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BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS CUSTOMER SURVEY
AND GERMAN MARKET RESEARCH
CASE COMPANY:
LEHTOSEN KONEPAJA OY

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Lehtosen Konepaja Oy on suomalainen raskaan metalliteollisuuden tilauskonepaja, joka sijaitsee Peipohjassa, Kokemäellä. Keskisuurena yrityksenä se on erikoistunut alihankintaan business-to-business markkina-alueella, ja toimii alihankkijana useille merkittäville kansainvälisille teknologiateollisuuden vientiyrityksille. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy on mukana Finnish-German Competence Network –projektissa (FGCN), joka on Euroopan unionin osaksi rahoittama hanke. FGCN -projekti tukee yhdessä myös projekteissa mukana olevien korkeakoulujen kanssa satakuntalaisten pienten ja keskisuurien yritysten kansainvälistymistä Saksan markkinoilla. Tutkimuksen aihe alueen valinnan pohjana oli Lehtosen Konepaja Oy:n toivomus aiheen tutkimisesta. Lisäksi FGCN –projektin alkuvaiheessa tehtävä selvitys ja kartoitus toteutettiin opin-
näytetyön muodossa.

Tämän opin-
näytetyön tavoitteena oli kartoittaa Lehtosen Konepaja Oy:lle potentiaa-
lisiä business-to-business asiakkaita ennalta määritetyistä Saksan osavaltioista. Li-
säksi tavoitteena oli laatia kohdemarkkina-alueesta kattava markkinatutkimus. Tut-
kimuksen tärkeimpiä osaongelmia oli: 1) selvittää, miten yritys voi löytää business-
to-business asiakkaita, 2) selvittää, miten luoda asiakassuhteita saksalaisiin yrityksiin
ja 3) pohtia, mitä markkinointiin liittyviä parannuksia kohdeyrityksen pitäisi tehdä,
jotta voisi kansainvälistyä ja löytää yhteistyökumppaneita. Opin-
näytetyössä tuotiin
esille Lehtosen Konepaja Oy:n tämänhetkinen tilanne ja analysoitiin yrityksen val-
miutta laajentaa kaupankäyntiä Saksan markkinoille.

Käytetty tutkimusmenetelmä oli kvalitatiivinen, ja tutkimusmuotoina käytettiin sekä
kirjoituspöytä- että kenttätutkimusta. Tutkielman teoreettisessa osuudessa käsiteltiin
arvojärjestelmää, joka kulminoitui yrityksen arvoketjun käsittelyyn. Teoreettinen
osuus nojautui vahvasti ammattikirjallisuuteen. Empiirisessä osiossa sovellettiin tut-
kimuksen teoreettisia malleja, joiden avulla voitiin analysoida kohdeyritykselle löy-
dettyjä potentiaalisia business-to-business asiakkaita ja haastattelumenetelmää käy-
tettiin aineiston keräyksessä.

Tutkimuksessa selvisi, että tutkimuksessa käytetyt teoreettiset taustat soveltuvat yri-
tyksien kansainvälistymisprosessiin ja business-to-business asiakaskartoitukseen.
Tutkimuksen tuloksena kohdeyritykselle potentiaalisiksi business-to-business asia-
kasehdotuksiksi muodostuivat SiPro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH, Jochen
Brill GmbH, Anakon GmbH ja Dietrich Maschinen GmbH, joihin Lehtosen Konepa-
ja Oy:n suositeltiin ottaa yhteyttä sekä parantaa business-to-business markkinointia.

BUSINESS-TO-BUSINESS CUSTOMER SURVEY AND GERMAN MARKET RESEARCH – CASE COMPANY: LEHTOSEN KONEPAJA OY

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Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is a Finnish mechanical engineering enterprise manufacturing heavy metal products and is located in Peipohja, Kokemäki. As a medium-sized enterprise it is specialised in subcontracting in business-to-business market area, and operates as subcontractor to many remarkable international export enterprises in technology industry. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is in Finnish-German Competence Network –project (FGCN), which is part-financed by European Union. FGCN –project supports, together with the universities being along, small and medium sized enterprises in Satakunta to internationalise in German market. The basis for the selection of the topic was the request of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to carry out a research on this subject. In addition, the clarifications and surveys needed in the beginning of the FGCN –project, were able to carried through in the form of thesis.

The purpose of this thesis was to deliver a business-to-business customer survey of potential customers from selected states in Germany for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The purpose was to deliver also a market research of the target market. The partial challenges of this study were: 1) To clarify, how a company can find business-to-business customers, 2) To clarify, how to make business contacts with German companies and 3) To consider, what kind of marketing decisions must the target company make in order to internationalise and find co-operative partners. In addition, the current situation of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was brought out and the availability of the company to expand its business to German market was analysed.

The research method used was qualitative, and both desk and field research were used. The theoretical part of the thesis included the issues of the value chain, which culminated to deal with the company's value chain. This part of the thesis relies heavily on professional literature. In the empirical part of the thesis, the theoretical models were applied and used in analysing the potential business-to-business customers to target company and interviews were used to collect information.

The research pointed out that the used theoretical models can be applied to company's internationalisation process and to business-to-business customer survey. As a result of this research SiPro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH, Jochen Brill GmbH, Anakon GmbH and Dietrich Maschinen GmbH were comprised to the potential business-to-business customers. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was recommended to contact there potential companies and to improve business-business marketing.

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1 INTRODUCTION

In the face of globalization and increasingly interconnected world many firms attempt to expand their sales into foreign markets. International expansion provides new and potentially more profitable markets; helps increase the firm's competitiveness; and facilitates access to new product ideas, manufacturing innovations and the latest technology. However, internationalization is unlikely to be successful unless the firm prepares in advance. Advance planning has often been regarded as important to the success of new international ventures. (Hollensen, S. 2007, 5)

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is a Finnish mechanical engineering enterprise manufacturing heavy metal products and is specialised in subcontracting in business-to-business market area. As a medium-sized enterprise it is planning to expand their sales into foreign markets, since they have gained a stable position in their market in Finland. The company had made a foreign market analysis in the spring 2006, and Germany was selected as a target country. This study will help Lehtosen Konepaja Oy assess the alternative foreign market by searching potential business-to-business customers to the company and in that way help the company in their internationalisation process. In order to conduct this study German language knowledge will be obligatory and the internationalisation process will need to be understood from both theoretical and practical side. Based on the information received Lehtosen Konepaja Oy will formulate its own international strategy and the implementation of strategy will make the ultimately decision whether to enter or not into Germany.

1.1 Background of the study

This study is a part of the project of Finnish-German Competence Network (FGCN) and Satakunta University of Applied Sciences. Competence Network -Research and Development project supports small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in

Satakunta in their internationalisation process. FGCN –project uses an international co-operation guide, which is being used to develop the internationalisation preparedness of all the SMEs in Satakunta. The current ability of the enterprises to expand their sales will be scanned with this operation model, create a plan for developing the internationalisation, find out the needed operations to develop international know-how and formulate market researches. All the parts in these projects will be involved when tailoring the developing operations. In the beginning of the projects students in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences can join either as a part of their course assignments or as their thesis projects. (Finnish-German Competence Network website 2009)

An earlier study has been made in Faculty of Business and Culture Pori, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences as a course assignment in the year 2006. The partner school Fachhochschule Ludvigshafen has taken part in this research. However, this earlier study was not satisfactory enough for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, since the lack of German language knowledge of the research group. The study needed to be deepened and revised before handing it to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy.

This study will be divided into two parts; case study and theoretical study. The aim of the case study will be to conduct a wider and more extensive research of German market and potential business-to-business customer survey for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The potential business-to-business customers will need to locate in Rhein-Neckar province, in more precise in Hessen, Baden-Württemberg or Rheinland-Pfalz states. The geographical target area was defined by Lehtosen Konepaja Oy with the co-operation of Satakunta University of Applied Sciences and Fachhochschule Ludvigshafen in the spring 2006. The company will need this kind of information in their future plans to expand their sales into German market and the purpose of the case study will be to help Lehtosen Konepaja Oy assess the alternative foreign market.

The theoretical study will concentrate on the primary activities of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the company by using value chain analysis. The purpose of the theoretical study is to analyse the availability of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to expand their market to German market, and to improve their

marketing strategies, which will increase the visibility of the company. The theoretical framework will be introduced more focused in Chapter 1.3.

1.2 Research questions and methods used

The research questions have been divided into two groups as there are two parts of the study. The study will answer to the following research questions:

Case study:

1. In what kind of companies Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is interested in order to internationalise?
2. What is the need of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy?
3. Is there a potential market for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in Rhein-Neckar province?
4. How to find Business-to-Business co-operative partners?
5. How to make business contacts with German companies?
6. What kind of marketing decisions must Lehtosen Konepaja Oy make in order to internationalise and find co-operative partners?

Theoretical study:

7. How value chain can be applied in companies' internationalise process?
8. How value chain analysis suits for SME's internationalise process as a tool?

The case study will start by defining the need of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and in what kind of companies Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is looking for. The other questions related to the case study will help to categorise the potential German companies and to select only the most potential customers in the market research. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy will make its own conclusions about the selected companies, and will analyse the results of the market research before taking the next step – the decision whether to make contact to these potential companies or not. The most important research questions for the theoretical study will be the ones related to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and the company's primary activities. These questions will help to create a framework that is necessary in order to be able to improve the readiness of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in their internationalisation process.

The study will be conducted as a desk research in both parts of the study; case and theoretical study. In the case study the desk research will be used for finding the possible potential customers for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The potential customer survey will start by getting familiar with the earlier study made by the group of researchers at Satakunta University of Applied Sciences in Faculty of Business and Culture Pori. The earlier study was sent to the author, which contained 18 possibly potential customers. The purpose is to go through all the companies, update the contact information, revise the company information, translate the main parts from the companies' website, analyse the companies' potentiality and compare it to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy's need. All these 18 companies will be categorised by their potentiality. The potential customers will be contacted via E-mail and possible company visits will be considered as well. At the end all the findings will be presented to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and written report will be handed to company's purposes.

The other part of the study, theoretical study, applying the value chain theory will be conducted as qualitative research, which provides a comprehensive view of the research problem. Many of the sources of this study are public publications and different databases. To ensure the reliability of the study the Internet sources are verified in case of any up-dates, since the case study was made earlier than the theoretical study. Other information is carefully collected from various recent sources, in order to create a realistic view of the current market situation. To get more valuable data the Managing Director Mr. Erkki Lehtonen of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy will be interviewed. The aim of the interviews is to find out the current situation of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and to compare it to the situation after the case study. This way the benefit of the case research will be seen.

Qualitative analysis is often divided to inductive and deductive analysis according to the logic of concluding. Inductive analysis means that the conclusions are made from individual cases to generalised, where as deductive analysis is made vice versa, generalisations are expected to apply also to an individual case. In this study the deductive analysis is used. The general internationalisation process is studied and then concentrated on individual case, the internationalisation of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. Qualitative research methods are seen as softer, more flexible and inductive than quantitative research method. (Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. 2009. 66-67, 95-97.)

There are four qualitative research data gathering techniques: participant observation, interview, social artefact and content analysis of which the latter will be used in this study. In the contents analysis the most interesting subjects are chosen first. Then the sources are evaluated concerning these subjects by coding frame, dividing to themes, classifying and separating from rest of the material. In this thesis the coding, classification and dividing to themes, aims to find the support of the internationalisation process. The most important and often the most difficult part is to outline the extent of the subject. (Tuomi, J. & Sarajärvi, A. 2009, 71, 81, 93-95, 103-108.)

1.3 Theoretical Framework

In this study the theoretical framework will be covered with the value chain analysis developed by Michael E. Porter, and it will be introduced more closely in Chapter 3. The value chain analysis, in more precise simplified value chain analysis will be used in this study to examine the primary activities of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The value chain analysis will give the framework for identifying international competitive advantage of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The value chain analysis will be a useful tool in the case study, when evaluating the potentiality of the selected companies.

In addition, this study will also focus on those business-to-business marketing actions Lehtosen Konepaja Oy needs to concentrate on in order to be more visible and which are the most related to the potential business-to-business customers, as business markets differs compared to consumer markets. After analysing the current business-to-business marketing situation of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy suggestions will be made to improve the company's visibility and these will be discussed more over in Chapter 5.

The SWOT –analysis, devised by Albert Humphreyn, will be used only as support tool in the study for evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to enter a new market. SWOT-analysis will also help to understand the company's current market situation. The study will return to SWOT –analysis more in Chapter 4.5.

2 LEHTOSEN KONEPAJA OY

The company was founded in 1923 by Arvo Lehtonen, who started machine shop operations in his repair shop in Merikarvia. Arvo Lehtonen sold his share of the company in 1939 and founded L.V.I. –store, which operation ended in the same year due the Winter War. After the World War II, Arvo Lehtonen started to find again a suitable place for his engineering workshop and he ended up to Kokemäki. The mechanical engineering section began its operations in Peipohja in Kokemäki in 1947 and it employed only two workers. At that time the company name was A. Lehtosen Konepaja. The number of employees started to increase together with the company growth. The first change of generation took place in 1971, when Risto Lehtonen took the ownership of the company. After the change the company employed 30 employees and the company name was changed to Ky Lehtosen Konepaja. The company had another change of generation in 1988, when the company was moved to its current owner Erkki Lehtonen. Since 1997 the engineering workshop has operated as a limited company and it had about 90 employees. (Lehtosen Konepaja Oy website 2007)

Over the decades Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has developed into a full-service engineering works, and their long-term experience of the metal industry has strengthened their position as a competent and reliable business partner. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is a subcontractor of the leading Finnish exporting manufacturers of machines and appliances, such as Metso and Rolls Royce. The other key customers are FläktWoods, Maillefer, Moventas and Upcast. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has already some exportation to Scandinavia, and together with their international partners it delivers products to end users worldwide. (Lehtosen Konepaja Oy website 2009; Kompass. 2007; Lehtonen, E. 2009)

In 2007 company's turnover was about EUR 15.5 million and the number of employees in total was 105. The company vision was to continue the steady growth trend, expecting to maintain an annual turnover growth rate of around 10 %. In 2008 Lehtosen Konepaja Oy achieved EUR 18.6 million turnover by means of modern machinery. At the moment Lehtosen Konepaja Oy employs 123 skilled workers. Fo-

cused and long-term development, stability, mutual trust between employees and other stakeholders, and an environmental focus at all levels of business, will remain as prior in their operations in the future. (Lehtosen Konepaja Oy website 2009)

The current organisation structure is presented in Figure 1. In 2009 the Board Directors are Chairwoman Tanja Lehtonen, Vice-chairman Erkki Lehtonen and Vice-chairman Mikko Lehtonen. The current employee situation structures from machining (52), sheet metal work and welding (36), component manufacture (10), assembly (5), surface treatment (4) and logistics (4), management in Konepaja (9) and in Engineering (3). The current floor area in total is 8500 m², which is divided into three different factory areas; Haanmäentie 6000 m², Suokas 1500 m² and Teollisuustie 1000 m². The business conforms to the ISO-9002 quality assurance system and the welding operations conforms to the certified Finnish SFS-EN-729-2 quality assurance system. Also the environment policy has been covered with SFS-EN ISO 14001 standard. (Lehtosen Konepaja website 2009; Kompass. 2007)

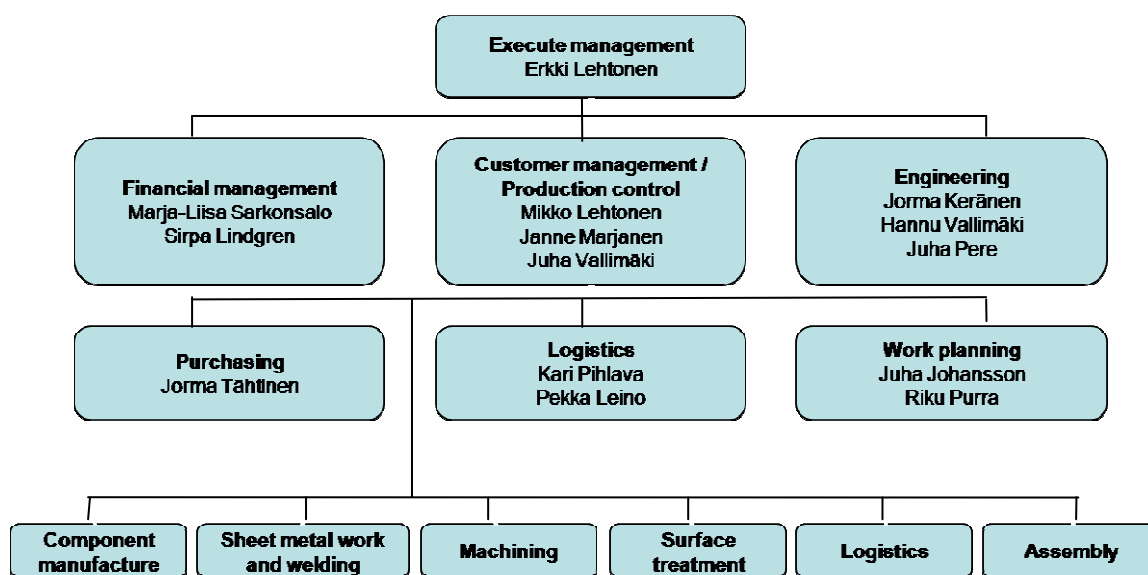


Figure 1. Organisation structure of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in 2009. (Lehtosen Konepaja Oy website. 2009, Company Presentation)

2.1 Nature of business

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy manufactures heavy metal products to its clients' specifications. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is specialised in total subcontracting, system delivery, body manufacture and the production of complex machined components.

The company operate in four mutually supportive areas of business, which are;

- Part manufacturing
- Machine bodies
- Total subcontracting
- Engineering

Machine bodies typically contains the following stages; component manufacture, welding, heat treatment, machining and surface treatment. The total subcontracting operates as a turnkey system supplier and delivers complete machines and equipment. The range of products includes also loading and logistics systems and production lines for sawmills and forest industries, ports and the processing industry. The manufacturing expertise is complemented by Lehtonen Engineering. (Lehtosen Konepaja Oy website 2009)

2.2 Lehtonen Engineering

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy's own products are managed by the engineering office Lehtonen Engineering, which also runs the transactions with improved operation strategy as its own unit. Lehtonen Engineering operates in industrial area of Suokas, which is located in Kokemäki. The unit employs five people and the turnover is about 1.5 – 2.0 million euros. The products of Lehtonen Engineering are presented below:

Mechanical wood industrial

- Total- and part deliveries
- Different kinds of transport systems for lumber, logs and side products
- Sieves and funnels
- Special dollies and dryers

Harbours

- Different kinds of transport systems
- Sieves and funnels

Project deliveries

- Planning and projects
- Total systems and single devices
- Production lines
- Material processing
- Transport systems
- Sieves
- Funnels and other products

The mentioned products are produced for different customers' purposes operating in these business areas. Such customers for separate projects have been for example, Enso-Timber Oy Veitsiluoto, UPM-Kymmene Kuopio, Seikun Saha Pori, Oy Botnia Wood Ab, Valmet Karhula, Rauma Stevedoring Ltd, Oy Hacklin Ltd, Rautaruukki Oy, Finnforest, Kemira Agro Oy and Finnish Army. (Lehtonen Engineering website 2009)

2.3 Current investments

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has made substantially investments to its production facilities and machines. In August 2009 the new logistic warehouse was taken in use for departures and arrivals, and the total floor area was 600 m². Now in practice the whole goods traffic goes through the new warehouse. Machines develop quickly and investments need to be made every year, since the production capacity depends on the modern machinery. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has increased its machine stock level wilfully. The need of large part in industry has increased, and Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has specialised in large and middle large parts. A year ago Lehtosen Konepaja Oy invested to Integrex e-1550V machine. With the new machine the company is able to execute more quickly for the customer's need, and to cut the extra waiting times for the deliveries and the production time will be minimised. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has also changed the whole method of production from three-shift work to five-shift

work and the machines will run non-stopped. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has already 7750 hours per a year production hours. Five-shift work is a notable competition factor and Lehtosen Konepaja Oy will start using the same method in other machines also. The latest investment was new large CNC boring machine (WHQ 13.12 Tos Varnsdorf), which was installed in April 2009. The new machine was placed to recently finished extension to the facilities. It was second of its type and it doubles delivery capacity in its area of application. The extension to the facilities was 750 m², which supplements the logistical control. (Lehtosen Konepaja Oy website 2009; LEKO News 1/2009. 7; LEKO News 2/2009, 3; Wihuri 1/2009. 4-5)

3 VALUE CHAIN

As a theoretical framework in the study, the value chain analysis developed by Harvard Business School Professor Michael Porter in 1985 will be introduced. A company's value chain is an interactive system or manufacturing network, which different parts are connected to each other with linkages. A company is more than a sum of different functions, to achieve competitive advantage it means that the companies' value chain will be handled as a system instead of separate parts summary. By creating and delivering superior value, a company can make profit, and this involves the following five capabilities such as understanding customer value, creating customer value, delivering customer value, capturing customer value and sustaining customer value. On the other hand a company needs to use also the concept of a value chain and a value-delivery network, which is also called supply chain, in order to succeed. A company's value chain is included to a larger stream of activities, which is *value system* shown in Figure 2. (Porter, M. 2006, 79-80; Kotler, P. 2003. 43)

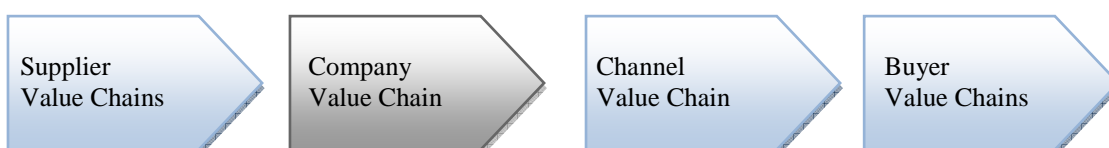


Figure 2. The Value System (Porter, M. 2004)

Value system contains subcontractors, which supplies for instance raw materials, components, machines and services. Before the product is delivered to the end customers many products pass through the value chains of channels, which also named a channel value. A company's product eventually becomes part of its buyer's value chain. Gaining and sustaining competitive advantage depends on understanding not only a company's value chain, but how the company fits in the overall value system. (Hollensen, S. 2007, 19-20; Porter, M. 2006, 79-80.)

3.1 The Generic Value Chain

The generic value chain shown in Figure 3, is being used for identifying international competitive advantage of a company. It provides a systematic means of displaying and categorising activities within and around an organisation, which together create a product or service.

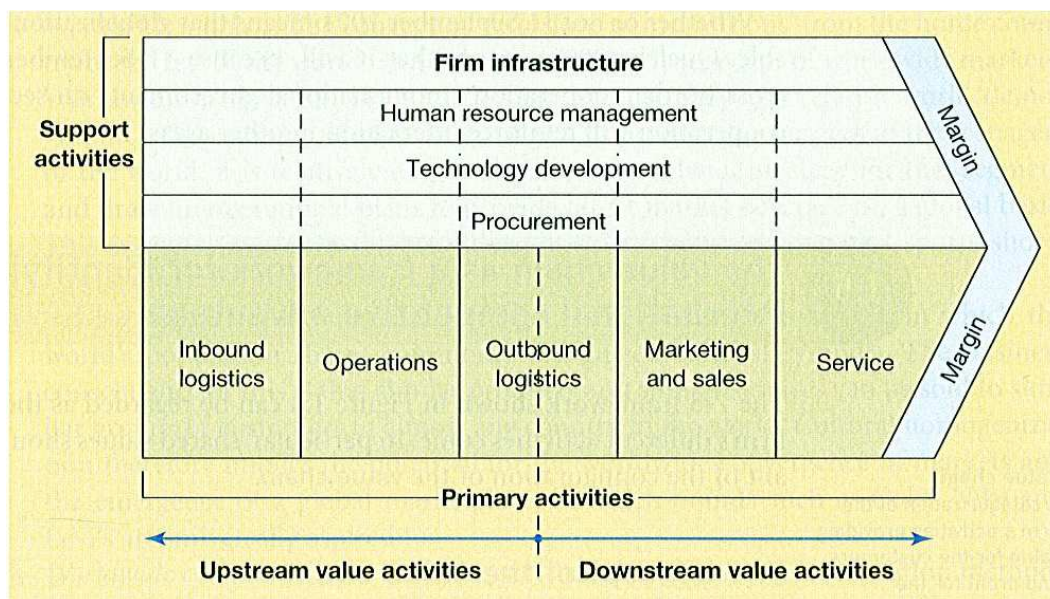


Figure 3. The Generic Value Chain. (Hollensen, S. 2007, 20)

The primary activities of the company are grouped, as earlier mentioned, into five main areas; inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing and sales, and services. These main areas have been listed in Table 1. *The support activities* can be divided into four areas; procurement, technology development, human resource management and infrastructure, which been introduced in Table 2.

Table 1. The Primary Activities in Value Chain. (Hollensen, S. 2007. 21; Porter, M. 2006, 305)

Primary Activity	Description
Inbound logistics	All those activities concerned with receiving and storing externally sourced materials. These include materials, handling, stock control, transport, etc.
Operations	These include technical planning, maintenance of facilities, machines and storing, and guarding services.
Outbound logistics	All those activities associated with getting finished goods and services to buyers. These are implementation services, waste management, transportation services, storing services, credit rating control and data processing.
Marketing and sales	Essentially an information activity; informing buyers and consumers about products and services including e.g. telemarketing, databases, benefits, advertising, promotion and pricing.
Service	All those activities associated with maintaining product performance after the product has been sold, such as installing and testing services and maintenance and repair.

Table 2. Support Activities in Value Chain. (Hollensen, S. 2007. 22; Porter, M. 2006, 305)

Support Activity	Description
Procurement	This concerns how resources are acquired for a business, e.g. financing services, bookkeeping, sourcing and negotiating with materials suppliers.
Human Resource Management	Those activities concerned with recruiting, developing, healthcare, motivating, training and rewarding the workforce of a business, and also the temporary workforce.
Technology Development	Activities concerned with managing information processing and the development and protection of knowledge in a business, e.g. R&D, market research, product design and raw material improvements.
Infrastructure	These are a wide range of support systems and functions such as finance, planning, quality control and general senior management.

More over, the value chain analysis can be broken into a three sequential steps, which are: 1) Break down a market/organisation into its key activities under each of the major headings in the model, 2) Assess the potential for adding value via cost advantage or differentiation or identify current activities where a business appears to

be at a competitive disadvantage, 3) Determine strategies built around focusing on activities where competitive advantage can be sustained. (Porter, M. 2004, 39-43; Johnson G. 2008, 110-111)

3.2 The Simplified Value Chain

Represented earlier Porter’s original value chain model, from which a ‘simplified’ version of the value chain has devised. The simplified value chain shown in Table 4 is characterised by the fact that it contains only the primary activities of the company. Every company operating in the industrial business area has service functions in order to maintain for instance machines and recruit employment. These services can be handled inside the company or outsourced. This study will concentrate more on the primary activities of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, and the main focus will be on the marketing. One of the research questions was “How value chain can be applied in companies’ internationalise process”. This question will be the main question, when applying the theory to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. (Hollensen, S. 2007, 22; Porter, M. 2006, 304)

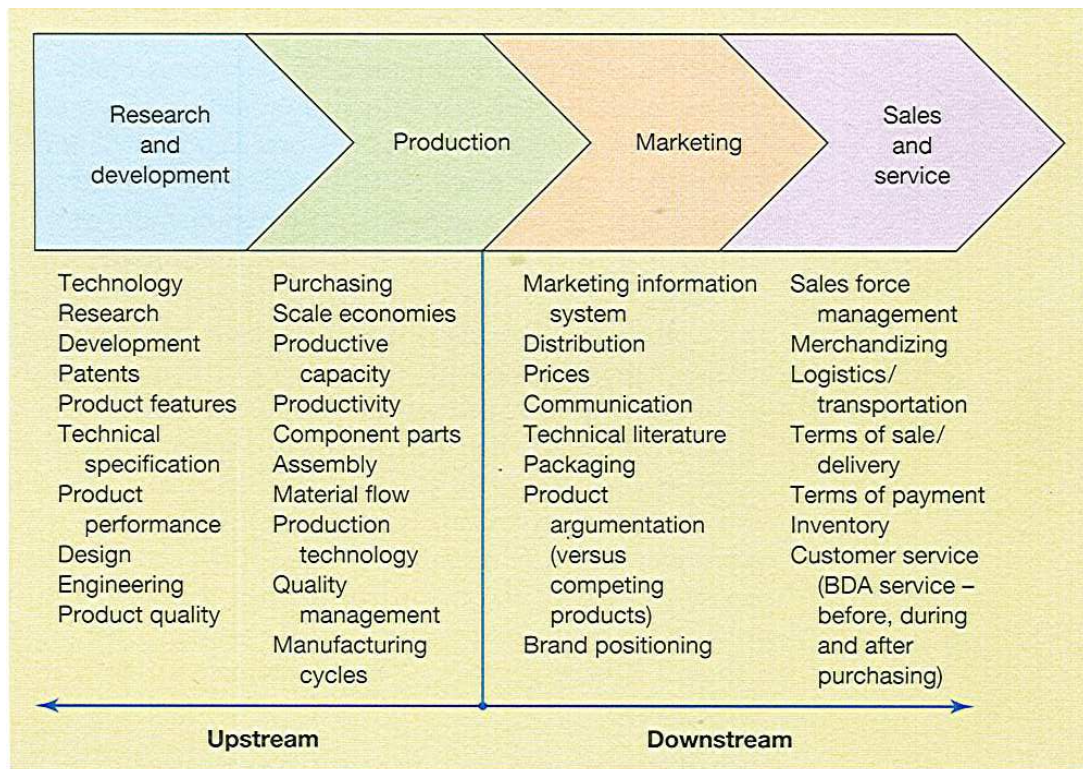


Figure 4. The Simplified Value Chain. (Hollensen S. 2008, 22.)

The other relevant question is concerning the marketing improvements, which Lehtosen Konepaja Oy needs to focus on to find potential business-to-business customers. As shown in the Table 4, the marketing decisions are related to following areas: marketing information system, distribution, prices, communication, technical literature, packaging, product argumentation and brand positioning. This study will discuss about the main marketing techniques that have major importance in the business-to-business environment and suits to this study.

4 CASE STUDY

The study starts by giving an overview of Germany and then continues to analysing the selected target country and the states. The aim is to gain as much detailed knowledge as possible to ensure the chosen target country is a reasonable choice and familiarise Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to chosen target market. The current market situation of engineering works will be studied. Then the progress of the potential business-to-business customer survey will be described and also the found potential customers will be presented and evaluated. And in the end the case company will be analysed also by reflecting it to the results of the target country analysis, and based on these facts the suggestions for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy will be made.

4.1 Presenting and analysing the target country

The chosen target country for this study was given by Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The company is planning to extend their markets to Germany in the future. The introduction to the chosen country will give an overview of the current market situation and also helps the company to make their future decisions about how much potential they have in the selected states in Germany. The general information about Germany is presented in Table 3 below, as well as the main economical knowledge.

Table 3. The general information about Germany. (Finpro. 2009)

Capital city	Berlin
Head of the state	President Horst Köhler (since 2004-)
Official language	German
Area in total	356,900 km ²
Population	82.22 million (est. 31.12.2007)
The most important harbours	Hamburg, Bremen, Bremerhaven, Wilhelmshaven and Lübeck-Travemünde.
Largest cities	Berlin (3.41 million), Hamburg (1.76 million), München (1.33 million), Köln (995,824), Frankfurt am Main (653,227)
Ethnic groups	German (91.5 %), Turkish (2.4 %), and other 6.1 %)
Religion	Catholics 25.69 million, Lutherans 25.10 million and Jewish 0.1 million (est. 2006)
Currency	Euro
Unemployment rate	7.8 % (2008)
The most important industrial product	Delivery machines, machines and devices, electrical industry products, electronics and food stuff
Main import products	Electronics, vehicles, chemicals, machines and devices, food stuff, fuel oil and raw materials
GDP (official exchange rate) GDP (per capita) GDP (growth rate)	2492.00 billion euros (2008) 30,320.00 euros (2008) 1.3 % (2008)
Foreign investments to Germany Foreign direct investments Finnish direct investments	38.21 billion euros in 2008 (nett capital flow) 17.03 billion euros in 2007 minus 327 million euros in 2007 (nett)

Germany's GDP has developed steadily during many years; GDP increased 2.5 % in 2007 and 1.3 % in 2008. However, the economy descended to recession at the end of 2008 and is at the moment in recession. According to the forecast made by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in April 2009, the gross production will decrease 5.3 % in 2009 and 0.8 % in 2010. The unemployment rate has an increasing trend due the current recession. According to EIU's forecast the unemployment will increase to 10.1. % in 2009 and almost to 11.0. % in 2010. (Finpro. 2009)

Table 4. The trade between the main trade partners of Germany in 2008. (Finpro. 2009)

France	96.86 billion euros
The United States	71.47 billion euros
The United Kingdom	66.79 billion euros
The Netherlands	65.64 billion euros
Italy	64.00 billion euros

Germany's major trading partners are France, the United States, the United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands. In addition the Netherlands is the largest trading partner of most European countries. The Table 4 gives an overview of the trade in euros between the main trading partners in 2008. As per the Table 4 shows France is the major trading partner to Germany with 96.86 billion euros and after that comes the United States with 71.47 billion euros trade. Comparing the trade between Finland and Germany, the facts show that Finland export was 6.56 billion euros and import 8.71 billion euros in 2008. Finland export change was -7 % and import +3 % between the years 2007 and 2008. It is good to mention that Finland's main export product to Germany in 2008 was machinery and transport equipment with 33.2 % share. The trade balance for Finland was 2.15 billion euros deficit. (Finpro. 2009)

When taking a closer look to the target country, facts show that Germany is one of the leading countries in manufacturing machines and devices. The main area for manufacturing heavy machines and devices is Ruhr area, which is next to the mentioned target federal states. The main part of all the German industrial companies is in mechanical industry, which is a numeric fact; almost 6000 companies employ about one million employees. Germany is also the most important marketplace in the European Union and the second biggest exporter and importer in the world after the USA. The import covers almost a third of the whole EU import capacity. In Germany every fifth job is dependent on exports. Industry is the most important sector of the German economy. The majority of the industrial corporations are small and medium sized enterprises. About 40 percent of the total workforce in the industrial sector

works in large international companies. The competitiveness of Germany is good or excellent depending on the valuer. According to World Economic Forum (WEF) published *The Global Competitiveness Report 2008-2009*, the general competitiveness index of Germany was the 7th highest of the all 134 countries. On the other hand the result of IMD's *World Competitiveness Yearbook 2009* states that Germany is in 13th place from the all 57 countries. (Finpro. 2009; World Economic Forum. 2009; IMD. 2009)

Germany has always been divided into states, but the division has changed during the centuries. Now Germany has been divided into 16 states and each state is specialised in different business areas. A closer look to the most important business sectors in the target states will be introduced in the Table 5. (Tatsachen über Deutschland. 2009)

Table 5. The most important business sectors in the target states. (Tatsachen über Deutschland. 2009)

Federal State	State Capital	Economic success in	Further information
Baden-Württemberg	Stuttgart	High-Technology, innovation, R&D	Top export state
Hessen	Wiesbaden	Chemicals, vehicles, mechanical engineering, electrical industry	Central location with air, rail and waterway junctions
Rheinland-Pfalz	Mainz	Wines, chemical industry, gemstone industry, ceramics and glass products, leather industry	One of the most dynamic centres in Germany

The competition in Germany is really hard and the 16 federal states give its own challenge in German market. Every federal state has also the possibility to enact an own law, which hold only in that particular state. The process is slow for a new supplier to enter the markets, because it takes time to make personal contacts and most of the business is handled in German even though English is a common business language. (Deutsch-Finnische-Handelskammer, 2009; Finpro. 2009)

Exhibitions are very important to business in Germany. Exhibitions are common marketing method and usually easy way to meet potential customers and partner in

cooperation from all over the world. Exhibitions are also a great opportunity to follow competitors' work. Two third of the world's most important and significant exhibitions are organised in Germany, which means that contacts can be made in internationally. Exhibitions are also the place, where the final decisions are made. Important is to know that 90 % of the deals are based on exhibitions, and the other marketing channels have much less influence. (Deutsch-Finnische-Handelskammer. 2009; Frankfurt. Trade fares. 2008; Finpro. 2009)

In general German companies are found to be demanding customers. The product quality and the whole product concept have to be high-quality. Also the production capacity needs to be sufficient in order to be able to deliver the agreed amount of goods within the agreed delivery time. In addition to this the marketing should be efficient. In Germany it is expensive to lancer new products, and companies needs to keep in mind the high labour costs and relatively high cost-of-living, when investing in Germany. Finnish know-how is very competitive in today's German market, when it comes to Finnish products. There are over 400 Finnish subsidiaries, sales offices or branch offices in Germany. Most of the Finnish companies, which do business in the German market, have their own branch office in Germany because they want to strengthen their position in the central European market. (Deutsch-Finnische Handelskammer. 2009)

4.2 Current situation of engineering works

There have been news about possible recession from autumn 2008 and it is today a real issue. According to the article in Kauppalehti 26.10.2009, the engineering works operating in Finland have informed of remarkable adapting actions due the weak order stock. There have been many lay-offs and more will come during the winter 2009-2010. Still there is a long way to upturn. In Finland the revenue of the whole technology industry was about 30 % smaller than in 2008 in the first quarter. Exporting decreased at the same time about 40 % compared to year 2008. To be point out is that the value of the engineering works' order stock in end-June was approximately 25 % less than the same time a year ago. In July only 10 % of the companies operating in the business field received new orders. (Kauppalehti. 26.10.2009, 3)

The lack of new orders affects more large and small engineering works in Finland and also in Europe the whole next winter. This has reflected mostly to the small sub-suppliers and those that are depended on the success of few clients in subcontract network. The same can be seen in the investment statistics, which show that the fixed investments will decrease about 30 % in 2009 compared to last year. (Kauppalehti. 26.10.2009, 3)

The investment recession will continue still for a long time in Europe and in the United States, because of the share of the underutilised capacity. However, there have been positive signs in German manufacturing industry. There has been 2 % increase of order stock in the euro area in the beginning of the autumn 2009. In generally the prospects of upturn are still unstable, because GDP of Great-Britannia is still decreasing. (Kauppalehti. 26.10.2009, 3)

However, the background of the growth of economical indicator is 20-30 % decrease in year level in industry, sales and other service fields. For this reason it takes time before the production capacities of the year 2007 and 2008 can be reached in Europe. The whole impact of the growth to employment can be seen normally after two years when the growth has begun. This was happened in 1990's recession, and the same trend in employment will be this time also. (Kauppalehti. 26.10.2009, 3)

4.3 Progress of the potential customer survey and used tools

The potential customer survey started in March 2007 by getting familiar to the earlier study made by the group of researchers in Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business and Culture Pori. The earlier study was sent to the author, which contained 18 possibly potential customers. The purpose was to go through all the companies, update the contact information, revise the company information, translate the main parts from the companies' website, analyse the companies' potentiality and compare it to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy need. This part was the most time consuming. All these 18 companies were categorised by their potentiality. The potential companies were contacted by E-mail and phone, but the needed information, requested by Mr. Erkki Lehtonen was not received from any of the contacted companies. All the

findings were presented to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in 01.02.2008, when also the full report of all the findings was hand out to company.

Internet was mainly used as source of information, because of the ease of finding the relevant and updated data in this kind of study. Since the purpose was to deepen and update the found companies' contact details, Internet was found to be the best source of information. The most important used tool was *Kompass –database*, when searching new business-to-business customers and also to deepen already collected material from elsewhere. Kompass Finland Oy (Kompass) is a franchise company of Kompass International Neuenschwander, which was founded in 1944. Kompass database is reached to 63 countries, and it maintains 300,000 Finnish business-to-business company details, and all these companies are linked to different product categories and codes in order to search information by business area or range of products. It is also available in 26 different languages. This database enables the companies to gather information about other companies and to promote own company in the global marketplace. The other updated company information was found from each company's own web sites, and one German online database, Branchenbuch, was also used.

All the found technical terminology -dictionaries were also a necessary tool in order to proceed with the study. In the study on-line dictionaries as well as dictionaries from library where used in translation process. The publications of Finpro and German-Finnish Chamber of Commerce were also used in some amount.

4.4 Evaluating and categorising the potential companies

First step was to check whether the company is operating in the same business area or not as Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The companies were categorised at this point to two different categories, in order to proceed with the survey. These categories were 1) Not potential customers and 2) In some aspect potential customers. The value chain analysis has been used for sorting out the potential customer from not potential customers (Figure 5).

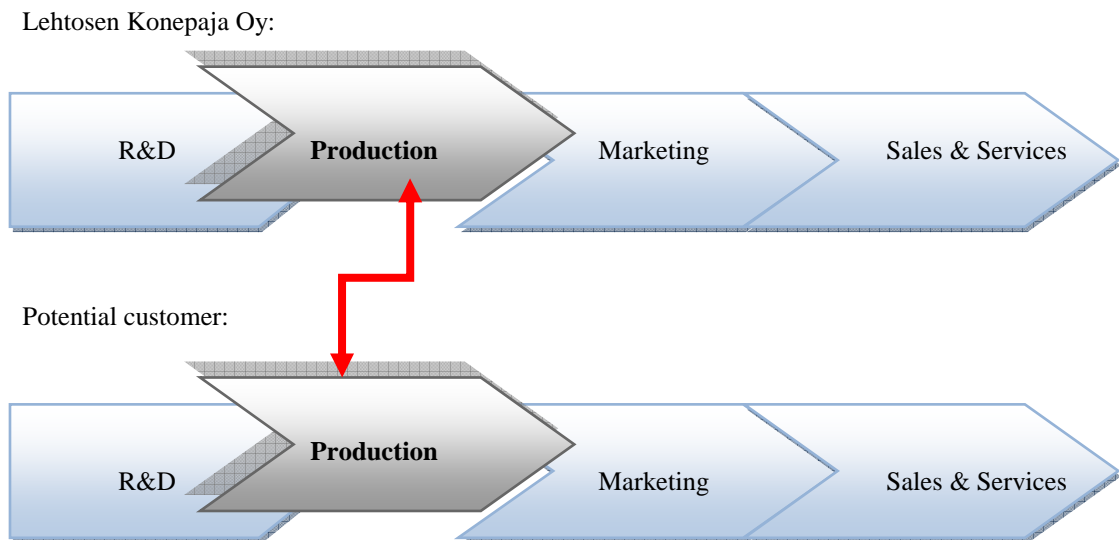


Figure 5. Comparison of value chains between Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and potential customer.

Not potential customers –category contained all those companies that did not have enough information or after a closer review was not suitable for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The criteria for these were most likely the lack of information available about the company and wrong business area. These companies were Wizemann Schlosserei und Metallbau GmbH, Ingenieurbüro Streb, Dipl.-Ing. A. Walter, 2Plan- und Prüf GmbH, Elektroanlagen Georg Vetter e.K., ACR-Engineering GmbH, Prokotec GmbH, ABB AG, Dietmar von Alt and Von Roll Deutschland Holding GmbH.

Potential customers -category contained all the rest of the companies, which operated in the same business area and could have the potentiality. These companies were SiPro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH, Jochen Brill GmbH, Dipl.-Ing. Ulrich Torcka, Dietrich Töws, Anakon GmbH, Atea-Anlagentechnik GmbH, Moses Steuerungstechnik GmbH, M+W Zander Holding AG and Dietrich Maschinen GmbH.

In this study to some of these potential customers were sent an E-mail (Appendix 2), with a short letter explaining the reason to contact this company and it contained a questionnaire (Appendix 3). The purpose was to find out more about the potential customers and also cover the parts, which was missing. According to Mr. Erkki Lehtonen, the need of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was to know more about the potential customers and such information was; the product being produced in the company,

strategic plan, the share of own production and subcontracting, what products the company provide from subcontracting and what is the amount of that. This questionnaire was sent to all the potential customers excluding Jochen Brill GmbH, Moses Steuerungstechnik GmbH, M+W Zander Holding AG, due the missing contact information. Dietrich Maschinen GmbH was found in the end of this study and was left out of the mailing list for this reason. The author did not receive any replies from these companies. The author made also few phone calls to the companies, and left a call request, but never received a phone call back from these companies. This was the reason why some of the questions were left unanswered. (Erkki Lehtonen. E-mail. 11.04.2007)

However, at the end of the customer survey it was noticed that most of the German companies use a special contact form, which needs to be filled out and sent to the company. This contact form usually is found in the website of the companies under contact information. This is normally used in the bigger companies, in order to avoid inappropriate mails such as junk mail and advertises. This habit emphasises the systematic thinking, which is a part of German culture.

Then the potential customers were analysed more deeply, and all the findings were reported under each customer. The companies' website was translated from German or English to Finnish, due the lack of German language knowledge of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. And also because the case study –report was conducted in Finnish. At this part found one extra company was founded, Dietrich Maschinen GmbH, which was found by using Kompass –tool. At this point the value chain analysis, in more precise supply chain analysis (Figure 6), was adapted to recognise the most potential customers. In practise this meant that Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would need to fit into the potential customer's value chain, so that Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would operate as subcontractor and potential customers would be the partner companies. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would supply products or machine parts to a partner company, which would use these as a part in their projects to deliver to their customer and end customer. In other words the competition between the companies has been broadened to competition between the *supply chains*. The supply chain is built up with the production unit and its subcontractors and partial suppliers.

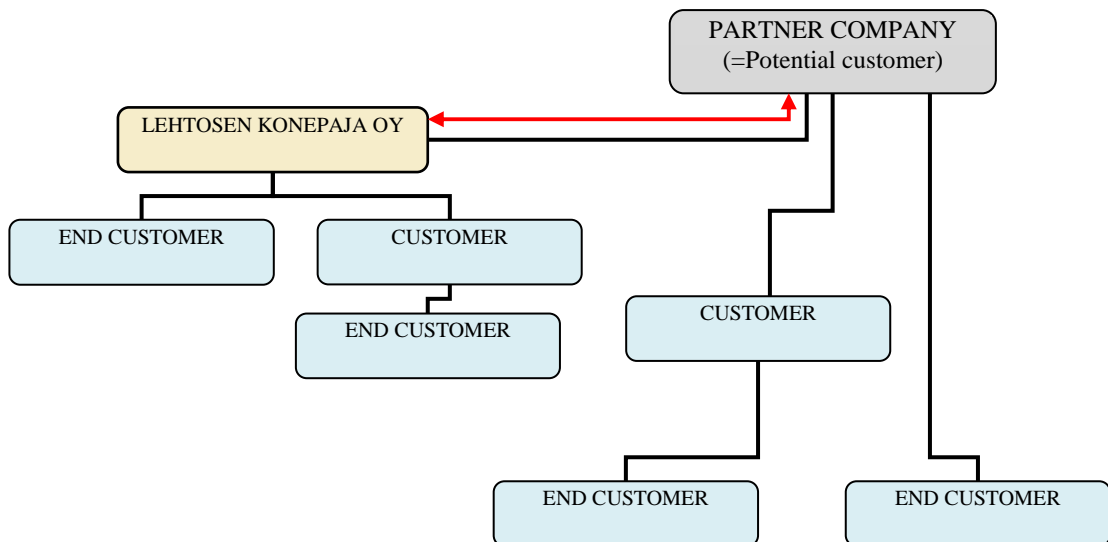


Figure 6. Applying Supply Chain to categorise the potential customers.

After a closer look to the possibly potential companies, the result of the analysis was that there were four most potential customers for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The most potential companies were SiPro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH (SiPro GmbH), Jochen Brill GmbH, Anakon GmbH and Dietrich Maschinen GmbH. These four potential customers were categorised by their potentiality;

1. Sipro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH
2. Anakon GmbH
3. Jochen Brill GmbH
4. Dietrich Maschinen GmbH

The most potential business-to-business customer for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would be *Sipro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH*, since it operates most closely in the same business area as Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. Despite that SiPro GmbH locates in Nordrhein-Westhafen, which was not named target state, it was still accepted. The main reasons for getting the acceptance were that SiPro GmbH seemed to be the most potential from all the founded companies and it locates really close to the state line of Pheinland-Pfalz and Hessen. SiPro GmbH operates internationally and undertakes projects around the world. It has also several different projects, which gave the image that it would suit for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to deliver some parts to the projects. The range of services includes project planning, design, structural and stress

analysis, manufacture, shipping and assembly for plant and equipment, steel constructions, pressurised containers, structural steel engineering and silo construction, complex, ready-for-use projects at national and international level and individual one-off-items. (SiPro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH website 2007)

Anakon GmbH was categorised to be the second most potential customer, which came up by studying the company's earlier projects. Anakon GmbH is operating in machine and steel construction industry, and the focus is on steel construction. The company is located in Karlsruhe in Baden-Württemberg. When comparing the company to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, it can be noticed that both are operating in the same business area. Anakon GmbH has gained a stable position in the market, which is based on the business knowledge and high-quality devices and programs the company uses. (Anakon GmbH website 2007)

Jochen Brill GmbH was selected as third, but is not quite as potential as the two earlier named companies of its business area and the company's products might not be meet Lehtosen Konepaja Oy's production line and specialities. However, the company might be a potential customer for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, because it is innovative co-operative partner in steel construction. The company has exportation to Western, Central and East Europe. Jochen Brill GmbH is located in Lennestadt in Nordrhein-Westfalen. The main products are metal constructions for construction industry and different kinds of steel constructions to its clients' specifications. (Jochen Brill GmbH website 2007)

Dietrich Maschinen GmbH is the fourth potential customer, because it was quite a small company even though it has exportation to Western-Europe, but the business area is the equal with Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The company is a reliable and skilful co-operative partner in machine and instrument construction. Dietrich Maschinen GmbH is located in Ludvigshafen in Rhein-Pfalz. Based on the collected material the company might be a potential customer for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. (Dietrich Maschinen GmbH website 2007)

4.5 Analysing Lehtosen Konepaja Oy

Generally used tool in evaluation of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats is SWOT –analysis will be used for analysing Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. SWOT-analysis, devised by Albert S. Humphrey, summarises the key issues from the business environment and the strategic capability of an organisation that are most likely to impact on strategy development. The analysis presents information that is helpful in linking the company’s resources and capabilities to the competitive market in which it operates. It is important part of the strategic development process. (Johnson, G., Scholes, K. & Whittington, R. 2008, 119-120)

After the environmental study in which the internal and external factors were studied, from the internal and external analyses comes the list of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. However, it can be also useful as a basis against, which to generate strategic options and assess future course of action. It must be remembered that SWOT-analysis is only useful if it is comparative and if it examines strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in relation to competitors. Accordingly, SWOT -analysis is best used as a guide and not a prescription. Adding and weighting criteria to each factor increases the validity of the analysis. The SWOT –analysis of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is presented in Table 6 in author’s point of view. (Johnson, G., Scholes, K. & Whittington, R. 2008, 119-120)

Table 6. SWOT –analysis of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy.

Strengths	Weaknesses	Internal Source (Controllable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Earlier experience of exporting - High-quality products - Investments in machinery and facilities - Capacity to expand - New method of production - Stable situation in domestic market - Established regular customer relationships in the domestic market 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of knowledge of German market - Lack of German language skills 	
Opportunities	Threats	External Source (Uncontrollable)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To find potential B-to-B co-operative partner(s) - To create long term business partners - Germans positive image of Finnish products - Visibility and marketing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Competition in Germany - Recession 	

When evaluating the strengths of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in German market, the investments, which the company has made, gives a certain benefit, because the modern machinery improves the quality of the products. The know-how and high-quality products will give an advantage and strength in competition in German market. As Germans prefer and have a positive image in general of Finnish products, the company has good starting point to go German market. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has the capacity to expand their operations into foreign markets as their current machinery is updated and faculty floor area has been extended, so they would not need any big investments in that area at the moment and the company has enough storage space for the increasing production. The new method of production gives an advantage for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to run the machines around the clock, and that way serve the customers with short production and delivery times. The new method of production is also more cost-effective for the company and also the customers benefit from it. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has gained a stable market situation in Finland, which can be

named as strength, since the company has established strong customer relationships and has regular customers.

The company has made lots of investments, but it has also focused on business-to-business marketing strategies and to employees as suggested in order to take advantage of their strengths, and this way it can succeed in German market. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has improved its visibility by creating a totally updated and revised websites, which are available in Finnish, Swedish, English, German and Russian. There has been created also a magazine 'Leko News' for customers and interest groups, which is published in company's website and is also printed. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has the opportunity to make new business contact to suggested companies, since the company's strengths supports to reach the set goal to enter German market. Also new business contacts can be made in exhibitions, and the same time it is a great way to give visibility to a company.

As one weakness of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, when entering the German market, is the current personnel, since the company do not have any German speaking employees. At the moment the spoken languages are Finnish, Swedish and English in the company. Even though the common business language is normally English, the Germans prefer to build the business contacts to new company and deal the businesses in German. This is an issue the company needs to solve out and put an effort before making the business contacts. At this point Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is working on the lack of knowledge of German market and getting familiar to the German business culture. There have been given few suggestions for overcome the weaknesses and turn them to strengths, but these will be discussed more in the Chapter 5.

The threats for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy are the competitors in Germany, if they are not able to compete with the others. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy will need to put more effort in marketing decision in their internationalisation process, and these have been taken in consideration, when suggestions discussed. The current recession is also an obstacle for new market concurs, since the whole world market has collapsed, but some emergent upturn in economy has been perceived. A strong competitiveness and innovation are the key factors for companies to the rise from recession, and also compete in new markets.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This study started with the case study made for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and then moved on to the theoretical study. In the case study the background, starting situation and research plan were analysed, which helped to get the overview of the subject and the thesis assignment. The study was also defined and there were negotiations with Lehtosen Konepaja Oy about the information they would like to receive and what is the need of the company for this kind of information. There were set also goals how to proceed with the study in order to conduct step by step the potential customer survey and German market research, which were included to the case study. The whole process of finding and analysing the possible potential business-to-business customers for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was time consuming and took lots of effort. Obstacles for the case study can be named few factors, such as schedule and the exiguous business language knowledge in metal industry field. According to the original schedule, all the findings for the case study was supposed to present to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in June 2007, but the customer survey turned out to be more time consuming than expected. Due the foregoing and some other obstacles, the time line for the case study needed to be re-scheduled. According to the new schedule the case study for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would needed to present in the beginning of the year 2008, and this goal was reached. Comments were received during the case study, and these helped to focus on the main research questions set to the case study and also to improve the study. It was found to be in some amount difficult to update the selected companies' contact details, translate the web sites and technical terminology from German or English to Finnish, analyse the potentiality of the selected companies. However, the case study was successfully completed and reported, and also the client was pleased with the work they received.

In this study all the research questions were able to answer and the needed information was found. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was contacted, in order to find out their need for this kind of information and also in what kind of companies Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was interested to co-operate with. According to Mr. Erkki Lehtonen the need of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was know more about the potential customers and such information was; the product being produced in the company, strategic plan, the share

of own production and subcontracting, what products the company provide from subcontracting and what is the amount of that. These questions were partly answered, because the questionnaire formulated and sent to the potential companies, was left without any replies and some information were not able to find from the companies' website. However, it was found out later that the German companies needed to be contacted with the special contact form, which most of the German companies use. This was a good finding for the later possible contacts. The other possibility to contact German companies is with the help of Finpro or German-Finnish Chamber of Commerce, which provides different kind of useful services. The target states were analysed in the market research made for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, and the study proved that there would be a potential market for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in Rhein-Neckar province. According to the study results, Rhein-Neckar province is highly emphasised to industry, and there are many companies specialised in heavy metal products.

During the customer survey was found some reliable and useful tools for finding business-to-business co-operative partners, such as Kompass and Branchenbuch. In this study mostly Kompass was used, because it provided more detailed information and it was easy to use. Also Internet was used as a source of information. It can be mentioned that company's website are one of the main marketing tool for companies, because Internet is one of the most used tool for searching information. The other recommended ways to find business-to-business customer from Germany is to attend exhibitions, because it is highly part of the German business culture. In the study, there were found two very reliable sources to help in searching potential customer and those are Finpro and German-Finnish Chamber of Commerce.

The theoretical study was defined and for theoretical framework was selected value chain analysis, which was proved to be successful choice for this study. The value chain analysis was used for analysing Lehtosen Konepaja Oy's the readiness and competitive advantage. Scanning the primary activities of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, the needed improvements the company would need to make, was able to found out. It was also noted that the company would need to concentrate on the whole value system and concentrate on marketing, which is the key to improve company's visibility in the market.

The study results are considered to be useful to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to proceed in the internationalisation process, evaluating their readiness to enter new market and to find business-to-business customers. The collected material in the market research and also the contact information about the selected potential customers can be used for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy's purposes. The validity and reliability of the study can be pointed out, since all the used sources are relatively new ones, the oldest ones being from the year 2003. To ensure the reliability of the study, the Internet sources were verified in case of any updates and all the used sources were reviewed.

The information given in the study might be amended in the future. For further study it is suggested to study the internationalisation process of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and to find out how the business contacts have been used and were new business relationships created with the selected potential companies.

5.1 Suggestions to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy

It is recommended to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy contact the potential customers, which came up in the market research; SiPro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH, Jochen Brill GmbH, Anakon GmbH and Dietrich Maschinen GmbH. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy could be in direct contact with them by using the customer's contact form. This way they could get all the information needed, if the companies are truly interested in co-operation with Lehtosen Konepaja Oy.

Trade shows and exhibitions are of major importance in the business-to-business environment and are a great opportunity for businesses to build brand awareness, knowledge, and interest at one place at a time. They also provide customers with access to many potential suppliers and customers in a short period of time at relatively low costs compared to regular information gathering methods. Customers can easily compare competitive offerings at one place. Also, Germany is known for providing four of the ten largest exhibition locations in the world and the exhibitions are important part of the German business culture, as known is that 90 % of the deals are based on exhibitions. Based on these studied facts it is important to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to attend exhibitions. Known is that it is rather expensive to stand in the exhibitions, so in this case Lehtosen Konepaja Oy could only visit some of the most remarkable

exhibitions in their business field in order to build new customer relationships, to see competitors' work and to give in that way visibility to the company. The two most promising exhibitions Lehtosen Konepaja Oy could attend are Metallworking Stuttgart and AMB –International Exhibition, which are organised between 09.-13.09.2007. (Kotler, P. & Proertsch, W. 2006, 114)

Direct marketing tools include the use of, for instance Internet, newsletter, catalogue and prospects, and these usually contain up-to-date information because preparation time can be neglected. One of the simple ways to increase the visibility and the company image is website. Normally all information is up-dated and all the interested can search the needed information about the company and get an overview of the company at the same time. The visual look of company's website gives also direct opinion about the company itself, and good way to advertise company is to have professional web pages done by experts. Also the information would need to be available in different languages. The second suggestion would be to Lehtosen Konepaja Oy to update their current web pages by adding the availability to choose the language. It would be good to have web pages in English and in this case in German also, because the company is interested in German market. As it was stated earlier in the study, normally the common business language is English, but Germans prefer to use German as a business language. (Kotler, P. & Proertsch, W. 2006, 112)

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would need to analyse the current situation and evaluate how entering the new market would affect the production, meaning that the company would need, for instance, to recruit more people and train them. They could think of recruiting personnel, who can handle the business in German language in order to strengthen their opportunity to operate in German market. The other possibility is that they could consider hiring a consultant to help them to get familiar with the German market and foreign trade procedures. There are two professional alternatives from where to receive this kind of information, and it is recommended to contact German-Finnish Chamber of Commerce or Finpro –or to both. The services that German-Finnish Chamber of Commerce provides are wide, for instance companies are able to receive updated information from German market and even contact specific potential customers directly with the help of the agents. The whole service range includes information, counselling and business contact services and also coun-

selling related to juridical and taxation practice. Finnish-German Chamber of Commerce is a part of German Chamber of Commerce system, which is able to receive wide co-operations networks to companies' use. The third suggestions for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would be to contact Finnish-German Chamber of Commerce and, for instance, use these provided services, such as to help to find business partners, to deepen the market area knowledge, receive juridical and language services for events or business meetings. The other option for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is to contact Finpro, which provides useful and extended market research of all countries and professional assistance in internationalisation process. The information received and service provided from both alternatives are mainly the same. (Deutsch-Finnische-Handelskammer. 2009; Finpro. 2009)

5.2 Implemented suggestions

All the findings and suggestions were represented in a company visit in Lehtosen Konepaja Oy in 01.02.2008 in Kokemäki. After a year from the first company visit the second meeting was agreed to 26.03.2009. The purpose of this visit was to interview Mr. Erkki Lehtonen about the current situation of the company in internationalisation process and also find out how much the made market research and potential business-to-business customer survey have helped. The aim was also to see, which suggestions the company had adapted, which not and why. The interview was informal and interactive, and all the findings were written down to a notebook. (Lehtonen, E. 2009)

The main topic was the investments, which Lehtosen Konepaja Oy had made during the year. This had been focused and planned, since the company gained to update the machinery stock in order to compete better in the new markets and have enough capacity to enter a new market. At this point any new personnel were not recruited, but the company will be open to that issue in the future –but first they wanted to see how the ball starts to roll, when new contacts have been made. According to Mr. Erkki Lehtonen there is one German skilled employee and the company has some contacts, which can help in handling the businesses in German at first. Also the options to use the different services of German-Finnish Chamber of Commerce and Finpro have been noted, and the company had contacted to them and learned more about the dif-

ferent services offered. Here it is good to pinpoint that Lehtosen Konepaja Oy has registered to Finpro's member company in 07.08.2009. (Lehtonen, E. 2009)

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy had adapted the suggestions related to the marketing actions, since the company has now a very professional and functional website available in Finnish, English, Swedish, German and Russian. The website was created and designed by professionals in their own business area, and constantly updated by administrator. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is now able to keep track of all the users all over the world, who will browse in their website. All the information will be registered to statistics, which provides the company to keep an eye on which market areas might be the next potential territory to enter. Mr. Erkki Lehtonen pointed out that most of the visitors have been from Sweden after the new website was taken into use. The company had also added pictures, company presentations and brochures to their new website. Everyone is able to download and read them. The company started to publish a magazine, Leko News, for its customers and interest groups. The magazine can also be read in an electronic form in Lehtosen Konepaja's new website. (Lehtonen, E. 2009)

The company also attended exhibitions in autumn 2008 as was suggested. Although neither of the suggested were visited, but Mr. Erkki Lehtonen mentioned that it was worth of taking part, because there were lots of other attendants and the exhibitions gave positive thoughts to future plans. They did not make any new business contacts at the first visit, they were more to observe. The company is planning to attend to next exhibitions in autumn 2009, if not already earlier. (Lehtonen, E. 2009)

At the end of the interview Mr. Erkki Lehtonen mentioned that the company was ready to internationalise and enter a new foreign market by searching for potential business-to-business customers – the company had prepared and done lots of advance planning. The customer survey done for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would be needed and the company was planning to contact these potential customers during the autumn 2009. Mr. Erkki Lehtonen had studied the report and had categorised the four most potential customers; 1) Sipro Projekt- und Anlagenplanung GmbH, 2) Dietrich Maschinen GmbH, 3) Anakon GmbH and 4) Jochen Brill. (Lehtonen, E. 2009)

All in all, Mr. Erkki Lehtonen was very pleased with the work done for them. It was extensive enough; information collected was useful and met the case. The report will help the company in their internationalisation process and searching for business-to-business customers. "It is good to continue forward from this!" (Lehtonen, E. 2009)

The case research made for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was represented in 01.02.2008 and the results of the study as well as the suggestions were well received. The complete benefit of this study for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy was seen in the second company visit on 26.03.2009, when Mr. Erkki Lehtonen was interviewed. The suggestions were implemented and the company had improved their marketing and the visibility. The company had not contacted to any of the selected potential business-to-business companies by then, because it was focusing heavily to investments and to increase the capacity to internationalise.

6 SUMMARY

All companies are more than a sum of different actions; companies' value chain is an interactive system or manufacturing network, which different parts are connected to each other with linkages. Important is to understand that companies' value chain will be handled as a system instead of separate parts of summary in order to achieve competitive advantage. A company's value chain is included in a larger stream of activities, which is called value system, which contains subcontractors. The value chain is used for identifying international competitive advantage of a company, which consists of primary activities and support activities. A simplified version of value chain, which was used in this study, is characterised by the fact that it contains only the primary activities of a company. The focus was on the company's marketing, which contains different activities to be handled, in order to get a functional marketing concept.

The purpose of this study was to deliver a business-to-business customer survey and a market research of German market for Lehtosen Konepaja, and another purpose was to give a clear vision of the value chain. This study was divided into two parts; theoretical and case study. *The theoretical part* of the study concentrated on the value chain, in more precise simplified value chain, which is used in this study to examine the primary activities of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The value chain analysis will give the framework for identifying international competitive advantage of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. The value chain was developed by Michael E. Porter and the theoretical part of the study referred to Porter's main literature of the competitive advantage. Other professional literature was used as well in order to increase the reliability of the study. In the theoretical study it was searched how value chain can be applied in companies' internationalisation process and how value chain analysis suits for SME's internationalise process as a tool. The theoretical study was conducted as desk research. Qualitative methods used provided a comprehensive view of the research problem. Interviews were made in order to get more valuable data, and information which was not able to get in any other way. The deductive research was used in this study; the general internationalisation process was studied and then concentrated on individual case, which was focused on the internationalisation of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy.

The other part of the study was *case study*, which purpose was to conduct a wide and extensive research of German market and potential business-to-business customer survey for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy, and acted as a client for this study. The client needed this kind of information in their internationalisation process. The research questions were formulated; the case study was culminated to searching what kind of companies Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would be interested to co-operate with, how to find business-to-business co-operative partners, how to make business contacts with German companies and what kind of marketing decisions Lehtosen Konepaja Oy must make in order to internationalise and find co-operative partners. The case studies started by defining the need of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and then proceed to analyse what kind of companies would be the most potential for the client. The idea was that Lehtosen Konepaja Oy would make its own conclusions about the selected potential customers and analyse the results of the market research, whether to contact these potential customers or not. In the case study the desk research was used for

finding the potential business-to-business customers for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy. All the possible potential companies were categorised by their potentiality and compared to the client's need. At the end of the study all the findings were presented to Lehtosen Konepaja and written report was given for the client's purposes.

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy's need for this kind of information high and the client had made the request to study German market and conduct a business-to-business customer survey. Lehtosen Konepaja Oy is interested in entering to new foreign market as they have gained a stable position in domestic market as subcontractor. The topic for this thesis was received from Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Faculty of Business and Culture Pori, which participated in Finnish-German Competence Network –project in year 2006.

The sources used in this study are relatively new ones, the oldest ones being from the year 2003. The sources used include books, Internet, magazines and databases. Internet was mainly used as source of information, because of the ease of finding the relevant and updated data. Internet was found to be the best source to update the company contact details of the potential customers. To ensure the reliability of the study the Internet sources are verified in case of any updates. Other information is carefully collected from various recent sources. All the sources have been produced by professionals in their own branch and are transparent, as they are available for everyone. All the findings have been extensive and useful in the internationalisation process.

It can be considered that the main research questions were answered by reviewing the results of the study and the information gathered. The results of the study and suggestions made for Lehtosen Konepaja Oy helped them to develop and overcome their weaknesses and minimise the threats. Having reviewed the suggestions the company certainly focused more on the marketing and how to create a better availability, which helps them in their internationalisation process.

The used theory in this research was functional, and it was approved to be a good tool for business-to-business customer survey and identifying international competitive advantage of a company. The used theory was useful tool in the case study, when evaluating the potentiality of the selected companies. Good databases for searching business-to-business customers were also found. Data bases helped to gather only relevant information and to search companies by business field. The most important database was found to be Kompass.

The information given in the study might be amended in the future. For further study it is suggested to study the internationalisation process of Lehtosen Konepaja Oy and to find out how the business contacts have been used and were new business relationships created with the selected potential companies.

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THE MACHINE STOCK LIST OF LEHTOSEN KONEPAJA OY

Vertical lathes



Mazak Mega Turn A16N Mill Center (rotating machines)	Ø 2030 x 2020
Mazak Mega Turn A16N	Ø 2030 x 1890
Mazak e-1550 V10II/2p (multi-tasking turning centre)	Ø 2000 x 1550 x 1875
TOS HULIN SKA 25	Ø 2900 x 1940

Boring machines



JUARISTI TS 5	X = 4000 Z = 2000 Y = 3000
JUARISTI TS 1	X = 3000 Z = 1500 Y = 2000
TOS WHQ 105	X = 1800 Z = 1500 Y = 1500
TOS WHN 13.8	X = 3500 Z = 1500 Y = 2500
TOS WHQ 13.12	X = 5000 Z = 2000 Y = 3000
TOS WHQ 13.12	X = 5000 Z = 2000 Y = 3000

NC-lathes



Mazak Slant Turn 40	Ø 550 x 2000
Mazak Quick Turn 35	Ø 340 x 1500
GIANA GFP 14 CC	Ø 1740 x 5500

Turning centres



Mazak Integrex 50YB \varnothing 710 x 2500
(rotating machines C, Y and B-axels)

Mazak Integrex 400YB \varnothing 610 x 1528
(rotating machines C, Y and B-axels)

Machining centre



Mazak VTC-300 C x = 2000 Y = 770 Z = 640

Milling machine



Correa A25/40 X = 4000 Z = 1000 Y = 1000

Soraluce Soramill TS2 X = 2000 Z = 1200 Y = 1500

Conventional machine tools



Centre lathes	6 pcs max. Ø 1740 x 5500
Radial drilling machines	4 pcs
Milling machines	1 pc
Keyseating machine	1 pc FRÖMAG RAPIDA 50 / 525 MM
Grinders	3 pcs

Sheet metal machine tools



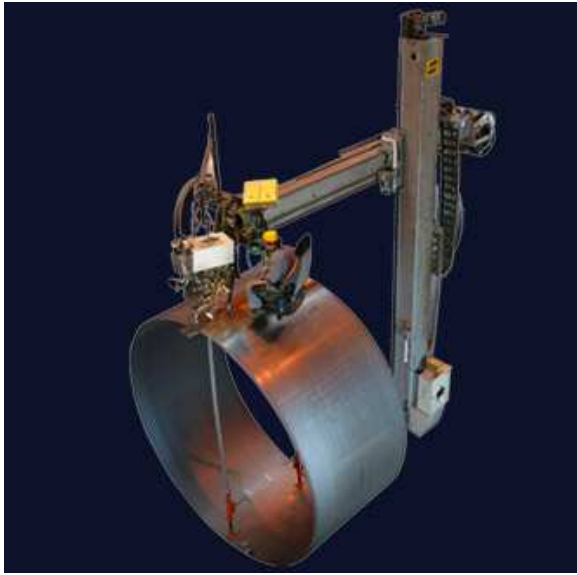
Elding press	DURMA 300 t / 4000 and FINNPOWER 600 t / 7050
Sheet cutter	ALIKO 16x3020 and FINNPOWER 16x6050
Sheet roller	DAVI 2000 / 16 and FACCIN 2000 / 42
Gag press	LEKO 1500 x 550 x 750
Section bender	FACCIN D800 70 x 70
Edge bevel grinding	PULLMAX R90, max. 50mm

Saws



Bomar transverse 510.330	CNC
Kaltenbach KKS-400NA	2 pcs

Welding



DNV sertification SFS-EN-729-2

Welding machines, 45 pcs 400-500 AMP

Turntables, 12 pcs PEMA / TALTOR
650 - 15 000 kg

Turning rolls, 2 pcs TALTOR 3 / 6 t

Transporter Bugo-Skuter BUGO 6+6 m

Jauhekaarihitsaustorneja, 300 pcs ESAB SM
(Submerged arc welding torns)

Annealing



Heatmasters 1 pc 3020 and 1 pc 4030
(4000 x 3000 x 2500)

Thermal cutting



Flame cutting /
Plasma cutting ThermCut CNC P4000
3050X12000

2 machines

Deggendorf, 28. Mai 2007

Sehr geehrte Damen und Herren,

Mein Name ist Miia Kärnä und ich bin eine Studentin der Satakunta University of Applied Sciences, Kankaapää in Finnland. Ich bin im Moment eine Austauschstudentin an der Fachhochschule Deggendorf in Deutschland. Zurzeit schreibe ich meine Bachelor Thesis an der Fachhochschule Deggendorf. Ich schreibe meine Thesis über die Analyse des deutschen Markts.

Die finnische Firma Lehtosen Konepaja Oy (Lehtosen Konepaja GmbH) gab hierfür die nötigen Impulse und ist sehr an meiner Arbeit für mögliche Kontakte in den deutschen Raum interessiert. Die Firma hat die Absicht mögliche Abnehmer und Geschäftspartner durch meine Arbeit zu finden. Dies kann eine Firma sein, welche ganz auf fremde Produkte angewiesen ist oder auch Hilfe bei der Produktion ihrer Produkte angewiesen ist.

Lehtosen Konepaja Oy ist ein Subunternehmer vieler finnischer Firmen aus der Metallindustrie wie zum Beispiel Rolls Royce Oy, Steer Prop Oy, etc.). Falls Sie weitere Fragen zu Lehtosen Konepaja Oy haben sollten, bitte ich Sie mich per Email zu kontaktieren. Ich werde Ihre Fragen jederzeit gerne beantworten.

Zum eigentlichen Grund meiner Email zu kommen, wollte ich Sie bitten, ob Sie mir einige Fragen Ihre Firma betreffend beantworten könnten. Ich würde diese Informationen, wenn dies von Ihrer Seite aus in Ordnung geht, als Referenzen aus dem deutschen Markt für meine Thesis benutzen. Bei jeglicher Art von Fragen zu diesem Punkt bitte ich Sie mir eine Email zu schreiben oder mich anzurufen. Die Fragen, welche ich von Ihnen für meine Thesis beantwortet bräuchte finden Sie im Anhang dieser Email.

Ich bedanke mich recht herzlich in voraus für Ihre Antwort und die Antworten auf meine Fragen. Wie schon erwähnt, bitte kontaktieren Sie mich bei möglichen Fragen

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Miia Kärnä

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Miia Kärnä

Satakunta University of Applied Sciences / Fachhochschule Deggendorf

Fragebogen für mögliche Referenzfirmen des deutschen Markts

Fragebogen

- 1.) Welche Art von Produkten produziert Ihre Firma?

- 2.) Produziert Ihre Firma alle Produkte selbständig oder kauft sie fertige Teil von anderen Firmen?

- 3.) Falls Teile von Subunternehmern bezogen werden, welche Teile sind das und in welcher Menge werden diese bezogen?

- 4.) Wer wäre die Kontaktperson für mögliche weiter Kontakte?

Vielen Dank für Ihre Mühe!

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