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CONVEYING CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

BY THE MEANS OF ORGANIZING AN EVENT

- Case Antti Arola Ltd

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis is built around the concept of conveying corporate communication and brand communication through organizing an event. Corporate communication is a way to lead the company´s stakeholders to create certain images of the company and to create relationships with the stakeholders. Part of the company´s corporate communication is brand communication. Brand communication is familiarizing products or services to the target group through marketing, creating images and influencing the stakeholders.

This thesis was assigned by a company called Antti Arola Ltd in Kajaani. The thesis goes through Antti Arola Ltd´s corporate communication and the brand communication of Marimekko, whose products are sold in Antti Arola Ltd. The objectives for this thesis was to organize an event in order to convey the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd and brand communication of Marimekko to the consumers and to increase the sales margins of Antti Arola Ltd.

The thesis was conducted as a development project. The project revealed that majority of the event participants had a positive image of Antti Arola Ltd and Marimekko even though the results were just an estimation of the employees of Antti Arola Ltd, since the company did not have any concrete feedback collection system. Also the event increased significantly the short and long term sales of Antti Arola Ltd through successful corporate and brand communication during the event.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Every company has an image they want to convey to the public. That image includes for example the mission, vision and values of the company. The company image should be built so that it attracts the company´s target audience. Corporate and brand communication are those internal and external means of communication that help forwarding the information of the company within the company as well as outside the company. There are many different ways to execute the corporate and brand communication of the company and one of those means is to organize an event.

There are numerous variations of different kinds of events organized everywhere all year long. An event can be a concert, a sports event, fashion show or for example a competition. All events have different purposes and objectives. When a commercial enterprise organizes an event, it is usually organized as a part of a company´s strategy to increase the knowledge and awareness of the company among the public and to increase the short term as well as long term profits.

Organizing an event is a process that requires careful planning. When the event has a good plan of action, it is easier to control possible problems and risks to ensure a fluent event. Before starting to plan the actual course of events of the occasion, it is important to define, what the actual idea of the event is. Why the event is organized and what are the objectives and desired outcomes. By understanding the starting point of the event, it is much easier to start planning the event the right way from the start. Defining the objectives and desired results of the event helps the organizer to really understand how things should be done to reach the targeted goals.

The first few chapters of this thesis go through theories of corporate communication, brand communication and planning an event as a background for planning and implementing an opening event for a renewed company in Kajaani called Antti Arola Ltd. Antti Arola Ltd is a family business which was founded by my great grandfather Antti Arola in 1908. The business has stayed in the family for over 100

years and so it has been quite natural for me to work there during the summers when I was younger and since July 2014 as a full-time sales assistant. The motives behind this thesis are the benefits for the family business and also the subject of organizing an event is interesting and practical for my work. Writing and executing this thesis will help me and the other employees at work, since the company´s corporate communication is clarified to ensure everyone is familiar with the concept. Also the company organizes events every now and then, so the things learned in this project can be used in later events.

Antti Arola Ltd has had previously three departments; women´s textiles, men´s textiles and Marimekko department. In recent years Antti Arola Ltd has been struggling to compete against big chains operating in Kajaani like H&M, Dressmann and Sokos in women´s and men´s textile sectors. It is almost impossible for a small family business to compete against big national and international textile chains and be successful in that matter. That has led to a situation where Antti Arola Ltd has been in the need of changing its´ operations. The managing director of Antti Arola Ltd, made the decision to close the men´s and women´s section and continue only with Marimekko department. The company operated men´s and women´s departments' closing sales during spring and summer of 2014. As the company decided to continue only with Marimekko department, the managing director Matti Arola gave me an assignment to organize an opening event for the renewed company.

The purpose of this thesis is to plan and implement an opening event for Antti Arola Ltd in order to convey the corporate communication of the company and the brand communication of the products sold in the store to the public as well as to increase the short and long term sales. The goals are to examine theoretical framework around company communication, brand communication and to structure the framework around organizing an event.

This thesis can be defined as a project development process. A project is a single entity that has clear objectives, it is limited in time and it has clearly defined resources.

2 CORPORATE COMMUNICATION

For every company, it is vital to know how the company´s stakeholders view the company. How they see the company as an entity; it´s appearance, values, customer service, product quality and so on. Without understanding the stakeholders´ images about the company, it is very unlikely to have a successful business. That is why it is crucial for every business to plan and implement carefully its corporate communications strategies. Corporate communication is a way of managing company´s stakeholders to see the company in a way the company wants them to and building relationships with the stakeholders. (Cornelissen 2004, 9.)

Corporate communication should be taken as a part of designing the company operations. Designing business activities is the base of designing the communication strategies and setting objectives within the company. Designing the corporate communications can be divided into three parts; strategic, tactical and operative designing. Basic communication policies are determined in the strategic level of communications, which is supporting the company´s strategic objectives. For example the company´s communication strategies are formed in the strategic level. Company´s resources that are available for the communications are identified in the tactical level of communication. These resources include, for example, the human-, financial- and equipment resources. After the resources have been identified, the targeted stakeholders and collaborative groups are defined and necessary operative guidelines are developed. The operative level in communication includes the practical actions that need to be done, such as making annual plan and budget for the company. Also the practical implementation of the corporate communications is defined in this level. (Tuomela 2006.)

Corporate communication management includes for example the communications strategy, which can be defined as designing and developing the instructions for communication. This strategy is based on analyzing the current situation of the company and it can be modified whenever needed, usually once a year. The strategy answers the questions of what the company is communicating, what are the desired outcomes and how the communication is executed. The communication

strategy sets the development objectives and it creates the starting point for designing and developing the company´s communications.

Designing and developing the company´s communications defines those actions that are done to improve the company´s communication as a whole. A company can define its corporate communication, for example, by determining the stakeholders and actions around its communication (Figure 1). Results to these actions are usually either project plans or lists of actions to be done. Communication instructions determine those principles and practices that are used in different kinds of communication situations. Communication instructions also include the descriptions of communication processes, style guidelines and presentation templates. (Tuomela 2006.)
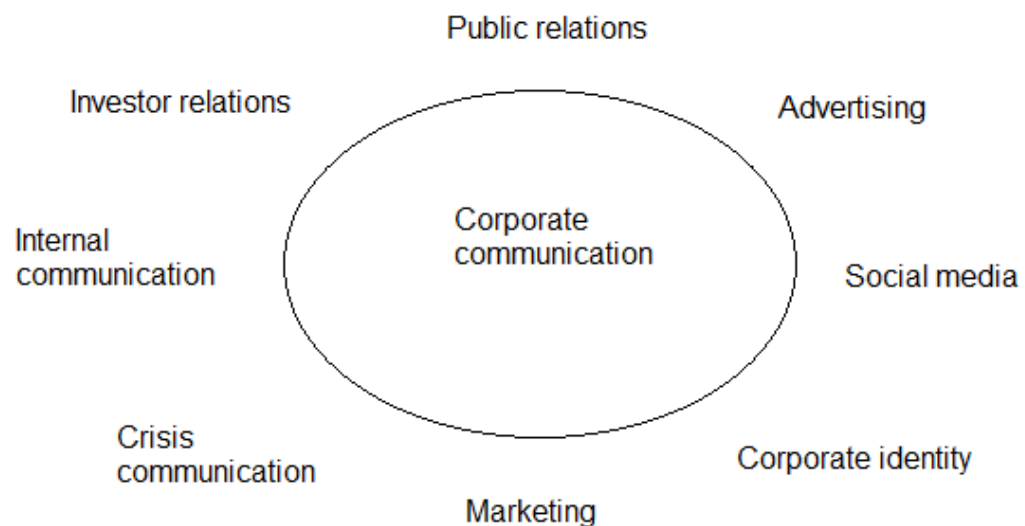
Figure 1. Aspects of corporate communication (Spiecker Kommunikation 2013)

Corporate image and profile

Corporate communication is a multi-dimensional subject. Organizations are communicating in different ways constantly such as in speaking and written text, per-

sonally and via messages, in formal and informal networks. Without communication inside and outside the company it is impossible to have a functional organization. Everyday corporate communication situations are taking place inside the company as well as outside the company such as in meetings, negotiations, contracts, webpages, minutes, reports, newsletters, notifications and tenders. With these controlled communication situations the organization is able for example to execute successful management and decision making, profitable production, marketing and sales, informing, profiling, recruiting and orienting. (Tuomela 2006.)

Corporate identity, -profile and –image are all individual concepts around the company (Figure 2). Through the situations previously described, the corporate image forms. The corporate image is divided into two parts; the image the organization desires to pursue (profile) and the actually achieved corporate conception (image). Of course the organization´s image is not formed only by the communication channels, but the outer factors such as products, services, employees and premises affects as well to the formed image of the company. The identity of the company means the characteristics that the company actually possesses, the company profile means the way the company wants to seem like and the image of the company is the way the stakeholders see the company. (Tuomela 2006.)

Corporate identity	Corporate profile	Company image
The reality of the corporate conception	The conception the corporation wants to convey	The received conception

Figure 2. Corporate identity, -profile and -image (Tuomela 2006)

Profiling the company creates the base of the corporate communication. Profiling aims to affect the stakeholders´ conception of the company through communication and it requires constant and organized actions in order to be successful. Profiling generates the basic messages that describe the foundation of the company´s

business models and identity. In other words, what are the factors that the company values. Some companies might value high quality products and services, others might value traditions in business or cost effective products. Company profile is formed depending on the values of targeted stakeholders. These basic messages in company profile determines the way the company communicates. (Tuomela 2006.)

Company reputation and identity

Good company reputation enables a favorable environment to do business in. In order for the company to achieve the justification to their operations, which is also known as company legitimacy, the company must follow general good manners, keep good relationships with its stakeholders and know the company responsibilities. Also the company should operate ethically, truthfully and be trustworthy. The criteria for the company´s business environment includes global responsibilities such as sustainable development and ethical guidelines in all operations. (Tuomela 2006.)

The corporate identity can be defined as external factors that can be seen outside the company, such as in the premises, products, services, the name and logo of the company, web pages and personnel dressing. The corporate identity should be carefully designed to match the image the company wants to create. (Tuomela 2006.)

2.1 Company´s internal communications

Company´s internal communication aims for transparent information flow and increasing employees´ motivation towards working in the company. When the internal communication works, the employees are aware of the company´s goals and changes in the operations, which creates motivation and satisfaction among the personnel. When all the employees are aware why certain things are done and

how they are done, the risk of errors decreases and the company´s operations go smoothly. (Kortetjärvi-Nurmi & Rosenström 2002, 224-225.)

Cooperation Act legally obligates every employer to inform the company´s financial statements, report of the company´s financial situation, human resources plan, personnel salary statistics, personnel affairs of the general principles and business organization and if there are changes in these previously described factors. Using diverse and controlled internal communication the company can ensure that the information is available for those who need it and that the information is easily accessible. Internal communication should be open and transparent so that the information flow goes into all directions without changing on the way. Open and transparent information flow encourages personnel to engage themselves to the company environment and motivates developing the working environment and the work community. Consistent information helps to support the mission, vision and values of the company, when the personnel is informed about the company´s objectives, desired outcomes and plans for the future. Internal communication channels can be for example personnel meetings, team meetings, negotiations, information board and electronic mail. (Tuomela 2006.)

2.2 Company´s external communication

Company´s external communication consists of forwarding the news, product- and marketing communication, communication follow-up and collecting feedback from the targeted groups and taking care of the relationships with community- and stakeholder groups (Tuomela 2006). The external communication can be divided into information operations, public relations, marketing and follow-up operations (Figure 3).
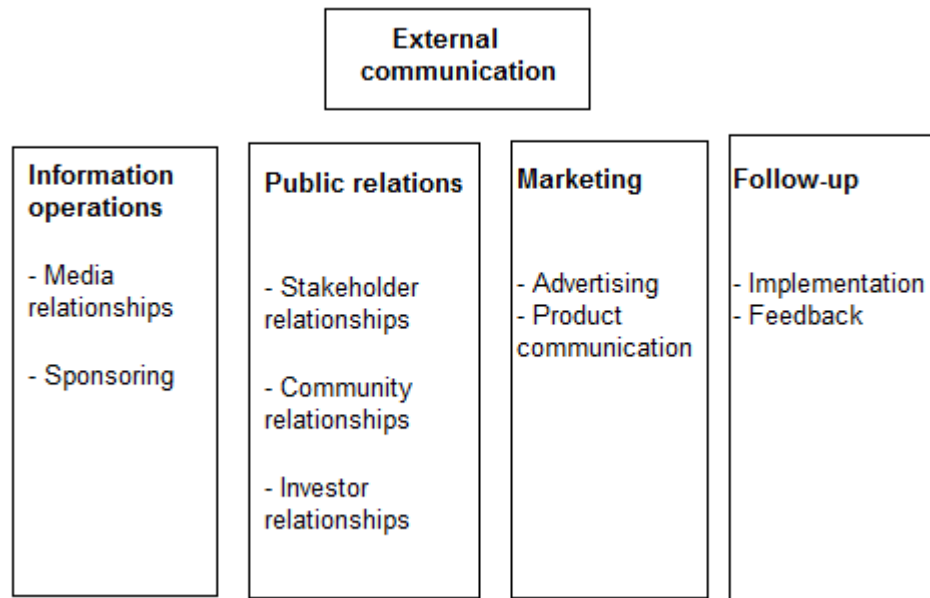
Figure 3. Elements of external communication (Tuomela 2006)

External communication can be defined as neutral outward informing of companies or communities. It can be divided into two parts; public relations and media communication. (Hautanen & Katto 2007.)

Public relations

Public relations means informing collaboration-, stakeholder- and target groups (Figure 4). Collaboration groups are groups that are cooperating with the work community, such as personnel, customers and subcontractors. Stakeholder groups are cooperating with the work community and the collaboration is beneficial for both parties. Target groups are for example media representatives, citizens and competitors. They do not collaborate directly with the work community, but they are informed with communication by the work community. (Hautanen & Katto 2007.)

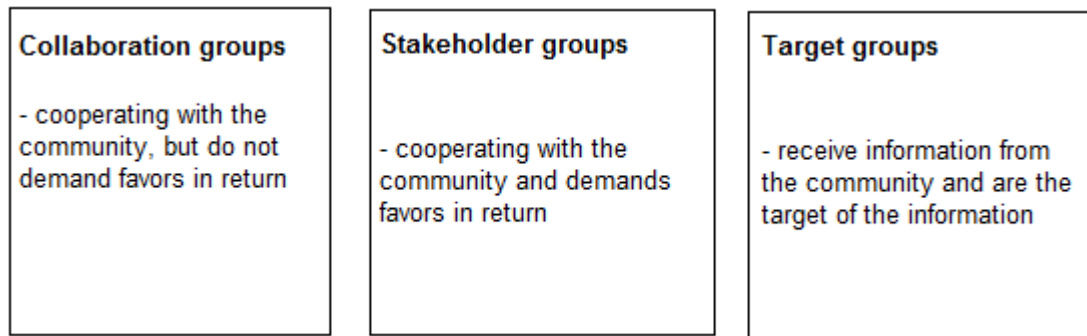| Collaboration groups	Stakeholder groups	Target groups
- cooperating with the community, but do not demand favors in return	- cooperating with the community and demands favors in return	- receive information from the community and are the target of the information

Figure 4. Public relation groups (Hautanen & Katto 2007)

Media communication

Media communication is an external communication that is targeted for a wider audience. Media communication is not direct but transmitted communication since the person communicating can affect to the conveyed text by his/her own perspective. The goal in media communication is to get information transmitted to the public through publicity. Positive information is one of the most important publicity that a company can have, since the information goes through media and so it is considered as "free publicity" for the company. This is often even more effective way to get noticed than advertising, since the source of the information does not come from the company, but from another source and so is more credible in the mind of the public. Companies should take advantage of media communication and offer the media to write about something that could be interesting for the large audience. Media usually chooses its topics based on the topicality of the cases so companies should try to offer news to write about that are currently on the surface. (Hautanen & Katto 2007.)

Follow-up is also part of the external communication. Companies need to know their objectives and evaluation criteria for their external communication in order to do the follow-up. Follow-up is an effective tool for companies since it can be used for collecting information about the company from the environment. The information can then be used to evaluate the current situation of the company and to support decision making processes. Follow-up includes for example monitoring

internet conversations, analyzing the behavior of the competitors and evaluating customer feedback. (Hautanen & Katto 2007.)

Event marketing

Event marketing is closely linked to the company´s corporate communication and it can be used as a communication channel to convey for example the company image to the stakeholders. Event marketing is a strategy where the marketing and the actual event are combined together as a single entity. Event marketing consists actions that are uniting the organization and its target group around the idea into a goals-oriented and interactive entity. All interactive actions that are meant to unite company´s operations and consumers can be understand as event marketing. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 19.)

Event marketing can be considered as a part of the communication strategy of an organization. The objective is to build or strengthen the image of a company or the brand of the products or services. Event marketing should be considered as a part of a larger entity of marketing rather than an individual operation in order to be a part of organization´s marketing communication. This is important to internalize since event marketing is the base of creating and building customer relationships. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 20.)

The advantages of event marketing are versatile. Event marketing enables interactivity and personal nature in the communication between the organizer and participants. Also the organization can receive immediate feedback from the participants and reflect that feedback to the objective that was set. Through event marketing the organization can provide experiences to the customer and so differentiate itself from the competitors. Event marketing should be goal oriented and connected with the marketing and communication plan of the event. The objectives of an event can be for example building and developing company image, get publicity and company awareness, strengthen customer relationships, represent products

or services or gain new customers or stakeholders through interactions. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 21-22.)

2.3 Creating unity with corporate communication

Corporate communication is not just aiming for the financial success. Understanding company´s corporate communication also helps employees of the company to create relationships with each other as well as with the stakeholders. (Cornelissen 2004, 10.) Creating relationships within the company helps to secure that everyone is working towards the same objectives. And it is obvious that good relationships with the company´s stakeholders are vital for the company´s existence.

When the CEO and employees are familiar with the company´s corporate communications, it helps them to make decisions and understand what kind of consequences their decisions have to the company´s environment and its operations. Understanding the consequences of their decisions to the company´s environment helps the whole organization to create a consistent approach to its operations. With full understanding of the company´s corporation communications, decision makers can recognize communication problems within the company, recognize which problems are out of their control and focus on problems that they can affect. This helps the whole company to create strategies to control communicational events to ensure functional operations. (Cornelissen 2004, 10.)

2.4 What is brand and brand communication

Brand

Brand is more than just a logo of a product. Brand can be a symbol, an experience, a value; brand is how consumers experience the product or service. Brand gives value to the products; black leather bag from Michael Kors or from H&M can have

a huge difference in the mind of a consumer even though they might look almost the same from the outside. This is why branding and brand communication is vital to the success of the business. Companies need to know, what their customers´ values are; do they value more the fact that the leather bag is an expensive but authentic Michael Kors or do they value more the fact that the leather bag looks similar to Michael Kors´s bag, but is ten times cheaper? When companies know their target audience´s values, they can plan their brand communication strategy to meet the expectations of their customers.

Brand gives an identity to the maker or seller of a product. It is a promise of a product to deliver a certain quality, advantages and services systematically to the consumers. Brand represents particular features to the consumers such as Mercedes-Benz represents premium, costly and high quality cars. High quality then represents durability and a status symbol for the consumers. Brand should be managed comprehensively and it should be developed in a way that it will convey positive attributes to the public. (Kotler 2000, 404.)

Organization´s brand also includes concepts of company reputation and image. Brand as a concept is based on consumer´s image about the product or service and its value can vary depending on the consumer experience. Image of a company is consumer´s impression of the organization, it´s products or services. Image can be formed without actual experiences through impressions or believes. Organization´s reputation is the stakeholders´ estimation of the organization and it is formed through images and experiences. Reputation cannot be built with marketing but it forms through the actions of the organization and the publicity it gets. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 34-35.)

Brand communication

Brand communication is the act of familiarizing your products or services to the targeted customers in the nature of marketing, giving them certain images of the products and influencing their opinions about the products. Brand communication is something that is happening every time a consumer has anything to do with the

brand, in another words interaction between the brand and the customer. Even though traditionally it is considered that brand communication is going only one way when in the reality, the communication flows also from the consumers to the brand. Brand communication occurs for example when customers see the brand´s products, logo and adverts online or offline or when they make a direct communication such as calling or visiting the brand´s office. (Roundhouse 2013.)

Since the progress in business environment has increased the already intense competition in the field and developing new products or services have become even harder, just creating a good brand is no longer enough. Branding already existing products or services has become even more important than what is has been in the past. As the concept of a brand is no longer just a trademark as it has traditionally been understood, marketers have been forced to develop new perspectives to communicate brand values to their target groups. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 313.)

Brand communication should be an interactive communication strategy that involves consumers emotionally to the brand. The communication flow should not be only from the brand to consumers, but the consumers should be part of the communication activities in order to create a comprehensive experience of the brand values which will desirably commit consumers to the brand and so create brand loyalty. In another words, the brand communication should be interacting with consumers rather that passively advertising in order to build and preserve stakeholder relationships. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 314.)

The difficulty in brand communication is that many organizations use the same communication channels to convey their brand values to the consumers. However, this will create a consumer avoidance towards brand communication due to the information overflow. This leads to a situation where brands are looking for different options for communicating their brand values. Interactive perspective for brand communication is one of those options. That is why committing consumers emotionally to the brand through experiences is crucially important for a successful brand communication. (Whelan & Wohlfeil 2006, 314.)

3 ORGANIZING AN EVENT

Organizing an event is a process that has three stages; planning, implementing and evaluating. Thoroughly and carefully planned event has higher possibilities to succeed and achieve pursued objectives. When the event has a good plan of action, the actual implementation is usually much easier and less risk factors will occur. In every event, there are risks that may occur, but with a well prepared plan, those risks are less likely to happen or if they happen, they are easier to solve. When the event is implemented well, it is very likely to have a successful event. Although, even with a good plan of action, the organizers should always be prepared if something goes wrong. It is also possible that even with a good plan, the event can be unsuccessful if the implementation of the event is lacking. Also evaluating of the event is critical. Going through the event and reflecting things which went right or wrong also helps in the future for example if similar kinds of events are to be organized.

3.1 Planning

There are many common features in every event. One is that an event has always objectives and a life cycle. Objectives include, e.g. defining why the event is organized and what the desired outcomes are. The event can have one or more objectives. Life cycle of the event starts, when the idea of the event is born and it usually ends, when the objectives are reached. Every event is also an independent entity; even though there are many set of groups working towards reaching the objectives, the event itself always has one person or group that carries the responsibilities. Also every event includes group working. Organizing an event has many factors to be considered and nobody can be an expert in every part which is why it is important that there are different people and groups with different skills working with the event. (Kauhanen, Juurakko & Kauhanen 2002, 24.)

There are few basic questions that applies every time when planning an event; why the event is organized, what are the actions happening in the event, how to get the public to participate in and enjoy themselves in the event, what are the target groups and how to make the event successful in the matter of content and in the terms of money. (Kauhanen etc. 2002, 12.)

According to Kauhanen etc. (2002, 12) there are few basic questions that every event plan need to answer:

Why? The organizers of the event need to know the idea and motives behind the event. Without understanding the reason for the event, it is impossible to plan and implement a successful event. With a clear comprehension of the purpose of the event, it is possible to make plans and decisions in favor to reach the targeted objectives.

What? After the purpose of the event is clear, the organizers can start designing the form of the event; is the event a concert, competition or perhaps a show and what are the activities and operations during the day.

Where? The location of the event can sometimes be very crucial. If the event location is hard for customers to reach, it will be a big risk that customers will not participate in the event. Also in some event locations the organizers might need to have a permits, such as in public parks or other public places.

When? Organizers of the event need to plan the date of the event carefully. Organizers should check for example if there are other events or activities happening in the same date. It is usually not desirable to organize the event in the same date when there are other activities happening nearby. This can reduce the number of participants especially in smaller cities**.**

To whom? Every event should define its target group. Having a target group helps event organizers to design activities and marketing operations.

How? Action plan of the event helps to attract the public to participate in and enjoy their time in the event. Without interesting activities or a attraction for the public, it is difficult to make the public to participate in the event.

3.1.1 SWOT-analysis

SWOT-analysis is a good and generally known tool when planning an event (Figure 5). SWOT-analysis evaluates the internal strengths and weaknesses and external possibilities and threats of the event. When the positive and negative factors of the event are recognized, it is possible to utilize the strengths and possibilities and to avoid or change the weaknesses and threats.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS

Figure 5. SWOT-analysis

3.1.2 Marketing

According to American Marketing Association (2013) "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large." When an organization is organizing an event, the marketing strategies becomes one of the important factors in order to organize a successful event. Mar-

keting the event enables the organization to attract the interest of the public to-wards the event and so increase the participation percentage. The marketing strategies and channels should be considered carefully in order to reach the correct target group. Also the marketing of the event should be designed so that it attracts the public to participate in the event by creating value for the consumers.

Every organization uses marketing also in their daily operations. Marketing strategies and channels can vary depending on the desired outcomes and target groups, which is why every organization should look into their business activities in order to choose the right strategies and channels. Traditionally marketing channels have consisted for example from newspapers, television, radio, face-to-face communications and billboards. Due to the technological development, new marketing channels such as search engines, websites, social media, e-mail and mobile phones have risen alongside with the traditional marketing channels. (Masterful Marketing 2007-2015.)

Printed marketing

Printed marketing means all advertising that is printed on paper. In a modern marketing, social media and online advertising have penetrated in the marketing environment and claimed a great part of the advertising. Still, the printed marketing has maintained its place in traditional advertising. Some of the printed marketing advantages are tangibility, reliability, and target marketing. Tangibility in printed marketing means that the printed advertising is in a physical form. For example newspaper adverts can stay in houses where it has been distributed for a long time and be read many times. Many households are either ordering a certain newspaper or they are receiving freely distributed local newspaper. Either way, most of the working age population are reading some kind of newspaper. (Forbes 2012.)

Printed adverts also seems to enjoy more reliability from the target audience compared to online advertising. Online adverts might ask the audience to click an advert to gain something and then spread viruses. That is a risk that printed advertising do not have. Reaching target markets through printed advertising is usually

easier than through online advertising. Printed adverts can be publishes for example in newspapers or magazines that are targeted to the niche audience and reach the target audience more effectively than online advertising. (Forbes 2012.)

Face-to-face marketing

Even though digital advertising has increased its popularity in marketing field, face-to-face marketing is still one of the basics of advertising channels. Interactions with the customers cannot be replaced with other means. The success of a business is related in a large extent to those situations where interaction happens with the consumers. Those situation define the image that consumers form from the company. (Berkowits 2014.)

Without interaction with consumers, it is at great risk that misunderstandings and false images about the company will occur. If there is no interaction with the consumers, it might give a message that the consumer is not critical part of the business. If the business operations are based merely on analytical and research results, it will create false interpretations and decrease the level of sales and customer service. It has to be kept in mind that even though digital marketing is a great tool in marketing, it still cannot replace the face-to-face interactions with the customers. (Berkowits 2014.)

Also since online shops have penetrated into the markets, the role of the concrete stores, the customer service and personnel expertise has become even more important. As the customer service has moved more and more into the online services, the face-to-face contacts have even bigger role in the concrete stores and the customers have higher expectations from the customer service. Online shops are usually quite fast and convenient way to do business, so when the customers do come to the concrete store, they usually have a high need for a personal service. But if the customers feel that the customer service has not been in the level expected, the experience is negative and there is higher risk that the customer will not return to the store. (SN4 2014.)

Online stores are convenient and usually less expensive than concrete stores. That has led to a situation where concrete stores are struggling to do business against online shops. In this kind of situation the customer service and expertise of the personnel are the most important aspects of doing business, since most of the consumers are prepared to pay for a good service. (SN4 2014.)

Social media in marketing

Social media is convenient, inexpensive and fast communication channel. Nowadays social media has risen among the traditional marketing channels. Social media include for example Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube that offers organizations to reach even more wider audience, since social media can be used internationally and it usually requires much less financial resources than traditional marketing channels such as radio or television commercials. (DeMers 2014.)

Undoubtedly social media can increase organizations´ business activities. For example using social media will increase brand or company awareness. When company´s or brand´s name or logo is visible for broader audience, it increases the recognition of the company or brand for already existing customers and familiarizes possible new customers. This can result in increased customer base. Social media also increases the possibility to reclaim customers. Every time a company posts something on social media the company is interacting with the consumers, which in the best case scenario leads into a customer conversion. Interacting with the customers is truly important for the company, since that is how the company can affect on the image the customer has from the company. (DeMers 2014.)

Using social media also humanizes the companies. When a company communicates in the social media, customers can relate more to the company, since there is an actual person doing those communications, not the organization itself. Regular interaction with the customers shows the organization want to communicate with its customers. For example if an organization never post anything on their Facebook- or Twitter pages, it gives the impression that the organization is indifferent for their customers. When the company is active in social media, it creates

better search engine rankings as well. Many consumers use different search engines such as Google to look for certain information. That is how organization´s information can be found easier from the internet. Social media gives real-time data from the consumers such as other direct communication channels like phone calls or e-mails. As a fast communication channel, companies can react to the consumers´ feedback immediately. This helps companies to develop and improve their operations. (Forbes 2014.)

3.1.3 Risk management

Every event has objectives and outcomes the event is trying to achieve. However, reaching those objectives and outcomes is not always so simple to reach. Every event may face obstacles and factors that may affect whether the event ever reaches its goals. Those obstacles between event´s objectives and reaching them are called "risks". This means that every operation of the event involves a risk. That is why event organizers need first to recognize possible risks to investigate whether these risks can be controlled through risk management.

Also with risk management, it is possible to have better chances in reaching the objectives that were set, to recognize possibilities and threats easier, to make rational decisions and to decrease losses. (The International Organization for Standardization 2009.) Risks management helps recognizing, understanding, evaluating and handling risks in order to achieve objectives that have been set. With an appropriate risk management risks can be controlled in a way that minimizes the possible losses resulted from the risks. (The Institute of Risk Management 2015.)

The ultimate reason why organizations are using risk management in their business operations is the attempt to secure the organization from being exposed to internal and external harms. There are different types of risk management strategies and plans and they might have different goals. These goals might be for example to keep the organization´s operations functional, decrease losses and gain profits and secure the safety of the workers, customers and other people from

the negative factors like accidents or hostilities. Risk management´s goal is also to maintain the facilities, information, documents and other physical property of the organization. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

There are a lot of different techniques to relieve or delete risks. One of them includes five quite standard levels of managing and recognizing the risks within the organization. Step one is to recognize the risks that might or might not happen. Secondly the state of the most important assets for the risk have to be estimated. Then, the organization should define the expected results for the risk if it will happen. Fourth step is to find different ways to minimize and eliminate the risks. Fifth step is to decide and prioritize actions which are the most important if the risk occurs. (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work 2012.)

SME risk chart (vulnerability analysis)

To manage the risks that the organization might face in the future, the organization´s managers should understand the risks and challenges that the organization might confront. The primary object for vulnerability analysis is to evaluate the possibility of the risks that might happen (Figure 6). Vulnerability analysis´ goal is also to assess the competent effect of different kinds of risks that the organization might identify. By scoring the vulnerability analysis the organization will have a lookup for their vulnerability in the business operations. The lower the scores are, the better. If the organization identifies a high scored area in the analysis, the organization should prioritize its´ actions towards to this hazard. (Accounting Financial and Tax 2010.)

Risks	Propability 1-5	Severity 1-5	Total
Human factors			
Technological factors			
Physical factors			
Economic factors			

Natural factors			
Political factors			

Figure 6. Vulnerability Analysis Chart

Risk types

All organizations have some kinds of risks, but those risks may differ due to the organizations´ different infrastructures. Because there are different kinds of risks they vary by their nature. Risks can be defined in different ways by the factors they are valued with. If risks are estimated as a whole category, they can be divided in two groups; internal and external risks. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Internal risks

Internal risks are risks that happen or are from the processes within the organizations´ business processes. These kinds of risks come up usually in the normal daily actions that take place in the organization. That means that these risks can be prevented more easily because they are more predictable, so the organization will be able to control these risks before they will have a negative impact on the business. This is beneficial for the organizations because these risks can be seen from a long distance and so be controlled in a decent time. Different factors in an organizations´ internal risks are human factors, technological factors and physical factors. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Human factors

Human factors refers to the people in the organizations that have an impact to the organizations operations. Human factors are for example employee´s dishonesty, accidents or death cases within the industry or when important people in the

organization are unable to complete their work or are otherwise incompetent. Also strikes, employees´ carelessness or failures of trade unions are human factors in the organizations´ risks. Suppliers are as well included to the internal human factors, even though they might not work directly within the organization, but if the supplier is unable to deliver needed products, it will have a negative impact to the organization. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Technological factors

Technology is developing in a constant level. That is why also technological factors should be considered when planning organizations´ risk management strategies. Technological factor means the constant changes which cannot be forecasted in the way organizations are doing their production processes or their distribution processes. To be said in another way, that means that an organization should be constantly looking for new technologies and techniques to improve their operational processes. An organization will lose a big amount of advantages comparing to other competitive organizations if they are not having the newest technology and techniques. With newer technology organizations can for example produce a higher quality products and without the new technology or techniques the quality of the organization might be lower than competitors. Then the organization will lose some of its´ advantages on the competitive markets. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Physical factors

Physical factors means those factors that are affecting the organization´s material property. These factors are for example the losses and the damages that might happen to the organization´s equipment and machinery that are needed in the processes of production. These factors are including for example the damages in the case of fire or a robbery or damages in the logistics. Also if the organization is

forced to pay a compensation for damages to another organization it is also considered as a physical factor. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

External risks

External risks refers to those risks which origins are from outside the organization´s operations. These risks are usually difficult to prevent or to be seen beforehand. Organizations cannot normally control these risks because they are caused by external factors. These risks are also very hard to be forecasted and the likeliness for these risks to occur cannot be defined very precisely. External risks include economic factors, natural factors and political factors. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Economic factors

Economic factors have a big influence to the external risks. This factor´s effects to the organization is quite difficult to forecast, because of their irregular nature. Economic changes in the competitive markets are very flighty. The changes might be big or small and it is impossible to forecast when these changes will happen, how they will behave and what kind of impact they will have to the organization´s business processes. For example price changes, fluctuations in the demand in the markets and customers´ changing wants and needs are economic factors. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Also the economic factors such as the growth of the competition in the markets, world economy and different levels of unemployment are at least somehow affecting to the business operations in the organization. The risks that are posed by the economic life are called as dynamic risks. These risks are quite hard to be forecasted because on their irregular nature. On the other hand, these dynamic risks are not always bad for the organization, since they might also bring a positive

influence to the organization, depending on what situation the organization is in compared to the economic changes. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Natural factors

Natural factors means those risks that are caused by the natural elements. These risks are impossible to be predicted and no one can control these forces. Natural factors are for example floods, tornados, drought, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. These cataclysms´ damages can be very serious and can even lead to death. Other damages could be for example damages to the organizations property and products. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

Political factors

Political factors include for example wars, governmental elections, riots or other hostilities. These risks have a great effect to the functionality of the organization´s operations. Political factors like the modifications in the regulations and policies may have an influence to the organizations situation in the markets and so to the profitability of the organization. (National Informatics Centre 2012.)

3.1.4 Budgeting

Budgeting can be defined as counting the costs and the revenues in order to make sure the organization is not generating loss. Budgeting is also a critical part of organizing an event. Budgeting allows organizers to plan the event so that it will be profitable, since most of the commercial events are organized to gain financial profits. With a clear budged, organizers can make desicions and modifications re-garding the plan of the event. Budget is always just an estimation of the costs of the event, so it is important to count the actual costs after the event to see if the event stayed within the budget. (Stanford University 2014.)

Financial objectives and profitability

When an organization organizes a commercial event one of the objectives is usually to gain profit from the event. Part of budgeting is setting financial objectives. Those objectives are usually divided in two parts as in direct and indirect objectives. Direct objectives are those financial profits that are gained in a short term, usually in the day of the event. Indirect objectives are those financial profits that are gained in the future, due to the event.

Profitability is one of the driving forces in organizing an event. When designing the profitability of the event, financial objectives and the budget of the event should be taken into consideration. A simple way to measure the profitability of the event is to count return on investment (ROI) (Figure 7). (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 52.) Return on investment is a ratio that indicates how much income flow is gained for the investment made (Taloussanomat 2015).

$$ROI = \frac{\text{Profits from the event} - \text{costs of the event}}{\text{Costs of the event}}$$

Figure 7. Return on investment (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 52)

Positive ROI results indicates that the event has been profitable and negative ROI results indicates that the event have generated loss.

3.2 Implementing

Implementing an event reflects those actions that are planned beforehand and are happening during the event. When the event has a plan of action, it is much easier to implement the actual event. Implementing the event consist making those things

happen, that are planned in advance. The aspects of implementing an event can vary depending on the type of the event and the company (Figure 8). These aspects are for example organizing possible partners to the event, getting necessary permissions or licenses, recruiting volunteers, purchasing possible goods and services, implementing event marketing strategy and so on. The event organizer should also be prepared for possible problems during the event. Some things might need some adjustment, or if something goes wrong, the event organizer should have a plan how to deal with possible issues.

Figure 8. Aspects of implementing an event

Aspects of implementing an event

Personnel of the event can be seen as a valuable asset of organizing an event. Professional staff is vital for the event since without them it is impossible to organize any events. That is why the staff should be taken into consideration in the implementation plan of the event. Informing personnel about the contents of the event and the staff´s tasks helps the employees to be motivated and service-minded. Organizing and delegating tasks among the staff helps everybody know when, where and what everybody are supposed to do. (Tapahtumajärjestäjän opas)

Communicating and informing the participants is important before, during and after the event. Marketing and advertising the event helps attracting participants and informing what the actual event is all about. Communicating and informing can

happen through various channels such as social media, newspapers, radio, and television or via face-to-face contacts. (Tapahtumajärjestäjän opas)

Whenever an event is playing music, even though it would be only a background music, the organizer has to compensate the usage of the music. The copyright protection agencies makes sure that the artists, publishers, lyric writers, composers, producers and else get a compensation every time their music is played in a public place or for a large audience. (Tapahtumajärjestäjän opas)

Usually every event includes a large amount of different materials. The organizer of the event should plan where, when and how those materials are purchased. This should be done well beforehand the event if there is a need to purchase the materials for example through tendering. Also the organizer of the event should think where, when, how and who will place the materials into their right places. (Tapahtumajärjestäjän opas)

Location of the event determines in a large extent what and how things can be organized. If the location is small, how does that affect to the event, or if the location is aside from the city center, does it have an impact on the event or not. Also the structure of the location needs to be taken into account. For example is the location one big open space or does it consist of many smaller spaces. This determinates how materials can be organized into the location.

All stakeholders should be taken into account when implementing an event. Different stakeholders might possess different objectives and desired outcomes for the event and the event organizer´s task is to think how those different objectives can be reach so that each party would be satisfied.

Dos and don'ts of implementing an event

There are some dos and don´ts when desiring to implement a successful event. The event organizer should always take into account the target audience´s style,

capabilities and preferences and also to consider different geographics and demographics of certain regions. (Congressional Management Foundation 2010, 146.) The target audience´s preferences, style and capabilities might vary radically depending on for example the local population´s structure. Also the geographical and demographical location affects to the issues that the event organizer need to take into account. For example, those things that work in the Southern Finland might not be functional in the Northern Finland due to the different cultures between the regions.

Also the internal factors such as the personnel´s skills, capabilities and weaknesses should be regarded in order to make the best of everyone. The event can be seen as an opportunity to improve or develop new skills and capabilities of the personnel. One factor behind a fluent and successful event is the stakeholders of an organization. That is why the event organizer should make sure that every stakeholder of the event agree and are aware of the objectives of the event. This helps everyone to work towards common goals, create cohesion and decrease the possibility of risks. Also effective communication on both sides with transparent information flow increases the motivation and satisfaction among the personnel. After the event it is important to evaluate the actions of the event in order to learn from the experience. (Congressional Management Foundation 2010, 146.)

The event organizer should never understate the diverse risk management activities since different events have different risks. All events should be estimated individually in order to develop a functional risk management strategy to decrease the risk of errors. Although the event should be considered as an entity, the details impact on things should never be underestimated. An event that has been implemented in detail decreases the possibility of last minute surprises and unexpected misunderstandings. (Congressional Management Foundation 2010, 146.)

All events usually have some kind of schedule. It is crucially important not to neglect the schedule in order to prevent the event to fall apart. If the schedule does not hold, it usually affects many other factors and the entity will suffer. Also when collecting customer feedback, the assessment questionnaires should not be too

complex since they are many times overlooked or left unfinished. The question-naires should be simple and easy to answer in order to be able to collect important feedback from the event. (Congressional Management Foundation 2010, 146.)

3.3 Evaluating

After the event it is important to evaluate the event. Recognize things that went well and which things could have been done better, if there was problems and how those problems were solved and whether the objectives were reached. This helps the event organizers to recognize what things were done right and which things should have been done better or take into consideration next time. Evaluating the event helps the event organizers to evaluate themselves critically and so develop themselves. Evaluating the event can also be seen as an overview of the whole event.

The evaluation should be targeted on the actions and activities of the event. The event organizers should decide beforehand some details about the evaluation such as when and where the evaluation is happening, who will participate in the evaluation, whose feedback is valuable concerning future development activities and how the collected feedback is structured. Then the feedback should be evaluated and noted in order to the data to be beneficial in future events. (Tapahtumajärjestäjän opas) For example using evaluation forms is a good tool for assessing the success of the event. The organization can use readymade evaluation forms which can be found from the internet, but it is more beneficial for the organization to create their own. This way the evaluation form is modified to serve the individual needs of the organization. (Chapman University 2015.)

4 ORGANIZING AN OPENING EVENT FOR ANTTI AROLA LTD

The assignment for the thesis was to organize an opening event for a renewed Antti Arola Ltd. The event was used as a way to convey the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd and brand communication of Marimekko as well as organize a sales event.

4.1 About Antti Arola Ltd

Antti Arola Ltd is a family business that operates in the textile sector. It was established in 1908 by Antti Arola. Antti Arola Ltd is Finland´s third oldest family business run by the same family since the establishment. Since the company has been operating over 100 years, it has been modifying its operations many times to match the needs of each decade. From the 1990´s until the year of 2014, Antti Arola Ltd has had three departments; women´s textiles, men´s textiles and Marimekko department. Recently the company has decided to close all other sections besides the Marimekko department due to the poor economic situation and increasing competition in the field.

The company´s mission is to provide reasonably-priced quality products and professional customer service. The company pursues to offer quality products that are still affordable for average income consumers. Also the company aims to provide professional staff. Most of the employees have been working for Antti Arola Ltd over twenty years, so the employees know the regular customer´s taste well enough. This helps the company to provide a good customer service since the employees can suggest products that will appeal to the customers.

Antti Arola Ltd.'s vision is to be the biggest Marimekko retail store in the Northern Finland. Most of Marimekko stores are quite small and limited in product range so Antti Arola Ltd wants to offer extensive range of products to serve the interest of the consumers. Antti Arola Ltd.'s values are following the ethics of the products,

being responsible entrepreneur and create pleasure and joy to the customers through selling beautiful products and providing individual customer service.

The operations of Antti Arola Ltd have not changed significantly in many decades, but recently the company has modified its operations and focused its target group differently than in the past, which is why the company needed to inform the current state of the company among the public. Earlier the company sold different kinds of textiles and its customer base was quite large. Due to the changes in the company operations, the company had focused on only one brand and so the target group focused also more on certain customer segment.

Traditionally the target group of Antti Arola Ltd has been from middle-aged to elderly people, men and women, who appreciate high quality products, variety of brands and professional services. After the changes in the company operations, the targeted customer type has changed to an adult, affluent, 30 to 60 years old woman, who appreciates domestic brand, design and traditions but is brave enough to wear clothes that differ from the mass.

4.2 Corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd

Antti Arola Ltd is a very traditional family business. The company wants to be seen as a responsible business partner for its stakeholders that offers personal experience through individual customer service and differentiated range of products.

Designing the corporate communication of a company can be divided into three levels: strategic-, tactical- and operational level. The strategic level consists identifying the strategic objectives of the company. Antti Arola Ltd.'s strategic objectives are to be a good place to work, be reliable and responsible company, be the biggest Marimekko retail store in the Northern Finland and develop the company´s operations constantly.

The tactical level of company´s corporate communication consist of identifying the available resources, such as financial-, human-, and equipment resources. Antti Arola Ltd.'s financial resources have been defined and the company has limited its financial resources carefully to match with the profit margins to avoid generating loss. The financial resources vary depending of the high or low seasons. On high seasons there are more financial resources to be used due to the larger profit margins, but on the other hand on the low season the company must use more financial resources for example for advertising to attract consumers to make the purchasing decisions. As a micro-enterprise, Antti Arola Ltd has very limited human resources and the company is highly dependent of its employees. The personnel is one of the driving forces of the company and it cannot afford to lose the staff due to the employees´ gained experience during the years they have been working for Antti Arola Ltd. That is why the company wants to be flexible and take good care of the staff. Antti Arola Ltd.'s equipment resources are for example the cash register and the payment terminals. The company has one cash register and two payment terminals that has been sufficient for the monetary transactions during normal trading.

The operational level consist the plan of implementing the company´s corporate communication activities. In another words, how the corporate communication is executed. The operational level of Antti Arola Ltd.'s corporate communication consists of internal and external communication of the company that conveys the image of the company inside as well as outside the company.

Internal communication of Antti Arola Ltd

Antti Arola Ltd is a micro-enterprise, since it has only four regular employees. This means that the company´s internal communication is very practical and informal. The information flow is transparent and the communication occurs in daily discussions among the employees during the work hours. This enables the information to be easily accessible for those who need it. There are usually no formal meetings or negotiations since every issue is handled informally within the company. There is no high hierarchy in the company and all employees are considered to be in the

same level. This creates equality and motivation among the employees in the company and so decreases the risk of errors. Also the motivated employees are pursuing towards developing the company and the employees of Antti Arola Ltd are constantly looking for ways to improve the company´s operations.

Most of the employees have worked together in Antti Arola Ltd over twenty years. The low turnover of employees communicates the well-being and satisfaction among the personnel. The tight work community helps the personnel to interact with each other and ensure that everyone are working towards the same objectives. Since all employees are familiar with the core values of Antti Arola Ltd, it is easier for the staff to operate in daily actions so that the desired outcomes of the company´s corporate communication are fulfilled.

External communication of Antti Arola Ltd

The external communication of Antti Arola Ltd can be seen for example in the window dressing, product displays, employees' appearance and attitudes, stakeholder relationships, media communications, advertising and marketing activities.

Antti Arola Ltd is using window dressing as a factor to attract customer to the store. Well-designed window dressing can many times to be trigger for the consumers to get interested of the store. Marimekko sends window dressing guidelines and suggestions on average once a month to its retailers, but the actual execution of the window dressing rests with every company themselves. Antti Arola Ltd.'s strategy in window dressing is to use the latest products arrived and to follow the Marimekko mentality with using appropriate color combinations and product displays.

Also the product display in the store conveys Antti Arola Ltd.'s corporate communication. The objective of the product displays is to create positive images of the products and to give ideas to the consumers. Many times when Antti Arola Ltd has for example covered a beautiful table for the customers to the store, the customers admire the beautiful products and want to have the same image to their homes.

Since creating positive images of the products is a vital part of Antti Arola Ltd.'s corporate communication strategy, the company has for example tables, chairs, a bed and shelves to display the products to the customers, to create beautiful store image and to bring the best out of the products. Also the store´s atmosphere is created for example through the product display, the lighting and the structure of the store.

Also the appearance and the attitudes of the employees of the company are conveying the corporate communication to the consumers. Employees are representing the company and for example in Antti Arola Ltd, the employees are encouraged to wear Marimekko clothes, which the company are sponsoring to the employees twice a year. Antti Arola Ltd.'s guidelines for the employees are to be friendly to all customers and treat every customer equally. The company wants to convey a message that all consumers are equivalent to the company. The employees´ duties are to offer expertise for the customers, help making the purchasing decisions and bring joy to the customers. Most customers are feeling satisfied after purchasing an appropriate product and if the customer service has been good, it is more likely for the customer to come back to the store.

Antti Arola Ltd endeavors to create the experience of individual customer service by offering help for each customer and serving only one customer at a time. Business in these days is more competitive than ever, which creates pressure on companies to cut costs and increase effectiveness. That is why many organizations have moved towards self-service business models. Especially in the clothing and textile industries there are nowadays more and more online shops that does not offer real life customer service and there are less employees in the stores to interact and offer customer service, which is a problem for those customers who are seeking for professional expertise. This is why Antti Arola Ltd is profiling itself as a company that is providing expertise, customer service and interaction with their customers.

Since creating customer relationships is essential for a successful business, Antti Arola Ltd pursues primarily to create customer relationships through face-to-face interactions while trading in the store. With face-to-face interactions it is possible to have transparent communication that goes both ways. This way the customer

receives information and so can create an image of the company and the company receives valuable instant customer feedback. Antti Arola Ltd has many standard customers that visit the store regularly. Some of the regular customers have known the employees of Antti Arola Ltd for decades and the customer-employee relationships are already quite established and reached a point where the employees and the customers have even become friends. Antti Arola Ltd also uses social media to create customer relationships. The company has its own Facebook-page and websites, but since the target customer base is older population who do not use social media as a primarily communication channel, the company has come to a conclusion that practicing face-to-face communicative interaction is more effective for their target audience.

Since creating stakeholder relationships is essential for a successful business, Antti Arola Ltd pursues to create and keep good relationships with its stakeholders. Marimekko is part of Antti Arola Ltd.'s stakeholder group. The communication between the companies takes place mainly via telephone or the internet and the communication goes both ways. The communication from Antti Arola Ltd to Marimekko consist for example product orders, compensation negotiations from defective goods or information inquiries. The communication from Marimekko to Antti Arola Ltd includes for example sending product catalogues, weekly newsletters and providing general information and guidelines regarding the brand communication. Antti Arola Ltd has a regular Marimekko representative who is the contact person and with who most of the direct communication occurs. Also the local bank is part of Antti Arola Ltd.'s stakeholder group. It is important to keep the investor relationships good, since the banks usually have a big role in companies´ monetary actions. Antti Arola Ltd handles all monetary transactions through its local bank. Also the company applies a loan from the bank when there are bigger investments to be done.

Media communication is a fine channel to convey corporate communication to a wider audience. Antti Arola Ltd has also used media communication such as local newspapers for corporate communication operations. Previously the local newspaper representatives have wrote for example about organized events such as when the company celebrated its 100th birthday. This has been a good publicity

for the company since the articles have been written from an objective perspective. Antti Arola Ltd has also used local newspapers as an advertising channel. The company publishes on average one advert in a month in a local free distribution newspaper. Newspaper advertising reaches especially those customers who do not use social media.

Part of the company´s external communication is to do follow-up. With follow-up the company can collect information of the consumers as well as from the competitors. Antti Arola Ltd does not have any formal customer feedback system, but it does receive a lot feedback directly from the interaction situations with the customers. When the company receives a feedback from the customer, regardless if it is positive or negative, the feedback is shared with all employees to decide if the feedback should result actions to the company´s operations. Positive feedback conveys a message that the customer is satisfied and it provides an insight of things that are well in the company. Negative feedback is evaluated among the employees to decide whether the feedback should result changes in some operations to improve the company. Antti Arola Ltd also does a follow-up of its competitors. The company follows for example its competitors´ campaigns or discount sales to match with them. Following the competitors is used in Antti Arola Ltd to create new ideas and to evaluate other companies operations to be able to compete against them.

4.3 About Marimekko

Marimekko is a Finnish brand that was founded in 1951 by Armi and Viljo Ratia. Marimekko represents Finnish design and it produces diverse collections of clothes, interior products, accessories and bags. Marimekko products are sold in about 40 countries and the brand is known for its bold use of colors and distinctive patterns and prints. (Marimekko 2014a.)

Marimekko has qualified its corporate responsibilities to match with the core values of the brand. Those responsibilities reflects the high quality and personality standards that Marimekko cherish. The responsibilities include making timeless products that do not follow shallow trends, but create their own design that lasts from mother to daughter. Marimekko also values ecology, which is why they want to make their products last, since they think product´s life cycle is one parameter of ecology. Also part of the responsibility standard is making appropriate products. The company´s ideology is to design beautiful products which are still practical and functional. (Marimekko 2014b.)

4.4 Brand communication of Marimekko

 Marimekko has been a strong part of Finnish design for many decades and as a brand it has been very precise about its brand appearance. Marimekko expects their retailers to follow their core values and the organization gives specific guidelines for example of the product displays and window dressing. This helps retailers to convey Marimekko´s brand communication to the public.

Marimekko is quite distinctive brand that divides consumers´ opinions. Marimekko products are usually quite bold with courageous colors, big patterns and unique design. Some consumers do not care for Marimekko, but on the other hand Marimekko also has lots of loyal customers. Marimekko as a brand conveys a message of quality products with unique Finnish design. Marimekko often provides a certain status for the customers, which is why so many are willing to pay little higher price for that status symbol and the promise of good quality. Also Marimekko products usually have those easily recognizable features. For example one of the most famous pattern of Marimekko is Unikko, which was designed in the 1960´s. This pattern is widely recognizable in Finland as well as abroad. Marimekko is many times also evoking feeling from the consumers´ childhoods. Many older customers remember Marimekko products or patterns from their childhood especially from the 1950´s and 1960´s when Marimekko was a newcomer.

Marimekko brings memories to many consumers´ minds, which helps consumers to commit themselves to the brand emotionally.

Since brand communication is familiarizing the products to the customer, the situations where the consumer is dealing with the products are vitally important. The brand communication is happening every time a consumer is anything to do with the brand, which is why it is important that every encounter is positive in the consumer´s mind. Marimekko invests a lot in the product display and creating images of the products. Marimekko has certain guidelines and suggestions for example to their retailers about the product displays and window dressing, so that every Marimekko store would be consistent and represent the images Marimekko wants to create to the public.

Since using only traditional channels for brand communication is no more enough, Marimekko has also created their own way to communicate their brand to the consumers. Alongside with the traditional communication channels, Marimekko has created a customer software called Marikylä, which enables online interacting with the consumers. Marikylä offers changing discounts and benefits to the customers and they organize different events for those who have registered as a member of Marikylä. Offering discounts and benefits for the registered members of Marikylä helps committing the customers to the brand and to activate the consumers to interact with the brand. Marimekko is also organizing different kinds of events for their different target audiences on a regular basis. These events help the brand to interact with the consumers, to create customer relationships and to create a feeling of a community and team spirit. Marikylä is free of charge and anyone can join in. Marikylä lures consumers to commit themselves to Marimekko and so create customer loyalty towards the brand.

Marimekko is also widely present in the media. Marimekko products are many times presented in domestic interior magazines, in the television and in advertisements. The brand´s presence in magazines and in television is good publicity for Marimekko, since the source of publicity comes from an objective, outside party rather than from the brand itself.

Core values of Marimekko

Marimekko has defined its core values that represents the brand image. Those core values familiarizes the company profile to the consumers and helps creating the brand communication of Marimekko. According to Marimekko (2015) their core values are:

- •   Living, not pretending
- •   Honesty towards everyone and everything
- •   Common sense
- •   Creating team spirit
- •   Being courageous even at the risk of failure
- •   Joy

Marimekko wants to embrace life, so that no one should have to pretend something they are not. Also the company wants to be independent and it does not want to please someone just for the sake of pleasing people. (Marimekko 2015c.) This gives an image of a company that is brave and wants to encourage diversity. Marimekko does not want to follow shallow trends, but to create their own and the company encourages the consumers to do the same. This creates an image of a strong brand that does not care about other´s opinions but stay behind their decisions.

One of Marimekko´s core values is also being honest to everyone and towards everything. The company believes that through honesty and outspokenness it is possible to be more creative and achieve more. Marimekko emphasizes honesty and trustworthy features in all of their business operations, which conveys a message that the brand wants to be responsible. (Marimekko 2015c.) This gives a message of rectitude and credibility. When the company is being honest and trustworthy, it creates customer loyalty when the consumers feel that they can rely on the company.

Good common sense is desirable in Marimekko´s all business functions. All products are designed to be functional and simple rather than complex and flashy. Marimekko´s target is not to create fancy but practical products that take place in

ordinary people´s everyday life. (Marimekko 2015c.) This gives a message that the brand appreciates every day and it wants to be in the same level as a common citizen rather than raising itself into a pedestal.

Marimekko also emphasizes doing things together, creating team spirit. Marimekko wants to be open minded and trustworthy brand, since they believe it is the ground of being courageous and creative. Marimekko wants to be innovative and create products that are easily recognizable. The company does not want to create just products for the consumers, it wants to create a way of life. (Marimekko 2015c.) This gives an impression of a company that wants to do things together and be part of the community. This helps creating experiences from the products which can result customers committing themselves to the brand emotionally and creating brand loyalty.

One of the core values of Marimekko is being courageous. Marimekko believes that without courage there cannot be creativity. Accepting mistakes can lead to creating something unique and meaningful. (Marimekko 2015c.) This creates an image of a company that does not fear to make mistakes and wants to be a pioneer with developing unique and meaningful products.

Also one of the core values of Marimekko is bringing joy to the lives of consumers (Marimekko 2015c). Joy is a feature that can be seen in all products of Marimekko. The colors and color combinations are bright and bold, the patterns are many times playful or even childish and in many products there are some small details that differentiates the products from others. This conveys a message that the design of Marimekko is not main stream, but they create their own trends which brings happiness in life.

4.5 Planning the event

Planning the event for Antti Arola included setting the objectives for the event and planning the actions before, during and after the actual event. Kauhanen etc.

(2002, 12) have defined some basic questions that help structuring the framework around the event.

Why? The objectives behind organizing the opening event for Antti Arola was to increase the company awareness and influence the public´s image of Antti Arola Ltd by transmitting the corporate communication to the public, to represent the Marimekko brand and products sold in the store and to organize a sales event. Since the company operations changed significantly during the autumn of 2014, the company was in the need of informing the public of the changes in the company. Organizing an event was a good choice to interact with the consumers and affect to the public´s image of Antti Arola Ltd and Marimekko products and to gain revenue in the same time.

What? On the day of the event the company was organizing fashion shows, had 15% discount from every normal priced products and it was serving local lingonberry pastry, local organic juice and Finnish Marianne-candies. The objectives behind these activities were to convey the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd and the brand communication of Marimekko by the means of communicating and interacting with the customers. Also the objective was to create a sales event to increase the short and long term profits.

The staff of Antti Arola Ltd was instructed to communicate and make as many contacts with the customers as possible during the day to increase the company awareness, to influence the company image of the consumers and to gain valuable knowledge about customers´ thoughts. The actual event as a whole conveyed the corporate communication of the company, and the fashion show was a good opportunity to present the Marimekko products and introduce the brand communication of Marimekko, hoping that it will result later profits. The servings were offered primarily to attract consumers to participate in the event and to give a positive image of the company by using local delicacies.

Where? This event was organized in the same property as where Antti Arola Ltd operates its daily business. The location was in the middle of the main shopping

street in Kajaani which is an ideal location for attracting people in participating in the event.

When? The event was organized on 4th of October which was Saturday. Saturdays are usually the best day to organize an event since more participants can participate in the event during the weekends. Autumn is many times very quiet time in the textile industry from the starting of schools until the Christmas season. Organizing the event in the early October increased the sales margins for the autumn. September would have been too early to organize the event since the company would have been still in the middle of summer discount sales and there would not have been yet any new collections to present. November or December would have been too late to organize the event since the Christmas sales would have been already started and increased the sales. The Christmas season is also quite busy, so there would not have been enough time to organize the event. So October falls perfectly between the summer discount sales and the Christmas season.

To whom? This event was meant for everyone from children to elderly people, to women and men,who are or could be interested in Marimekko products. The average Marimekko customer is a middle-aged woman, who likes colors, interesting patterns and has courage to wear clothes that are not main stream.

How? An event that has activities and something to offer for the consumers is usually attracting the residents to participate in the event. Fashion show was a good way to represent Marimekko products to the consumers, since carefully planned ensembles are creating images and giving ideas to the consumers. Serving local delicacies attracted participants and it gave an impression that Antti Arola Ltd wanted to support and collaborate with local entrepreneurs. Giving an -20% discount also attracted buying customers and increased the sales revenues.

SWOT-analysis of the event

In order to analyze the internal and external features of organizing an opening event for Antti Arola Ltd, the internal strengths and weaknesses and the external

opportunities and threats were identified by conducting SWOT-analysis of the event. (Appendix 1)

Strengths

One of the internal strengths of the event was a strong brand, Marimekko, which is generally appreciated among the public. Finns tend to appreciate domestic products and Marimekko has a strong brand image that attracts the consumers. Antti Arola Ltd has also very professional staff. All employees have been working in the company over twenty years, which means that they are very familiar with the products and the customer segment. Antti Arola Ltd possesses also long experience in organizing events. The company has organized many similar kinds of events in the past, so the concept of organizing a successful event was familiar.

Since Kajaani is a small city with not that many events organized, usually any kind of activity attracts public. This is why a fashion show is a good way to attract people to participate in the event. Also serving some local delicacies in the event was a strength since the delicacies were bought from local bakery called Pekka Heikkinen which have similar background than Antti Arola Ltd and the bakery is widely appreciated among the locals. Collaborating with local entrepreneurs created positive image of Antti Arola Ltd, since the residents of Kajaani are widely supporting the local companies.

Weaknesses

One of this event´s weaknesses were limited resources, since the budget was quite narrow. Also the location was quite small to organize a fashion show because the runway was quite large and it had to be placed in the middle of the store. That was little problematic, because the runway took space from the audience. Also, even though Marimekko as a brand was one of the strengths of the event, it was

also one of the weaknesses. Marimekko is rather distinctive brand, so their product profile is not pleasing everybody.

Opportunities

One of the opportunities of the event was to gain company awareness, influence the public´s image of Antti Arola Ltd and present Marimekko brand and products to the consumers. Organizing an event like this enabled customer interactions to create customer relationships and also get information directly from the consumers. Also with the fashion show it was possible to do product presentation of the products sold in the store. With product presentation the company can create images and give ideas for the consumers, which could result to possible purchase decisions. The event was also organized as a sales event to increase the sales revenue in short term and the customer interactions were hoped to create long term profits.

Threats

One of the threats of this event was the lack of marketing due to the limited resources. It does not matter how good the event is, if the public does not know about it or if the marketing fails to get people interested in participating the event. One threat was also that if there would have been other activities on the same date, which could lower the number of participants. Also the weather conditions could have been a threat. The weather can have surprisingly big effect on the behavior of the consumers whether they would leave their homes and participate in the event. Wrong timing could have been a threat as well. The date of the event should be set so, that as many people as possible would be able to participate in the event.

Marketing

The objectives in marketing the opening event was to attract as many participants to take part of the event as possible. Traditionally Antti Arola Ltd has used only printed advertising, store advertising and face-to-face marketing as their marketing channels. The company has published newspaper ads on average once a month in a local free distribution newspaper called Koti-Kajaani which is published every Wednesday and Saturday. Also the company has advertised with promotional stand every now and then when they are having discount sales or new collections. Also part of the marketing channel has been interacting and discussing directly with the customers.

When designing the event´s marketing strategies, it was noticed that creating Facebook-pages and websites for Antti Arola Ltd had become a topical issue. Creating Facebook-pages and websites for the company was a convenient, contemporary and cost effective way of marketing, which also modernized the image of the company. The company has not used internet advertising as their marketing channels before, so making their own websites and Facebook account diversified their marketing channels.

The websites were purchased from a company called Suomen Hostingpalvelu Ltd, which is providing hosting services such as domains and web hotels. They have a simple and clear webpage software that allows easy way to create homepages. The homepages for Antti Arola Ltd can be found from www.anttiarola.fi. Also the company was created their own Facebook-pages. This was an easy and free way of marketing and it could reach surprisingly many customers since so many people are nowadays using Facebook. The event was marketed with printed advertising, store advertising, internet advertising and face-to-face marketing. The advert of the event was published in Koti-Kajaani on Wednesday before the event, also the promotional stand and adverts in the company´s Facebook-pages and websites were published on Wednesday before the event.

The employees were also using face-to-face marketing as a marketing channel, which means discussing and informing the customers and acquaintances about

the event. This is quite powerful marketing channel especially among the elderly people, since the information goes from one person to another. All marketing and adverts were published on the same date, which makes the marketing strategy congruent.

Risk management of the event

Vulnerability analysis is an assessment chart that helps evaluating the probability and severity of risks. Kauhanen etc. (2002, 55) has presented a risk assessment matrix, where the risks have been divided into groups according to the nature of the risks. Possible risks are written down and evaluated by numbers from 1 to 5. Then the numbers from probability and severity are multiplied which gives an estimation of the total scoring. Low total scores are considered as low risks and the higher the total scores are, the higher the risks are. Certain actions based on the total scoring should be done. Total scores over 15 are major risks that should be eliminated and taken into serious consideration. Total scores from 7 to 15 should be noticed and adjusted in order to decrease the effects of the risks. Total scores under 6 do not require immediate attention.

The vulnerability analysis of the event was made by the employees of Antti Arola Ltd based on their long experience in the industry. (Appendix 2) The vulnerability analysis of the event resulted three most probable and severe risks of the event. The highest risks with the scores of 10 was the human, technological and economic factors. The human factors include for example employees getting sick or otherwise unable to complete their work. The probability of these risks were not very high, but the severity would have been high, since it would have been difficult or even impossible to organize the event if the employees would have been sick in the day of the event. Human factors also include for example the failure of suppliers. Marimekko is the supplier of Antti Arola Ltd and if the product deliveries for the event would have been delayed or if Marimekko would have been totally unable to deliver the ordered products, it would have been impossible to organize the event.

Also the technological factors scored relatively high. Technological risks include for example stereo and lighting breakdowns. The probability of these risks was not that high since all equipment was checked before the actual event, but the severity of these risks was high because of the vitality of the technological factors to the fashion show. The malfunction of payment terminals were also included to the technological factors. The malfunction in these devices would have been a high risk since most of the customers pay with electronic cards nowadays.

The third highly scored risk group was the economic factors. These risks include for example the customers´ changing needs and wants and the growth of the competition in the industry. These risks are quite difficult to forecast, but the severity of these risks would have been quite high for the event. Lack of participants would have been a major risk, since the success of the event was based on the number or participants. Without participants the company could not have made any customer interactions and the objectives that were set for the event would have been impossible to achieve.

Responsibilities

An event usually has a project manager who leads the project. Project manager is in charge of making things happen and he/she has to be able to delegate, since one person cannot execute the project by him/herself. A project manager has a project team to work with. A project team can include people for example from the organization, it´s stakeholder groups or completely outside the organization. A project manager´s task is to divide tasks and responsibilities. Project team members should then communicate how things are going. This is how it can be made sure that everything gets done and there is not too much to do for one person. (Vallo & Häyrinen 2012, 224.)

In this event, all employees were given certain responsibilities to take care of. (Appendix 3) This helps the event to go smoothly, since all responsibilities were delegated and everyone knew what their tasks before, during and after the event were. Dividing responsibilities also helps to decrease the risk of errors, since one person

has limited responsibilities and the burden does not pile up into one person´s shoulders.

Schedule of the event

The schedule for the day of the event was planned to ensure a fluent event. (Appendix 4) The schedule plan included a general schedule for the actions and activities for the day to ensure that all employees were aware of what was happening and when. The plan also included a schedule for the models for the fashion show to remind the models which clothes were represented next and with who and in which order they would enter into the stage.

Budget of the event

The budget of the event was counted in order to decrease the risk of the event generating loss. (Appendix 5) In order to count the budget, the costs and the expected revenues were identified and calculated.

Addition to the regular employees of Antti Arola Ltd, the company hired another seven people; five models for the fashion show and two people to handle the servings. All additionally hired people were given Marimekko gift cards as reimbursement which were worth of 50 euros per piece. With five models and two waitresses the total costs for additional employees were 350 euros. The disposable plastic glasses and plates were purchased from a local wholesale store at the price of 28,60 euros.

Antti Arola Ltd wanted to use local products since it fit to their company image. Local juice producers were looked for and the companies that possessed suitable products were tendered. Vuokatin Viini had the best price-quality ratio, so the juices were ordered from there. Two ten liter concentrated juice canisters were ordered, which were 64 euros per canister. That made a total of 128 euros. Also

the lingonberry pastry were ordered from local bakery called Pekka Heikkinen. Antti Arola Ltd has ordered pastry before from Pekka Heikkinen for similar kinds of events, so the bakery made a decent offer from the pastry. The company ordered 27 big pastry which was enough for about 500 people. One big pastry cost 5,85 euros, so the pastry costs were a total of 157,95 euros.

Fazer´s Marianne chocolate candies were ordered from internet page called Karkkigalleria. These candies could have been purchased from local grocery stores or from wholesale store, but Karkkigalleria had the lowest price for these candies. Two 2,5 kilo boxes were ordered at the cost of 27,50 euros per box plus 6,70 euros shipping costs, which made a total of 61,50 euros.

Advertising costs were 545,60 euros. Antti Arola Ltd placed an advertisement at the local newspaper called Koti-Kajaani. (Appendix 6) This newspaper is free of charge to the city residents and it is distributed to all households every Wednesday and Saturday. The advertisement was placed on the previous Wednesday´s paper, so that consumers would have time to plan their Saturday if they wanted to participate in the event. The total budget of this event was 1271,65 euros, so if the costs of the actual event falls under 1300 euros the event has stayed within the budget. All the other materials were already existing from previous events, so they are not counted in the budget.

The imposed direct financial objectives were the sales in the day of the event and the indirect objectives were those future sales that would be gained due to the event. The direct objective was to increase the sales on the day of the event by 200% compared to an average sales on a corresponding period and the indirect financial objective was to increase sales margins in every month compared to last year´s sales.

ROI of the event was 4,4 % and the sales from the day of the event increased by 354% compared to an average sales on a corresponding period. These results were excellent, since the objective was to increase sales by 200%. Also the long term sales increased. The sales margins went up from 5 to 10 percentage in every month from October 2014 to April 2015.

4.6 Implementing the event

Implementing the opening event for Antti Arola Ltd included for example recruiting the models, tendering and purchasing the materials needed, organizing the store and building the stage and runway, informing the stakeholders, making marketing and advertising arrangements and interacting with the customers.

Recruiting the models

Antti Arola Ltd hired seven additional employees for the day of the event. Five of them were hired as models to represent the chosen products in the fashion show and two of them were hired to prepare and serve the food and drinks organized to the customers. Three of the models were adults and two of them were children. The idea in the fashion show was to present chosen Marimekko products from the newest collection and to show that the products are suitable for many different kind of people. The youngest model was a 3-year-old girl and her 6-year-old brother was the other child model. The adult models represented three different customer types; one was a 26-year-old woman, who was representing young and slim customers. Another adult model was a 36-year-old model, who was representing a bit older and average body type customers. The third adult model was a 50-year-old woman, who was representing a middle-aged and heavier body type customers. Using many different age and body type models represented the diversity of Marimekko products.

Materials

Some of the needed materials such as the stage, the runway, the tables and the chairs were already existing from the previous events. (Appendix 7) The materials that needed to be purchased were first tendered and then purchased from the suitable suppliers. Tendering the materials such as the juices and candies helped

the costs to keep in the budget. All materials were purchased weeks before the event to ensure everything would be ready for the event.

Marketing

Building and developing the marketing strategy started also several weeks before the event. The websites and the Facebook-pages were made around one month beforehand the event. The planning of the newspaper advert took place in the previous week of the event and the actual marketing and advertising activities started on the previous Wednesday. Also informing the stakeholders such as Marimekko started few weeks before the event to ensure the ordered products would arrive in time.

The fashion show

The fashion show was held two times at 11 o´clock and 1 o´clock in the afternoon on the day of the event. The fashion show was held twice because the location was quite small, so that the area would not be as crowded and because it was desirable to gain as many participants as possible. For example if someone was interested in participating but not able to come to the first fashion show, he/she could come to the second fashion show or vice versa.

The models were displaying Marimekko clothes, bags, scarfs and jewelry from the newest collection. Marimekko launches four collections per year; spring, summer, autumn and winter collections. The presented collection was the winter collection of 2014, which was designed for the Christmas season. The models were display-ing clothes that were the most suitable for their body type and personality. The models came about a week before the event to try out the clothes, to make the final decisions who will wear what and making sure that the sizes were right.

The actual fashion show was rehearsed twice; the night before the event and in the morning of the event. The rehearsals were organized to reveal possible problems that might occur and especially for the child models to get to know the other adult models so that they would feel more comfortable going with them to the runway. Rehearsals revealed some problems that might occur during the event. The biggest problem was to find the right pace for the models, so that the previous models would have enough time to change clothes, but the music would not end middle of the output. Also the music players needed to be moved slightly so that the one playing the music could see better when the models are going or leaving the runway.

The fashion show included all in all ten outputs, and each output had a theme such as nightwear, casual wear or evening clothes. The models were made a reminder paper of the starting orders and guidelines of the outfits to support a fluent fashion show. (Appendix 8) The fashion show as a whole took about 15 minutes.

Interacting with the customers

One of the purposes of the event was to get contact with the consumers. Interacting with the customers gave an opportunity to create customer relationships and influence the customers´ image of the company. Creating customer relationships enabled gaining customer loyalty and therefore possibly gaining long term profits. Interacting with the customers offered also important information from the customers to the company. Interacting with the consumers during the event enabled an immediate feedback of the event and of the company itself.

4.7 Evaluating the event

Evaluating the event of Antti Arola Ltd was also part of bringing the event to a close. Organizers should reflect things that were successful and things that went

wrong or caused problems. Even though the employees of the company have organized similar kinds of events before and are quite skilled in that matter, it was important to understand why somethings worked well and how some things might have been done differently. This helped the employees to learn from this event in order to plan even more successful events in the future. After the event there was an evaluation meeting in the social premises of the company. There all employees and the models were offered a glass of sparkling wine and lemonade for the children. The employees and models were taking discussions of the things that went well and which things could have gone better. Also the additional employees were given their gift cards.

The models and the employees of Antti Arola Ltd all agreed that the event as a whole went well. Especially the fashion shows were considered a success since so many viewers came to watch the fashion shows. The employees of Antti Arola estimated that there were around 400 participants during the day, which was a good result, since the company had prepared its premises for 500 participants. Also the financial goals of the event were exceeded. Since the event was a success and it attracted more participants than expected, there could have been more sales assistants to interact with the customers and at least one or two cashiers to work in the cash desk. Now because there were only four employees working with the sales, there was constantly queues to the cash desk and customers had to wait to get service if they needed one. With more sales assistants there could have been also more customer interactions.

Customer feedback

There was no written customer feedback collected from the customers. Still, the customers gave quite a lot of direct feedback either during the event or afterwards. The employees asked from the customers if they liked the event and all the feedback that was given was positive. Especially the customers were thanking for using models that represented different ages and body types.

What could have been done better was that it would have been beneficial to collect more and more systematically some customer feedback. There was no written customer feedback collected to see what the customers actually thought about the event. Some people might not say their true thoughts if they are asked directly, but will answer truthfully if they can answer anonymously. Now with only spoken feedback, the company have only an image of what the customer liked about the event, when with written feedback it would have been possible to do for example a statistics about the event and use those feedbacks when organizing future events.

5 CONCLUSIONS

The objectives of this event was to convey the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd and brand communication of Marimekko products through organizing an event and to create a sales event to increase the sales margins of the company. That is why it was important to look into the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd internally as well as externally to identify the strategies in which the company have executed its corporate communication to the public. Important part of the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd was also the brand communication of Marimekko. The brand communication of Marimekko must be congruent with the corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd to administrate the whole business.

The corporate communication of Antti Arola Ltd was executed in many levels. The theoretical background provided a base for the implementation. The execution was done internally as well as externally within the company and outside the company. The objective of Antti Arola Ltd.´s corporate communication was to convey an image of a company that offers large range of quality products and professional customer service. It was quite difficult to evaluate if those objectives were reached due to the lack of systematic feedback collection from the customers and other stakeholders.

Corporate communication offers a way to convey the company´s values and image to the public as well as provide an insight of the customers´ impressions of the company. It was important for Antti Arola Ltd to convey its corporate communication to the consumers due to the changes in the company´s operations. It was also important to receive feedback from the customers in order to know how the consumers experienced the company to be able to develop the operations of Antti Arola Ltd.

A company can affect the image consumers have from the company through interactions as well as outer factors such as the products and service of the company. For Antti Arola Ltd, it was important to use right communication actions and channels to reach the target audience and to convey the wanted image to the

consumers. In order for Antti Arola Ltd to achieve the image of a company that provides large range of quality products and professional customer service it was important to convey the external and internal communication of the company.

Since corporate communication is a multidimensional subject, there are different ways for a company to execute its corporate communication. It was noticed that for Antti Arola Ltd, the most effective way to express the wanted image was through external and internal communications. The objective in external communication is to create certain images of a company to the public through outer factors. The external communication of Antti Arola Ltd was implemented through window dressing, product display, employees´ appearance and attitudes, media communication, advertising and marketing activities.

The window dressing and product display were representing Antti Arola Ltd as a company as well as Marimekko as a brand. Antti Arola Ltd was encouraged to make attractive window dressing, since that is many times the first impression of the company to the people walking in the street. Attractive and well-designed window dressing is inviting the consumers to take a closer look, arouse interest and desirably enter to the store. Antti Arola Ltd.'s window dressing was designed by the employees with the help of the guidelines provided by Marimekko.

Also the product display in the store was essential in Antti Arola Ltd.'s external communication. Marimekko provides product display guidelines for its retailers with every new collection, but the actual execution is the hands of the companies themselves. Well-designed product display creates positive images of the products and give the consumers ideas. To make a successful product display, Antti Arola Ltd had for example tables, chairs, a bed and shelves to present the products at their best. With the combination of first impressions and the actual experiences in the store, the customers´ images of the company was formed.

Important part of Antti Arola Ltd.'s external communication was also the employees´ appearance and attitudes. The employees of Antti Arola Ltd were encouraged to wear Marimekko clothes during the work hours, since the employees were also representing the company and the brand. Antti Arola Ltd sponsored new

Marimekko clothes for the employees twice a year. The attitudes of the employees were also essential in conveying the corporate communication of the company. The employees were advised to be friendly to all customers and to treat everyone equally in order to convey a message that all consumers are equal to the company. Also the employees were advised to serve only one customer at a time to provide an individual customer experience.

Part of Antti Arola Ltd.'s external communication was creating and maintaining the relationships with its other stakeholders such as the banks and Marimekko. It was important for Antti Arola Ltd to maintain good relationship with its investor which was the local bank. Many business operations of Antti Arola Ltd required the services of the bank, such as dealing the monetary transactions. The communication with Marimekko went both ways. Having a good relationship with Marimekko was considered vital for the business, which was why Antti Arola Ltd actively maintained its relationship with Marimekko. The communication from Antti Arola Ltd to Marimekko consisted of for example product orders, dealing with reclamations and gaining information about general issues concerning the products. The communication from Marimekko to Antti Arola Ltd consisted of for example product deliveries, providing weekly newsletters concerning topical issues and providing help and support.

Internal communication of a company aims for transparent information flow and increasing the employees´ motivation towards working in the company. Antti Arola Ltd.'s internal communication was very practical and transparent due to the close working community which enabled the information to be easily accessible to those who need it. The hierarchy in the company was low and all employees were considered to be in the same level. Due to the close working community, the relationships between the employees were good, which created team spirit. Also the fluent internal communication of Antti Arola Ltd ensured that all employees were familiar with the company´s objectives and were working towards reaching them. The low turnover of the employees was telling as well about the employees´ satisfaction and motivation towards the work place.

The execution of the event started from designing the plan for the event. The plan needed to answer the questions why is the event organized, what was the event about, where and when it would be held, to whom and how the event should be organized. Making this kind of plan helped to identify the objectives behind the event. Also the plan included issues such as SWOT-analysis to recognize aspects of the event, risk assessment, schedule, budget, materials of the event and dividing the responsibilities. With a proper plan it would be more likely to have a fluent event that reaches its objectives. .

Although Antti Arola Ltd aimed to offer individual customer experiences for the customers also during the day of the event, the objective was not fully achieved. There could have been more sales assistants to be in the cashier and to interact with the customers, since the large audience surprised the company and the need for customer service were slightly underestimated. The 15% discount attracted more customers than what was expected and the employees were not able to provide as individual customer service and make as many interactions with the customers as wanted. Next time it would be beneficial for the company to be better prepared for customer overflow and hire more sales assistants to work in the cashier and to make customer contacts especially if there are some attractive discounts.

The duties of the employees in Antti Arola Ltd were to make customer interactions, provide expertise and help the customers to make purchasing decisions through which the customer experiences satisfaction and joy of the experience of gaining something valuable for them. A satisfied customer is much more likely to come back to the store, which is why providing successful customer experiences is desirable. Most of the customer interaction in which the company is able to influence the customers´ image of the company was happening through face-to-face interactions in the store. Even though Antti Arola Ltd also used social media such as Facebook and websites for its corporate communication channel, the company had noticed that the most effective way to convey the corporate communication to their customers was through face-to-face interactions. Many of the target group were elderly customers, who do not use for example social media, which is why face-to-face interactions were the best way to communicate with the customers.

Also with face-to-face interactions it was easier to create practical customer relationships, which desirably would create customer loyalty. One of the objectives of the event was to make face-to-face interactions with the customers in order to influence the customers' image of Antti Arola Ltd and to convey the external communication of the company. It was difficult to say, whether the company reached this objective, since no written feedback was collected. Even though the direct feedback from the customers were positive, the actual results were just an estimation of the employees of Antti Arola Ltd.

Making this thesis revealed also some interesting development points, things that are well and issues that could be developed in Antti Arola Ltd. Reviewing Antti Arola Ltd.'s corporate communication revealed for example that the financial resources of the company was divided into a high and low seasons depending on the sales margins on a certain periods. It was found, that Antti Arola Ltd had quite limited financial resources to be used for example for advertising. That is why Antti Arola Ltd should be extra careful when making monetary decisions. With limited financial resources, it is desirable to get the best benefit out of the financial resources that are available for the company. During high seasons such as in Christmas season, the sales margins are already quite profitable without any extra advertising from Antti Arola Ltd. That is why the company should focus on its financial resources for the low seasons, when the sales margins are threatened to be low. The company could for example organize events or campaigns with more aggressive advertising and marketing to increase the trading of the company during low seasons. Organizing the opening event was in that sense well timed, since the event took place in the low season between the summer discount sales and Christmas season, which increased the profit margins for the low season.

Antti Arola Ltd.'s human resources consisted of 4 regular employees. Human resources was one of the most important factors of Antti Arola Ltd´s corporate communication, since the company pursued to offer professional and individual customer service. All employees were possessing certain valuable skills and were given responsibilities depending of the capabilities of the employees to create motivation to work and improve the company. Since the company had only 4 employees, the company was found also to be highly dependable of its employees. That

is why Antti Arola Ltd wanted to take good care and motivate its staff for example through effective internal communication.

Antti Arola Ltd have used media communication in the past as a way to convey the corporate communication of the company, although the initiative have mostly came from the media itself. Local newspapers have been written articles for example when Antti Arola Ltd have celebrated its 90th or 100th birthdays. The media communication could have been used better in this event. Inviting journalists to the event could have resulted in written articles of the event and of the Antti Arola Ltd itself. That would have been free publicity for the company. Also the publicity received from the media communication is usually credible in the minds of the consumers, since the communication comes from outside source and from an objective perspective.

The customers gave positive feedback from the event as a whole. Especially Antti Arola Ltd received acknowledgment from using models that were different ages and had different body types. Especially those clothes that were displayed in the fashion show sold well in the day of the event. The customer feedback from the event and from the company itself could have been collected more systematically. Now there was no written feedback collected, only spoken feedback which resulted that the overall picture of the feedback was just an estimation of the employees. Collecting written feedback could have been beneficial for the company, since the feedback could have been reviewed in later events and be used as a source for improving the company. Now that the feedback was received in face-to-face form, it is quite difficult to use it later purposes.

The actual event of opening the renewed company was a success. The direct financial goal was to increase sales by 200% compared to a corresponding period and the sales increased by 354% which is almost the double of the goal that was set. The company got positive feedback from the customers in the day of the event and also after the event. The employees got to interact some of the customers and the company got some important information about the customer´s opinions. Also the long term financial objectives were reached. The goal was to increase sales margins in every month from the event until April compared to the previous year.

The sales margins increased from 5 to 10 percentage every month from the event until May compared to last year´s corresponding period.

All in all, the company was satisfied with the results received from the event. The day of the event increased the sales margins for the autumn and the company received valuable information of the consumers´ image of the company, which was mostly positive. The company got to organize an event to increase the brand awareness of Marimekko among the consumers, to send a positive image of Antti Arola Ltd through the event and gain short and long term profits.

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APPENDICES

SWOT-analysis of the event

STRENGTHS: Strong brand (Marimekko) Professional staff Experience in organizing events Fashion show Servings; local products	WEAKNESSES: Limited resources Small location for fashion show Distinctive brand (Marimekko); not for everyone
OPPORTUNITIES Increased sales; immediate and long term Brand and company awareness Customer interactions New customers Product presentation	THREATS: Lack of marketing of the event Other activities in the same day Bad weather Wrong timing

The vulnerability analysis of the event

RISK	The probability of the risk	The severity of the risk	Total
Human factors	2	5	10
Technological factors	2	5	10
Physical factors	1	5	5
Economic factors	2	5	10
Natural factors	1	3	3
Political factors	1	3	3

Responsibilities before, during and after the event

Before

Managing director Matti Arola	Arranging and installing music players, sound check of the music, building the stage and runway, building the changing area for the models and bringing the tables, chairs and other additional things to the dining area.
Sales assistant 1	Ordering the campaign products and other additional products, making sure there are enough products in the shelves, making a discount area where the campaign products are.
Sales assistant 2	Making the newspaper ad for Koti-Kajaani, making the promotional stand, bringing products from the stock closer to the shop into cabinets
Sales assistant 3	Recruiting models and additional employees, organizing the pastry, juice and candies, choosing the songs for the fashion show, selecting presented products, making the schedule for the fashion show, fitting the clothes with the models, organizing and directing rehearsals, publishing ads of the event on homepages and in Facebook.
Waitress 1	Organizing food and drinks, making sure the dining area is ready for the event
Waitress 2	Organizing food and drinks, making sure the dining area is ready for the event, participating in the rehearsals as a dresser.
Models (all)	Fitting the clothes, coming to the rehearsals

During

Managing director Matti Arola	Playing the music in the fashion shows, cashing the customers in the cash desk.
Sales assistant 1	Making customer contacts, serving customers, cashing the customers in the cash desk, filling the shelves if some products run out
Sales assistant 2	Making customer contacts, serving customers, cashing the customers in the cash desk, filling the shelves if some products run out, dressing two adult models in the fashion shows.
Sales assistant 3	Making customer contacts, serving customers, cashing the customers in the cash desk, filling the shelves if some products run out, dressing one adult customer in the fashion shows.
Waitress 1	Opening the dining area after the first fashion show and closing it before the second one, placing the pastry into the plates and pouring juice into the glasses, making sure there are enough food and drinks available.
Waitress 2	Placing the pastry into the plates and pouring juice into the glasses, making sure there are enough food and drinks available, dressing the child models in the fashion shows.
Models	Modelling

After

Managing director Matti Arola	Taking down the changing area for the models, stage and the runway, uninstalling the music equipment, removing the tables and chairs from the dining area, closing the shop, participating in to the evaluation session.
Sales assistant 1	Cleaning the shop, putting products back to their places, closing the cash desk.
Sales assistant 2	Cleaning the shop, putting products back to their places, cleaning the changing area for the models, participating in to the evaluation session.
Sales assistant 3	Cleaning the shop, putting products back to their places, cleaning the changing area for the models, participating in to the evaluation session.
Waitress 1	Cleaning the dining area, participating in to the evaluation session.
Waitress 2	Cleaning the dining area, participating in to the evaluation session.
Modles	Participating in to the evaluation session.

Schedule of the event

9.00 a.m.	Preparing the shop, making sure there is enough products, final rehearsal of the fashion show
9.30 a.m.	Shop opens
9.30 to 11.00 a.m.	Normal business activities, trading, models arriving, getting food and drinks ready, getting models ready
11.00 a.m.	First fashion show
11.15 a.m.	Dining area opens
11.15 to 1.00 p.m.	Food and drink servings for customers, trading, normal business activities
1.00 p.m.	Second fashion show, dining area closes
1.15 to 3.00 p.m.	Trading, normal business activities
3.00 to 3.30 p.m.	Organizing the shop, cleaning
3.30 to 3.45 p.m.	Evaluating the event with the models and employees

Budget of the event

Additional employees	350 euros
Disposable plastic glasses and plates	28,60 euros
Juices	128 euros
Pastry	157,95 euros
Marianne candies	61,50 euros
Advertising	545,60 euros
TOTAL	1271,65 euros

Advertisement of the event

Materials for the event

Dining area	- Two tables for the food and drinks - Fifteen chairs for customers to sit in - Temporary gateway to close the dining area during the fashion shows - Bowl for the Marianne candies - Two juice jugs - Five hundred napkins - Five hundred disposable plastic cups and plates - Serving utensils for the pastry - Trays for pastry (provided by Pekka Heikkinen) - Lingonberry pastry for five hundred people (from Pekka Heikkinen) - Twenty litres of Kainuu wild berry juice (from Vuokatin Viini) - Marianne candy for five hundred people (from Karkkigalleria)
Dressing area for the models	- Two curtains for isolating an dressing area for the models - Clothes rack for the models´ clothes - Clothes and accessories for the models
Music corner	- Music stereos - Chair for the DJ
The store	- The stage - Carpets for the runway - Step between the stage and the runway

Models´ starting order and guidelines for the fashion show

Lähtö 1: Raitapaidat (NOPEA!)

1. MALLA (punainen raita, pun. huivi) + LUKA (raitahousut ja sin-pun raitapaita)

2. ANNI (sininen raita, sin. huivi)

3. TANJA (vihreä raita, vihr. huivi)

Lähtö 2: Pallot (NOPEA!)

1. MALLA (punainen Petja, pun. olkalaukku) + ISA (syksymekko ja neule)

2. ANNI (sininen pallopaita, rusk. olkalaukku)

3. TANJA (musta Petja, musta Ebony)

Lähtö 3: Kaste/Tiia (HIDAS)

1. MALLA (punainen Kaste, puuhelmet) + LUKA (punainen paita)

2. ANNI (vihreä Tiia, sateenvarjo)

3. TANJA (sininen Kaste, puuhelmet)

Lähtö 4: Paletti/Pilate (HIDAS)

1. MALLA (punainen Paletti, punainen Ebony)

2. ANNI (sininen Pilate) ⎤ HIDAS!

3. TANJA (musta Paletti) ⎦ että Malla kerkiää

Lähtö 5: Iloiset takit (HIDAS)

1. MALLA (Kihlatasku) + ISA (Iloinen takki)

Lähtö 6: Saunatakit (HIDAS)

1. ANNI (punainen Siro Mari ja yökkäri, toilettilaukku)

2. TANJA (luumu Siro Mari ja yökkäri, pyyhe) + LUKA (sininen yökkäri)

Lähtö 7: Kavalat Salakat (HIDAS)

1. MALLA (musta Salakka, huivi)

2. ANNI (punainen Mutu, puuhelmet)

3. TANJA (sininen Ruutana, sin.pun laukku)

Lähtö 8: Laaka/Viilto

1. MALLA (Laaka, käsirenkaat)

2. ANNI (Viilto + Tuiske, huivi)

Lähtö 9: Plink/Pooki (TOSI HIDAS!)

1. TANJA (Pooki, huivi) + ISA (musta pallopaita)

2. ANNI (Plink, laukku)

Lähtö 10: Juhlakalut

1. MALLA (Gedda, huivi) HIDAS!

2. TANJA (Polte, käsirenkaat)

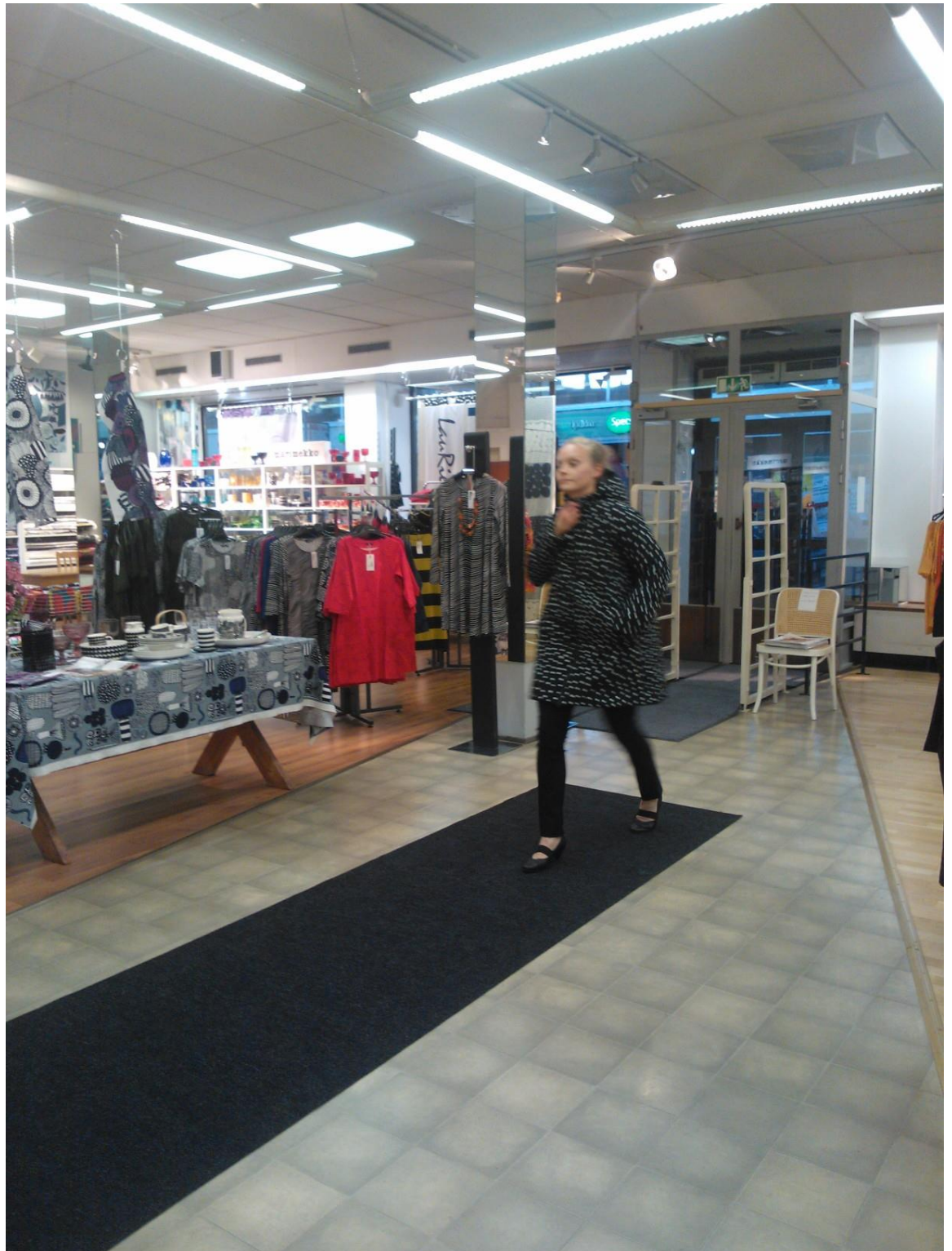3. ANNI (Rara, musta Tasku)

Snap shot of the websites

Pictures from rehearsals and preparing the event

Pictures from the day of the event