

Finding out the most used booking methods and targeting
marketing channels at specific customer segments
Case: Kemi Tourism Ltd.

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Bachelor's thesis of the Degree Program in Business Management
International trade
Bachelor of Business Administration

KEMI 2014

TIIVISTELMÄ

LAPIN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU, Kauppa ja kulttuuri

Koulutusohjelma:	Liiketalouden koulutusohjelma
Opinnäytetyön tekijät:	Emma-Lotta Hiltunen ja Niina Tytärniemi
Opinnäytetyön nimi:	Käytetyimpien varaustapojen löytäminen ja markkinoinnin kohdentaminen tietyille asiakasryhmille Case : Kemin Matkailu Oy
Sivuja:	45
Päiväys:	20.05.2014
Opinnäytetyön ohjaaja:	Marita Wahlroos
<p>Tämä opinnäytetyö on toimeksianto Kemin Matkailu Oy:ltä. Työn tavoitteena on selvittää asiakkaiden käyttämät suosituimmat varausväylät maittain ja kohdentaa markkinointikanavat eri asiakassegmenteille.</p> <p>Opinnäytetyössä käytämme sekä määrällistä että laadullista tutkimusta, mutta pääpaino on määrällisellä eli kvantitatiivisella tutkimusotteella. Käytämme tutkimusta tehdessä hyväksi Travius-varausjärjestelmää, josta saamme tarvittavat tilastotiedot. Olemme etsineet opinnäytetyöhön teoretietoa käyttäen lähteinä Internetiä ja kirjallisuutta, jotka liittyvät matkailuun sekä markkinointiin. Olemme myös saaneet työharjoittelun kautta niin teoreettista kuin empiiristäkin tietoa. Lisäksi teimme työtämme varten pienimuotoisen haastattelun Kemin matkailu Oy:n työntekijöille.</p> <p>Keskeisistä tuloksista tärkeimpänä erottuu matkatoimistojen tärkeys varausväylänä. Esimerkiksi Kiinassa ja Venäjällä matkatoimistoille markkinointiin on hyvä panostaa varauskeino suosioista johtuen. Kuitenkin yksityismatkailijat ja online-varaajat ovat sosiaalisen median suosion myötä nouseva matkailuryhmä, kuten esimerkiksi Kiinassa voidaan havaita. Yhtenä markkinointipanostuksen menetelmänä voisi olla kilpailun järjestäminen sosiaalisessa mediassa ja palkintoina voisi olla matkapaketti Kemiin.</p> <p>Tutkimuksen perusteella pidämme tärkeänä, että nämä uudet suuntaukset otetaan markkinoinnissa huomioon ja niiden kehittämiseen paneudutaan riittävästi. Toki tuloksissa ja johtopäätöksissä on otettava huomioon eri maiden eroavaisuudet, sillä yksi markkinointikeino ei sovi kaikille.</p>	
Asiasanat: markkinointi, sosiaalinen media, matkailu, matkailumessut, tutkimus	

ABSTRACT

LAPLAND UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES, Business and culture

Degree programme:	Bachelor of Business Administration
Authors:	Emma-Lotta Hiltunen and Niina Tytärniemi
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Date:	20.05.2014
Thesis instructor:	Marita Wahlroos
<p>This study is assigned by Kemi Tourism Ltd. The objective of this thesis research is to find out the most frequently used booking methods used by the customers in different countries and target the assignor's marketing channels at specific customer segments.</p> <p>The methods used are both quantitative and qualitative research, but the main focus is on the quantitative method. We utilized the Travius booking system when collecting the required information and statistics. We have used literature and the Internet as sources dealing with travelling and marketing. We also gathered both theoretical and empirical knowledge through our practical training. In addition, we conducted a small-scale interview with Kemi Tourism Ltd. employees.</p> <p>Main results and conclusions: From the results the importance of tour operators as booking method stands out. For example, in investing in travel agency marketing is vital in China and Russia due to the popularity of the booking method. However, private travelers and online bookers are the growing group of travelers due to the increased popularity of the social media clearly seen for example in China. One of the marketing investments made could be in a competition held in social media and the prize could be a travel package in Kemi.</p> <p>The results of this research indicate that it is important that these new trends are taken into consideration in marketing and developing them is a priority. In interpreting the results and conclusions, the differences between countries should be taken into account, since one marketing tool does not suit all.</p>	
Keywords: marketing, social media, tourism, travel fair, research	

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1 INTRODUCTION

According to the Sales Manager of Kemi Tourism Ltd., the Kemi town and Meri-Lappi, i.e. Sea Lapland, offer travelers a great opportunity to experience a unique experience in a unique place. The region can provide customers a tour on an icebreaker which is one of a kind experience in the tourism industry in the world. In addition, Kemi has had the snow castle for years. The snow castle can be seen in its quality and artistically as a very important tourist destination worldwide. The Sea Lapland region is unique because it is among the few places in the world where the ice is frozen the entire spring. That enables tourists to experience amazing winter sports, i.e. snow mobile drives, cross-country skiing, and snow shoeing, and the sense of freedom on the arctic sea ice. The region lives from the sea and it is also reflected in the services in the region. The sea differentiates the Sea Lapland region from other parts of Lapland and creates significant value to the Lapland tourism service packages. As a result, the Sea Lapland region has a revised slogan, "Experience the freedom of the arctic sea, snow and ice". (Sipola 2014.)

Those are the ideas that the words "tourism in Kemi" raised in Tomi Sipola. Today many effective ways of marketing tourism services are known but one of the issues can be the effective targeting of marketing. The objective of this thesis is to target marketing for specific customer segments and to find out the most used booking methods used by the customers in different countries. We also research the countries that from which the largest tourism masses travel to Kemi. The objective for our thesis is to promote the marketing of Kemi Tourism Ltd. by finding the most profitable ways to market their services in the most important countries. In our research, we also touch on the clientele of Kemi Tourism Ltd. and the way the single and group travelers are placed in researched countries.

The thesis topic was given as a project from Kemi Tourism Ltd. Kemi Tourism Ltd. assigned us to find out the biggest tourism countries. We discover the best ways of marketing by analyzing the visitor statistics and databases given by Kemi Tourism Ltd. We process the visitor statistics of the Travius booking software from the past three years. From the statistics we create excel diagrams and by analyzing those figures we find the right ways for marketing.

Our thesis is implemented with the quantitative research approach, and we chose this approach because the thesis is essentially related to researching different kinds of statistics based on existing material. Similar kind of work has not been done for Kemi Tourism Ltd. yet and, therefore, we think that our research is to provide new perspectives for the company's marketing. We think that Kemi Tourism Ltd. benefits from our thesis by not having to use unnecessary resources for unprofitable marketing ways in countries they are not lucrative in. Hence the purpose is to maximize the benefits of marketing and to improve its quality and profitability. Our thesis gives an opportunity to Kemi Tourism Ltd. to efficiently use their existing resources to the most productive destinations.

1.1 Background and motivation

Our field of study is international marketing and, therefore, the topic is intrinsically linked to study modules we are studying. Both of us have always been interested in internationalization, tourism and travelling. We requested our thesis topic from Kemi Tourism Ltd., because we found it as an interesting topic that they would like us to investigate. The topic is related to developing their marketing based on the information from their booking system. They do not have the time to do such extensive research and they also thought that they could benefit more of a statistical research than from the traditional interview model. In previous thesis research the response rate was relatively low and, therefore, this time they wanted to try a different approach.

1.2 Research objective and limitation

The objective for this thesis is to study what are the most frequently used booking channels by tourists from different countries, and also focus on targeting marketing channels for certain customer segments. We seek to find out the best ways for Kemi Tourism Ltd. to use their marketing funds in order to their marketing to be as profitable as possible. Our objective is also to improve the holistic marketing and suggest plans for development. This research assists Kemi Tourism Ltd. to gain the biggest benefit from its marketing. We clarify the differences between online bookings and office-made bookings. In addition, the office-made bookings we categorize into group and single travelers.

Our research questions are as follows:

1. What are the most essential marketing channels used in tourism industry?
2. Through which booking channels tourists did book a trip or service?
3. Which marketing methods would be effective for Kemi Tourism Ltd. to use in the most popular destination countries?

1.3 Research methods

This thesis is conducted by using both quantitative and qualitative research method, but the main focus is in the quantitative method. By researching the material Kemi Tourism Ltd. has gathered in its booking software we are able to make the required conclusions and calculations that are vital to this thesis. This quantitative research uses data or material gathered by the researcher (Kristo 2013).

In this study we make use of material that already existed in Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s software. By using that information we find out the amount of visitors, where they come from and which booking system did they use. The final summary, analysis and conclusions are made based on these results. In the quantitative research method, it is relevant to define different concepts and to benefit from the previous researches that are linked to the topic. (Kristo 2013) In addition to the existing data, we gathered empirical information by interviewing Kemi Tourism Ltd. employees. This kind of researching method is known as the qualitative research method. In the qualitative method it is important that an objective grip is held through the research. The researcher should not mix his own beliefs, attitudes and values in the target of research, but instead he should aim to understand the aspects and expressions of the interviewed person. (Metsämuuronen 2008, 17.) In our thesis both of these methods are used alternately and the best sides of both methods are exploited in this study.

1.4 The presentation of the company

Kemi Tourism Ltd. is a limited liability company that was established in year 1987 and

it operates in the city of Kemi. The company operates in the tourism industry and its main products include Icebreaker Sampo, Snowcastle and Gemstone Gallery. (Kemin Matkailu Oy 2013.) Previously the Snowcastle and the Icebreaker Sampo were owned by different companies until 2008 when they all merged together to one company – Kemi Tourism Ltd. (YTJ-tietopalvelu 2013). The company is owned by the city of Kemi, and its main industry includes for example booking services and tour guide services (Kemin Matkailu Oy 2013).

Company is focusing on getting the tourists in the area of Kemi, and its goal is also to achieve improvement in the attractiveness of the area by a comprehensive cooperation with the travel organizations in the neighboring area. Kemi Tourism Ltd. is widely marketing its services and functions in numerous target countries but it mainly operates in the Kemi district. (Ahonen 2013, 36.) Kemi Tourism Ltd. is identifying its vision to be the strong tourism operator in the Meri-Lappi district and overall in Finland. Company is aiming to create the unique experiences for their customers and hence their slogan is “Experience the arctic freedom – sea, snow and ice.” There are ten regular employees, including the managing director, working in Kemi Tourism Ltd., but in high season the number can grow up to twenty. Through its functions, the company is seeking to attain the highest possible level of customer service and emphasizes the importance of the team spirit among the employees. (Kemin Matkailu Oy 2013.)

1.5 Structure of the thesis

The Case Company is Kemi Tourism Ltd. which is a tourism agency in Kemi, Finland. In this thesis research Chapter 2 describes the development of tourism and tourism in Kemi. Chapter 3 describes today’s tourism marketing and illustrates the concept of marketing mix. In Chapter 4, marketing channels and advertising are discussed along with marketing communication in a tourism company. Implementation of empirical research, gathering of data and final analysis process are described in Chapter 5. Moreover, the final results of the research are described in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 concentrates on overall conclusions and discussions along with the recommendations for future research.

2 TOURISM

”Travelling means a lot to me because I enjoy getting to know different kinds of cultures, foods and lifestyles. As a profession this is an amazing job because I get to meet new people and hold meetings at fairs (three to four per day) with up to 20-30 different cultures or nationalities. Fairs are held all across the world and, therefore, they are a great way to get to know new cultures, manners and foods. In addition, during my free time I aim to travel every year into a different country.” (Sipola 2014, current authors’ translation).

As it can be deduced from Sipola’s (2014) email, travelling includes many different kinds of aspects and it gives many experiences for people. According to one story, longing for new experiences is the reason why people have traveled through the ages, in the beginning by voyages of discovery and adventures, and today among the modern tourism. ”A tourist travels because they want to satisfy the realities laying deep in their souls, and fill the black holes.” These kinds of needs and motivators for travelling can be boredom in everyday life, secret passions and scenes of the dreams. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 162.)

2.1 Development of tourism

Tourism as an industry is growing and developing. Through industrialization around the 18th century the nature and possibilities of tourism evolved as communications and transportation were developed. The concept of mass tourism was introduced, when the flight engineering reached to the point where it became possible to transport tourists for long distances to different destinations. The nature of tourism has changed considerably from those days, since currently people have much more expectations for their trip than previously. To acknowledge identified wishes and needs has become one of the most important parts of tourism and these demands are responded by adventure travel services. (Karusaari & Nylund 2009, 16.) As the figure 1 below shows, the number of tourists has increased worldwide year by year excluding the decreases during the depressions. In 2010, there were 940 million tourists from different parts of the world traveling and the number has doubled since the year 1995. (BBC 2014.)

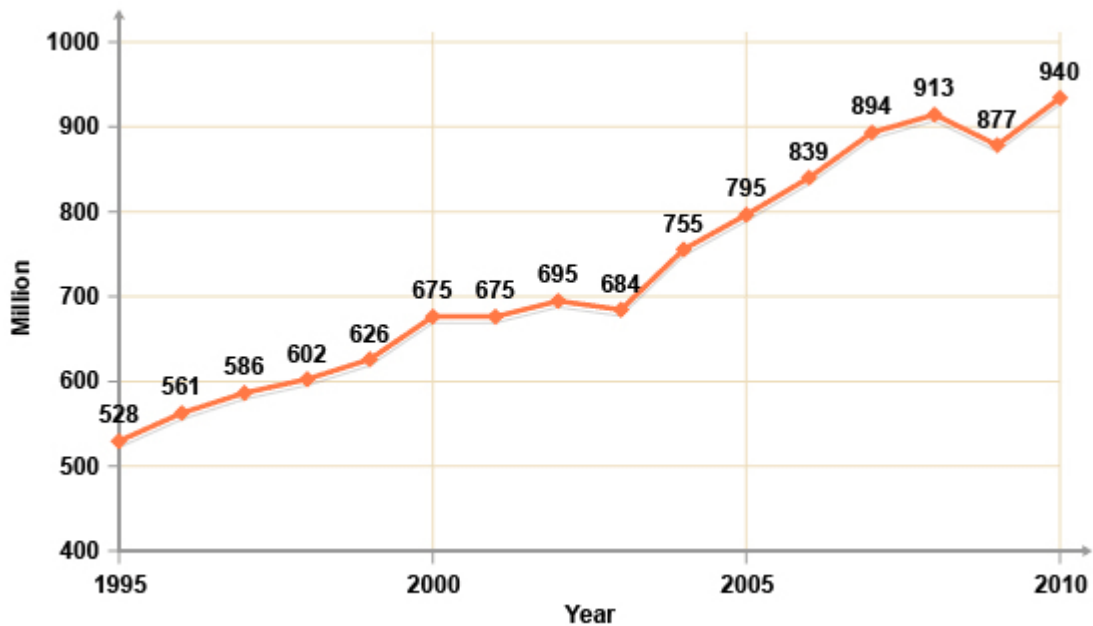


Figure 1 (Diagram of tourism development in 1995 - 2010 (BBC)).

If the gaze is aimed towards the year 2020, it is estimated that the amount of tourists will be up to 1.6 billion. At the moment tourism employs 74 million people, but there are evaluated to be 200 million people in the tourism related functions alone. Regarding the industry this big, it is vitally important to continue the development and diversification in the future. Today the manners and actions of tourists have transformed into more independent and identified. There is more information available for tourists and they want to be more engaged in the planning of the holiday. (Buhalis & Costa 2006, 9, 68.) The more information is available for people the more knowledge they get from different options, and because of that their expectations towards their trip may increase and change. The choices tourists make can be guided by their budget, values, wishes and preferences.

2.2 Tourism in Kemi

Kemi is a part of the vast Meri-Lappi region which includes Tornio, Haparanda, Keminmaa, Tervola and Simo. The strengths of Meri-Lappi are good communications and central location. For example Kemi-Tornio airport and railway station operate in the area. In addition most of the cities have bus stations that have good accesses to nearby regions and also long distance destinations. The flip side can be seen in the poor placement and amount of signposts when then problem might be the use of the

highway as a fast lane. (Körkkö 2011.)

Improving the informing with signposts and signs could significantly enhance the spontaneous input traffic of travelers to Kemi. They have been trying to find solution for the short term visits of tourists because at the moment the area functions mostly as a stopover for visitors. The services of the city should be informed more in order to the travelers to find them more easily. For example bowling hall of Kemi is quite invisible when it comes to signs and advertising. Surely the travelers would like to enjoy the existing entertainment services that Kemi has to offer but these kinds of services require the tourists own inquiry which leads to the decrease of the spontaneous actions.

Despite of the facts mentioned above, at the moment Kemi is a popular winter holiday destination in Meri-Lappi, as it has been invested in since the year 1987. It was the time when the city took ownership of the Icebreaker Sampo, which brings 10 000 tourists to Kemi annually. Even though Sampo is relatively expensive compared to other sight in Kemi, its success has been consistent and great year after year. In addition, the world largest Snowcastle was built in Kemi year 1996 and it has attracted already 2,1 million visitors since the first year. The 19th Snowcastle was built in Kemi 2014 and next year it will be the 20th anniversary for the castle. Winter tourism is and has been the leading spirit of Kemi, because Kemi is best known for that.

The popularity of summer tourism in Kemi has also risen in the past few years due to the visits of cruise ships and archipelago cruises (Vilén 2012). Even though the success of summer tourism has risen it is still noticeable minor than winter tourism. Kemi has sought to develop its summer tourism inter alia by cooperating with the University of Lapland. The cooperation includes the event “Innomaraton” the university has organized to make students develop new ideas for the chosen target. In 2013 Kemi Tourism Ltd. was one of the targets for development. During the event many different kinds of ideas were invented which would among other things improve Kemis summer tourism and visibility in the world. Various events that highlight the uniqueness and distinctiveness of the city could increase Kemis attractiveness among domestic and foreign travelers.

3 TOURISM MARKETING

When observing the strategic planning process of a tourism company, it can be noticed that marketing is in a key role during the whole process. This kind of planning consists of reconciliation in organizations' goals, knowledge, resources and the changing possibilities of marketing. (Hollanti 2007, 29.) Marketing has immersed and evolved into an additionally comprehensive concept since the 1960's, when the concept itself was acknowledged. From the beginning, manufacturing orientation marketing has traveled a long way through the different phases of today's comprehensiveness stage where it cannot be classified as a single operation, but more as a way to think and implement the organization. (Rope 2000, 20.) Due to this philosophy, also tourism marketing has faced notable changes. Especially the social media's status as a way to reach the majority of the population has gained a significant role. It is estimated that approximately 66 % of the users of the Internet also utilizes social media. (Kalkela 2011.) As the popularity of the social media increases, new doors to inform about services have opened also for tourism organizations and this development facilitates keeping track of their clientele's preferences.

The concept of marketing is one of the most important for a tourism company. This importance derives from the fact that in travelling and in marketing the main goal is customer satisfaction without forgetting the company's own targets and ideology. The concept of marketing has to be understood by the whole company from management to line workers. The concept was first introduced in the middle of the 1900's when the apprehensions of selling and marketing changed. From being product and sale orientated, businesses evolved into a more customer based operations. The customer's needs and desires were increasingly taken into consideration instead of only manufacturing products. The key factor in tourism marketing is to be better than competitors in creativity, management, delivery and customer satisfaction. (Kotler 2009, 25.)

3.1 Tourism marketing today

Today many people still perceive marketing as a selling concept. Such view is, however, incomplete because even though divestment has its place in marketing it should be regarded as its own concept. Tourism marketing should be in line with company policies, rules and values. Marketing is all about forecasting demand and eventually satisfying it. (Holloway 2004, 7.) If the marketing concept is seen only as

selling and advertising, company's overall operations may be incomplete. In this case, the company cannot reach the full potential that it could have achieved with better strategy. Therefore, it would be essential for tourism-sector companies to carefully go through their marketing strategy and marketing paths at regular intervals, in order to the company to keep pace with the prevailing trends.

The development of tourism marketing does not show any signs of stopping, instead the pace seems to accelerate increasingly. When observing the contents of marketing it would be a huge mistake to think that the development has reached its ending point. When the speed of change only accelerates the pace of change the companies involved in marketing need to be on high alert all the time. The base of all tourism marketing is how it works towards the targeted tourist. Taking the human behavior as a basis of marketing and understanding a human is the cornerstone in successful marketing. (Rope 2000, 626.) As the tourism industry is a growing business and new tourist destinations and tour operators appear on the market, the company's goal is to find the appropriate means for their own company, enabling it to maintain its market position in growing competition. For a company to be able to keep pace with this competition, it needs to understand marketing as a comprehensive concept, which provides guidance to the company's operations.

3.2 Marketing mix in a tourism company

There are many different kinds of methods and models for marketing and every company should consider what model suites their company the best. In our opinion the model 4P is often used and simple tool to work with. It contains the most important features that should be taken into consideration in marketing and it can be applied at the prevailing tourism trends. These 4P's are product, price, promotion and place. In this thesis research the influence of these four parts is briefly observe.

From the tourism perspective, the product takes its place as a common thread in marketing. Product can be goods, services, people, places, organizations and ideas. It contains the essence of the desired product, which is intended to sell to tourists. Important at this stage, is to consider what the tourist wants and needs, as well as what benefits them the most. (Middleton 1988, 88-89; Horner & Swarbrooke 1996, 143).

The second important aspect in the 4P's is price. Pricing is important when it is desired to have successful marketing and business. When pricing the services, there must be found a value that is relative to the customer's approval and the company's profits. If the price is too low, the company's profit does not meet the target, but on the contrary too expensive price expels the buyers and therefore they do not buy the product, which can be a disadvantage for company's finances. It can be said that the price should boost consumption. (Horner & Swarbrooke 1996, 170.)

Of the all sections of marketing mix, the promotion part has the most visible role because it includes advertising, sales promotion and public relations activities. Its main goal is to create positive images for customers of products and to create a need to buy them. Usually the tourism company has either a push or a pull strategy in use in their advertising. In push strategy the company is not marketing its product itself, but relies the marketing for the intermediary. In pull strategy the company markets the product directly to buyer, and trusts that the buyer purchases the product from the intermediary. (Horner & Swarbooke 1996, 202.)

The final mix component is the place which determines the location of the product, as well as the availability of the item from the customer point of view. Although tourists would be ready to pay for the product, there is no trade if it is too difficult for the client to get their hands on it. That is why the product's distribution channels are essentially linked to the place. They are divided into two parts, which are the distribution of the product directly to the customer and the product distribution indirectly through an intermediary to the customer. (Horner & Swarbooke 1996, 188.)



Figure 2 (Marketing mix figure, (Smartdraw).

4 MARKETING CHANNELS AND ADVERTISING

When marketing is targeted to reach out a large number of people, a wide variety of advertising can be used. Advertising tools include media advertising, direct mail and additional advertising. Media advertising includes newspaper advertisements, television and radio advertising, outdoor and transport advertising, online advertising and cinema advertising. (Bergström & Leppänen 2009, 180-216.) Direct mail can be distributed regionally, in accordance with purchasing and housing type (Suomen suoramainonta 2009). Another advertising tool is complementary advertising. This includes post advertising, mobile advertising, directories, catalogs, exhibition advertising, event advertising and sponsorship advertising. These promotional tools allow large extent to the company's familiarity, customer's interest in the company's products and services and clientele's shopping behavior.

Kemi Tourism Ltd. uses a wide range of advertising and marketing tools in its operations. Social media advertising is one of the most widely used and it includes for example Facebook, blogs and Tripadvisor in addition to other recommendation sites. Further Kemi Tourism Ltd. utilizes for example home pages, print advertising, sign posts, catalogs of retailers, fairs, events, email advertising, press releases/visits, commercial videos and advertising events. (Sipola 2014.) Of these methods we focus on exhibition advertising and social media on the request of the client.

4.1 Marketing communication in tourism companies

When the target for marketing is both consumers and dealers, the concept marketing communication is used. It must be kept involved in business operations from start to finish. Especially in the early stages of the company's advertising, marketing communication is important in order to enable customers to find the new service or product. (Bergström & Leppänen 2009, 178.) Marketing communications are formed for a company to suit its needs. For example, a small business, the clientele of which is located close to the company, uses local advertising such as newspaper advertisements and direct mail advertising, as well as, the premises advertising such as a showcase of the ads. If the company's target is other companies, the emphasis is on direct communication and sales work. In addition, the product that is marketed, defines the

correct form of marketing because a variety of products should not be marketed by the same means. When searching for the right form of marketing communications the most important thing is to think of the customer base that you want to reach and the product that is traded. (Bergström & Leppänen 2009, 179.)

4.2 Trade show marketing

Trade show marketing is vital for travel agents, as it is one of the most important promotional events for tourism products (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 251). Trade fairs are an excellent way to increase the customer base, as they make marketing easier, because the seller does not have to search for customers, but the customers come over to the service provider (SOTA network blog 2013). Fairs are organized for the travel industry professionals and lay people. Internationally, the most important fairs are the POW-WOW-fairs held in the United States and Asia together with the travel fair held in Berlin in the early spring, as well as a fair in London held in the end of the year. Finland, too, can be found represented in the largest and most important trade events. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 251.)

In Finland, the most important tourism fairs are The Travel Fair held in January, RyMy alias the Domestic Group Sales Events, as well as Secretary and Assistant Fair organized in the autumn. In addition to the above-mentioned major exhibitions, there are also a lot of regional trade fairs and exhibitions. (Puustinen & Rouhiainen 2007, 251.) The exhibitions organized in Finland attract visitors mostly from the home country, making it possible to market a company's products and services nationwide, which allows multiple travel agencies to inform what the company has to offer. Often a travel agent also visits abroad fairs, which allows the company to get higher visibility in many different countries. In the largest trade fairs media interest increases visibility for agencies and often tourism industry's representatives gather from all over the world to see the exhibitions supply. (Morello 2014.)

4.3 The advantages and disadvantages of trade shows

Attending fairs can create a comprehensive picture of the field's competition and competitors for a travel operator. In the events it is possible to observe what kind of

prices, products and services rival firms have to offer. At fairs companies can also create relationships and look for potential partners. (Gibbs 2014.) If a company has not been active in the long term, or it has a new product in its range, the fairs are a great place to get opinions of the product or the business model (Queensland government 2014). In addition, other thesis writers have researched the profitability of fairs as tools of marketing in their works. Riikka Mikkilä (2012, 2) found in her thesis that the exhibition events she studied had a positive impact on tourism operator's visitor base. The study also showed that the key to the success of the fair can be found on its location, diversity and awareness.

Travel fairs disadvantages can often be found in their location. They are usually held in large cities, when the small distant town's representatives have difficulty to reach the fair, such as for cost reasons. (SOTA network blog 2013.) Fairs generally run for a few days and, therefore, if a company has only a few employees or the high season, it might be that the company has no opportunity to participate in the event (Queensland government 2014).

4.4 The social media

People have always had the need to be social, in connection with another person, and the media is one of the means by which this is made possible by great distances. When these two words are merged together it creates the concept of social media, which today is widely recognized for both in private and working life. In the business world the concept is transformed into an effective marketing tool through which companies can reach out to existing and potential customers easily and effortlessly. Social media covers a number of different communities in a network, of which the most common are Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and various blogs. (Safko 2010, 4-5, 449, 472, 531.)

Before social media marketing, the dominant way to market was push-marketing style, where marketing was one-sided way of selling from company to the customers through media such as television or radio. As access to information became easier, people began to increasingly question the veracity of advertising and rely on the experiences of related party about products and services. This transition resulted in that business had to start to invest more and more into interaction with their customer base. (Treadaway

& Smith, 2010, 16.)

4.5 The advantages and disadvantages of the social media

Social media is much more effective compared to other marketing practices thanks to its mutual interaction. Social media is an effective way to create relationships with customers and with social media it is easier for the company to build more stable and long-term relationships that are profitable in terms of sales. Through social media, company has the possibility to observe and study competitors' activities and to benefit in their own business by utilizing the obtained information. In social network a company can examine the means by which the competitors are getting their customers and how customers find the competitors. (Safko 2010, 4-5, 727.)

While social media is an excellent marketing tool it also has its own drawbacks. Today, it is easy for people to publish information about themselves or their company on the Internet and, therefore, it can be difficult to differentiate from the crowd. For example, too boring or irrelevant publications on social network can easily get the customer's interest to fall apart and find their way to more interesting publications. ”..people can't believe you if they don't know what you are saying and they can't know what you are saying if they don't listen to you and they won't listen to you if you're not interesting..” -Bernbach (Sullivan 2003,6).

Social media can also easily operate as the channel for negative as well as positive feedback, being beneficial or detrimental to the company. This can even lead to, for example, that any confidential or damaging information the company's reputation leaks for customer viewing. (Treadaway & Smith 2010, 17.) Such easy access to information is a good thing in terms of sharing experiences, but readers and customers need to be able to think about things critically, because in the flood of information there can be incorrect information included. Especially when writing important documents or researching information about organizations etc. it is crucial to acknowledge the publications release date, writer or publisher and the content.

5 IMPLEMENTATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

This thesis was carried out using a quantitative research method. We chose a quantitative grip on our work, because we use existing material from Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s online booking system. When interpreting this kind of material, the accuracy of the work is good if the material is gone through carefully.

5.1 Gathering of data

The thesis process was started by getting to know to theory about tourism and marketing with the help of literature dealing with marketing channels, advertising and the development of tourism. The research began by requesting guidance from Kemi Tourism Ltd. with going through and sorting the material. The instructions indicated that the booking system data must be sorted out to five different groups over the last three years. The data consists of thousands of tourists groups and individual travelers who have used the Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s services during that time. The sorted data was initially collected by entering them into Excel spreadsheet on the basis of which figures were turned into graphs which facilitated readability. The results were also analyzed with a description of each chart individually for clear illustration and comprehension.

The results were obtained using Kemi Tourism Ltd. reservation system Travius, which can be found at www.travis.eu. In order to use the system, Kemi Tourism Ltd. employee created a username which could be used during this research. When logging into the system, the "order" button from the top bar has to be selected. Below the order button, there is found a search box which allows the user to retrieve the information they need to find. In the first field Kemi Tourism Ltd. was selected as an office, and below it was selected the demanded segment. The segments were web store, walk in, tour operator, incentive and incentive ROI. Another important criterion is the time period of the information desired to search. In this thesis research the researched dates were 1 December – 30 March from years 2011 - 2014. When the search results were loaded, they were systematically gone through from the first to the latest, opening each order in its own window. When the order was opened in its own window, there was found the necessary information for our study which was citizenship and the number of customers.

Etsi tilauksia

Toimipiste : Tilausnumero :

Segmentti :

Asiakas :

Tekijä

Etunimi : Sukunimi :

Ryhmä nimi : Referenssinumero :

Alku päivämäärä : Loppu päivämäärä :

Ryhmä koko : -

Etsi luonti päivämäärällä :

Etsi kassatilauksia :

Tila :

Hae laskutuksesta : Etsi peruutettuja tilauksia :

Hotellihaku :

	Tilaus	Käyttäjä	Ryhmä nimi	Asiakas	Asiakasmäärä	Ajankohta	Laskutettu	Maksettu	Hinta	
	9580	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Walk in	4	02.01.2014-02.01.2014	0,00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Tilaus
	9681	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Walk in	4	02.01.2014-02.01.2014	0,00	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	Tilaus

Figure 3 (Travius booking software (Travius))

5.2 Analysis process

Reservation types in the Travius booking system are Web store, Walk in, Tour operator single, Tour operator group, Incentive and Incentive ROI. In addition, the results also provide a detailed analysis by country of the largest countries, which are China, Israel, Spain, Russia, and The United Kingdom. In the specific analysis we go through the combined results of all the booking methods from the three year period, i.e. 2011 - 2014.

Web store comprises all the tourists who have booked travel and tourism services through Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s web page. The web pages are most commonly used to book Sampo cruises and Snowhotel stays. It should be noted that the web store booking opportunity has been in operation only since 2012. Walk in means private tourists, who have been in direct contact with the Kemi Tourism Ltd. employees through email or over the phone. In addition, the products purchased straight from the office are included in the walk in reservations.

Tour operator was divided into single and group reservations, in which single means trips that have been bought through travel agencies and there are less than ten tourists

in one reservation. In tour operator group reservations, the group size is greater than ten, and these bookings have also been made through travel agents. Incentive reservations mean incentive trips that companies have purchased for their employees. Incentive trips are always reserved through agents. Incentive ROI reservations are otherwise similar to the incentive, but the only difference is that in this case the passengers have come through the agencies in Rovaniemi. Incentive trips are journeys that a company has bought for the selected employees, and often in Kemi's case it is Sampo cruise. (Söderström 2014.)

Web store reservations include customers who have booked a trip from Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s website. The reservations were processed by one at a time by adding each result to an Excel table into a separate column to that country, where tourists came from. When investigating tourists' citizenships the researcher must always look at "citizenship" and not "country" section. In that point at web reservation there is an empty space because the "country" section is meant for reservations made through agents.

The screenshot shows an Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1		WEBSTORE	WALK IN	TOUR OPERATOR SINGLE	TOUR OPERATOR GROUP	INCENTIVE	INCENTIVE ROI
2	AUSTRALIA						
3	AUSTRIA						
4	BELGIUM						
5	CHINA	=29+23					
6	DENMARK						
7	FINLAND						
8	FRANCE						
9	GERMANY						
10	ISRAEL						

Figure 4 (Excel table, calculating results)

Walk ins' were done at the same way as the web bookings. Interpreting the tour operation segment differs slightly from the Web store and walk in interpretation. Client groups were divided into individual and group travelers. If the size of the group was ten persons or less, such groups were placed into the individual section and larger groups were divided into group section. Tourist group clients were divided by the main agents or country. Special cases were the following foreign travel agencies: Trans Nordic Tours, GTA, Mici travel, Scandinavian perspectives and RTS, which were classified directly to China. The following Finnish agencies were divided by the nationality of the visitors: Safartica, Eräsetti, Lapland safaris, Vision capital, Rovaniemi Tourism &

Marketing Ltd., Tumlare, Incint, Fimca, Viada, Finland special tours and Travelers choice.

Incentive and Incentive ROI were divided mainly by the nationality of the customers. When conducting the research one must take into account that these segments include many tour operator groups and individual travelers who need to be recorded in the tour operational side. This is because the incentive segments have not yet been utilized as well as it could have been. In order to conduct the study correctly, the client was asked for instructions on how incentive segment customers should be divided. The client distinguished incentives from other groups, and thus we were able to tabulate them correctly.

When all the results were sorted into tables, a clear imaging method had to be chosen, in which the results could be visible and legible. In this thesis research it was decided to use the bar and pie chart because they show clearly the division of the tourists from country to country. A comparison of each year is placed in their own chapter, in order to see the changes year by year. Fifteen largest countries were taken into this study, of which the five largest countries were chosen into the closer examination. To these countries a small-scale marketing research was made. Pie chart was used in the country-specific analyzes of the imaging method, when examining division of the way of booking in between these largest countries.

6 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The following three bar charts reflect the annual visitor statistics from the three year period. The research periods are from the following times 1 December, 2011 - 30 March, 2012, 1 December, 2012 – 30 March, 2013 and 1 December, 2013 – 30 March, 2014. In this research, fifteen largest countries were included into analysis, some of which clearly stood out from the crowd. In addition, tourists from other countries also arrived at Kemi, but because the number of visitors was rather low they were left out of these results.

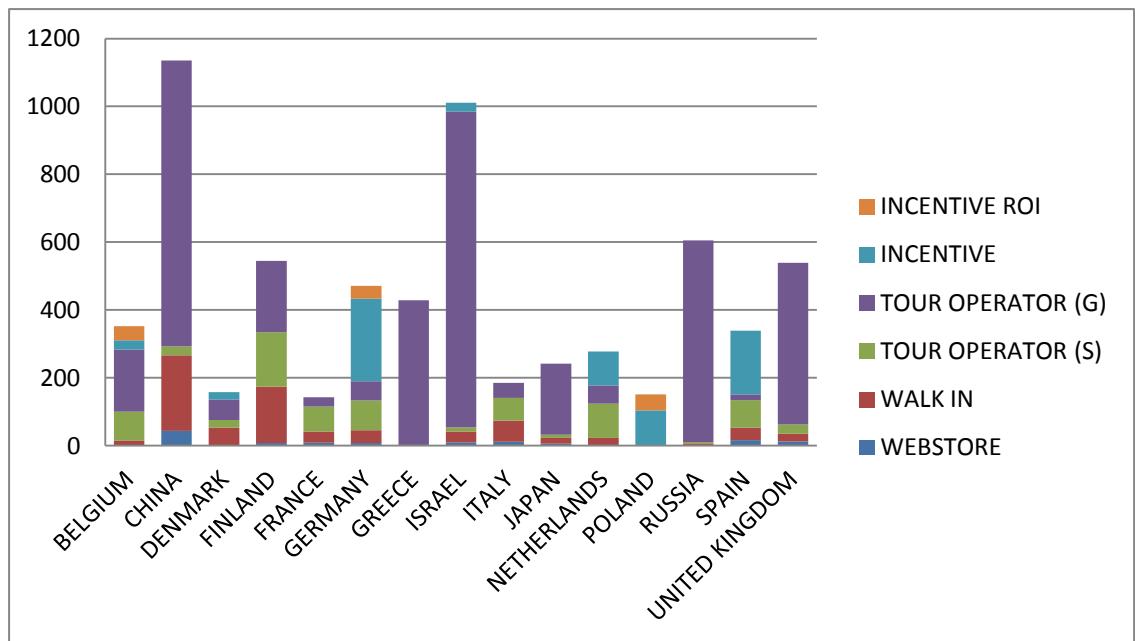


Figure 5 (The fifteen countries with the largest numbers of tourists arriving at Kemi 2011 - 2012)

The figure above is from the years 2011 - 2012 and it shows that China and Israel have a much higher number than the other countries. Web store was not during these years a very popular booking form, but in most countries, the most used booking methods are tour operator groups, which is due to the fact that groups of tourists are often large. In addition, tour operator single is a relatively big booking group, especially in France, Belgium, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain. Incentive tourists came particularly from Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Poland. The figure shows that in Finland the number of tourists is quite large, but Finnish tour operators individual and group travelers are mostly foreigners who have booked a trip from a Finnish office. Finland has also some walk in customers, who are Finnish and they have booked either

a Snowcastle visit or a Sampo cruise. The main focus on our study, however, is on foreign tourists and, therefore, in this thesis the Finnish travelers are only touched upon in the analysis.

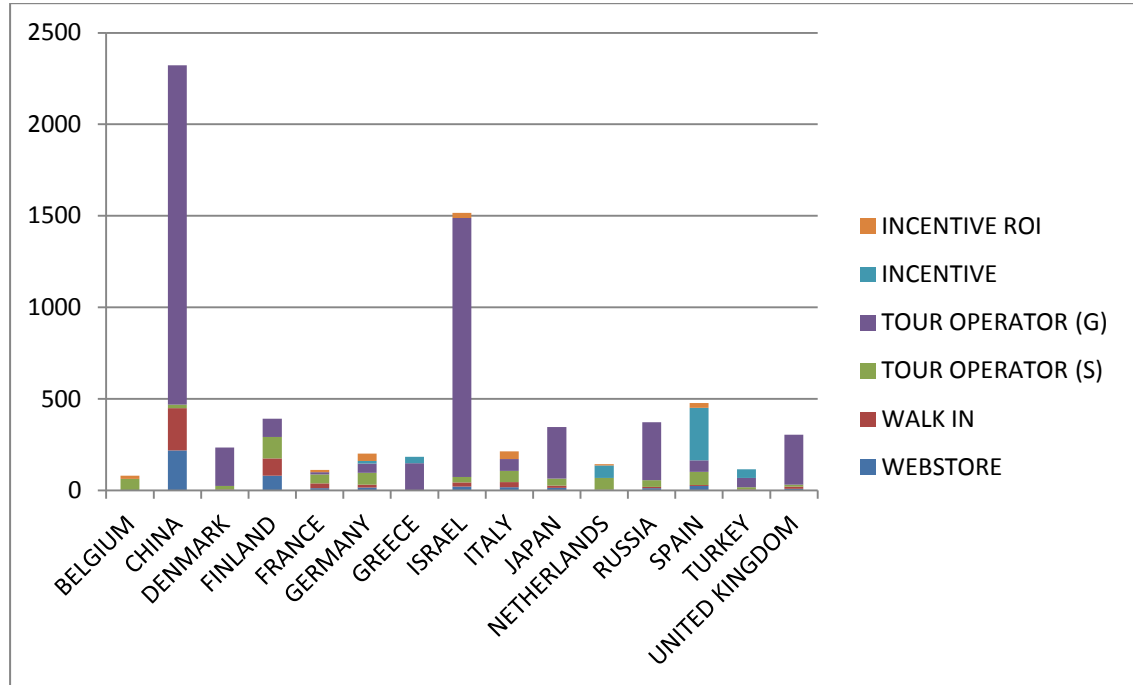


Figure 6 (The fifteen countries with the largest numbers of tourists arriving at Kemi 2012 - 2013)

The figure above is from the years 2012 – 2013 and it shows that the number of Chinese and Israeli tourists has grown increasingly, and other tourists have remained almost at the same level as in the first year. Number of Spanish tourists has risen slightly and the number of German tourists has reduced. Tour operator was the largest visitor category especially when observing the groups. The number of German incentive tourists has reduced from the years 2011 - 2012, which partly explains the reducing in the whole number of German visitors. The number of Belgian tourists has also reduced, which can be explained with the minor number of tour operator groups. Web store reservations from China have significantly grown but in the other countries the number remained relatively the same or grew slightly compared to the years 2011 - 2012.

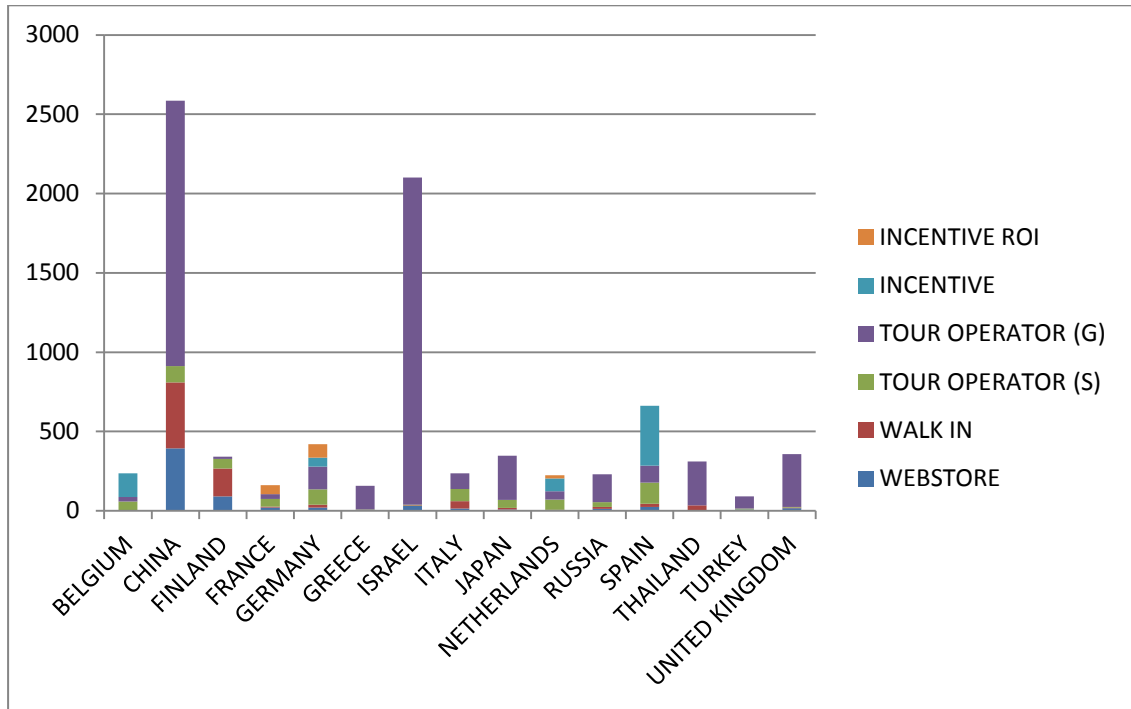


Figure 7 (The fifteen countries with the largest numbers of tourists arriving at Kemi 2013 - 2014)

In the years 2013 - 2014 it is shown that the number of Chinese and Israeli tourists is clearly rising. Web store reservations among Chinese tourists have increased and in the other countries the number of tourists stayed in the same level as in 2012 - 2013, excluding the slight increases in number. Tour operator was the largest group due to the large number of tourists in group reservations. Incentive trips have reduced in all the countries excluding Spain. Only in Belgium the incentive trips have risen compared to the last years. When observing the figures it has to be taken into consideration that Israelis and Chinese tourists in the past two years are large in numbers and it makes the other countries visitor statistics look smaller than they are in the reality.

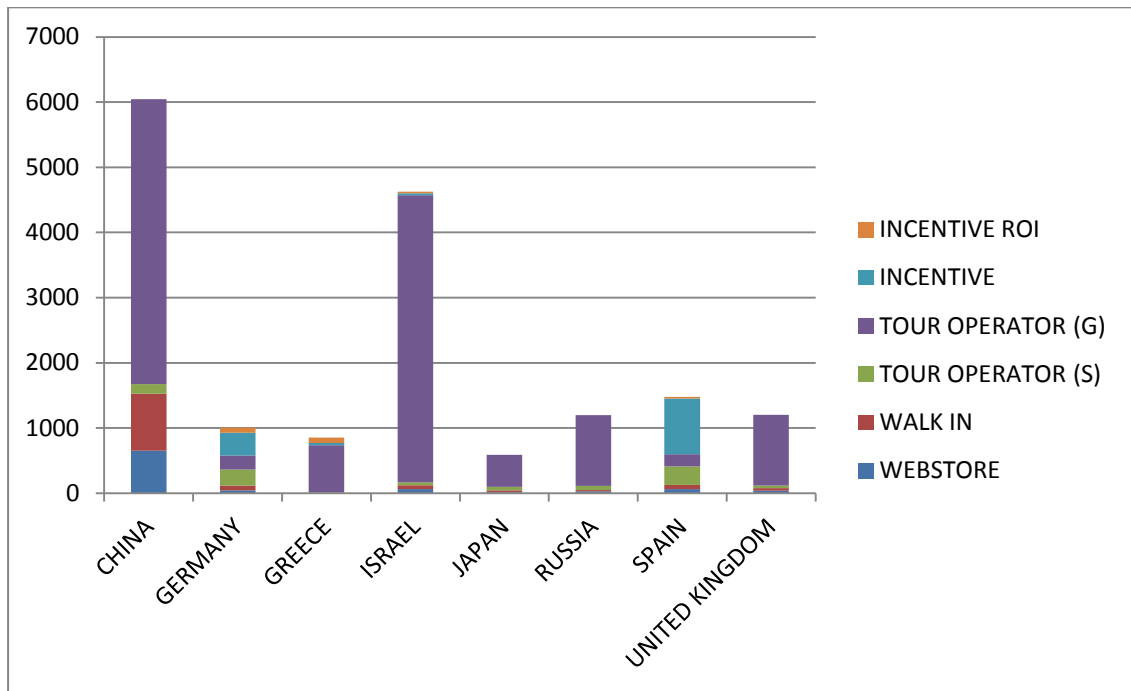


Figure 8 (The eight countries with the largest numbers of tourists arriving at Kemi 2011 - 2014)

The figure above shows the aggregated number of visitors arriving at Kemi 2011 – 2014 in the eight largest countries. A closer look at five of the countries with the highest visitor numbers is taken. Each one of the countries is examined individually in the pie chart. The pie charts results are achieved by combining the three-year observation period in a one combination. When comparing the major countries bar figure, it is noticed how China and Israel continue to stand out very clearly from the other countries. The majority of the visitors consist of tour operator sector groups, which ought to be expected on the basis of previous years.

Even though it is shown in the figure that the United Kingdom is part of the largest group of countries, it is mainly because of Chinese tourists who came through the British offices. Spanish and Germans incentive groups are also clearly visible in the figure, as well as private Chinese tourists who came through the Web store and direct bookings.

6.1 Country specific results and inferences

The results of this research indicate that it can be seen clearly what the biggest countries most used booking channels are. Based on this information the summaries

and analyzes are made of country-specific marketing point of view, as well as helping Kemi Tourism Ltd. to detect development areas in addition to successes. A more detailed analysis of country-specific summary discusses the behavior of the citizens of different countries on the basis of marketing. In order to identify what marketing tool is the best for each country, the most used and successful reservation methods are discussed. The popularity of online and office-made bookings was researched by country and it was also discussed if investing in a certain marketing tool would increase Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s visitor numbers.

Before the country-specific analyzes and figures, the focus is on the overall charts, which were explored year by year. From these figures it is clearly seen which countries stood out from the others in their visitor numbers. Even though part of the countries remained lower in their visitor number, marketing in these countries should not be ignored. Especially today when the number and popularity of private travelers is growing, social media marketing and online bookings are the rising trends. (Sipola, 2014).

6.1.1 China

The focus of the discussions to follow is on country-specific analysis of the number of visitors. In all country specific pie charts the results are summarized and analyzed in the chart from a three year period. The figure below shows the results of the Chinese tourists for that period of time. From China there were not any incentive travelers and, therefore, it is not included in this figure.

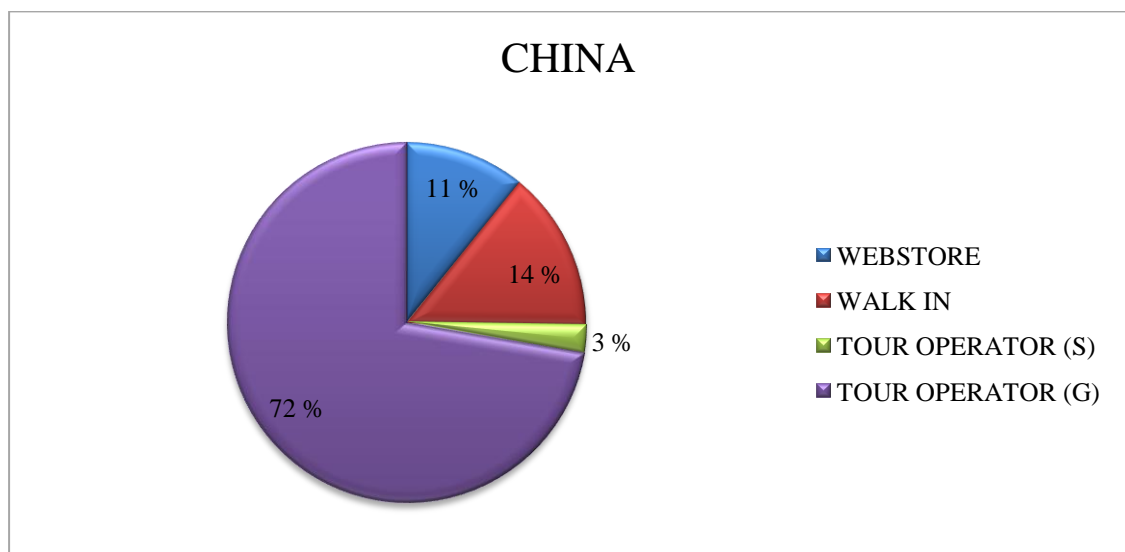


Figure 9 (Figure of Chinese visitors arriving at Kemi from the years 2011 - 2014)

The tour operators group sector was the largest group of visitors when aggregating the groups with the single travelers, the tour operator sector covered 3/4 of Chinas bookings in the pie chart. In 2011 - 2012 the total number of group travelers was 842, the second year 1855 and the third 1674. In total, the tour operator's group sector brought 4371 tourists and, therefore, it was the most used way of booking. In 2011 – 2012, 27 travelers arrived at Kemi through the tour operator single booking method, the second year 18 and 103 in the third year. In the tour operator single sector a change was seen in comparison with the other two years since then the number of visitors was about five times higher compared to previous years. Second most tourists came through walk in reservations and the total number was 870 people. In 2011 - 2012 there were 222 walk in tourists, the second year 232, and the last year the number was twice as big as in the previous year with 416 tourists visiting Kemi during that time. The web store was used by 655 tourists. In 2011 – 2012 there were 44 tourists, the second year 218 and 393 in the last year.

When considering what kind of marketing there should be targeted in China, the marketing through fairs to agencies is one of the most important tools to Kemi Tourism Ltd., because the method has brought the most tourists to Kemi. Market of China is booming and it even passed Germany and USA in their visitor numbers and consumption (Chang 2013). From year 2012 the overnight stays among Chinese travelers in Kemi has increased by 27,3%, and due to that fact Kemi Tourism Ltd. could target their marketing to one of the most largest and significant travel fair held in China, COTTM, which is specially targeted to agencies (Muoniovaara 2013).

Other important marketing method to China would be social media marketing, hence Chinese people use much more social media and share information of their trips compared for example to Europeans. When marketing to China, it has to be taken into consideration that Chinese people has been divided into casts, and from the tourism point of view it means that the people from the same cast share their opinions and experiences with other people belonging to the same cast. In this case it is important that marketing reaches every potential customer notwithstanding in which cast they belong to. Because Chinese are ready to pay for services and experiences when being on holiday, it is a profitable idea to target package deal marketing for them. (Chang 2013.) This way

the 4P models price part is realized in two ways: the customer is satisfied to get more services and the company is satisfied when it makes more sales.

6.1.2 Israel

After China the second largest tourist country was Israel. The figure below shows the Israeli tourists arriving at Kemi in years 2011 – 2014. Israeli tourists used all the booking methods researched and, therefore, all those methods are included in the pie chart.

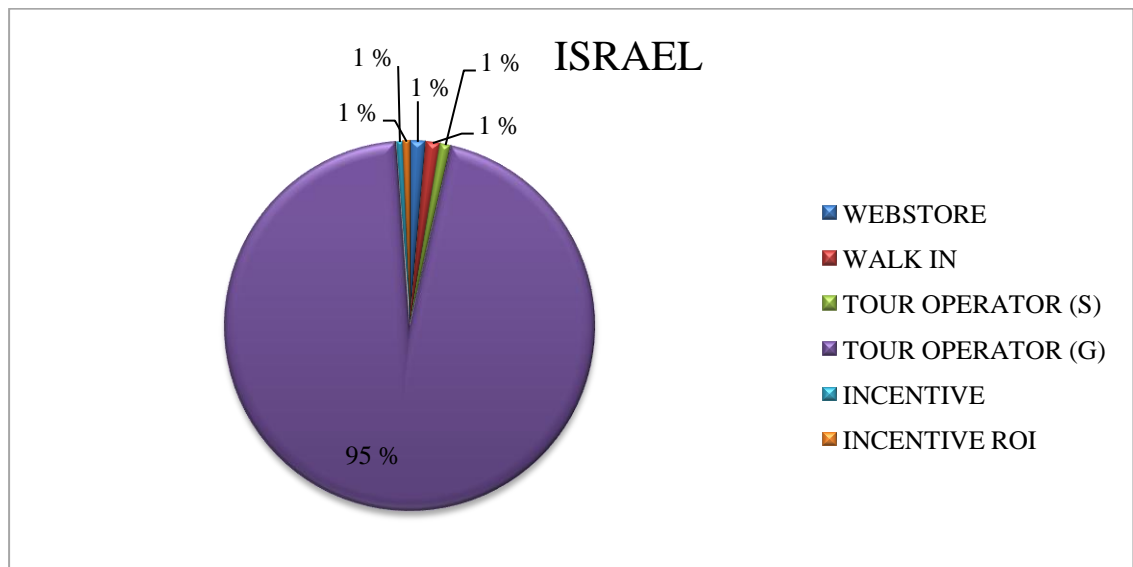


Figure 10 (Figure of Israeli visitors arriving at Kemi from the years 2011 - 2014)

The tour operator group travelers were the biggest section of all the booking methods in Israel. As in China, the tour operator group travelers increased year by year, hence in 2011 – 2012 there were 930 tourists, second year 1416 and the last year 2063. The total number of group travelers was 4409. Tour operator single booking method was utilized by 12 tourists in 2011 – 2012, second year by 29 tourists and the last year by 4 tourists. All added together the number of tourists who made their reservation through tour operator single, was 45. When observing the web store reservations in the year 2011 – 2012, it can be seen that there were 10 tourists who booked their trip through the Internet, second year the number was 21 and the last year 31. All added together there were 62 tourists who used the web store reservation method. There were 32 walk in travelers in 2011 - 2012, second year 23 and the last year 3. The aggregated number in walk in tourists was 58. Through incentive reservations 27 tourists booked their trip in 2011 - 2012, but during the years 2012 - 2014 this booking method was left out due to

lack of the travelers. Incentive ROI also brought 27 tourists to Kemi, but only in 2012 – 2013.

The tourists of Israel have not directly found to Kemi through Kemi Tourism Ltd.'s marketing, but they have found their way to Kemi through Lapland Incoming agency, which has taken care of the marketing to Israel for several years. In the case of Israel, there can be seen how the push-marketing method has been highly successful. Push marketing concept in this case means that Kemi Tourism Ltd. has not had to use its own resources for marketing, but the marketing has happened through an intermediary. The figure of Israel illustrates that Lapland Incoming agency has succeeded among marketing for Israeli tourists, and the interest in Kemis tourism services exists.

Lapland Incoming office has cooperated with Israel for example among The Idan Raichel project event and it has certainly increased all Israelis interest towards Lapland and Finland (Lapland Incoming Ltd. 2013). Since Israeli tourists clearly have interest towards Lapland's tourism, Kemi Tourism Ltd. could invest more in Israel by marketing its products at fairs for the Israeli offices. One possible marketing tool for Kemi could be organizing similar kinds of collaboration events in Kemi, for example, organizing a concert by famous Israeli singer in Snowcastle in the honor of its 20 year anniversary.

When marketing to Israelis, the importance of the social media must not be forgotten, since according to research Israelis are one of the most active social media users in the world. That is why this research suggests Kemi Tourism Ltd. to invest in social media marketing because web store reservations have for now remained low in comparison with the fact that social media is relatively popular in Israel. From the chart below it can clearly be seen, how Israelis are one of the most active social media users. The charts reading are from October 2011 and they indicate the hours spent among social media during one month.

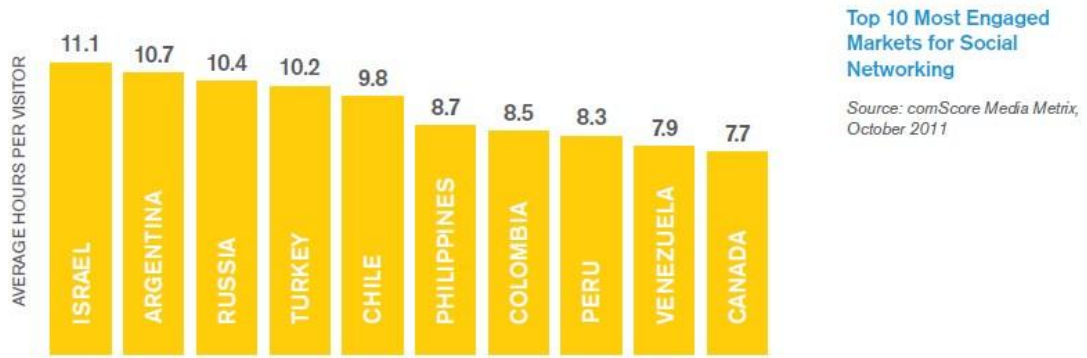


Figure 11 (Top 10 most engaged markets for social networks, comScore Media Metrix)

6.1.3 Spain

The figure below indicates the Spanish tourists arriving at Kemi in years 2011 – 2014. As Israeli tourists also Spanish tourists used all the booking methods researched. The booking methods of Spanish tourists differ from other nationalities researched because the tour operator method was not the most used booking method.

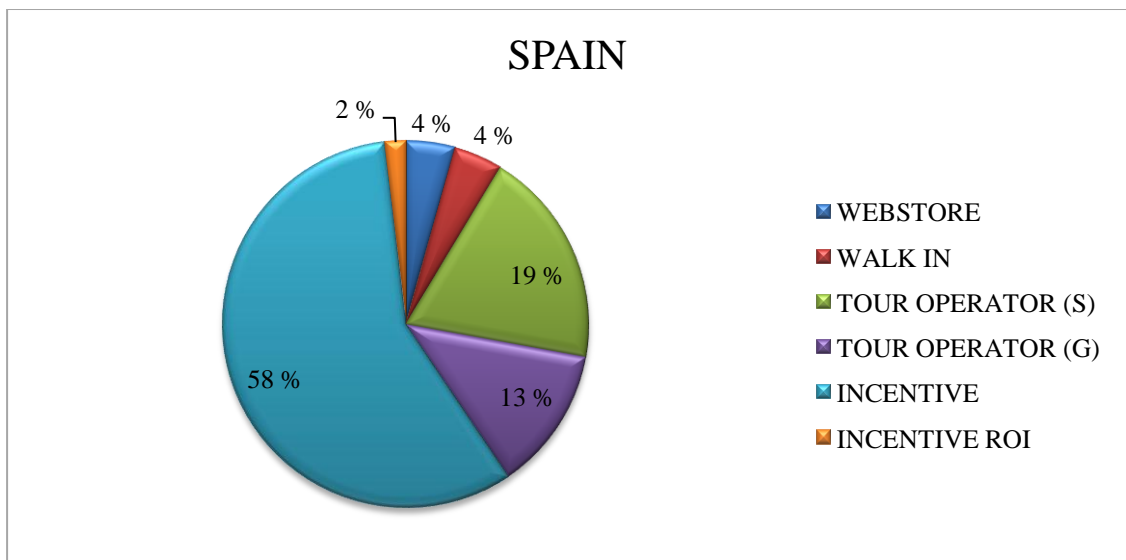


Figure 12 (Figure of Spanish visitors arriving at Kemi from the years 2011 - 2014)

In Spain the most commonly used booking method was Incentive reservations. In addition, in Spanish case it was noticed that the biggest reservation group grew from year to year. In 2011 - 2012 there were 188 incentive travelers, 287 the second year and 377 in the last year the total number being 852. The next biggest group was tour operator’s single reservations which brought 284 tourists to Kemi from the three year period. In 2011 – 2012 the tour operator’s single reservations brought 81 tourists, 71 during the second year and 132 the last year. The third biggest reservation method was

the tour operator group which brought 188 tourists to Kemi. In 2011 - 2012 group reservations were used by 17 tourists, 63 tourists in the second year and 108 tourists during the last year. The web store method was used by 16 tourists in 2011 - 2012, 24 tourists in the second and also 24 tourists in the last year. In total the amount of web store bookings was 64. The walk in method brought 37 tourists in 2011 - 2012, 6 in the second year and 21 in the last year. When adding the number together the total amount of walk in tourists was 64. Through the incentive ROI booking method arrived 27 travelers at Kemi and they all came during the second year.

The number of Spanish incentive travelers is large, because there have been held incentive fairs in Spain over many years. Kemi Tourism Ltd. has participated as a destination on these incentive fairs and managed to market successfully its supply. Kemi Tourism Ltd. has had a decent number of incentive travelers through tour operators which can also be explained by successful marketing. In order to Kemi Tourism Ltd. to increase the number of tour operator customers, it could be profitable to invest in agent fairs in addition to incentive fairs.

One of the most important fair events in Spain is Sicur which is comparable to Finnish travel fairs and EIBTM which focuses on incentive travelers along with meeting and congress trips (Niskanen & Pihlaja 2011, 64). According to research, Spanish people use traditional sales network such as traveling agencies and travel organizers because personal service is important when buying package or long-haul holidays. Travel agencies are often important source of information to Spanish tourists and the agencies often have an effect on their travel decisions. Even though social media use is increasing also in Spain, the Spanish tourists are more familiar with the traditional ways when planning a holiday. As the study mentioned, social media operates more as a source of information for the travelers than as an actual booking system. Compared to Chinese tourists, Spanish tourists are more price-conscious and they want to get value for their money. (Niskanen & Pihlaja 2011, 63-65.) Due to this fact it could be useful to pay attention to the pricing especially when marketing to Spanish tourists.

6.1.4 Russia

The figure below illustrates the Russian tourists arriving at Kemi in years 2011 – 2014. As Chinese tourists the Russians' did not use incentive or incentive ROI booking

methods and, therefore, they are excluded from the pie chart below.

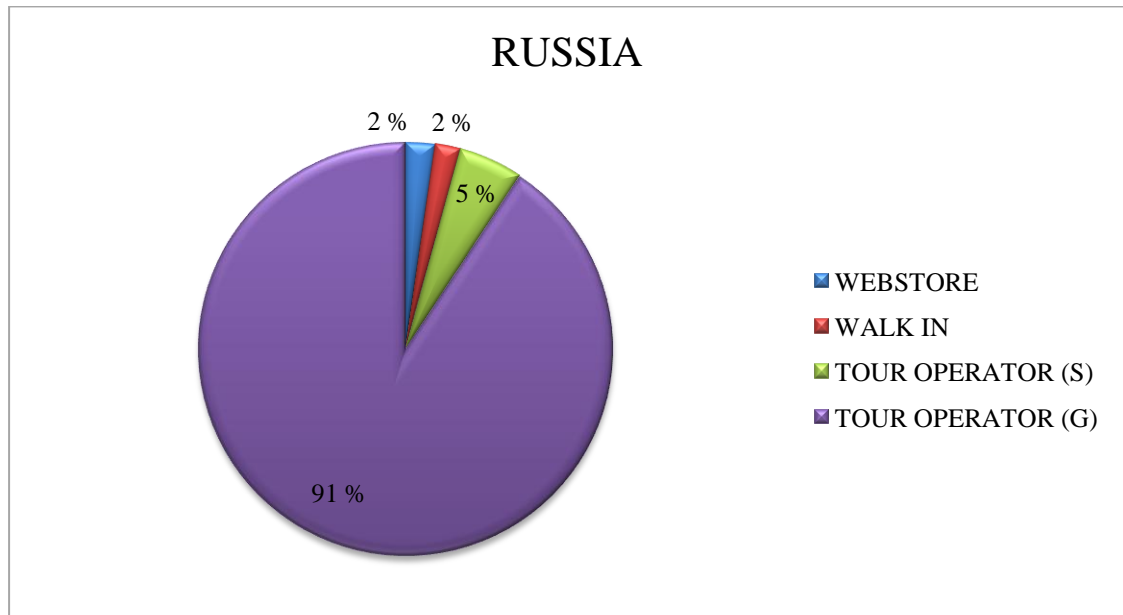


Figure 13 (Figure of Russian visitors arriving at Kemi from the years 2011 - 2014)

As the pie chart of Russians' booking methods shows above, the tour operator groups are clearly the biggest booking group in the three years. In all, there were 1087 tourists booking their trips through a tour operator, and in 2011 - 2012 the number was 594, second year 317 and the last year 176. The second most travelers from Russia came through tour operator single, but the number still remained quite slow, because through this booking method there were only 60 tourist coming to Kemi. In 2011 - 2012 the number of the travelers was 4, the second year it was 37 and the last year the number was 29. Walk in booking method was used in the three year period by 24 people. In 2011 - 2012 there were 5 tourists, the second year 6 tourists and the last year 13. Through web store there were 27 tourists coming to Kemi and of them 2 people came in 2011 - 2012, 13 people in the second year and 12 in the last year. No incentive travelers came from Russia in the three year period.

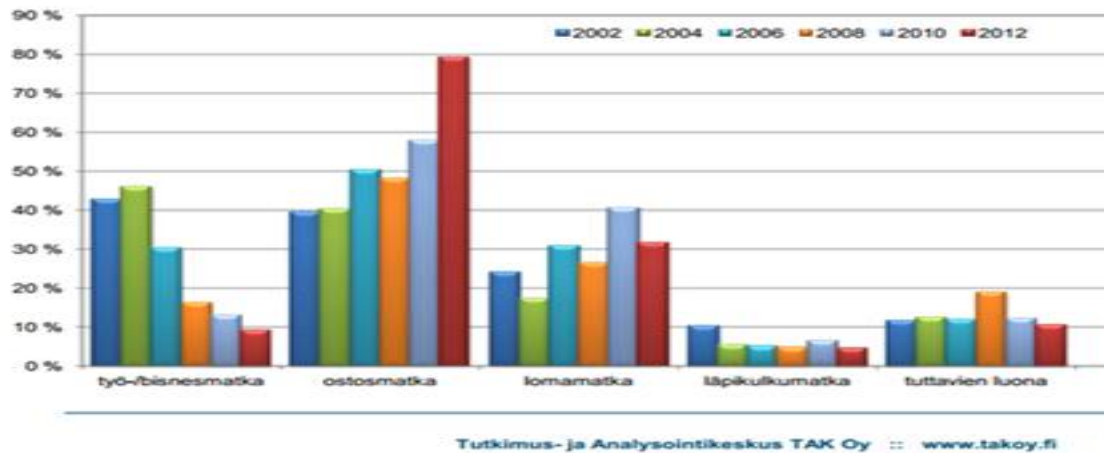


Figure 14 (Reasons for travelling to Finland (TAK Oy)).

Figure 14 provided by Tutkimus- ja Analysointikeskus shows what Russian tourists want from their trips to Finland. The first section stands for business trips, second shopping trips, third holidays, fourth transit trips and the last visits for friends and family. The importance of shopping trips for Russian tourists stood out from the other reasons and their popularity has increased year by year. However the diagram excludes the dip caused by the economical situation in 2013, which reduced the consumption of Russian tourists in their shopping trips. Nonetheless, the experts still evaluates that in the year 2014 the situation will be restored. (Ratilainen 2013.)

Usually Russian tourists make purchases in Finland because of the tax free opportunity that tax administration defines as follows “Due to the international standards goods can be sold to traveler tax free also in traveler sale. In tax free shop buyer get the goods straight with them and take them out of the country in their baggage. Buyer pays value added tax in the moment of purchasing, but later it will be returned for them.” (Vero 2011). One of the writers of this thesis research noticed the phenomenon while being in practical training in a clothing store in Kemi during winter time. Especially during Epiphany, multiple Russians visited the store and bought tax-free clothes for hundreds of Euros.

Since shopping travelers is such a big tourist group it would be profitable to invest more in marketing towards them. It might be that it is unclear for many Russians what possibilities Kemi has and thus are not able to use its full potential. One possible marketing tool for shopping travelers could be, for example, placing brochures in

visible places in different stores in English and Russia. That could enable companies in Kemi to cooperate in order to improve tourism in the area. Russians are prepared to pay for their holiday and services and often want certain glamorousness from their trip. Russian tourists also demand high quality service and when buying services and products they prefer them to have better quality than in Russia. (Raappana 2014, 9-10.)

Since Russian tourists mostly come through travelling agencies to Kemi, it is likely that they value the more traditional booking methods, where the customer is in direct contact with the expert while booking the trip. From the 4P promotion point of view it can be considered that it is lucrative to increase the cooperation and networking with Russian agencies. In addition, the exposure in Russian media such as TV and newspapers could be developed. Different kinds of brochures in travelling agencies are a good way to increase visibility in Russia because Russians appreciate more traditional ways of booking a trip. Since Russians value pure nature and unpolluted air which Lapland has plenty of, (Raappana 2014, 6) it is also vital to highlight the Place in the 4P model when marketing Kemis' surroundings.

6.1.5 The United Kingdom

The figure below shows the United Kingdoms' tourists arriving at Kemi in years 2011 – 2014. Britons did not use the incentive or incentive ROI booking methods during the researched time period.

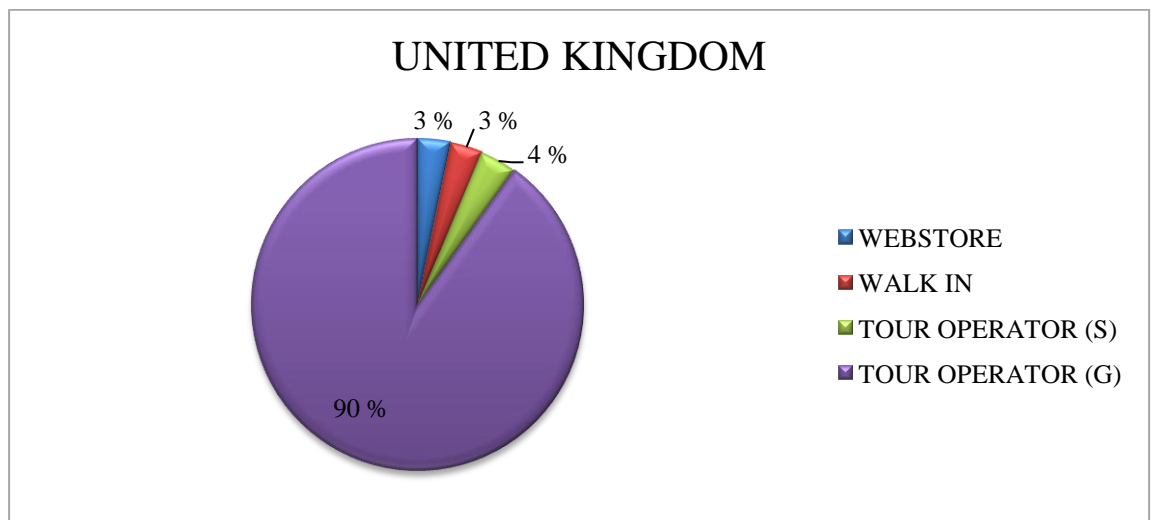


Figure 15 (Figure of the United Kingdoms' visitors arriving at Kemi from the years 2011 - 2014)

The largest amount of travelers from the United Kingdom came through tour operators group reservation method, since the total amount from the three year period was 1083. In 2011 - 2012 the amount of tourists was 476, the second year 273 and the third year 332. The other booking methods in the Great Britain were relatively even. Through tour operator single reservations there were 43 travelers in total during three years. In 2011 - 2012 there were 28 passengers, in the second year 11 and in the third year 4 passengers. From the UK there were 38 web store reservations in total. In 2011 -2012 there were 13 web store reservations, 9 in the second year and 16 during the last year. Walk in method brought 28 travelers to Kemi and 22 came 2011 - 2012, 12 on the second year and 4 during the last year. From the UK there were not any incentive trips to Kemi during the researched time period. When researching and analyzing these numbers it must be taken into account that even though the trips are booked through the UK tour operators usually the travelers are Chinese tourists.

The British usually spend their holidays during summer and warm destinations such as Spain and France are highly favored among Britons. A positive aspect is also that winter holidays to different European cities are becoming more common. (Barrow 2013.) Kemi Tourism Ltd. could use this possibility to sell and market their services by cooperating with other northern destinations. An example of this kind of cooperation could be a package tour which includes a four day downhill skiing trip in Levi and a three day holiday in Kemi.

Previously the British booked their holidays through agencies but today the reservations made online have become the most used reservation method and agencies have lost customers. In 2012 only one British in ten booked their trip through an agency and 66 % reserved their holiday through an online travel agent, online tour operator or through a website. As a comparison only 14 % of the British would reserve their holiday through telephone, 11 % in an agency itself and 12 % would use brochures for assistance. According to research 52 % of British planning their trip use the Internet as their main source. (Dailymail 2012.)

The British prefer to book their holidays well in advance but they do not forget to be price conscious. Over two of three Britons booked their trips six months before the departure. (Dailymail 2013.) A research conducted by ABTA in 2012 indicated that 48 % of British tourists booked at least one package trip and the number have gone up by

11 % since 2010. For the travelers it is important that the booked trip inspires confidence and sense of security. (Smith 2012.) This research suggests for Kemi Tourism Ltd. employees to concentrate on marketing package trips to the Britons through online tour operators and online agencies. Since the use of social media in the Great Britain is popular (Rose 2013), its use in marketing package and other trips could be profitable.

6.1.6 Overall inferences

When all the analyses are synthesized, it can be stated that even though Kemi is a small town in Lapland, there is a surprising amount of demand and interest for it among tourists. Based on the conclusions, it can be stated that tourism in Kemi could be an increasingly successful tourist destination, if it were able to harness its full potential and develop suitable packages for different customer groups and thereby market them efficiently. It also can be seen how social media impact is highlighted in marketing since the private travelers who utilize the Internet actively are on the increase. Hence, new ways of marketing in social media could be invented such as different kinds of competitions held by different companies in social media and the prize could be for example a package trip to Kemi. These kinds of methods are useful because they tend to market themselves since people share the link in social media causing debate.

7 CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this research was to find out how to target marketing for specific customer segments and to sort out the most used booking channels used by the customers from the five countries which brought the most tourists to Kemi. In addition, fifteen most popular countries were discovered when conducting the research, and the five largest were chosen for a closer analysis. Relevant literature was discussed and reviewed in order to gather information for the thesis research. In addition, an empirical theme interview was carried out to strengthen our theoretical points of view and to complement the study.

7.1 Conclusions and discussions

In order to create reliable and productive marketing plan for each country, we had to examine the booking behavior of the tourists from different countries to pinpoint the best marketing tools to improve the targeting of marketing. Our own research for the most part supported theoretical information found in different sites. For example in Russia, the United Kingdom and Israel the tour operator booking method was dominating the statistics. The theoretical information was congruent in Russia's case since it suggested that Russians prefer to book their trips through agencies. When surveying the results it must be noticed in the Britons case that most of the tourists were Chinese who came through agencies but when observing Britons themselves, web store bookings are widely used and the theoretical results indicated that they are keen social media users. Even though Israelis use social media frequently according to our research, the tour operator segment is still a dominating booking method.

In China's case, online bookings and tour operator booking were both highly favored, there are big and popular travel fairs in China, and also the use of social media is in their interest. While in Spain incentive trips were the most used booking methods and there are big incentive fairs held every year. The results in this study and the researched information are cohesive since Spanish people prefer to book their trips traditionally through agencies.

Since this study was conducted manually, it is possible that some small errors have occurred but a lot of time was used for conducting the main research. When reading the

results it should be noticed that all the tourists from a certain country might not be the citizens of that particular country. This might lead to the fact that one country might have more tourists than it actually does which distorts the results as happened in the UK's case.

Conducting this thesis research was a long and challenging process, but it has given us a lot. This process helped us develop as students and improve the time management. Because one has to be organized and systematic from the beginning of the work, the thesis could turn out to be consistent, due to these demands we have developed in these areas. Matching the timetables was time to time challenging along the other work and school hurries, but with determination these challenges were solvable. Conducting the thesis in pairs was not a concern for us, because we have used to study and make assignments in pairs during our studies. Our cooperation went well and seamlessly, and when working we managed to fill in each other thoughts and ideas. As thesis progressed we learned to notice what is demanded from the work, where we should pay attention to and what the points which need improvement were.

Now that our thesis research is done, we are satisfied with it, despite the fact that also the downfalls of the work become more apparent. If we had the knowledge right from the start to do this work more systematically, the last minute improvements and translation job would have been easier. It was challenging to write the thesis in English but we think that by writing it in English it improved our language skills. Moreover, since we are in an English speaking study programme, writing the thesis in English was reasonable. When conducting the research, we could have avoided extra work if we had known from the beginning that we did not need to research Finnish tourists at all. However, that piece of information came to our knowledge at the end of the research process when the results had already gone through.

We find that our work will benefit Kemi Tourism Ltd., because research this comprehensive would have required additional resources from the assignor of this thesis research. This work gives them a good understanding from which countries their clientele comes, and what booking method they utilize. In addition, we research different nationalities booking method preferences, which were not directly visible in results, and by utilizing them Kemi Tourism Ltd. could target their marketing methods better in different countries. This partly helps Kemi Tourism Ltd. to develop its

marketing. One writer of this thesis conducted her practical training in Kemi Tourism Ltd., and through that gained valuable knowledge considering the thesis. Further, our own experiences were helpful when conducting this research, because when the research was made and planned, it was of notable help knowing how to use the booking system and knowing terminology.

7.2 Recommendations for future research

If planning for further research, we think there could be found good topics from our thesis. For example, focusing on some biggest countries in our research and improving its marketing could be one topic. In addition researching Finnish tourists and travel agencies could provide additional useful information to Kemi Tourism Ltd. because they had to omit from this work. This research suggests Kemi Tourism Ltd. could use their marketing channels even more widely and also to further investigate what channels to use to which country. We wish that Kemi Tourism Ltd. could benefit from our thesis when targeting their marketing and also develop further research topics on the basis of our work.

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