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Implementing existing theories in developing a gastronomic tourism destination

Case Kyrö Distillery Company

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Bachelor's thesis
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ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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The aim of this bachelor's thesis was to provide points of development for the subject company Kyrö Distillery Company in the developing of a gastronomic tourism destination. The subject company mainly operates as a distillery, but it has promising tourism potential in the field of gastronomic tourism. The company and the restaurant located in the destination, Kyrönmaan matkailunedistämiskeskus, also operate as a tourism destination providing tours and tastings of the company.

The objectives of this thesis were set by the author himself and the entire idea for this study came from the professional interest of the author towards the subject. The author of this thesis conducted an interview with the representative of the company and formed questions based on theories used by professionals in studying gastronomic destinations, the state of tourism in the region and the current trend of food tourism. The questions aimed to show the current state of the company's operations and point out possible room for development in their actions. These theories used in this study were chosen by the self-conducted research by the author. The author selected these sources and theories by their high relevance to the industry of gastronomic tourism. The subject company showed interest in the subject of this thesis and accepted to be interviewed.

All of the suggested points of development introduced in this thesis were based on existing theories on important factors in the development of gastronomic tourism destinations. The suggested development actions were the author's own ideas based on the information provided by the existing theories. It was left for the subject company to decide whether or not the suggested development ideas were worthy of executing.

Key words: gastronomic tourism, development, theories, food tourism

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1 INTRODUCTION

Majority of tourism in Finland consists of national tourism. National tourism can be divided into regional tourism. Regional tourism flourishes when the public sector works in co-operation with the private companies offering tourism products to form a functioning tourism business cluster. Within this cluster, the private companies and their products become incredibly valuable. This thesis conducted in co-operation with Kyrö Distillery Company attempts to find points of development in an authentic gastronomic tourism destination built around a brand that has local, authentic values and has gained international recognition of their high-quality product.

A current trend within the tourism industry is considered food tourism. This type of tourism is associated with the search of authentic food-related experiences as the tourist's motivation to travel. Authentic experiences can be built around culinary products. Food tourism is a sub-category to experience tourism that highlights the importance of culinary products and their relation to their authentic surrounding destinations. This thesis suggests the theories used in development of gastronomic tourism destinations around the world could be implemented to Kyrö Distillery Company and the development of regional gastronomic tourism.

In order to develop, one must look at the current state of regional tourism. What is the state of regional tourism today? In order to answer this question, the author of this thesis has studied the state of tourism in areas surrounding the subject company.

After confirming the state of tourism and the room for development, the author of this thesis presents theories and suggestions on how to develop a gastronomic tourism destination in the region. This is completed by a dialog between the existing theories used in studying gastronomic destinations and an interview with the subject company's representative about the current state of actions, and how to achieve development in the field of gastronomic tourism.

2 RESEARCH PLAN

2.1. Subjects of study

The aim of this study is to produce an idea on how to develop the gastronomic tourism potential of Kyrö Distillery Company and thus, possibly the regional tourism on areas of Pohjanmaa and Etelä-Pohjanmaa. These are the areas around the subject company behind this study, which is located in Isokyrö. (Nikkanen 2015, 67.)

Very little is written or studied at all of the region's tourism potential. Majority of the theories used in this study are ones used when studying the development of gastronomic destinations in general. Gastronomy plays a vital role in the entire experience of the tourist, since a large portion of the tourist's budget is spent on culinary activities. (Hall 2003, 4.) Building a respectable authentic gastronomic tourism destination requires effort and research in combining background information and essential factors. (Hall 2003, 26)

This thesis attempts to combine strategies used in the analysing of these gastronomic destinations and apply them to Kyrö Distillery Company and potentially build a functioning tourism image of the area as a gastronomic destination centering the company that has acquired recognition of their products around the world, as is stated in the background information about the company. (Nikkanen 2015, 66.)

When looking at a tourism potential of a single destination or a company, one must look at the surrounding areas and their tourism structure, since the ambience surrounding food plays an important role in understanding the overall culture. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 21.) That is why this study also takes a look at the state of regional tourism on the area covering Pohjanmaa and Etelä-Pohjanmaa. The author of this study also describes what is the relationship within companies inside the tourism business cluster. (Jänkälä 2014, 11.)

In order to understand the development of tourism, one must also study the current trends in tourism, that apply on both global and local level. As the author points out, a current trend in tourism is food tourism. *"Food experiences have become more*

important in tourism as the 'experience economy' has developed.” (World Tourism Organization 2012, 20.) A sub-category of food tourism, gastronomic tourism, is a trend that can be applied to the purpose of this study. Detailed information about these trends in tourism and how are they relevant to the purpose of this study is conducted on the theory section of this study.

2.1.1 Development of regional tourism

As is pointed out later on in the theory part of this study, referring to studies conducted by Finland's national organizations, the majority of tourism in Finland consists of national tourism. (Jänkälä 2014, 38.) When majority of tourism flow in a country is between regions inside the country, differentiating from competition becomes key factor in developing the tourism structure of a region. Regionally speaking, tourism is a significant source of livelihood. (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 8.) Regions inside Finland are geographically quite different from each other, and so are the activities and tourism products they offer. (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 10.) This supports the idea introduced later on in this study about the importance of authenticity and heritage of the region in tourism marketing (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.), suggesting that a region's best marketing tool is built around what is authentic in the region. This supports the statement that innovations and products are at their fullest potential in tourism marketing when they are developed on already existing factors that are considered authentic and typical to the region.

2.1.2 Kyrö Distillery Company's tourism potential

The role of Kyrö Distillery Company in this study is based heavily on the work the company has already done to promote the region. The company was originally built to produce rye whisky. Rye is a typical product of the region and Isokyrö is an ideal location for the company to operate in. (Nikkanen 2015, 64.) While producing whisky takes years, the founders realized, that they had the time to develop a side project on the meantime. This turned out to be a better success than any of them realized, as the side

product, Napue Gin, was selected as the best gin & tonic gin in International Wine and Spirit Competition held in England in the fall on 2015. This gained the company global recognition. (Nikkanen 2015, 66.) The gin is produced with local ingredients and the brand built around it is heavily influenced with the scenery available in the region, as is pointed out in the interview with the company's representative later on in this thesis.

Even though the area has is home to several finnish breweries, Kyrö Distillery Company and their products are absolutely the star of the show. This is backed by an answer about the company's competition in the interview with the company's representative. Around these products, a gastronomic route (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.) of the region could be built. Terms like terroir are of great relevance to this. Terroir is the influence of the milieou to the product. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.) The products introduced by the company and the background information about the region suggests that there is a great platform to be developed into a gastronomic destination highly attractive, not only to the experts of the industry and the enthusiasts that can be considered the main market segment, but also towards locals interested in products their home area has to offer and even walk-by-tourists in the region. Reasons and explanations behind these claims are later on provided in this thesis.

Another point why Kyrö Distillery Company is a great target to be developed into something bigger concerning and possibly representing the whole region, is the fact that it is a relatively young company with plenty of room and possibilites to develop. The idea of the company has only started in 2012. (Nikkanen 2015, 64.). Kyrönmaan Matkailunedistämiskeskus, a restaurant located on the grounds of the company, already by it's name suggests that the company is moving towards the same direction that is suggested in this research. (Nikkanen 2015, 67.)

2.2. Methods and sources

This study is conducted by combining already existing theories about gastronomic tourism destinations. The theories are analysed and their relativity to the subject company and the purpose of this study is evaluated. Because not much information is available about the sort of tourism in Finland and especially in the region, an interview

with the a representative of the company is also conducted in this study. In the interview, the author of this study has put together 12 questions based on the existing theories about gastronomic tourism destinations. These questions are divided into three categories: the operations of the company, the products of the company and the customers of the company. The answers to these questions aim to show the state of the company's development towards a gastronomic destination, which actions have been taken and possibly point out what more could be done.

2.2.1 Research questions

The main research question of this thesis is: how to develop Kyrö Distillery Company's gastronomic tourism potential? In order to answer that question, the author of this thesis has studied what is the company like, which kind of theories are used in studying similar locations elsewhere and what are the factors that are key in building a gastronomic tourism destination. Sub-questions relevant to the main purpose of this study are: what is a gastronomic tourism destination, and how to promote such destination? These questions and the answers given to them shed light on how a gastronomic tourism destination is formed, what factors have led to becoming one and what is needed to properly promote such destination in order to maximize its tourism potential.

2.2.2 Theories

Majority of the theories that are referred to in this study are those of Hall (Food tourism around the world, 2003) and Groce (Transforming terroir into a tourist destination, 2010). Other frequently used sources for this thesis are the World Tourism Organization's Global report on food tourism, van Westering's studies of gastronomy and heritage as well as Murray's studies on culinary tourism. These sources, especially the ones of Hall and Groce, are frequently referred to in many studies related to this subject and it is the author's opinion that these are credible sources when studying the development of gastronomic tourism. Other sources used in this study include: the

Ministry of employment and the economy to provide information about the state of tourism in Finland, Nikkanen, with the well written general information about the subject company in his book (Suuri viskikirja, 2012) and organizations such as Visitpohjanmaa and the ELY Centres, to provide information about the state of regional tourism in the subject areas. These organizations are considered reliable by the author, since they are public organizations focused on the issues and themes discussed in this thesis.

The theories in this thesis study the important factors in developing a gastronomic destination. Some of the most relevant theories include foodscaping (Hall 2003, 10.), which studies the combination of scenery and surroundings and their impact on the product produced in the location. Other theories relevant to this theme are those of authenticity and terroir, latter of which is about the actual taste of the milieu on the product. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.) More theories such as gastronomic route (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.), study the bigger picture of an area with potentially more than one destination with gastronomic tourism- and product value. Theory about learning experiences en locale (World Tourism Organization 2012, 6.), their importance in branding and the value of information-gaining experiences in destination is included in this thesis. This theory is highly relevant to the reason, why people travel to a destination in search of a product rather than finding the product imported to another location, which can be seen as the foundation of this study. Also relevant to this, is theory about the formation of a functioning tourism business cluster to properly promote the product at hand. (Jänkälä 2014, 11.)

2.2.3 Interview

In order to find out about the subject company's current status on tourism, the author of this study has conducted an interview with a representative of the subject company. The representative of the company in this interview is Miko Heinilä, who is also the CEO of Kyrönmaan matkailunestämiskeskus. In the interview, the author of this thesis has formed questions about the company, suggesting theories used in studying gastronomic tourism destinations to be analysed as potential points of development. The theories behind these questions include themes such as foodscaping (Hall 2003, 10.), learning

experiences (World Tourism Organization 2012, 6.), terroir (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.) and gastronomic route (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.), which are considered relevant to this study. The purpose of the interview is to give insight on the company's actions and status considering these themes as well as finding out their potential possibility in developing their actions. In the interview, the author also attempts to find out, how the subject company feels about themes such as event attending (World Tourism Organization 2012, 15.) and organizing (World Tourism Organization 2012, 15.) and the promotion of their brand both globally and locally as well as their place in the local tourism business cluster (Jänkälä, S. 2014, 11.).

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1. Regional tourism

Majority of tourism in Finland consists national tourism, which keeps the industry alive by amounting up to 71% of total tourism in Finland. (Jänkälä 2014, 38.) Tourism as an industry in Finland has a remarkable effect on the national economy. (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 6.) Regionally speaking, tourism is a significant source of livelihood. (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 8.) *”Tourism has major employment impacts and the industry has a balancing effect on regional development in Finland.”* (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 5.) Many key tourist attractions and clusters formed around them are located outside growth centres. (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 6.) Tourism industry services facilitate the provision of more diverse and higher quality services for locals. (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 10.) *”Tourist services also create basic infrastructure, providing the basis for the development of other forms of business activity”* (Ministry of employment and the economy 2012, 10.)

The purpose of this study is to focus on the areas surrounding the subject company Kyrö Distillery Company. These areas are Pohjanmaa and Etelä-Pohjanmaa. Regionally comparing, the areas of Pohjanmaa and Etelä-Pohjanmaa are left behind in visitor numbers by the most popular tourist destinations in Finland. (Picture 1.) In annual visitor statistics, as is provided below in Picture 1, the areas combined amount to only a third of what is witnessed in the capitol area. (Picture 1.)

	Yöpyymiset, lkm					Saapuneet, lkm				
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
SA PÄÄKAUPUNKISEUTU										
Kotimaiset	2 272 626	2 288 035	2 217 800	2 244 169	2 388 255	1 562 596	1 569 892	1 530 506	1 559 071	1 654 999
Ulkomaiset	2 232 411	2 269 038	2 206 883	2 223 696	2 305 552	1 183 219	1 245 074	1 237 033	1 260 591	1 289 261
AL Etelä-Pohjanmaa										
Kotimaiset	658 947	645 637	660 505	636 647	642 323	377 719	372 746	377 972	367 387	371 103
Ulkomaiset	31 147	28 520	30 773	25 963	28 593	11 216	10 666	12 191	11 539	12 704
AL Pohjanmaa										
Kotimaiset	344 526	350 550	347 679	326 195	338 768	215 250	214 894	214 455	201 218	217 589
Ulkomaiset	77 584	76 484	73 028	77 248	82 037	38 798	34 826	32 026	33 449	33 636

Picture 1. The amounts of nights spent and arrivals on capitol area, Etelä-Pohjanmaa and Pohjanmaa between years 2011-2015. Source: VisitFinland, Tilastopalvelu Rudolf.

As can be seen in the statistics provided in Picture 1, not much has changed during the last five years with accommodation and visitor numbers in the areas of Pohjanmaa and Etelä-Pohjanmaa.

The organization responsible for promoting the areas and their tourism-activities is Visitpohjanmaa. (Visitpohjanmaa) The subject company of this study, Kyrö Distillery Company, is mentioned on the website as one of the top5 destinations to visit on the area. (Visitpohjanmaa) Visitpohjanmaa is funded by the ELY Centres (Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment), on the website of which, it is described as being "responsible for developing rural industries and ensuring the vitality of the Finnish countryside. (ELY Centres) Visitpohjanmaa is basically linking together the companies that control smaller parts of the region, like VisitVaasa and Etelä-Pohjanmaan matkailu. (Visitpohjanmaa)

These are independently functioning companies responsible for the marketing of touristic attractions and activities around their functioning radius. They also present the accommodation services and restaurants of the area that have attained two qualities, locality and high standard. (Visitvaasa) The Etelä-Pohjanmaan matkailu site has brief information about the company's strategy of development. It includes information on how they try to work with local companies by promoting them and setting goals such as attracting more international visitors. There are three examples of projects mentioned that have something to do with the company, two of which are projects of developing the strategies of organizational structure development. Only one project had something

to do with products of the area. The MaKuMa-project's goal was to collect a group of the most attractive local products worthy of promoting, in which, the actual marketing of the products was executed outside the project. (Etelä-Pohjanmaan matkailu) This project did not include Kyrö Distillery Company or their products, since it was conducted before the founding of the company.

3.2. Food tourism

When a customer interacts with the offer, an experience transaction is created. In tourism industry we have seen a trend of producing experiences for customers. Experiences are an economic offer distinct from services. Whereas services are delivered, experiences must be staged in order to engage the customer to create a memorable event. It has grown to be the most important motivation for tourists to satisfy one's experience hunger. (Richards 2001, 56.) And the growth of the experience industry has only made people hungrier. *"Emerging modern mind is bent on expanding its repertoire of experiences"* (MacCannell 1976, 34.).

"Food experiences have become more important in tourism as the 'experience economy' has developed." (World Tourism Organization 2012, 20.) Even though culinary tourism is claimed perhaps one of the most misused terms in the industry, attempts exist on explaining and defining the levels of significance between food and tourists in order to avoid misleading information and poor planning being used by tourism planners and operators. (Murray 2008) According to a study by Culinary Tourism in Ontario: Strategy and Action Plan 2005-2015, The key component on defining the level of importance of gastronomy in tourism is the intentionality of seeking experiences associated with it. The level of intentionality can be divided into three categories, primary (main reason of travel), secondary (interest exhibiting on spot) or tertiary (subsidiary to other interests). (Murray 2008). Whether it's specified as "gastronomy tourism" or gastronomy as an integral aspect of tourism, food has always been an essential part of any form of travel or culture. (van Westering 1999, 77.)

A huge part of the media is now connected with food and tourism. A continuous redefinition of culture takes place, as our trends are developed by the "cultural elite"

defending their status by showing newly- acquired behavioural patterns. The race to gain social prestige is on, as the key motivation to travel for "new tourists" is to go for a flexible, segmented and more authentic tourism experience. So is recognition of business opportunities to support such lifestyles. (van Westering 1999, 75.)

Spatial fixity is a term used when discussing elements that are meant to be experienced on-the-spot. (Hall 2003, 10.) Participating in the local culinary arts and the ambience surrounding food plays an important role in understanding the overall culture. At the same time it enhances the quality of the tourist's experience while bringing cultures together and adding depth to the experience both ways. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 21.)

Food tourism strategies are significant instruments of regional development and there are examples of poor rural areas having tourism and agriculture to save the economic situation. Growing food for hotel and restaurant sector is a working business opportunity as well as a further developed form of tourism on sites associated with products such as wine. (Hall 2003, 4.) "Foodscape-" branding adds value on vineyards and other landscapes related to food and beverage industry especially in rural regions. Even though there is evidence of the fact that not all vineyards are visited for the simple reason of being a vineyard, but instead being associated with multiple motivators. From this, one can conclude that a landscape is not all it takes for a destination to develop into a popular tourist attraction. (Hall 2003, 10.)

Since it is studied, that tourists spend majority of their travel budget on food (Hall 2003, 3.) and the most gastronomy-oriented tourists spend twice the amount compared to others, defining touristic value of a destination by culinary products is a great way of marketing an area. "*The relationship between gastronomy and heritage is mutually parasitic.*" (van Westering 1999, 75.) A heritage site loses its value when staged authenticity is built for the masses that arrive. (van Westering 1999, 79.) Large visitor numbers, congestion and pollution also affect the quality of the experience offered. The only authenticity can be found where one is not built. "McDonaldization" is a subject of criticism throughout the world as the completely opposing phenomenon. (Hall 2003, 6.)

3.3. Introduction of the company

Kyrö Distillery Company is the first ever Finnish company to produce rye whisky. The story of the company started in 2012 in a sauna. The founders were tasting a souvenir rye whisky and started thinking, why haven't people produced this in Finland, since all the raw materials available are typical to Finnish cuisine. A year from that, they had obtained the license to produce a test batch. (Nikkanen 2015, 64.)

The distillery itself is located in an old dairy in Isokyrö. The distillery is capable of producing same-quality products all-year-long due to methods used by the company. In addition to the distillery, the company has a malt storage, barrel storages, a laboratory and a restaurant called Kyrönmaan Matkailunestämiskeskus with a bar, capable of hosting up to 260 customers. (Nikkanen 2015, 67.)

The goal of the company, is to become the world's most famous rye whiskey distillery by 2022. During best weekends, the distillery is visited by up to 5000 people. This has happened a year and a half after the beginning of the distillation. (Nikkanen 2015, 66.)

A 100% rye whiskey is only produced by several brands in the whole world. (Nikkanen 2015, 67.) Beside producing rye whiskey, the company also produces gin. The rye-based Napue gin was released in the summer of 2014. On top of the original 12 herbs typically used in the production of gin, the company has added four traditional Finnish herbs: cranberry, sea-buckthorn, fresh birch leaves and the provincial flower of Pohjanmaa, meadowsweet. The gin was selected in the oldest competition in the game, International Wine and Spirits Competition, as the best gin & tonic-gin. The sudden success led to using all their resources to producing gin in July 2015. (Nikkanen 2015, 66.)

The names of the whiskey products come from phases of development for plants (Juuri and Verso) and the names of the gin products come from nearby village-names (Napue and Koskue). Also the graphic design used by the brand has been praised. The font used by the company, is a unique font called Napue Sans. The name comes from the memorial sign for the battle of Napue. The Photos used by the company are always black and white. The company's image was selected as the best in Finland. In addition,

the design of the bottles was selected on a shortlist in an internationally most respected competition of its type, Cannes Lions, in which, the company was also the only participant of the 83 Finnish ones to be noted. In a Dieline-packaging competition, the company's packaging solution was as the second best in the category of spirits. (Nikkanen 2015, 68.)

4 THEORIES

4.1. Gastronomic tourism destination

"The product is the basis of food tourism" (World Tourism Organization 2012, 11.) Food tourism is a growing market. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 10.) It has become one of the key segments of tourism. Creativity is vital in modern tourism and gastronomy has found its place within all types of existing tourism as well as introducing a new aspect of the lifestyle of a potential tourist. (Hall 2003, 2.)

Gastronomy plays a vital role in the entire experience of the tourist, since a large portion of the tourist's budget is spent on culinary activities. (Hall 2003, 4.) Although not all tourists admit culinaryism being their main motivation for the seek of experience, every tourist takes part in culinary activities in one way or another. (Hall 2003, 9.) Whereas some seek for a trip to a gastronomic route, others find experiences when finding solutions in a destination, among other activities, as reaction to a simple sense of hunger or thirst.

"The only solution is to transform a region and its resources into a complete tourist product by first identifying the attractions and then linking them together by theme" (Groce 2010, 61.) A gastronomic route is a systematic touristic experience, at its best consisting of the entirety of what the area has to offer regarding a product of the area, tools of development and production combined with linking factors and historical information of both the chosen product and others of the area. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.) This experience is the ideal product for a lifestyle that is modern tourist. It includes experimenting and learning of production and consumption process of an authentic product in it's natural habitat.

Local products are a trend not only in tourism-, but also in restaurant business by itself. Local products are considered both the healthy and the sustainable option. Local, regional or national products are different sized categories used in describing the typicality of the product on an area. (Hall 2003, 58.)

A local product is not necessarily something only consumed in the area, but can be used when describing something that is typically produced and developed in the area before being exported and consumed elsewhere. Champagne, Burgundy and Rioja are examples of products identified with geographical characteristics of a place. (Hall 2003, 33.)

Terroir is built up by years of practical experience led to a precisely detailed delineation of quality. (Hall 2003, 35.) A destination in itself is not enough to build a product, although the milieu has to play an essential part in the "terroir" product. Terroir is the multisensory experience en locale on your plate. All that cannot be reconstructed elsewhere result in what is unique in the experience right there at the spot. Authenticity and uniqueness is key in choosing a destination over another. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.) Terroir is a key theme in this thesis. It is used in the interview, when asked about the company's products' relevance to the surrounding area and its qualities.

Rural areas are changing after having suffered major recessions since 1970's. Partially because of preservation of heritage, the problems of globalization present as much possibilities as they do threats. Rights of the indigenous people are possibly forgotten when conflicting land use interests appear. On the other hand, food tourism is potential source of economic development for rural areas. (Hall 2003, 26.)

How to differentiate from competition is the key to maximising the business. In the intangible economy, companies survive if they have privileged capital. (Hall 2003, 32.-33.) This theory is used in the interview of the subject company's representative to find out what differentiates the company from its main competitors. Hall presents four important qualities to look for in order to become a successful gastronomic tourism destination: attraction, specification, certification and association. (Hall 2003, 57.)

A tourism product is not just "communicating with the destination" but should have a benefitting side on the customer's point of view as well by responding to the needs of the customer. Background checks on attractions and professional competence, visitor needs linked to available resources, product development with clear objectives and best professional knowledge and variability of product are key factors when building a tourism product that is to satisfy the wide range of customers. (Groce 2010, 69.) These

are themes are discussed in the interview when asked about the company's use of professional knowledge in the development of their products and operations and the importance of variability of products is brought up here again.

4.2. Marketing

Modern tourists are looking for concrete learning experiences. A learning experience includes ethical and sustainable values of the destination territory being experienced first hand and their importance being understood. A modern tourist learns that in order for a destination to remain authentic, it must be protected and preserved. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 6.) All of this includes the landscape, the culture and the products offered. The link between gastronomy and the preservation of the area is the gastronomic tourist, who travels to the area in search of one, that requires the other. (Hall 2003, 10.) This theory about learning experiences is the foundation behind one of the questions in the interview with the subject company's representative. The aim of the question is to find out, what kind of learning experiences does the company offer for its customers.

Food related events are a great way to promote an area's local cuisine. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 15.) Food and beverage expenditure is huge in festival tourism, regardless whether or not the event is revisited ever again. Specialized products offer the opportunity for the development of visitor product. It is studied that the agriculture by itself is no longer enough to maintain a functional business model. Secondary sources of income such as events, farmers markets or product-related nature tourism are recommended. (Hall 2003, 2. 32.) This is related to the question used in the interview on what kind of secondary products does the company offer for its customers. Groce points out three types of products for a company to offer, core products, facilitating products and supporting products. (Groce 2010, 66.)

A marketing tool that is missing totally or is extremely underdeveloped almost everywhere in this field of tourism, is the proper use of social networks. *"...only 4% of the organizations surveyed said they used social networks for the promotion of food tourism"* (World Tourism Organization 2012, 13.) This is an indicator that the industry is still behind in technological development. It is a tool that is used by the consumers

but not to its full potential by the providers. Source credibility is probably the main issue why service providers are still considering whether or not the use of social media to its fullest is profitable for business. This is a topic discussed in the interview with the company as a question, concerning the main marketing methods and segments of the company.

The entire experience of the tourist is not limited to the days of travel or on location. It includes the preparation and information gathering and ends in the aftermath being spread out in social life or social media. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 11.) Motivators of tourists and understanding and utilizing them is important when designing and creating a product or service that adds value to the tourist's experience. There are two types of motivators for tourists. The internal stimuli (pushing factors) or the external stimuli (pulling factors). The pulling factors are considered to spring from the perspective of demand for desires as well as psychological, social and ego-centric needs such as escaping the daily routine, resting, exploring and social interaction. The pulling factors include cultural and natural attractions, special events and festivals, experiences, friendliness of locals, gastronomic diversity and variety etc. The perceived value of the destination is multidimensional. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 8.) Motivators are related to customer satisfaction. What one expects beforehand, and in the other hand, is left with after the experience, are key elements in figuring out the decision-making process of a visitor. (Groce 2010, 62; World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.) Variability is looked for in the interview as the variability of products offered by the company.

Building a respectable authentic food tourism destination requires effort and research in combining background information and essential factors. Realism is also of course important as false marketing might lead in loss of appeal. Because of possible abuse, respect is needed. Both the visitors and the locals need to be convinced of the preciousness of the resources at hand. (Hall 2003, 26; Groce 2010, 63.) This adds attachment and emotionality linked to the entire experience. This theory is used in the interview to study the subject company's status on the use of professional knowledge about the industry.

Groce points out two different views of the complete touristic experience. The view of the tourist is a horizontal perspective, including all different elements and an overall evaluation of the experience. The view of the tourism operator on the other hand, is a

vertical or hierarchical. To this view, the business is of exclusive significance with little role for factors that are outside the company's functioning radius. (Groce 2010, 64.) This theory is the basis of one of the questions used in the interview and it is used in order to gain information on how the subject company takes factors outside the company into consideration.

4.3. Tourism business cluster

Tourism business cluster is formed by for example the service providers, marketing-, communications-, and sales operators together with the supporting or enabling parties, all of which are relevant to the combined business industry within tourism. (Jänkälä, S. 2014, 11.)

When creating a touristic terroir image to market, both private and public sector need to have a clear and common goal. (Groce 2010, 68.) An important factor in a functioning tourism business is the network around it. This is the topic discussed in the interview with the company representative as one of the questions. Strategy between producers and the tourism industry is needed in order to maximize the potential of a product by reducing economic leakage by using renewable resources, recycling financial resources by buying local goods & services, using local produce like packaging solutions before exportation, attracting external resources like for example customers via internet, emphasizing local identity in branding, selling directly to consumers and creating a relationship between the producer and the consumer. (Hall 2003, 28.-29.)

Tourism as an industry works in two ways. Both the customer and the provider are involved in the process of development. The importance of gastronomy in diversifying destinations and stimulating their development is recognized by both the providing and the receiving end. In order for a destination to develop, both private and public sector need to work together to ensure the quality, recognition and stability of the marketed products. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.)

To do their part in ensuring the continuity of business in the industry, European and American legislations have also protected authentic products by registering regional

speciality products as intellectual property in form of designated quality labels. (Hall 2003, 35.)

The branding of the product needs to be utilized by the public sector by recognizing a level of authentic quality. Also private businesses involved in the process must be appraised of loyalty to the local quality available. The availability of the branded product must also be ensured and promoted. Exaggerated advertisement of a destination or product must be avoided because it might lead to dissatisfaction among customers after having way too high expectations. All cultures have different perceptions of gastronomy and quality. After the expectations meet with the results, repeat purchase behaviour is likely. This is key in the preservation of the product and results in the possibility for development. The success of culinary tourism lies in the repetitiveness of customer behaviour. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 8.) This statement from the World Tourism Organization has two qualities that were looked for in the interview with the subject company. The first which is the level of recognition given towards the company and its success by the public sector. The second point is how to ensure repetitiveness of customer behaviour.

Diversity, traditionality and quality are quarantees of culinary heritage and continuity of local products. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 11.) Traditionality and how is it promoted and percieved by the company is one of the themes discussed in the interview. Euro-toques is an example of an attempt at controlling the labelling of a regional product. It is an organization focused on protecting the quality and heritage, promoting the practices and demanding of proper labelling. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 18.) The organization works as a lobby group in European and national institutions. They work mainly with food laws and agricultural policies, as they put it themselves: act in order not to suffer. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 19.)

Co-operation is the glue that holds all of this together. When the providers of the region work together, they have collectively more to offer. The providers of touristic services can build a wholesome product like a gastronomic route. This way, there's more to offer, and the tourist spends more time on the destination, using more of the services and products and thus helping the entire economy of the region grow and supporting further development of the area. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 9.) The conversion from a

territory into a culinary tourism product is the challenge of the destination. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 11.)

5 ANALYSIS OF DATA

5.1. Operations of the company

In order to find out about the company's current status on subjects and theories presented in this study, the author has conducted an interview with a representative of the company. The representative of the company, who took part in this interview, was Miko Heinilä, who is also the CEO of Kyrönmaan Matkailunedistämiskeskus, the restaurant section of Kyrö Distillery Company located in Isokyrö next to the distillery. The interview consisted of 12 questions, which were divided in three categories. These categories were the company, its products and its visitors. The questions are provided as an appendix in this thesis.

The first four questions were related to the company and its business. The first question of the interview discusses, **how does Kyrö Distillery Company stand out from its most relevant (regional) competitors**. As Hall points out, how to differentiate from competition is the key to maximising the business. (Hall 2003, 32.-33.)

According to the representative of the company, *"the first obvious regional differentiating factor is, that the Kyrö Distillery Company is the only distillery in the region, whereas other similar companies in the region operate as breweries. Closest competing distilleries are located in Tampere and Pori, and even they are currently operating with low amounts of distillation. This is considered a technical separator. The answer also points out, that the brand of the company is visible on the shelves of bars and the experience is provided in the destination itself, including stories, tastes, scents etc. factors."*

The fact that the company has basically no competition in the region, gives the subject company the possibility of being the main operator for a larger region. A gastronomic route (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.) could be developed by combining forces with the local breweries. (for example Mallaskoski in Seinäjoki and Bock's in Vaasa) Their products might be of interest to the customers of the distillery. This is supported by the fact that majority of the customers of the company come from either one of the directions, since these are the two major cities around the area and both of them are

located close to the distillery. This is stated later on in this interview. By providing information about each other and organizing joint tours that include all three mentioned destinations, the companies could all benefit from each other and the entire region's tourism could acquire a new product worthy of promoting. In order for this to work, the quality of the products of the breweries and their actions needs to be studied so, that the quality of the entire experience stays on the same level. In order for a destination to develop, both private and public sector need to work together to ensure the quality, recognition and stability of the marketed products. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.)

The second question of the interviews attempts to find out, **what is the company's role in the local tourism business cluster**. As is pointed out in the theory section of this thesis, strategy between producers and the tourism industry is needed in order to maximize the potential of product. (Hall 2003, 28.)

The answer to this question points out that "on the level of Isokyrö, the company tries to be the first knot of the local network and hook the customers to the region by collecting promotional material from local operators and by delaying the customers' stay in the region by channeling the customers to other local companies. Regionally speaking, the products of the company have opened doors to co-operation with local operators such as bars and breweries. In areas of Vaasa and Seinäjoki, the distillery products of the company have been a subject of interest. Considering raw materials, the company prefers the use of berries with authentic local producers. The hotel and restaurant-business of the region is directly linked to the company's operations by offering accommodation services and the products of the company. Also co-operation with local bus companies is used in transportation services to the destination."

Given the fact, that the company has no competition in the region, being the first knot of the network for a customer to react with is logical. The company seems to do great work in promoting local companies in Isokyrö. Regionally, the company works with different operators by promoting its products. But like was stated in the analysis of the previous question, the tourism product could also be promoted more. Even though it is stated in this thesis, that the regional tourism organization, Visitpohjanmaa, promotes the distillery as one of the top5 destinations in the region, there is room for development in co-operation with public operators. A goal to become the main tourism attraction of the

region is realistic in the author's opinion. When creating a touristic terroir image to market, both private and public sector need to have a clear and common goal. (Groce 2010, 68.) Currently, the business cluster of the region lacks collective strategy in order to promote, what the area has to offer, in order to maximise it's tourism potential. It currently gives information to already interested possible customers, but no strategy can be found to attract people apart from the ones that have already made the decision to travel to the region.

The third question of the interview discusses **the biggest and main marketing segments and channels used by the company**. A marketing tool that is missing totally or is extremely underdeveloped almost everywhere in the industry, is the proper use of social networks. *"...only 4% of the organizations surveyed said they used social networks for the promotion of food tourism"* (World Tourism Organization 2012, 13.)

The answer by the representative points out *"Facebook as the main marketing channel with up to 21 000 followers for the Distillery side and 3000 followers for Kyrönmaan Matkailunestämiskeskus."* It is also pointed out, that *"the marketing channel of the distillery is also used for the promotional use of the restaurant-side. On top of social media, the local magazine Pohjankyrö and a travel publicication called Sininen tie publish about the operations of the company. The main target segment for the company is the local area at the moment. The intention is to grow first to being a regional, and after that, a national operator."*

The use of social media and the importance of it seems to be well understood by the company. A respectable virtual image of the brand is great to obtain, but even greater when the brand is visible also in the physical world. On top of being active on social media, it is the author's opinion that first hand experience is needed. Being visible in events related to the company and it's operations brings attention to the brand. Food related events are a great way to promote an area's local cuisine. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 15.)

The fourth and the final question about the company and it's operations was about **how locality and traditionality are visible in the operations of the company**. It is stated by the World tourism organiaztion, that diversity, traditionality and quality are

quarantees of culinary heritage and continuity of local products. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 11.)

The answer highlights the relevance of the tour available in the destination. *”The beginning part of the tour consists of history of the area. The brand of the distillery is also highly built around the history of the region. Also the interior design of the restaurant is conducted with local elements. Copper lamps from former local gas station, seats from local schools and carpets from local farm houses decorate the inside of the restaurant.”*

The fact that the brand is built around the history of the region ties the company to the region. This has two sides to it. First of which, is that the company is actually tied to the area. This prevents the company to locate elsewhere without possibly losing its appeal and image of locality. The other side to this is, that by being tied to the region, it has all the resources at hand that are available and typical to the area. Like it is stated in this thesis, these resources are great when marketing a product as authenticity and locality are considered trends in both tourism and restaurant business. Authenticity is key in choosing a destination over another. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.)

5.2. Products of the company

The second part of the interview is formed with questions about the products and services of the company. The first question of the second part is about **how diversity is shown in the company's product repertoire**. The world tourism organization states the motivators behind tourism appeal. The pulling factors include cultural and natural attractions, special events and festivals, experiences, friendliness of locals, gastronomic diversity and variety etc. The perceived value of the destination is multidimensional. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 8.)

According to the answer, *”the distillery produces five different gins, four different rye-based products and as the newest addition, a product called Long Kyrö, which is a mixed drink sold in bottles. Also merchandise like tasting-glasses, books and t-shirts are sold in the restaurant. The restaurant also has a bar, that is specialized in cocktails. On top of the company's own products, smallholding-wines and microbrewery products that*

are not necessarily available elsewhere in the region are offered. The company also provides service packages for meetings, distillery tours, workshops, dinners and a distillery tour combined with a tasting-package. According to the answer, it is possible to expand these packages by request to meet the needs of the customer.

These examples offered in the answer show great diversity of products offered by the company. There is always room for expanding the repertoire of merchandise built around the main products, which in this case are the distillery products. Only imagination is the limit when developing merchandise. The author's opinion is, that the merchandise should be highly relevant to the region and its history to ensure the level of traditionality in the company's product repertoire. For example traditional clothes of the region could be manufactured as merchandise. Also when considering the industry of distillery products, the mixed drink Long Kyrö is a great example of what more could be done in the future in this field. Another detail that could be added to the repertoire of experiences offered on location, is accommodation services, since it seems to be the only missing factor in building a destination that enables its customers to stay in the location for longer periods of time. This could also be an enabling factor in organizing events in the location, as is suggested by the statement by World Tourism Organization. Groce points out three types of products for a company to offer, core products, facilitating products and supporting products. (Groce 2010, 66.) In this case, distillery products can be seen as the core product, merchandise as the facilitating product and the experience offered in the destination as the supporting product.

The second question about the company's products is about **how they're related to the surrounding region and how these factors are presented to the customer**. This question seeks an answer related to the terroir of the products. As is pointed out in the theory section of this thesis, a destination in itself is not enough to build a product, although the milieu has to play an essential part in the "terroir" product. Terroir is the multisensory experience en locale on your plate. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.)

The answer points out regionality being strongly presented in the products. *"The whiskeys are produced with Finnish rye malt and local groundwater. The gins are produced with Finnish aroma distillates that are produced with for example local birch leaves. The company uses its "own" font throughout the entire brand, which is called*

Napue Sans. The font is derived from the memorial sign of the battle of Napue. The location of the distillery is a former dairy which has played it's own part in local history. It is located around the edges of the battlefield of the battle of Napue in 1714."

The terroir-aspect of the product seems to be in order. The use of local fresh groundwater, local berries (as is stated in a previous answer) and local rye malts and aroma distillates all result in the final product being unique and relevant to the area. More study needs to be conducted, whether there are elements or raw materials still at use that could be replaced with local ones. Terroir is built up by years of practical experience led to a precisely detailed delineation of quality. (Hall 2003, 35.) The detail of using a locally named own font is an incredible detail that should be appraised more. Also the fact of using a piece of local history as the distillery instead of building one from beginning is a respectable detail. Again, authenticity and uniqueness are key factors in choosing a destination over another. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 14.) "Foodscape-" branding adds value on vinyards and other landscapes related to food and beverage industry especially in rural regions. (Hall 2003, 10.)

The third question about the company's products products discusses **the quality factors taken into consideration in the process of production and how professional knowledge about the industry is obtained by the company**. As is stated in the theory section of this thesis, building a respectable authentic food tourism destination requires effort and research in combining background information and essential factors. (Hall 2003, 26; Groce 2010, 63.)

As is pointed out in the answer, *"the main distiller in the distillery is Kalle Valkonen, an environmental ekologist, who has a degree in distillery business that has been expanded abroad. The quality of the products is observed continuously and it is considered an important issue. The main distiller together with two assistant distillers ensure the continuity of quality by for example taking a reference bottle from every batch. This is an efficient way of examining the quality of the products even afterwards, since even the sense of taste can vary daily. On the restaurant side, an experienced bar manager is leading operations and the representative of the company interviewed in this thesis has experience about tour operating. The company aims to combine personal strengths to ensure satisfactory experiences for it's customers. The actions of the company are developed constantly with high regard given to feedback provided by it's customers. A*

Vaasa-based company called Werklig has helped the company with it's expertise in branding.”

The details of the production seem to be in a professional state. The only aspect of the company's operations that no information was given in this interview about, was the business side of the operations. Perhaps professional knowledge on how to operate a growing business that has gained international reputation by it's products could be applied to ensure growth and to avoid mistakes. Professional competence and the use of best professional knowledge are key factors when building a tourism product that is to satisfy the wide range of customers. (Groce 2010, 69.)

The fourth and last question about the company's products is about **how the success of the brand and the products of the company is noted and possibly appraised by the public sector operators**. As is pointed out in the theory section of this thesis, in order for a destination to develop, both private and public sector need to work together to ensure the quality, recognition and stability of the marketed products. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 7.) The branding of the product also needs to be utilized by the public sector by recognizing a level of authentic quality. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 8.)

The answer lists multiple sources of interested parties. These include *”40 to 50 magazine interviews, a tv interview, radio interviews in Finland and in the UK. The company has also gained visibility in various events. The company has also travelled the world with VisitFinland and Finpro. Tekes, a funding institution for ideas, has also given marketing assistance to the company. Various ambassadors have helped the company by for example giving them an opportunity to organize events in the apartment of an ambassador in London. Vasek and Start have remembered the company with an award called Antti-statue and the magazine Maaseudun tulevaisuus together with its accompanies gave the company a reward for promotion of rural areas and their future.”*

The answer points out multiple cases, where the company's success has been awarded or interest towards the company and it's actions been shown by different facets. Yet no appraisal for the authenticity of the brand has been shown towards the company by high end public organizations with efforts to promote the status of the brand or the company's

products to a secured or preserved product like for example a designated quality label. (Hall 2003, 35.) It is great that local operators have recognized the company, but for this kind of appraisals to have an impact on the company's future, high end public organizations need to promote the success of the company. Also considering the fact that the company is the only one in Finland to produce rye whiskey, a status similar to Champagne, Burgundy and Rioja could be sought for the unique product, since as is stated before, a 100% rye whiskey is only produced by several brands in the whole world. (Nikkanen 2015, 67.)

5.3. Customers of the company

The third and last part of the interview consists of questions about the customers of the company. The first question in this part discusses, **which kind of secondary acts of business besides the production of distillation products does the company operate with**. In the theory section of this thesis, the author points out what Hall has recommended for agricultural businesses, but what can also be applied to the purpose of this thesis. Secondary sources of income such as events, farmers markets or product-related nature tourism are recommended. (Hall 2003, 2. 32.)

The answer states that *"besides distillation products and merchandise, the company offers experiences."* An example of an experience is given in the answer to this question, but due to its relevance to the next question, the example is thoroughly given in this thesis as the answer to the next question.

It is stated before in this thesis, that events organized in the location could be a possible tool in developing the tourism potential of the subject company. Experiences are offered to customers who visit the distillery in forms of tours and tastings, but no kind of events are organized in either the site itself or in a local destination. Since it has grown to be the most important motivation for tourists to satisfy one's experience hunger (Richards 2001, 56.), it is great that the company has a focus on offering experiences for its customers. Participating in the local culinary arts and the ambience surrounding food plays an important role in understanding the overall culture. At the same time it enhances the quality of the tourist's experience while bringing cultures together and adding depth to the experience both ways. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 21.)

The second question about the company's customers is about **how the visitors in the distillery learn from the production processes and raw materials used by the company**. Like is stated earlier on in the theory section of this thesis, modern tourists are looking for concrete learning experiences. A learning experience includes ethical and sustainable values of the destination territory being experienced first hand and their importance being understood. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 6.)

The answer to previous question is given here, since it is of high relevance to this question. *"An example of an experience offered by the company is a dinner, in which the guests are greeted with the best gin & tonics in the world in the restaurant. In the background, plays mellow indie pop rock and the guests are welcomed. After this, a dinner is served by a Seinäjoki-based Juurella-restaurant. The restaurant is known for using local ingredients. Cocktails and central-european smallholding-wines or microbrewery-beers are offered with the meal. The complete taste-experience is unique. After the dinner, coffee is served, following a tour of the distillery. The tour starts with the history of the area, the buildings the company and what is visible in the area. Methods and processes of production are explained as well as the room for expanding is studied. The tour ends back to the restaurant, where a tasting of the products of the company is offered."*

On top of the example already given as the answer to previous question, the answer to this one points out that *"the operations of the company are explained to the level of detail with what is malting, which kind of whiskies exist and how the products stand out in a global portfolio. Mashing and distilling is explained, as well as the meaning of the barreling process. Also actions like bottling are explained to the level of how it was done before, how it is done now and how will it be done in the future. Packaging is also explained during the tour phase-by-phase."*

The entire tour consists of elements explaining majority of the production chain behind the products. Only the acquisition of raw materials is missing from the tour. The author suggests this could be added. Building a respectable terroir image takes years of practical experience that lead to the high quality of the end product. (Hall 2003, 35.)

The next and third question about the customers of the company is about **how the experience of the customers outside the distillery are taken into consideration by the company**. The view of the tourism operator is a vertical or hierarchical. To this view, the business is of exclusive significance with little the role of factors that are outside the company's functioning radius. (Groce 2010, 64.)

The answer states that *"companies contact Kyrö Distillery Company and ask according to their own needs. As is stated previously, meeting-packages and transportation services from Vaasa and Seinäjoki can be arranged. It is also possible to add coffee-, meeting-, and lunch services and an additional sauna service with the possibility for accommodation in the lake Kalliojärvi nearby."*

The answer shows that the elements outside the visit in the distillery are taken into consideration to the level of being able to arrange them, but not a lot of information is given about how the satisfaction of the customer about these services are taken into consideration and how to possibly develop these factors. Room for further development with the companies that arrange transportation services exists. The view of the tourist is a horizontal perspective, including all different elements and an overall evaluation of the experience. (Groce 2010, 64.)

The last question of the interview discusses **the actions taken by the company to ensure revisiting of customers**. As the World Tourism Organization states, the success of culinary tourism lies in the repetitiveness of customer behaviour. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 8.)

The answer points out *"the experience en locale being the most important factor. It has to be extraordinarily great. And it has been so, when the experience has "opened up the gate for revisitation". The answer also points out that a reason for revisitation must always be given. For example by explaining about possible expansions yet to come."*

The company seems to give out all the information available in one package. The author suggests that dividing the elements provided during the visitation to the distillery could lead to multiple visitations by the same customer. For example dividing tastings, tours and history of the area to different packages, each of which take less time at once, there could potentially be shorter visits by more customers at once with the room for

revisitation in order to experience everything that is available in the location. This could potentially increase the traffic to the destination. This requires more manpower in order to properly organize everything, but it might end up being profitable when and if enough customer traffic appears. After the expectations meet with the results, repeat purchase behaviour is likely. (World Tourism Organization 2012, 8.) It is easier to meet the expectations, when the focus is on a smaller entirety at once.

6 CONCLUSIONS

Kyrö Distiller Company is a unique and authentic company with high regard to locality. Although it mainly operates as a distillery, there is a potential to develop into a gastronomic tourism destination that is the main tourist attraction of the region. Considering trends in tourism and the business of producing gastronomic products, food tourism and authentic gastronomic experiences are key factors that are highly relevant to the company and its operations.

The company has already gained international reputation with its products, even though their main product is yet to be released. The restaurant in the destination named Kyrönmaan Matkailunedistämiskeskus, already operates as a touristic destination with packages including tours in the area and tastings of the company's products. By adding accommodation services to the location, it would fulfill the elements of a destination where a visitor could spend more time than just a day's visit.

The company is highly visible in social media and the brand is recognised not only by parties interested in their products, but also by locals and people interested in authentic products and destinations in general. By organizing events in the destination, there is a potential to attract much more visitors to the site.

The company has shown its potential to grow outside its current functioning radius with merchandise and secondary products that have gained success. The brand has shown promise with all of its products having a high relevance to the area itself. This is made possible with high level of professionalism, as is shown in the operations of the company. In order to ensure growth, more diverse repertoire of products with high regard to locality is suggested by the author to be a goal in the future. Also the need for further use of professional knowledge on the business side of things is suggested to be considered.

The company is a major contributor to the promotion of the region's authentic image. It has basically no competitors in the region within the distillery industry. Still it is yet to be praised by the high-end public organizations. Hopefully the future products of the

company can obtain the same level of recognition to the region as for example Champagne has been able to do in its own province.

Kyrö Distillery Company offers experiences instead of purely products. Experiences are offered in the destination itself where a visitor can learn, what are the factors that lead up to becoming a major brand in the industry. These experiences can be further developed to maximise their tourism potential by for example dividing them into smaller entities with more attention paid to details to ensure the high quality of the experience. Also the acquisition of raw materials is suggested to be added to the experience tour offered in the destination.

Further study needs to be conducted about the elements adding up to the terroir of the product. There is a possibility that materials exist in the process that could be changed to a local substitute.

Hall points out four qualities of unique gastronomic destinations: attraction, specification, certification and association. Kyrö Distillery Company fulfills all of these elements apart from the proper certification of their products. This has not only to do with the company itself, but also with the local and regional operators.

The region lacks strategy in order to properly promote it's unique potential. For example taking along other operators in the area such as breweries located nearby, an authentic gastronomic route could be built in the region. Services that are relevant to the visitors' experience that are not controlled by the company itself should be taken more into consideration, since these are factors that are included in the overall experience of the customer.

It is the author's opinion that this study has been successful. It has studied the actions of the company and found possible points of development in their actions. This thesis has presented ways of developing the gastronomic tourism potential of the subject company. These actions are not only related to the author's own opinion, but are based on theories and suggestions of parties such as the World Tourism Organization and important contributors to the studying of gastronomic destinations such as Professor C. Michael Hall.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Interview

YRITYS

1. Miten Kyrö Distillery Company toiminnallaan erottuu olennaisimmista (alueellisista) kilpailijoistaan?

Alueellisesti ensimmäinen asia silmiinpistävä tekijä on, että kyseessä on tislaamo, kun taas muut toimijat alueella ovat panimoita (Seinäjoki & Vaasa).

Lähimmät tislaamot ovat Tampereella ja Porissa, jotka ovat vähissä tislauksissa = tekninen erottaja. Tislaamona yritys erottuu brandillä ja tarinalla = kokemuksellinen tuote.

Brändi tulee vastaan hyllyllä ja kokemus paikanpäällä, johon liittyvät tarinat, maut, tuoksut ym. tekijät.

2. Millainen on yrityksen asema alueen matkailuklusterissa? (yhteistyö alueellisten toimijoiden, kuten esimerkiksi ravintola-, ja matkailualan toimijoiden sekä raaka-aineentuottajien kanssa)

Isokyrön mittakaavassa Kyrönmaan Matkailunedistämiskeskus on pyrkinyt keräämään paikallisia toimijoita ja keräämään heiltä promomateriaalia sekä viivästyttämään asiakkaiden läsnäoloa Isossakyrössä ohjaamalla asiakkaita muille palveluille. Yritys pyrkii olemaan verkoston ensimmäinen solmu ja kouruttamaan asiakkaat alueelle.

Alueellisesti tuote on ollut avaamassa ovia moneen paikkaan yhteistyön merkeissä. Seinäjoen ja Vaasan suunnassa portfolio on ollut kiinnostava alkoholituotteiden osalta ja yhteistyötä on haluttu tehdä. Baarit ja panimot ovat suoria yhteistyökumppaneita.

Tuotteissa on haluttu käyttää aitojen paikallisten kyröläisten marjatilojen marjoja.

Hotelli- ja ravintolapuoli on suoraan linkittynyt yrityksen toimintaan tarjoamalla majoituspalveluita sekä yrityksen tuotteita alueella. Lisäksi paikalliset matkanjärjestäjät eli bussiyhtiöt kuljettavat vieraita tislaamolle.

3. Miten, missä ja kenelle yritys markkinoi itseään? (lyhyesti suurimmat ja olennaisimmat markkinointikanavat sekä kohderyhmät)

Tärkein markkinoinnikanava on Facebook, jossa on 3000 seuraajaa Kyrönmaan Matkailukeskuksella ja 21000 tislaamon puolella. Tislaamon markkinointikanavaa käytetään myös ravintolan näkyvyyteen.

Paikallislehti pohjankyrö sekä matkailualan erityispainos sininen tie, julkaisevat yrityksen toiminnasta.

Pääkohderyhmä yrityksen toiminnassa on paikallisalue. Tarkoitus on laajentua maakunnalliseksi ja kansalliseksi. Suunta on kokoajan eteenpäin.

4. Miten paikallisuus ja perinteet näkyvät yrityksen toiminnassa?

Tislaamokierroksella hyvinkin vahvasti. Tislaamokierroksen alkuosa koostuu alueen historiasta.

Tislaamon puolella brändi on rakentunut alueen historian ympärille.

Kyrönmaan matkailunedistämiskeskuksen sisustus koostuu paikallishistoriallisista elementeistä.

Pubin puolelta löytyy paikallisen Esson vanhat kuparlamput, istuimina paikallisen alaja yläasteen tuoleja ja matot maataloilta lähialueelta.

TUOTTEET

5. Miten monimuotoisuus näkyy yrityksen tuotevalikoimassa?

Tislaamon puolella on 5 erilaista giniä, ruispohjaisia tuotteita 4 ja lisäksi uutuustuote Long Kyrö. Matkailunedistämiskeskuksen puolella on tarjolla tasting-laseja, kirjoja, t-paitoja ja baari.

Baarin tarjonta perustuu cocktaileihin. Tarjolla on omien tuotteiden lisäksi myös pientilaviinejä euroopasta sekä pienpanimo-oluita, joita ei saa välttämättä muualta alueella.

Yritys tarjoaa myös palvelukokonaisuuksia. Nämä sisältävät kokouspalveluita, tislaamokierroksia workshoppeja, dinner-paketteja ja tislaamokierros + tasting-paketin. Näitä on mahdollisuus laajentaa asiakkaan toiveesta.

6. Miten yrityksen valmistavat tuotteet liittyvät ympäröivään alueeseen ja miten nämä asiat on tuotu esille asiakkaille? (esim. mitkä alueelliset, maantieteelliset ym. tekijät maistuvat/näkyvät tuotteissa)

Alueellisuus on vahvasti tuotu esille tuotteissa. Viskit tehdään suomalaisesta ruismaltaasata ja kyröläisestä pohjavedestä. Ginipuolella tuotteet valmistetaan suomalaisista aromitisleistä (kerätään esimerkiksi koivunlehtiä joista tehdään aromitisle).

Brändissä näkyy oma napue-sans -fontti, joka on Napuen taistelun muistomerkistä lähtöisin.

Tislaamon lokaatio on vanha Oltermannin meijeri jolla myös oma historiansa. Meijeri sijaitsee Napuen 1714-vuoden teistelukentän rajoilla.

7. Mitä laadullisia tekijöitä on otettu huomioon tuotteiden valmistuksessa ja miten alan ammattiosaaminen on otettu huomioon yrityksen toiminnassa?

Tislaamon puolella päätislaajana toimii Kalle Valkonen, ympäristökologi, jolla on tislauksen tutkinto, jota on myös laajennettu ulkomailla.

Laatua tarkkaillaan jatkuvasti ja se on äärimmäisen tärkeää.

2 apulaistislaajaa ja 1 päätislaaja varmistavat tuotteen laadun jatkuvuuden mm. ottamalla joka erästä referenssipullon. Tämä on tehokas tapa tarkastella tuotteiden laatua jälkikäteenkin, koska tunnetusti makuaistikin heittelee päivittäin.

Ravintolapuolella toimii kokenut bar manager ja haastateltavan henkilökohtainen opastausta on hyödynnetty toiminnassa.

Yrityksen toiminnassa on pyritty vahvuuksien yhdistämiseen, joilla aikaansaadaan mielekäs kokemus asiakkaille.

Toimintaa kehitetään jatkuvasti palautteen mukaan.

Brändipuolella yhteistyökumppanina toimii Vaasalainen Werklig, jonka asiantuntemusta hyödynnetään.

8. Miten tuotteiden / brändin mahdollinen menestys ja arvostus on noteerattu julkisen tason toimijoiden taholta?

Viime vuonna yrityksen toiminnasta tehtiin 40-50 lehtihaastattelua, tv-haastattelu, radiohaastatteluita suomessa ja briteissä sekä yritys on ollut esillä erilaisissa tapahtumissa

Yritys on kiertänyt Visitfinlandin ja Finpron kanssa maailmalla.

Tekesiltä yritys on saanut markkinointitukea.

Eri maissa suurlähettiläät ovat olleet auttamassa toiminnassa. Yritys on kyennyt järjestämään mm. Lontoon suurlähettilään asunnossa tapahtumia.

Vasek ja Start ovat muistaneet yritystä pohjanmaan uusiyritys -palkinnolla ja lisäksi Isokyrön kunta on palkinnut yrityksen isokyrön yrittäjä-palkinnolla.

Paikallislehdet ovat muistaneet yritystä Antti-patsaalla ja maaseudun tulevaisuus yhdessä kumppaneineen on muistanut yritystä maaseudun tulevaisuuden tekijäpalkinnolla.

ASIAKKAAT / VIERAAT

9. Mitä oheistoimintaa tuotteiden valmistuksen lisäksi yritys harjoittaa?

Yritys tarjoaa oheistuotteiden (T-paidat, tasting lasit, suklaa, kirjat) lisäksi kokemuksia.

Kokemusesimerkkinä toimii dinner, jolla vieraat otetaan vastaan, istutetaan ravintolaan ja tarjotaan maailman parhaat gin&tonicit. Taustalla soi rentohenkinen indie pop rock ja vieraat toivotetaan tervetulleiksi.

Tämän jälkeen tarjolla on seinäjokisen, paikallisia raaka-aineita käyttävän juurella-ravintolan tarjoama ruokailu, jonka yhteen tarjotaan cocktaileja ja keskieuropalaisia pientilaviinejä tai pienpanimo-oluita. Makukokonaisuus on uniikki.

Ruokailun päätteeksi tarjolla on kahvia, jonka jälkeen lähdetään tislaamokierrokselle. Kierros alkaa historiallisella tarinoinnilla alueesta, rakennuksesta, yrityksestä ja mitä näkyy ja löytyy alueella. Läpi käydään tuotantotilat ja menetelmät, laajentumismahdollisuudet ja prosessivaiheet ja kierros päättyy takaisin ravintolan puolelle, jossa tarjolla on tasting yrityksen tuotteista.

10. Miten tislaamalla vierailijat pääsevät oppimaan tuotteiden valmistuksesta ja sen vaiheista sekä raaka-aineista?

Yrityksen toimintaa mennään läpi sillä tarkkuudella, että mitä mallastaminen on, millaisia viskejä on, miten tuotteet erottuu globaalissa portfolioissa.

Mäskäys ja tislaus käydään läpi, tynnyröinnin prosessin tarkoitus ym., miten pullotus tehtiin aiemmin, miten se tehdään nyt ja miten mahdollisesti tulevaisuudessa.

Myös paketointi käydään läpi vaiheittain. (miten ja miksi näin)

11. Miten tislaamalla vierailijoiden kokemukset itse tuotteen ulkopuolella on otettu huomioon? (majoitus, kuljetus ym. tekijät)

Yritykset ottavat yhteyttä ja kyselevät tarpeidensa mukaan. Tarjolla on kokouspalveluita ja kuljetuspalveluita Seinäjoki-Vaasa-akselilta.

Kuljetusten yhteen on mahdollista sopia kahvit, kokoukset, lounaat ja lisäksi saunat ja mahdollinen majoitus Kalliojärvellä.

12. Mitä yritys tekee saadakseen vierailijat palaamaan uudestaan?

Tärkeintä on kokemus paikanpäällä. Sen pitää olla erinomaisen hyvä. Kokemus ollut hyvä kun ensimmäisellä kerralla se avaa oven tulla uudelleen.

Aina pitää kertoa syy palata, esimerkiksi kuvailemalla mitä on tulossa.