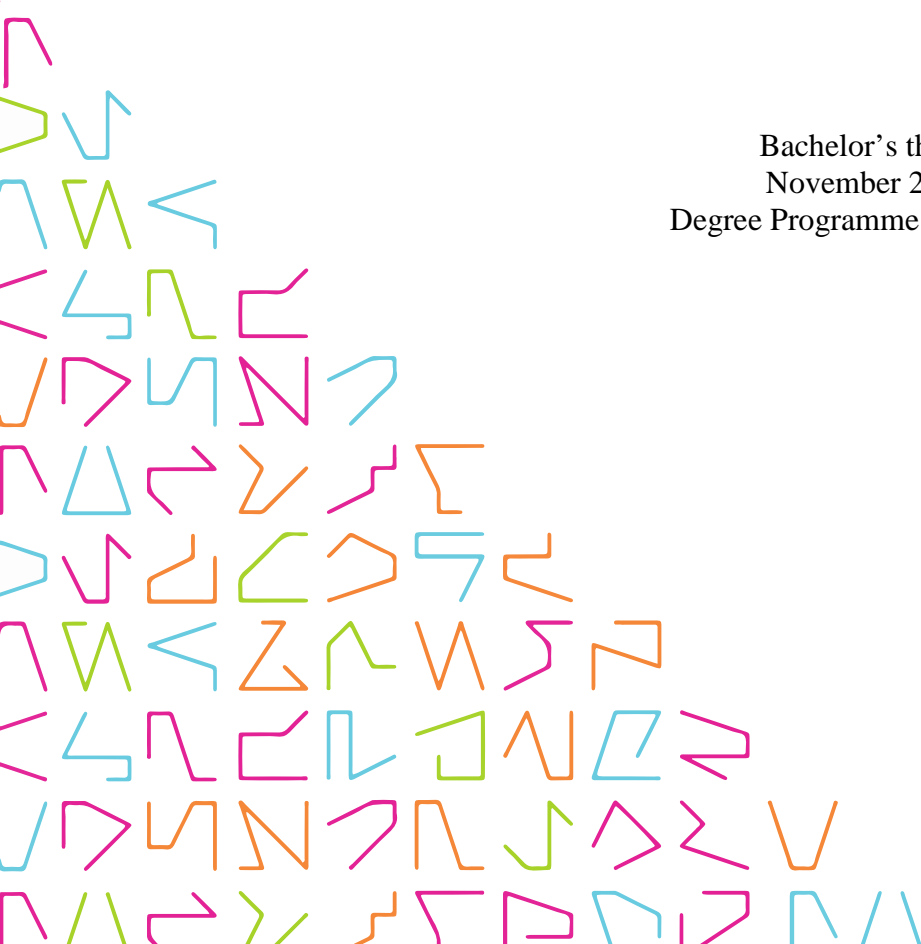


MARKETING PLAN FOR A HOTEL

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Bachelor's thesis
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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to create a marketing plan for LentoHotelli Kauhava. In addition to accommodation and catering services, the company offers conference and seminar spaces, and the possibility to organise various events. The company needed a marketing plan in order to find efficient ways to market the business. The main reason for creating a marketing plan was to gain more visibility and attract new customers, especially during the upcoming winter season.

The aim of the marketing plan was to discover the company's target market and identify the marketing tools that are most effective and best suited for reaching the market. The theoretical framework of the thesis focuses on services marketing and the different marketing tools. Due to confidentiality reasons, the marketing plan can be found in the appendix of this thesis.

All the actions described in the marketing plan were planned for the current situation of the company and are subject to change. It is left for the company to decide whether it chooses to use the suggested marketing actions in the future or not.

Key words: marketing, services marketing, marketing plan, marketing tools

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to create a marketing plan for LentoHotelli Kauhava, a hotel that focuses on organizing events and offering conference and seminar facilities for its customers. The hotel opened its doors in June 2015, and before that all the company facilities used to belong to the Finnish Defence Forces. Until January 2015 the area was an air force base.

The company had not previously focused on marketing and advertising; therefore it was necessary to build up a structured marketing plan for it. The company wished that the marketing plan would focus on finding the target market for it and then help in the selection of the appropriate marketing tools. In order to achieve this, the author decided that the best method was to analyse the different marketing tools and the current market situation of the company.

The objective of this thesis was to draw up a practical marketing plan with an emphasis on marketing strategy and the marketing tools. The thesis took into account the age and size of the company and its current marketing abilities. The aim was to give a realistic approach into improving the current situation of the company.

2 MARKETING

2.1 Marketing concepts and theoretical framework

2.1.1 Marketing

“The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself.” (Drucker 2009)

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as *“...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.”* (AMA 2015)

The core idea of marketing is meeting human and social needs and doing it profitably. Companies use different methods to find out what their customers want, and when they have established a relationship with the customers, pay close attention to their customers' needs and wants. Companies know that when they create value for their customers and focus on their special needs, profits will follow. Therefore it could be said that the goal of marketing is to attract new customers by promising superior value and to keep and grow current customer base by delivering satisfaction. (Armstrong & Kotler 2012, 8.)

Marketing is not just about selling and advertising. Although both are important, they are only the top of the marketing iceberg. In fact, a leading marketing theorist Peter Drucker once said that *“The aim of marketing is to make selling unnecessary.”* Essentially this means that when companies do their marketing homework, as a result they will have a customer who is ready to buy whatever they are marketing. (Kotler & Keller 2012, 28-29; Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 6-7.)

Marketing entities and concepts

There are 10 types of entities marketing managers can market; goods, services, events, experiences, persons, places, properties, organizations, information, and ideas. Typically companies use market offerings, which are combinations of these market entities. (Kotler et al. 2012, 29.) In order to better understand their customers and the market-

place, companies need to consider the five core customer and marketplace concepts (Kotler et al. 2008, 8-13):

Needs, wants and demands

The basic human needs are physical, social and individual needs. These needs are part of the human make-up. Wants on the other hand reflect human needs shaped by culture and individual personality. Wants then become demands when backed by the ability to pay. Given the right resources, customers demand products that will bring them the most value and satisfaction. In order to become successful, marketing companies try to learn and understand everything about their customers' needs, wants and demands through consumer research and data.

The market offering (products, services, and experiences)

Market offerings are a combination of products, services, information or experiences offered to a market to satisfy customers' needs or wants. Physical products can be market offerings, but market offerings also include services, activities or benefits, intangible services that do not result in the ownership of anything. Example of an intangible service could be a hotel or an airline. Other entities, such as persons, places, information and ideas can be counted as market offerings as well. Smart marketers create brand meaning and brand experience for customers, bringing deeper significance to the products and services they are selling. Disneyworld and Absolut Vodka are great examples of a successfully branded market offering.

Value and satisfaction

Customer value could be explained as the customer's assessment of the product's capacity to satisfy his or her needs. Customers have expectations about the value and satisfaction that different market offerings will deliver, and they base their decisions to purchase on those expectations. Customer satisfaction is the extent to which a product's perceived performance matches the formerly set expectations. For a company, the key is to match customers' expectations with the company performance.

Exchanges and relationships

People's urge to satisfy needs and wants through exchange relationships is the core concept of marketing. The word exchange refers to the act of obtaining a desired object from someone by offering something in return. In order to an exchange to occur, both parties must have something of value for the other, and they need to be able to communicate and deliver. Relationship marketing is rather a complicated concept, but the core of it is the process of creating, maintaining and enhancing strong, valuable relationships with customers and other stakeholders.

Markets

A market refers to the set of all actual and potential buyers of a product or a service. These buyers share a particular need or want that can be satisfied through exchanges and relationships. The size of a certain market depends on the number of people who share the same need and have the resources to engage in an exchange.

2.1.2 Services marketing

Services can be better described as economic activities that add value to a product and provide benefits for customers (Gilmore 2003, 4).

The difference between marketing and services marketing is that services are intangible. Because of the fact that they are intangible, it is difficult for customers to evaluate and compare services. In order to attain customer's interest and trust, service provides aim to prove their capability by using service marketing actions to create a positive image of the service and its quality. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 268-269.)

When designing services marketing programmes, a company must consider four special service characteristics. These characteristics are summarized in figure 1. (Armstrong et al. 2012, 250-251.)

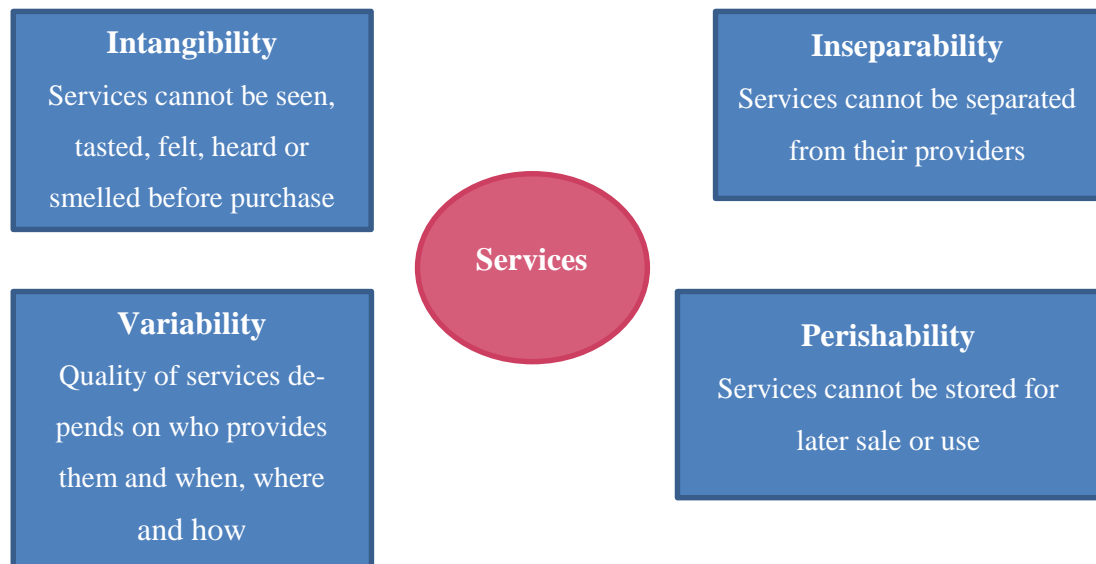


FIGURE 1. Four service characteristics (Armstrong et al. 2012, 250)

Intangibility means that customers are not able to see, taste, feel, hear or smell the service, before they make a purchase. Therefore customers have a difficulty of knowing what they will receive when purchasing a service. In order to reduce this uncertainty, they might assess the quality of the service by looking at the price (Gilmore 2003, 10). Armstrong and Kotler (2012, 250) also suggest that customers use place, people and equipment visible to them as ‘signals’ of service quality. To send customers the right signals about the service quality, service providers can use evidence management to make the product tangible in some way. Evidence management refers to presenting organised and honest evidence of the service provider’s capabilities (Kotler et al. 2008, 600).

Inseparability means that whether the providers are people or machines, services cannot be separated from the providers. This also means that when a service function takes place, both the service provider and customer are present, more specifically, at the same place at the same time. This is called *provider-customer interaction* and it is a special feature of services marketing (Kotler et al. 2008, 601). Because customers are involved in the service process, the outcome is affected by both the customer and the provider. Customer’s behaviour and attitude can affect the quality of the service, both negatively and positively (Gilmore 2003, 11).

Variability of the service means that the quality of services depends on who provides them, as well as when, where and how they are provided. This leads to it being difficult

to control service quality, because the people providing and receiving the service vary. Attitudes and moods, for example, have a major effect on the service experience (Armstrong et al. 2012, 251).

Perishability means that service products, unlike goods, cannot be stored for later sale or use. Gilmore (2003, 11) gives a good example of the nature of services: “*A lawyer cannot store parts of his or her knowledge for others to use while the lawyer is in court or on holiday.*” Service value exists only in the moment, therefore there needs to be a balance between supply and demand. During off-peak and off-season, companies often design special strategies in order to maintain that balance. These strategies might include hiring part-time employees or setting differential pricing (Armstrong et al. 2012, 251).

2.1.3 Marketing of events

When starting to market an event, a company needs to create good marketing and promotional materials that will tell its customers everything they need to know about the event. When is it? Where is it? How much will it cost? The materials allow prospective participants to understand what the company is offering and why they should attend. The materials must demonstrate the benefits and value of attending the event. Different marketing and promotional tactics can include advertisements, social media networking, direct mailing, press releases, word-of-mouth, and e-mail blasts. (Kilkenny 2006, 153-155.)

The key to successful event marketing is figuring out which promotional tactics are most effective for specific markets. It is important to ensure that the information reaches the right people. Internet is a powerful promotional tool and creating an event website is a great way to reach people and gain publicity. Event website can be used as a one-stop resource for all event information, accommodation, and travel. (Kilkenny 2006, 156.)

Different pricing tactics can be used to lure more participants. Early-bird rates are commonly used by event and festival organisers. Reduced prices for groups of certain sizes can persuade more people into participating. (Kilkenny 2006, 161-162.)

According to Hoyle (2002, 2-3) all historic and successful events have three things in common. These are known as the three *Es of event marketing*:

Entertainment

Compels the audience to leave home to experience something different and unique, designed just for them.

Excitement

Key to making an event memorable. Can be something promised by the event marketer, such as a great band or a fantastic event location. Can also be industry related; a new corporate logo, a celebration of an organisation's anniversary, or an impact of a keynote speaker.

Enterprise

Defines the pioneers in event marketing. Refers to the willingness to stretch the bounds of reason, to sail into uncharted waters.

Notwithstanding the type of an event, its success requires the recognition of the *five Ps of marketing*. The five Ps are product, price, place, public relations and positioning. (Hoyle 2002, 12-19.)

These event marketing tools are essentially the same as Kotler's four Ps of marketing, but with the addition of positioning.

2.1.4 Marketing mix

"Marketing mix is essentially a conceptual framework that helps to structure the approach to each marketing challenge." (Smith & Taylor 2004, 6)

Marketing mix is a set of marketing tools companies use to implement their marketing strategy. These marketing tools are referred to as the four Ps of marketing: product, price, promotion, and place. (Kotler et al. 2012, 38.)

According to Kotler and Keller (2012, 39) the four Ps include the following components:

Product (variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, sizes, services, warranties, returns) – the goods and services offered to the market.

Price (list price, discounts, allowances, payment period, credit terms) – the value that customers must pay for the goods or services.

Promotion (sales promotion, advertising, sales force, public relations, direct marketing) – the way in which the company communicates with its customers. It has its own set of communication tools which are called the communications mix.

Place (channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transport) – the physical distribution channels companies use to get their products to the customers.

Due to the fact that marketing is such a broad and complex field, the four Ps of marketing are not enough when services marketing is concerned. The four Ps are better suited for manufacturing and marketing of physical products, and marketing of services requires the existence of other factors as well. This is why Kotler and Keller (2012, 39-40) introduced a new set of four Ps that entail the modern realities of the holistic marketing concept:

People (employees and internal marketing, critical to marketing success).

Processes (creativity, discipline, and structure brought to marketing management).

Programs (all the company's consumer-directed activities, online and offline).

Performance (reflection of the range of possible outcomes that have financial and non-financial implication, and implications beyond the company itself).

Marketing mix four Ps	Modern marketing management four Ps
Product	People
Place	Processes
Promotion	Programs
Price	Performance

FIGURE 2. The evolution of marketing management (Kotler et al. 2012, 40)

2.1.5 Marketing communications mix

Marketing communications mix, sometimes referred to as the promotional mix, is a mix of specific communication tools companies use to pursue their marketing communications and marketing objectives. This mix consists of twelve major modes of communication (Smith et al. 2004, 8);

Selling is building durable relationships that are dependent on constantly satisfying the customer.

Advertising is any paid form of non-personal presentation and promotion of a product by an identified sponsor.

Sales promotion consists of a collection of incentive short term tools that are designed to stimulate a purchase of a product or a service.

Direct marketing can be explained as the distribution of information, products or services through any advertising medium that invites the individual to respond directly to the advertiser.

Publicity, or in other words public relations, is the development and maintenance of good relationships with different publics, the range of different groups on which the company is dependent.

Sponsorship can be seen as helping others while simultaneously achieving specifically defined communications objectives.

Exhibitions are company-sponsored events designed to create interaction between buyers, sellers and competitors.

Packaging nowadays acts as a silent salesperson, helping customers by bringing a certain brand to their attention. In addition to communicating with a buyer, it protects the product and offers convenience.

Point-of-sale and merchandising refer to techniques such as display and store design that are vital communication tools in guiding a buyer towards making a purchase.

Word of mouth means interaction between people, conducted either in oral, written or electronic form.

E-marketing is identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer needs online.

Corporate identity is how a corporation, company or organization expresses itself visually.

Each of these communication tools has its own characteristics and cost, therefore companies need to allocate their budget over the different modes based on which modes they find most useful for their own purposes (Kotler et al. 2012, 262).

In addition to the above mentioned twelve communication modes, Kotler and Keller (2012, 777) discussed the importance of *interactive marketing*. Interactive marketing refers to those online activities and programmes that are designed to engage customers or prospects and raise awareness, improve image or elicit sales of marketing offerings, in a direct or indirect way.

The precondition of interactive marketing is that customers express their preferences, and this in turn allows marketers to produce more relevant marketing messages. This mode of communication creates a two way dialogue between a company and its cus-

tomers. Marketers can use the information they get from any customer feedback to guide their advertising efforts. Forms of interactive marketing include search engine marketing, blogging, email marketing, and social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. (Marketing-Schools.org)

2.1.6 Segmentation

“Market segmentation is a selection process in which the company attempts to identify the categories of consumers whose needs and wants it is capable to satisfy better than its competitors.” (Ranchhod & Gurău 2007, 53)

Market segmentation and target marketing are crucial parts of a marketing plan. Nowadays markets are so large and fragmented, and competition is so intense, that it is impossible for a company to appeal to all customers. In order to avoid wasting resources companies use target marketing, which means they divide large markets into smaller market segments. (Smith et al. 2004, 37.) Each of these market segments has its own needs and distinct responses to different marketing mixes. Ruskin-Brown (2006, 70) states that segmentation is: *“the strategic process of defining which will be the specific group of customers toward whom the firm will focus its marketing efforts...”* Generally this means that companies try to find out which target markets are the most profitable for them, and then focus their resources on those market segments. If it happens that there are several attractive segments, companies can use three strategy options to approach them (Ruskin-Brown 2006, 74):

The undifferentiated strategy: Company offers the same marketing mix for all the segments of the market. Maximizes efficiency, but minimizes effectiveness.

The concentration strategy: Company chooses the most attractive segment and uses one unique marketing mix for that. This approach enhances effectiveness.

The differentiated strategy: Company targets many attractive segments with an individually tailored marketing mix.

The grounds for a successful segmentation strategy must exist before taking any further steps. Firstly there needs to be 'a gap in the market', in other words, customers whose needs are not currently being satisfied. Then it is necessary to make sure that the group of customers is large enough to create profit and be worthy of the investment. Lastly companies need to be able to communicate with the segment, for example promote and deliver to it. (Ruskin-Brown 2006, 75-76.)

Regardless of which segmentation strategy is used it is important to adjust the marketing programme to recognise customer differences. The most widely known and used segmentation variables are geographic, demographic, psychographic, and behavioural (Kotler et al. 2012, 126-131; Kotler et al. 2009, 341-355).

Geographic segmentation: Dividing the market into geographical units such as nations, states, regions, counties, cities, or neighbourhoods.

Demographic segmentation: Dividing the market by using variables such as age, family size or family life cycle, gender, income, occupation, education, religion, race, generation, nationality, and social class.

Psychographic segmentation: Dividing consumers into different groups on the basis of their psychological/personality traits, lifestyle, or values.

Behavioural segmentation: Dividing consumers into groups on the basis of their knowledge of, attitude toward, use of, or response to a product.

2.1.7 Business-to-business marketing

Business-to-business marketing refers to an action where a company or an organisation is buying products or services from another company. The action can also be defined as marketing of capital goods or corporate marketing. (Rope 1998, 9.)

Rope (1998, 13) listed the three different customer groups that are included in business-to-business marketing:

Commercial organisations

Public organisations

Non-profit organisations

Even though the buyer of a product or a service is a person at the company and not the company itself, the purchase is made for company use instead of personal use. This is the core concept of business-to-business marketing; all products and services are designed to satisfy the needs of a company or an organisation instead of a single consumer. (Rope 1998, 13-14.)

Capital goods can also be divided into different categories based on the situation where the goods are needed:

One-time purchase

Installed capital assets

Production and operational systems such as computer programmes

Ongoing purchases

Raw material and partial components

Accessories (lubricant, copying paper)

Irregular purchases

Production equipment such as machines

Professional services (cleaning, education)

There are different variables that can have an effect on the purchase. These variables include the significance of the purchase, the length of the purchase and marketing process, the complexity of the purchasing decision, and the number of parties involved in the purchasing action. (Rope 1998, 14.)

The difference between the marketing of capital goods and consumer products is mainly due to the different kind of markets. The differences between capital goods and consumer products are encapsulated in the following table (Rope 1998, 15):

TABLE 1. Comparison between capital goods and consumer products

Capital goods	Consumer products
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Satisfies the needs of organisations</i> - The number of customers is limited - <i>Complex purchasing process</i> - Complex product - <i>Expensive purchasing price</i> - Great need for maintenance - <i>Professional buyers</i> - Direct contact between the user and the manufacturer - <i>The group in charge of the purchase decision is hard to define</i> - The focus is on rational purchasing motives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Satisfies the needs of individuals</i> - The number of customers is unlimited - <i>Simple purchasing process</i> - Simple product - <i>Inexpensive purchasing price</i> - Little need for maintenance - <i>Nonprofessional buyers</i> - No direct contact between the user and the manufacturer - <i>The person in charge of the purchase decision is easy to define</i> - The irrational purchasing motives are significant

The table generalises the differences between capital goods and consumer products, but in the following factors the differences are not necessarily that straightforward:

The complexity of the purchasing process

The expensiveness of the purchase

The need for maintenance

The contact between the user and the manufacturer

The rationality of purchasing motives

The most important and crucial factors that affect the marketing actions are:

Organisational purchasing process vs. individual purchasing process

Organisational needs vs. individual needs

Professional purchasing process vs. unprofessional purchasing process

These factors should be considered when planning marketing strategies. (Rope 1998, 16.)

2.2 Marketing plan

Marketing planning refers to the structured process of determining how to provide value to customers, the organization in question, and also the key stakeholders. Marketing plan is a document which summarises what the marketer has learned about the market-place during a certain period, what will be accomplished through marketing, and how it will be accomplished. A marketing plan is conducted by researching and analysing the company's current situation, markets and customers included; developing and documenting marketing's objectives, strategies, and programmes; and lastly implementing, evaluating, and controlling marketing activities to achieve the set objectives. (Wood 2014, 4.)

Every single company, including start-ups, multinational corporations, and various foundations, needs a marketing plan to help it make way towards its goals. A marketing plan usually covers a full year, but due to the fact that it requires thorough research and analysis, the marketing planning process starts months before (Wood 2014, 6-8).

Depending on the company the exact contents, length and format of the marketing plan may vary. Wood (2014, 7) suggests that the following eight sections should be included in a marketing plan:

Executive summary

Even though it appears first, this part of a marketing plan is to be written last, because it offers a brief overview of the plan's highlights and objectives.

Current marketing situation

This section helps the company to analyse events and trends in the environment that can affect the organization, its marketing, and its stakeholders. These analyses include the internal and external situation, competitive situation, market situation and the SWOT analysis.

Target market, customer analysis, positioning

This part explains the segmentation, targeting, and positioning decisions. It also discusses the segments to be targeted, with an overview of customers' and prospects' needs, wants, behaviours, attitudes, loyalty, and purchasing patterns.

Objectives and issues

This section outlines three specific objectives to be achieved through the marketing plan, and identifies any issues that may affect the organization's ability to achieve them. The objectives are financial, marketing, and societal objectives.

Marketing strategy

Marketing strategy summarises the overall strategy for achieving objectives by creating communicating, and delivering value to the target markets. It also indicates any possible effects that marketing could have on the stakeholders.

Marketing programs

This part explains the programs supporting the marketing strategy, including specific activities, schedules, and responsibilities for marketing mix, service, and internal marketing.

Financial and operational plans

This section includes the financial and operational requirements and results related to marketing programs; expected revenues and profits, projected budgets, schedules and responsibilities, and additional information or resources needed for planning and implementation.

Metrics and implementation control

This part indicates how the marketing plan will be implemented and evaluated, including metrics for performance measurement. It also shows how and when adjustments will be made to keep the plan on track towards its objectives.

Armstrong and Kotler (2012, 59) would also include a separate threats and opportunities analysis in the marketing plan to help management to anticipate any positive or negative developments that might have an impact on the company and its strategies. SWOT analysis in Wood's marketing plan includes these ones, too.

3 ANALYSES AND RESEARCH

3.1 Company analysis

A company analysis is a part of the situation analysis of the marketing plan and it includes the goals, focus, strengths and weaknesses of the company (QuickMBA.com). The main purpose of a company analysis is to impart basic knowledge about the company, such as the mission statement.

A mission statement entails the fundamental purpose of a company, defining the company focus, indicating how it will provide value, and outlining of its envisioned future. It is valuable to the company, because it helps it to align its strategy, resources and activities in order to achieve the envisioned future. (Wood 2014, 32.)

3.2 Market and customer analysis

Market analysis helps companies to determine the characteristics of a particular market and analyse the information. Market analysis allows companies to gather valuable data that will help them to get to know their customer base, and also to find out their competitors' vulnerabilities. A broad analysis should include an industry overview, an analysis of the competition, company's own projections of its business, and also any rules and regulations they might have to abide by. (Bplans.com)

Customer analysis is conducted in order to identify a company's target customers and to discover the needs of those customers. It should indicate how well the company's product or service satisfies its customers' needs. All customer analyses should include a demographic profile and a behavioural analysis. Demographic profiles are used to break down customers into different categories based on their age, income or geographic location. A behavioural analysis helps to explain why customers choose to buy a certain product instead of its alternatives. (ACSBDC.org)

3.3 Competition analysis

A competition analysis focuses on the strengths and weaknesses of the company's main competitors. It also allows the company to gain insight on the strategies and objectives of the competing companies. The knowledge of the competitors' plans furthers companies to plan their own tactics. A competition analysis helps companies to know their position in the market and to define the correct pricing for their product or service. (Kotler & Keller 2009, 308-311.)

With an effective strategy, companies can also use the internet for gaining a competitive advantage. A Harvard Business School professor, Michael E. Porter, introduced a 'five forces' framework which allows companies to evaluate the influence on industry structure. According to Porter there are two profitability drivers that are fundamental to an effective strategy; industry structure determines the profitability of an average competitor, and sustainable competitive advantage allows a company to outperform the average competitor.

Porter's framework is named after the five underlying forces of competition that are used to determine the attractiveness of a certain industry. The forces are known as: the intensity of rivalry among existing competitors, the barriers to entry for new competitors, the threat of substitute products or services, the bargaining power of suppliers, and the bargaining power of buyers. Some of the forces can influence the attractiveness of an industry positively, and others negatively. (Kotler et al. 2012, 144.)

3.4 Macroenvironment analysis

Marketing environment consists of two levels; macroenvironment and microenvironment. *Microenvironment* refers to the forces close to a company that affect its ability to serve its customers, such as suppliers, competitors and publics. *Macroenvironment*, in turn, consists of broad societal forces that affect the microenvironment. These societal forces are demographic, economic, natural, technological, political, and cultural forces. Due to the fact that the macroenvironment forces are outside marketing, they can have a huge influence on a company's performance. They affect the companies' ability to develop and maintain relationships with their target customers. (Kotler et al. 2008, 179.)

PEST analysis is used to examine the political, economic, social and technological elements of macroenvironment (Kotler et al. 2008, 43). Marketing environment shapes opportunities and poses threats to a company, therefore PEST analysis can be considered as part of the SWOT analysis (Kotler et al. 2008, 184). PESTEL analysis is a broader version of PEST, as it adds environmental and legal elements to the analysis.

3.5 SWOT analysis

SWOT focuses on analysing the internal and external factors that have an effect on the company. SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It can be divided into positive and negative factors; strengths and opportunities being positive, and weaknesses and threats negative (Armstrong et al. 2012, 58). Because it provides an overall evaluation of the company, it is an important part of a marketing plan. It shows the company's present position and helps identify its current and future problems. (Holloway 2004, 30.)

Armstrong and Kotler (2012, 58) explain the four letters as follows:

Strengths are internal capabilities that may help a company to reach its objectives.

Weaknesses refer to internal limitations that may interfere with a company's ability to achieve its objectives.

Opportunities are external factors that the company may be able to exploit to its advantage.

Threats mean the current and emerging external factors that may challenge the company's performance.

Before putting a SWOT analysis to a use, Wood (2014, 42) suggests that the company's previous performance is to be examined in order to tell how much different factors have affected the company in the past. The strengths and weaknesses of the company's main competitors should also be reviewed.

3.6 Research process and data collection

The aim of this thesis was to create a marketing plan for a new company, therefore the research questions were derived from a marketing plan. The company in question offers accommodation, catering, and also event and seminar spaces. When planning for the thesis, the first research question naturally was: What should be included in a marketing plan? The company wanted a marketing plan that focuses on finding out and specifying the target market when it comes to marketing and selling its event and seminar spaces. So, the appropriate research questions here were: What is the target market? What is the most effective way to reach that target market? What are the best marketing tools for this company?

The author chose qualitative approach for this thesis. The required data for this thesis consists of conversations with the company representatives and the author's own experience at the company. The theoretical framework is based on various books and e-sources.

The thesis consists of five chapters. Chapter one (1) introduces the thesis and offers a brief summary of the contents. Chapter two (2) gives an insight into marketing and explains the theoretical framework of this thesis. In chapter three (3) the different analyses used for the marketing plan are discussed. Chapter four (4) includes the actual marketing plan. The marketing plan can be found in the appendix and will not be published due to confidentiality reasons. Chapter five (5) includes the conclusion of the thesis.

4 MARKETING PLAN

The marketing plan can be found in the appendix. The goal of this marketing plan was to identify the company's target market and then select the appropriate marketing tools to address that market and satisfy the customers' needs. The marketing plan will not be published as a part of the thesis in order to protect the privacy of the company.

5 CONCLUSION

This bachelor's thesis contains the marketing plan for LentoHotelli Kauhava, the background information, and the different approaches that were used in creating it. The main objective of this thesis was to create a marketing plan for a new company that had never had one before. For this reason, the author started the process by studying the theoretical framework of marketing and analysing the current market situation.

The marketing plan does not include any budget suggestions or financial information due to a mutual agreement between the author and the company. The actions suggested in the plan are focused on utilising the different marketing tools the author considered most suitable for the company, which had no previous marketing plan and had not executed marketing actions before. The company wished to find out its target market, and then the tools which would best suit to reach those markets. The author considers that this was achieved, but all in all, the marketing plan is not as comprehensive as the author originally planned it to be, due to lack of information provided by the company.

The marketing plan was created with the current situation of the company in mind. After the first year, it is advised to go through the plan and make necessary updates. It is also up to the company representatives to decide whether or not they will use the marketing actions suggested in the plan.

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APPENDICES

Marketing Plan for LentoHotelli

MARKETING PLAN

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LentoHotelli

November 2015