire was published.

The first question in this part asked about the web pages of the organization. The question got 308 answers. 167 people (54,2%) answered that the pages were very clear and informative and 127 people (41,2%) that the pages were comprehensive, but something was missing. Only 6,5% (20) thought that the web pages were unclear. None of the respondents found the pages very tenuous.

Figure 13. Opinions about web pages www.aitohso.fi (n=308)

The following question in this part was an open question in which the respondents were asked to define their opinion about the renewed newsletter Aito asiaa. This question got 193 answers, of which 5 were blanks. Most of the comments were positive ones, such as: ‘welcome’, ‘clear’, ‘good’, ‘OK’. The negative issues that aroused among the comments were: ‘for some reason it goes to junkmail’ and ‘have not received a
newsletter for some reason’. It was appreciated that the newsletter is very compact as there are lots of other e-mail coming in every day.

The third question in this part asked about the opinions on the frequency of the newsletter Aito asiaa. The question got 325 answers, in which 93,2% of the people found the frequency convenient. 4% (13) found the frequency too rare and 2,8% (9) too often.

![Figure 14. Opinions on frequency of e-newsletter Aito asiaa (n=325)](image)

“Do you frequently read the member magazine Aito?” was the fourth question in this section and it had 325 respondents. 80% of the respondents answered that they read it frequently. The alternative ‘No’ had also another question in it: why? 7 people of the 67 that answered ‘No’ did not comment their answer at all; 19 told that lack of time was the main reason for not reading it; 6 told that they do browse through the magazine, but do not read it that well through.

The following question in this section was “Does the new magazine Aito meet your expectations?” 332 respondents answered to this question and 88% found that the magazine does meet the expectations. This question had an open field for comments regarding the magazine, in which the following issues were mentioned:

- the content does not meet everyone, due to the fact that all the members are not assistants / secretaries or in an international organization
- more professional content was asked
The last statement/question in this part was a free comment field regarding the renewals mentioned in this section. It had 69 comments, of which 12 were empty. In the comments the following issues were handled.

Positive comments:
- They are clearer now than before
- Great coherent look!
- Going absolutely in right direction
- The renewal makes a modern and coherent impression to the organization’s external communication
- Web pages are easier to use now than before

Issues that aroused among the comments:
- The home page is confusing
- Colors on the web page are old-fashioned
- No change on web pages’ content seem to have happened
- Font on the web pages is dull/too big
- More information and links to web pages that support daily work

As it can be seen in these comments, the opinions in them vary quite a lot. These issues have been taken into consideration in paragraph 7.4, when discussing about the proceeding recommendations.

6.3 Communication about renewing Aito HSO

The third section of the questionnaire handled Aito HSO’s communication about its renewals.

The first question in this section was “How much do you think you have got information about Aito HSO’s renewals?” 78.2% (262 people) thought that the amount of information they had got about the renewals was adequate. 17.3% (58) answered a little
and 7 people (2.1%) answered not at all. In the last alternative there was an additional field: else, what. 2.4% (8 people) chose this alternative and their explanations were in between too much, too little and as a new member, I cannot tell. The below pie clarifies the situation.

![Pie chart showing responses to the survey question](image)

Figure 15. Amount information on Aito HSO’s renewals (n=335)

The second question in this section was “Through which channel did you firstly get the information about the organization’s renewals?” 43.6% of the respondents said that they had got the information from newsletter Aitoa asiaa. The second biggest part had got the information from Aito-magazine. All in all there were 328 people that answered to this question, which means that all the respondents answered to this question. More detailed results can be seen from Figure 16.

![Bar chart showing channel through which information was first found](image)

Figure 16. Channel through which the information on Aito HSO’s renewals was firstly found out (n=328)
This part was followed by an open comment field regarding the communication and marketing of the renewing process. This had only 48 respondents, of which 11 were blanks, which means that there were only 37 comments in this part, i.e. only 10.7% of all respondents answered to this question. This means that these answers cannot be interpreted in the same way as the other questions, because of a big loss, but as single opinions that the single members have. Any bigger conclusions cannot be made on this basis. Over a half of the respondents stated that the communication has been at least sufficient or good. In a couple of the answers it was appreciated that the members were taken with to the planning process.

The last question in this part was ‘Has the reform made it possible that it is easier for you to identify to the organization Aito HSO instead of Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit?’ 56% of the people answered yes. This question had also an alternative field for comments in which the most comments stated that it is good that the word ‘sihteeri’ (in English ‘secretary’) is not included in the new name because of the fact that there are a lot of members who do not work as secretaries. Another point of view was that all the members have not graduated as BBA’s (Finnish word ‘tradenomi’) that was included in the previous name. Also the shortness of the name was appreciated.

The features that were criticized among the No-answers were firstly the issue that the word ‘aito’ (in English authentic, real, genuine) was found a bit irritating. Secondly, there were a lot of comments, in which it was stated that they had identified themselves very well to the organization during the time of the previous name.

6.4 Aito HSO’s member services

The first question in this part was of type multiple selections, where the respondents were able to choose as many alternatives as they wanted, because all the possible services used wanted to be acknowledged and only one possible answer in this question would have been a limitation. The first question in this part was ‘Which member services of Aito HSO have you used’. The question included the term ‘Aito HSO’ to avoid possible mixing of Akavan Erityisalat’s member services to this one. 303 an-
answered to this question. There were 88 people that chose the alternative 1 ‘used member card to get discounts’. 192 of the 303 people, over 63%, had participated in some member events.

The third alternative ‘visited the Member’s Extranet’ got 207 marks. This alternative included another question: ‘What information have you acquired on the Extranet?’ 59 said that they had searched information on member events. Most of the other answers included either salary information or open jobs in Työpaikkapörssi so it was noticeable that information searched on the Extranet does consist either of member events, salary information or open jobs. Työpaikkapörssi (in English Job Market) is a forum at Aito HSO’s Member’s Extranet, where the organizations can inform about open positions.

The last alternative “other, what” got 15 marks, of which 4 dealt with discounts of Akava Special Branches, 2 had not used any services for the time being. There were 7 separate answers, which handled with jobs, information on member fee, cooperative organizations and tutor evening. 1 left this field blank.

The following question wanted to find out what the members think about the amount of Aito HSO’s member services. This question had 319 answers and the following pie depicts the results more detailed.

Figure 17. Amount of Aito HSO’s member services (n=319)
The question above was followed by an open question, in which it was asked what kind of member services would be welcome or if there was something that was found useless. This open question got 90 answers, in which the following kinds of issues were discussed:

- more discounts to culture events/hotels/restaurants (also outside Capital Region)
- more services/events outside the Capital Region
- more events for retired members

6.5 Person-defining questions

In the final section of the questionnaire some person-defining questions were asked. The first question in this part was about the gender of the respondent and 99% of the respondents were female.

In the second question the age of the respondent was defined. It was quite surprising to find out that the age of the respondents was distributed that evenly to all possible alternatives excluding the selection +65 years.

![Figure 18. Respondents’ age (n=344)](image)

The third question in this part wanted to find out where the respondents live. 76% of the respondents said that they live in the Capital Region and 14% elsewhere in Southern Finland. This means that 9/10 of the respondents live in Southern Finland,
which according to Rapp describes the organization well, due to the fact that also most of the members live in Southern Finland. It needs to be mentioned that whole Finland was represented among these answers, there were people all over the country, which can be seen from the pie below.

![Figure 19. Respondents’ home in Finland (n=341)](image)

In fourth question of this part the employment situation of the respondent was defined. 82% of the respondents answered that they were in working life whereas 9% said that they were students. This 9% of students represents also the whole member structure Aito HSO has, as approximately 9% of their members are students. The possibility of being a student and working was not specified, but it was said in the question that those who are full-time student but also working, should pick “a student” to get accurate results.
It was also asked, in which sector of the society the respondents were working. 64% of the respondents answered that they work on the private sector whereas 29% said that their job was on public sector. Only 6% was working on 3rd sector and the remaining 1% of the respondents was entrepreneurs or freelancers.

In the following questions, 66% of the respondents answered that their everyday duties are regular duties, 28% expert duties and only 6% said that their duties are chief or executive duties.
The length of one’s career was defined in the following question. This question got 344 respondents although there was an error in making the alternatives of the question when the alternative 16-20 years was dropped out due to a technical error. When presenting the results according to the alternatives given, the chart is the following:

![Pie chart](image)

Figure 22. Length of career in years – part 1 (n=344)

But, as this above pie does not tell the whole truth, the chart could be re-divided into new categories: 1-10, 11-25 and 26+ because it presumably has been so that the people who would have belonged to category 16-20 have either responded 11-15 or 21-25 or then left this question blank. As the total amount respondents of the survey is the same as the amount respondents in this question, it means that there has not been any loss in this question, even though one alternative was missing. That is why the form of the pie in part 2 would probably be accurate.
In following question the study degree of the respondents was defined. 48% of the respondents said that they had graduated as HSO-secretaries. 46% had graduated as tradenomi, HSO. This means that only 6% of the respondents had graduated from somewhere else than HAAGA-HELIA University of Applied Sciences, Helia Polytechnic or Helsingin Sihteeriopisto.

The last question asked about the graduation year of the respondents. In the chart below it can be seen that the graduation has been taken place between 1972 and 2016. The years after 2011 shall be considered as possible graduation years as the study was made in December 2011. It was very surprising to find out that at least one person had graduated per year between this excluding year 1973.
7 Discussion

Firstly in this part all conclusions regarding the study will be defined. In the second part the research objectives are concluded. The third part will focus on validity and reliability of the study. In the fourth part there will be some recommendations based to the results of the study and the final part is reserved for assessment.

7.1 Conclusions

In this section the results will be concluded according to each part of the study. The findings will also be linked to the theories stated in paragraph 4.

7.1.1 New name and visual look of Aito HSO

In all four questions in this section the overall results appear to be that the new name and look suits to the members either well or excellently. Over 70% of the respondents had answered either excellent or well to three questions in this section. As one question in this section was an open question, where the respondents were able to give their own connotations of the logo, it cannot be included to these results as such.

When linking these results to paragraph 4.2 it seems that the core of the brand of Aito HSO had already formed as a very strong one prior the whole renewal process because of the fact that the best brands are able to take advantage of the changes in the environment and adjust to different situations. In Aito HSO’s case there was a need for an update as the association has members working also in other professions than secretaries/assistants.

7.1.2 Webpages, newsletter and magazine

When analyzing the members’ opinions on the renewed look of Aito HSO’s different forums (www.aitohso.fi, Aitoa asiaa and Aito-magazine) it seems that all the forums are quite equally appreciated among the members. The e-newsletter Aitoa asiaa was found very useful, easy and compact and also the Aito-magazine was read frequently and found to meet member’s expectations.
Over a half of the respondents said that the webpages were very clear and informative. But it should be notified that over 41% found the webpages comprehensive, but also that something was missing. This finding reflects a lot to the modern world, as almost everything is online or at least should be as people do not have time to search for information outside the internet. There were also a lot of comments regarding the web pages, which have been taken as proceeding recommendations in paragraph 7.4.

7.1.3 Communication about the renewing process

As presented in paragraph 6.3, it seems that all in all the communication on the whole process has been good and thorough. As explained in paragraphs 4.3 and 4.4, as all information processing is done through perceptions and that the forming of those perceptions is a long-lasting process during which they constantly develop, the perceptions should be made possible in several contexts when trying to develop the brand. In other words, when Aito HSO decided to renew its look, it wanted to promote the change in several different forums it already had.

Also the new concept of the e-newsletter Aitoa asiaa turned out as a successful forum in communication about the renewing process, as it can be noticed from Figure 16, as over 43% of the respondents had got the information on Aito HSO’s renewals through that channel.

In this part, there was an especially interesting question for the organization itself, which was the question on identifying to the new organization Aito HSO. This was one of the key questions that had been included to the survey as it could be considered one of the most important issues regarding the renewing process – identifying to the new organization. As a whole and when considering the results, this question was maybe rather difficult for the respondents as ‘identify’ is a very strong word. And why is this found difficult: on a simple reason; the results in this question do not respond to the other findings that there have been regarding the whole renewal process. On the other hand, maybe the respondents had actually identified themselves to the old organ-
ization already, and they just appreciate the changes as a fresh breeze of the organization.

### 7.1.4 Aito HSO’s member services

As referred in paragraph 2.2.3, Aito HSO is a private non-profit organization, which strives for its member’s interests by being a trade union. A common feature within non-profit organizations is the fact that they offer member services as exchange for the payment the members make for the organization.

Aito HSO offers a variety of member services, which some of them are organized in cooperation with Akava Special Branches. Over 63% of the respondents had used some of the organization’s member services, which means that the members have found the services useful; in other words, supply and demand meet each other in this case. In this question, the average for the amount alternatives (services that Aito HSO has) that the respondents had used was 1.46; which in other words means that one respondent had used 1.46 Aito HSO’s services in average.

As over 85% of the respondents answered that the amount member services is adequate, it can be presumed that also the membership fee correlates well to the amount member services.

### 7.2 Answers to the research problems/objectives

As stated in the paragraph 1.2; the problem in the organization was that they did not know what their members thought about the recent change in the logo/name/brand process. They did not know whether the new logo answered to the perceptions the members had and were the expectations the members had been fulfilled now. The other problem that was trying to be solved (or at least try to find out some recommendations to it) was that the organization was somewhat uncertain about the fact that what their members think about their member services.
What comes to the first research objective, it seems that the renewal process has all in all been very successful and well-communicated. The new logo and name were mostly found either excellent or good and the connotations that the logo had among the respondents responded the same ones that the planning team had. The communication on the renewal process has been either good or sufficient and available in several forums, such as in Aito-magazine, e-newsletter Aitoa asaa, web pages, member’s extranet, letter.

The renewal process has made all the different forums somehow to support each other by having the same colours and look. A great cohesion can be seen among the different material Aito HSO has, i.e. in stationery, envelopes, e-newsletter, magazine etc. This reflects well the theory presented in paragraph 4.3, when trying to develop the brand, the perceptions should be made possible in several contexts.

What comes to the second research problem, as stated in paragraph 7.1.4, over 85% of the respondents answered that the amount member services is adequate so it can be presumed that the membership fee correlates well to the amount member services.

Over 63% of the respondents had used some of the organization’s member services, which means that the members found Aito HSO’s services useful. All in all, it seems that most of the members are satisfied with the current selection of the services, but as there were some issues that arouse among the comments in this part, those have been taken into consideration in paragraph 7.4, where the proceeding recommendations are discussed.

### 7.3 Validity and reliability of the study

According to Hiltunen, reliability and validity are often defined from two different points of view, which are:

- Are the measuring / research methods valid and reliable?
- Are the conclusions drawn from the results valid and reliable?
7.3.1 Validity

Validity expresses the fact how well the measuring or research method used in the study measures the feature of the phenomenon that is supposed to be measured. Validity of the study is good, when the target group and the questions of the study are correct.

A total lack of validity makes the study worthless. In such case a total other issue is being researched instead of the original target. An inadequate validity means that the empirical observations and the whole study in itself focus more or less towards the other direction than it was meant to be (Hiltunen, 3. 2009).

In this study the validity is found good, because the respondents were selected randomly among the members according to their own interest to answer to the questionnaire. Also the results show that the questions and alternatives have been correct and clear, excluding the question regarding length of career, in which one alternative was missing.

7.3.2 Reliability

Reliability expresses how reliably and repeatedly the used research method measures the wanted phenomenon. Reliability can be separated into two different components that are stability and consistency.

According to Hiltunen, checking the reliability of a study can be divided into four different parts:

- Congruence
  - How well the different indicators measure the same thing? The information will become more convincing if more indicators are used.
- Accuracy
  - The accuracy of a recurring phenomenon; can be checked by asking the same question in different ways and comparing those results to each
other. This feature is often used in aptitude tests that companies or educational institutes might do for their applicants.

- **Objectivity vs. subjectivity**
  - How do others understand the meaning and framework of the researcher?

- **Consistency**
  - A phenomenon can be considered consistent if it has been discovered similar different times.

This study is found reliable as several different indicators have been used to define the opinions of the members on the whole renewal process. Not only were the opinions on the logo asked, there were also several other related features asked as well.

### 7.4 Proceeding recommendations for Aito HSO

As a conclusion for this thesis there are some proceeding recommendations for Aito HSO based on the results presented in previous paragraphs. The recommendations can be divided into three categories, which are:

1. Development suggestions for magazine Aito and the web pages
2. Increasing the amount of member services outside the Capital Region and events for retired/elderly members
3. Continuous follow-up of the new brand

The member magazine Aito was the most criticized among the communication forums the organization has. As stated in paragraph 6.2, the members would like to have more versatile content in the magazine as not all the members are only assistants/secretaries. This was also noticed in the questionnaire, when the profession of the respondent was asked, there were, for example, travel manager, HR officer, coordinator, marketing manager, sales person, office manager among the several different types of assistants. Maybe the magazine could have in every issue a column in it, in which a member of Aito HSO is presented. That interview could then lead to new content on each magazine as it could be built on the suggestions the interviewee has.
Some of the respondents found the web pages quite complex and that there was not that much content in them. After visiting both the web pages and the Member’s Extranet, it was found out that some of the features that were criticized as a lack on the pages were actually found at the Member’s Extranet (for example magazine Aito, which is available online at the Extranet). It seems that a good idea would be to emphasize the content of the Extranet e.g. in the newsletter, as it was considered a great communication channel of the organization. For example, every time when a new issue of the magazine is published, it could be mentioned in the newsletter and then there could be a link to the online version of the magazine. The same comes to launching new services in the organization, informing about them briefly in the newsletter makes the members’ awareness and interest wake up and also more visitors to the extranet, when the detailed information is only available there.

What comes to the member services, as a whole, the amount of them was found sufficient, but in the detailed comments after the question it was mentioned that there could be some more services available outside the Capital Region as well. Although 76% of the respondents live in the Capital Region, the remaining 24% is also entitled for similar kinds of member events that are arranged in e.g. Helsinki. As the organization is rather small and it does not have local offices such as the bigger trade unions mentioned in paragraph 3.2, it is rather difficult to expand to other areas than nearby the center of the area, in which most of the members are, but, maybe with help of active members it would be possible someday. This also boils down to good communication and marketing on such event or service.

There was also some discussion on arranging more events for elderly/retired members. In Finland during the next decades, the largest generations are going to retire, which means that also the amount of retired members in trade unions increases. As it is very important to remember also these members, who have paid for the services for several years or even decades, it would be important to acknowledge the situation already now and try to find out what would be the best kind of activities to arrange for the retired members as well.
The third suggestion is following-up the brand process continuously. In this case, the visual appearance of Aito HSO’s precedent Tradenomi HSO Sihteerit was in use for several years and it was already considered somewhat old-fashioned. Maybe this time that effect would be avoided by having a continuous follow-up on the members’ opinions to keep the ‘freshness’ in the perceptions of the members during the next few years. As the survey was conducted several months before this part was written, it is suggested that a somewhat similar survey, maybe a smaller one, could be conducted maybe in 2013.

7.5 Self-assessment

This thesis was very topical for Aito HSO and also very interesting for me as I am a member of the organization. During the process I learned a lot new things regarding branding, non-profit organizations and trade unions. Also the basic concepts of reliability and validity are now clearer.

What comes to planning and time management, this thesis did not finish as fast as it was expected due to several other engagements at the same time during this process. As the questionnaire was rather long, it meant that also analyzing that data took longer. If I would need to conduct a similar study again, it would probably not be as time-consuming as this one, as the basic tools and information gathering skills would be already learned.
Bibliography


Appendices

Appendix 1: New marketing material of Aito HSO
Appendix 2: Home page of www.aitohso.fi
Appendix 3: New Aito-magazine
HSO-olohuone 29.8: Nyt saa kysyä työstä!


Alustava ohjelma:

16.00 Tutustumiskierros Kansallismuseon. Mainitse ilmoittautumislomakkeessa, jos osallistut tutustumiskierrokseen.

16.30 Tervetuloa, Marina Paulaharju, puheenjohtaja, Aito HSO
Sodexon tervehdys, Seija Siplä, Key Account Manager, Sodexo

Buffet
Appendix 5: Cover letter for the survey in Aitoa asiaa 11/2012

Kysely järjestön ilmeuudistuksesta ja jäsenpalvelujen kehittämisestä

Aito HSO ry:n opiskelijajäsen Riikka Ilmonen tekee opinnäytetyötään järjestön ilmeuudistuksesta sekä jäsenpalvelujen kehittämisestä.

Keräämme kyselyllä avokasia tietoa siitä, millaisia tunteita ja mielikuvia Aito HSO ry:n uusi nimi ja visuaalinen ilme herättävät sekä jäsenten kokemuksista ja teivomuksista jäsenpalvelujen suhteen. Vastaamalla voit auttaa kehittämään toimintaamme!


Tutkimustulokset julkaistaan alkuvuodesta 2012 Aito HSO:n netissä ja lähetetään sekä jäsenlehti Aidossa.

Appendix 6: Webropol questionnaire form

Nimi- ja ilmeuudistuskysely

Kerro, miten Alto HSO:n toteuttama nimi- ja ilmeuudistus on mielestäsi onnistunut!

Nimi ja visuaalinen ilme

1) Mitä "Alto HSO" nimi kuvaa mielestäsi järjestöä?
   - erinomaisesti
   - hyvin
   - vähän
   - ei ollenkaan

2) Mitä mieltä olet järjestön uudistetusta logoasta? (tämän kyselytyömaan yläalaissa)
   - erinomainen
   - hyvä
   - tyydyttävä
   - ei kuva ollenkaan
   - järjestöä

Mitä uudistunut logo mielestäsi viestii järjestötä?

3) Onko uusi visuaalinen ilme mielestäsi
4) Mitä mieltä olet Alto HSO:n uudesta sloganista "Hyvä alijoitus osaamiseen"?

5) Jos voisit muuttaa jotain Alto HSO:n uudistuksista, mitä muuttaisit ja miten?

Vapaat kommentit ilmeudistukseen:

Nettisivut, jäsentiedote Aitoa asiaa ja Jäsentähti Alto

6) Uudet nettisivut www.aitohso.fi ovat mielestääsi:

☐ erittäin selkeät ja informatiiviset
☐ kattavat, mutta jotain puuttuu
7) Uudistunut sähköinen jäsentiedote Altoa asiala on mielestäsi:

8) Altoa asialaa ilmesty

- Ilan usein
- Sopivin välälajoin
- Ilan harvoin

9) Luetteko säännöllisesti jäsenlehti Altoa?

- Kyllä
- Ei, miksi?

10) Vastaako uusi jäsenlehti Alto odotuksiasi?

- Kyllä
- Ei

Vapaat perustelut

11) Vapaat kommentit jäsenlehti, -tiedote ja internetisivu-uudistukseen:
Alto HSO:n uudistuksesta viestiminen

12) Miten paljon koet saaneesi tietoa Alto HSO:n uudistuksesta?
- sopivasti
- vähän
- en ollenkaan
- muu, mikä?

13) Minkä kanavan välttelykaellä sait ensimmäisenä tiedon yhdistyksen uudistuksesta?
Valitse seuraavista yksi: ...

14) Vapaat kommentit uudistukseen liittyneeseen viestintään ja merkinnöille:

15) Onko uudistus kokonaisuudessaan mahdollistanut sen, että sinun on jäsenenä helpompi samaistua järjestön "Alto HSO" kuin "Tradenomi HSO Sihteeri"?
- Kyllä
- Ei

Vapaat perustelut

Alto HSO:n jäsenpalvelut

16) Mitä Alto HSO:n jäsenpalveluja olet joskus käyttänyt?
- käyttänyt jäsenkortilla saatavia alennuksia
17) Mita mieltä olet jäsenpalveluiden määristä?
- Liikaa palveluita
- Sopiva määri
- Liian vähän palveluita

18) Millaisia jäsenpalveluja toivot lisää tai onko jokin palvelusta mielestäsi tarpeeton?

19) Vapaat kommentit Alto HSO:lle

Taustatiedot

Henkilötiedot:
- Nainen
- Mies

Ika:

Asum:
- Pääläkeasunnossa
Olen: (valitse yksi vaihtoehto)
- opiskelija (jos olet päätoiminen opiskelija, valitse tämä vaikka kahvit töissä opintojen ohella)
- työelämästä (vastaa seuraavan kysymyksen)
- tyttö
- eläkkeellä
- perhevapaalla
- muilla vapaalla (esim. vuorottelu- tai opintovapaat)

Työskentelen: (vastaa myös seuraavaan kysymykseen)
- julkisella sektorilla
- yksityisellä sektorilla
- 3. sektorilla (järjestöt)
- yritysä/freelancer

Työtäni parhaiten kuvaa:
- päällikö/johdajatehtävät
- asiantuntijatehtävät
- toimihenkilötehtävät

Ammattinimikeeni on:

Kuinka kauan olet ollut kaiken kaikkiaan työelämässä?
- alle vuoden

Koulutus (jos olet opiskelija, valitse se, mikäl valmistut):
☐ HS-sihteerit
☐ tradenom, HSO
☐ KTM/PM/muu ylempi korkeakoulututkinto
☐ muu, mikä?

Valmistumisvuosi:

Osallistun arvontaan ja jätän yhteystietoni

☐ Kyllä
☐ En

Yhteystietolomake

Etunimi
Sukunimi
GSM
Sähköposti
Yritys / Yhteisö

☐ Valvrista vastausten lähetys
Lähetä