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Case: Vaasan kaupungin Kulttuurikasarmi

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TIIVISTELMÄ

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Opinnäytetyön tarkoitus on löytää keinoja, jolla Vaasan Kulttuurikasarmia voidaan kehittää matkailukohteena. Opinnäytetyön aiheen sain entiseltä työnantajaltani, Vaasan kaupungin Kulttuurikeskukselta. Työssäni olin myös tekemisissä Kulttuurikasarmin ja alueen tekijöiden kanssa. Kulttuurikasarmi hankeprojekti aloitettiin vuonna 2012 ja aluetta on pyritty kehittämään niin että siitä tulisi näkyvä kulttuuri-keskus Vaasan sydämessä.

Kulttuurikasarmi sijaitsee Vaasan keskustan kupeessa. Puukasarmialue oli ennen Suomen armeijan käytössä. Alue on säästynyt uudisrakentamiselta, niinpä se näyttää suurin piirtein samalta kuin August Boman sen suunnitteli noin 130 vuotta sitten. Alueella on paljon potentiaalia, kuten laaja ja värikäs historia sekä erilaiset kulttuurialan toimijat, mutta sitä ei ole valjastettu kokonaan markkinointi käyttöön.

Opinnäytetyön teoria osuus koostuu kulttuurimatkailun, markkinoinnin ja tuotekehityksen teorioista sekä turismin, kulttuurin, ServQualin ja Kulttuurikasarmin määritelmistä.

ABSTRACT

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Title	Tourism product development. Case: Vaasan kaupungin Kulttuurikasarmi
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The aim of this thesis is to find out tools that can help in developing of Kulttuurikasarmi as a tourism product. This thesis concept was given to me by my employer, the Cultural Department of the city of Vaasa. Cultural department launched the Kulttuurikasarmi project in the year 2012 and the department has developed the area to become a cultural attraction in Vaasa.

Kulttuurikasarmi is located in the heart of the city of Vaasa. The area served as a barracks area for the military before the military base in Vaasa was closed down and moved away. The barracks area has a vast and colorful history that has not been harvested in to marketing of the area. In English Kulttuurikasarmi could be translated into Culture Brigade, but in this paper it will be referred to by its Finnish name, Kulttuurikasarmi.

The theory part of this thesis will focus on theories from tourism product development, cultural tourism, marketing and define culture, tourism and Kulttuurikasarmi as well as ServQual.

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1 INTRODUCTION

This thesis is about developing the old military area in Vaasa, now known as Kulttuurikasarmi, as a tourist attraction. In English Kulttuurikasarmi could be translated into Culture Brigade, but in this paper it will be referred to by its Finnish name, Kulttuurikasarmi.

The Cultural department launched the Kulttuurikasarmi project in the year 2012 and the department has developed the area to become a cultural attraction in Vaasa. The area already has cultural activities and operators but its full potential has not been harvested yet. Information about the Kulttuurikasarmi project is based on information given by the Cultural Department.

1.1 Aim of the thesis

The aim of this thesis is to give concrete suggestions for the Cultural Department of the city of Vaasa on how to develop Kulttuurikasarmi as a tourist attraction. As mentioned later in the thesis, Kulttuurikasarmi has been launched as *'a lively cultural area that offers a wide range of cultural services for tourists and citizens'* but its potential has not been really taken into account.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

This thesis consists of three parts, the introduction, theoretical part and the empirical part. In the theoretical part, main theories are about cultural tourism, product development, marketing and service quality. Information and statistics about Vaasa are presented as well as Kulttuurikasarmi and the project on Kulttuurikasarmi. At the end of theoretical part, the research and data collection methods are discussed. Empirical part discusses the research method, data collection and the research results. In the end of the thesis there is a conclusion with development proposals.

1.3 Limitations

This thesis research was limited by the number of participants in the research. A new survey would be in place for example during the summer or early autumn with a bigger participant count.

2 KULTTUURIKASARMI

City of Vaasa's webpage defines Kulttuurikasarmi as a wooden brigade area that is an important part of Vaasa's culture both historically and architecturally. Kulttuurikasarmi consists of cultural actors on the old brigade area in Vaasa - cultural organizations, associations, companies and individual artists.

The idea behind Kulttuurikasarmi is to create a functional base and a network for creative industries that is open to co-operation. Various cultural actors could meet and work there. According to the City of Vaasa's webpage the brigade area is a lively cultural area that offers a wide range of cultural services for tourists and citizens.



Picture 1 Kulttuurikasarmi, design Ilkka Nyqvist

Kulttuurikasarmi does not have their own homepage but they are presented in Facebook. Currently their Facebook page has 564 likes. They post approx. once in a month, mostly about events happening in Kulttuurikasarmi or by actors in Kulttuurikasarmi.

2.1 Kulttuurikasarmi project

The city of Vaasa's Culture Department started the Kulttuurikasarmi project in 2012. The goal was to build Kulttuurikasarmi as a visible and actual cultural center in the heart of Vaasa and with that cultural actors could be promoted more visibly to various groups of people. Before the implementation of the project, Culture Department consulted Creader Oy about organizing Kulttuurikasarmi and its administration in the year 2011. The consultation report suggested using building number 13 as the base for cultural activities and having a café in the area to bring more value to visitors among other suggestions.

Building number 13 has been developed as a cultural attraction. It holds an art gallery, artists' studios and many events in Kulttuurikasarmi, such as children's' festival Festival Piccolo and the Christmas bazaar, are held in building 13 or its surrounding area. Currently there is no operating café in Kulttuurikasarmi area. Soldier's home association usually has open café during Night of Arts but one day in a year is not enough.

2.2 Actors in Kulttuurikasarmi

Actor	Description
Vasa Arbis (Vasa arbetarinstitut)	Community college.
Vaasan Sotilaskotiyhdistys	Soldier's home association.
Teater Casa	Novia UAS's students' theatre.
Tanssikoulu Kipinä	A dance school with wide range of classes, suitable for all, regardless of age or dance experience.
Tria- Lasten ja Nuorten Kuntoutus	Company specialized in children's physiotherapy.

Vaasan kaupungin kotihoito	“The City of Vaasa’s home care”, provides services for elderly people living at home.
TaiKon – Basic education in art in Vaasa	TaiKon offers qualitative basic education in art in Vaasa to children and youngsters.
Pohjanmaan tanssin aluekeskus	Supports professional dancers in Ostrobothnia region, helps to increase dancers employment, active supporter of dance culture.
Black Wall Gallery	Non-profit art gallery run by Vaasan Taiteilijaseura (Vaasa’s Artist Association).
Taidelainaamo Artotek	Art “library” run by Vaasan Taiteilijaseura. Visitors can rent art from Artotek by paying a monthly fee.
Kpanlogo Yede	Kpanlogo Yede provides a place for people interested in African culture, especially dancing and drumming. Association conducts private classes in African dance and rhythms and also performs at various cultural events.
Pikku Aasin nukketatteri	Professional puppet theatre that performs in various cultural as well as private events.
DJ Salazar Pakyo	DJ Salazar Pakyo has his studio in the building 13.

Tangocho Wasa	Dance association that organizes dance courses on Argentine tango and various dance events.
Teatteri Soiva Sammakko	Children's theatre with involving plays. Theatre combines live music, storytelling, different aspects of theatre and children's games.
Pro Artibus	The Pro Artibus Foundation is an independent organization affiliated with the Foundation for Swedish Culture in Finland. Its' main mission is to promote visual arts in all parts of the Swedish-speaking regions of Finland. The foundation manages and expands an art collection comprising of work by Swedish-speaking Finnish artists.
Platform	Platform is an artist-run initiative founded in the year of 2000. Platform holds a project room and a residency program in Vaasa, Finland. The aim of Platform is to promote, show and be part of producing international contemporary art.

As one can see from the list of actors in Kulttuurikasarmi, most of them are related to culture. There are three actors who are not linked to cultural activities, Soldier's home association, Tria- Lasten ja Nuorten Kuntoutus and Vaasan kaupungin kotihoito. Soldier's Home Association's linkage to culture is debatable because it represents Finland's and the brigade area's history.

3 CULTURAL TOURISM

There are various definitions for cultural tourism, as Greg Richards (2003) concludes that the concept of cultural tourism is fairly unclear, and many different definitions of term are used varying from case to case. Cultural tourism has become so popular that everyone seems to be familiar with it and a lot of people are interested in developing it. (Richards, G. (2003) What is Cultural Tourism?)

Alf H. Walle defines cultural tourism as ‘tourism that is concerned with cultural phenomena. Early cultural tourism tended to involve “high” or “elite” culture where as much current cultural tourism concerns highland or folk culture as well.’ (Alf. H Walle 1998, p. 23)

David Leslie and Marianna Sigala state that one of the best known conceptual definitions of cultural tourism is by Richards who stated that cultural tourism is ‘the movement of persons to cultural attractions away from their normal place and experiences to satisfy their cultural needs.’ Leslie and Sigala also mention a technical definition by Richards stating that cultural tourism includes ‘all movements of persons to specific cultural attractions, such as heritage sites, artistic and cultural manifestations, arts and drama outside their normal place of residence’ (Leslie & Sigala - International Cultural Tourism: Management, Implications and Cases. P. 3)

As mentioned before, there are difficulties in defining ‘cultural tourism’. Howard Huges gives four different term of cultural tourism, which are universal, wide, narrow and sectorized. This term labelling is easier to understand through a figure, which is shown below (Howard Huges (2000). Arts, Entertainment and Tourism. P. 51-53).

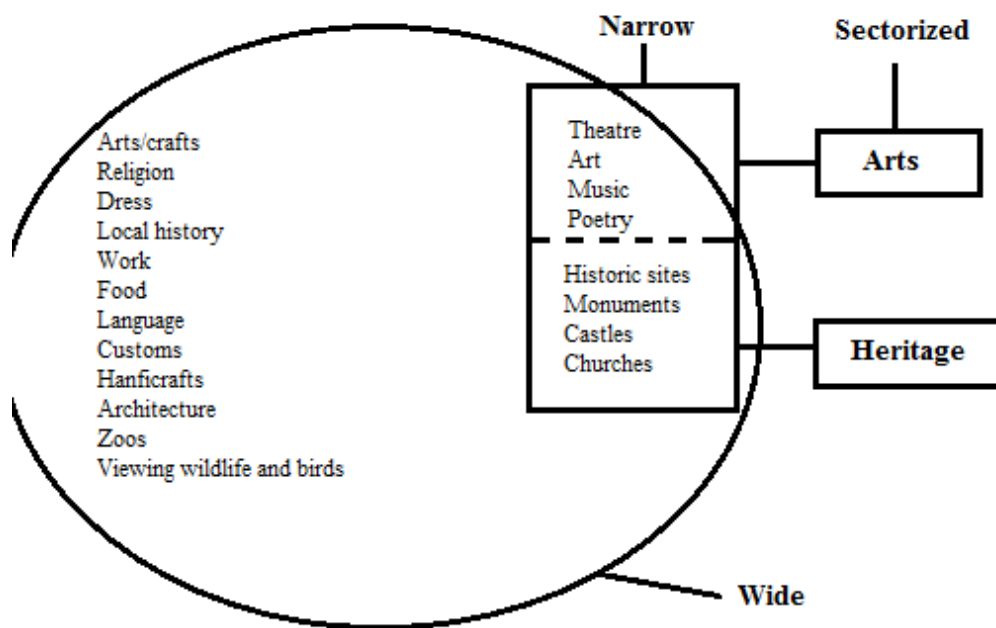


Figure 1 Variations of cultural tourism (Howard Hughes (2000). P. 53)

Universal cultural tourism is the widest definition of this term. It is a complex of values, ideas, attitudes and other meaningful symbols which binds people into groups and affects groups character so that a distinct way of life results – for example Finland has a different culture compared to Japan's culture. (Howard Hughes (2000). Arts, Entertainment and Tourism. P. 52)

European Centre for Traditional and Regional Cultures (ECTRAC) gives resource based definition of cultural tourism by defining resources affiliated with cultural tourism. These resources are:

1. Archaeological sites and museums
2. Architecture (ruins, famous buildings, whole towns)
3. Art, sculpture, crafts, galleries, festivals, events
4. Music and dance
5. Drama (theatre, films, dramatists)
6. Language and literature study, tours, events
7. Religious festivals, pilgrimages
8. Complete (folk or primitive) cultures and sub-cultures.

These kind of recourse based definitions are common with cultural organizations and tourist boards. (Richards, G. (2003) *What is Cultural Tourism?* P. 7)

Richard states in the introduction of *What is Cultural Tourism* (2003) that cultural tourism has a long history, dating back to the Grand Tour (the traditional trip of Europe undertaken by mainly upper-class European young men). It is also one of the most popular types of tourism and many policy makers seem to keen on developing it. One reason being that every place has some kind of cultural activity that can be developed as a tourism attraction or a product – unlike for example archipelago tourism which needs an archipelago in order to work.

This is the case also in Finland, where Visit Finland has a national program for culture (Culture Finland). Visit Finland works closely with ministries, travel businesses, transport companies and Finnish regions and it is completely funded by the Finnish Government. The Culture Finland program targets to increase cultural tourism to and in Finland by improving collaboration among numerous culture and tourism industry parties in order to create new and attractive cultural tourism products and services. (visitfinland.com)

Comparing the ECTRAC's list of cultural resources to the list of actors in Kulttuurikasarmi, one can draw up the conclusion that Kulttuurikasarmi has the base to become a cultural attraction. There are two dance schools, art school, an art gallery, various artist's studios, theatres, musicians and organization that promotes African culture. The area itself is architecturally an historical site as it has remained the almost same way August Boman designed it in the 19th century.

3.1 Definition of culture

The Cambridge Dictionaries Online defines culture (arts) as *the arts of describing, showing, or performing that represent the traditions or the way of life of a particular people or group; literature, art, music, dance, theater, etc.*

4 MARKETING

4.1 Definition of marketing

The basic idea of marketing is to get and keep customers at a profit and the core of it is creating value to the customer. Marketing exists through exchanges. Exchange is defined as an act or a process of receiving something from someone and giving something in return. The ‘something’ can be physical good, service, idea or money. (David Jobber and Fiona Ellis-Chadwick (2013). P. 4)

Bonita M. Kolb uses the definition of marketing by the American Marketing Association website, www.marketingpower.com, ‘*the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods, and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational goals*’ in her book *Tourism marketing for cities and towns*. This definition describes marketing as exchanges which supports the definition made by Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick.

The traditional idea of marketing concept is that companies attain revenue and other objectives by satisfying customers. This theory is necessary but it is not adequate because it ignores a core aspect of commercial life: competition. Modern marketing concept can be defined as: *The achievement of corporate goals through meeting and exceeding customer needs and expectations better than the competition*. (David Jobber and Fiona Ellis-Chadwick (2013). P. 4)

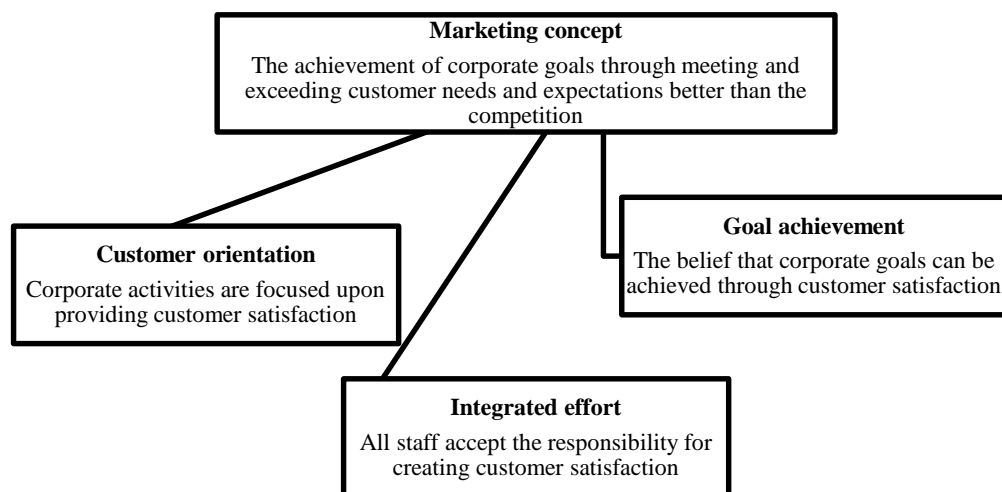


Figure 2 Key components of the marketing concept (David Jobber and Fiona Ellis-Chadwick (2013). P. 5)

Marketing is a vital part of tourism management. Tourism marketing is simply putting the right marketing concepts to planning a strategy to attract visitors to a destination, whether it is a resort, city, region or a country. (Bonita M. Kolb (2006). Tourism marketing for cities and towns). The principles of marketing can be put in to practice at any tourism enterprise but there are differences between establishments in operational capacity and impact. D in financial resources, control of the market, degree of co-operation with other tourism companies and customer amount. It is natural that organizations with large budgets – international hotel chains, airlines etc. - are more advanced in marketing than smaller organizations, individual entrepreneurs with smaller budgets. (A.V. Seaton and M.M Bennet (1997). The Marketing of Tourism Products: Concepts, Issues and Cases)

In tourism planning consumer orientation means understanding the needs, desires and perceptions of the visitor/tourist.

4.2 Marketing mix

The marketing program combines a number of elements into a workable strategic plan. Marketing mix is different for every actor with in tourism field, they must

constantly search for the right marketing mix- right combination of elements that will produce a profit. (McIntosh, Goeldner, Ritchie (1995) P.427) The original concept of the marketing mix consists of four major elements: *product, price, promotion* and *place*. These ‘4-Ps’ are the key decision areas that marketers must manage so that they satisfy or exceed customer needs better than the competition. There is also an extended marketing mix of ‘7-Ps’ adding *people, process* and *physical evidence* into the mix. (Jobber and Ellis-Chadwich 2013. P. 19).

Seaton and Bennet define the 4-Ps through questions:

- Products: What is/are the product to be offered? What are its features and benefits? How will it serve the needs of its customers? What are its competitors?
 - Price: At what price should the product be offered to the market?
 - Place: Where should the product be distributed?
 - Promotion: How should the tourism product be publicized?
- (Seaton & Bennet (1997). P. 18)

4.2.1 Product

As this thesis focuses on product development, it will also focus mainly on product element of the marketing mix. Jobber and Ellis-Chadwick define products as *a good or service offered or performed by an organization or individual, which is capable of satisfying customer needs*. (Jobber & Ellis-Chadwick 2013, P. 27). Within tourism, leisure and hospitality products, the concept changes to a service product and it has specific characteristics that set the product apart from the more general goods. Understanding the complexity of a service product concept is important in order to successfully market tourism products. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008). P. 520)

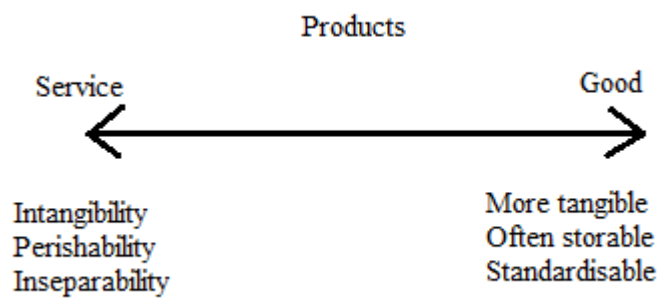


Figure 3 Services and goods continuum (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, Wandhill (2008) p. 521)

Products can be placed along the continuum, as seen above, most of the products are a combination of both services and goods. A pure service would be for example a consultation where as a pure good would be clothing or a sack of flours. Some products have more service content than others, and if they are able to be placed to the service side of the continuum shown in Figure 3, they can be called as service products. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, Wandhill (2008) p. 521). According to Pine and Gilmore, services are intangible activities customized to the individual request of a known client whereas goods are commodities that are tangible items sold to largely customers who buy them off the shelf. (Pine and Gilmore (1999). P.7-8)

4.2.2 Characteristics of the service product

A tourism service as a product is one of the hardest products to define. It is an abstract concept that is made up with various different elements. Service products usually also include factors that cannot be controlled, such as weather, infrastructure, characteristics and perceptions of an area. (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 123)

A service product is intangible, which means that it cannot be easily evaluated or demonstrated in advance of its purchase. Because of this marketers of tourism and hospitality products have problems due to fixed time and space constraints. They cannot easily demonstrate the good sides of the products or experiences they are selling.

Service products are also perishable, which means that unlike goods, they cannot be stored to be sold later in the future. Unsold tickets to an art exhibition or hotel beds are empty revenue that cannot be recouped. Perishability is also linked to the seasonality of tourism industry. This means that there are high and low seasons that marketers within tourism and hospitality industry must take into account when thinking of pricing and promotion strategies.

Inseparability in tourism products means that the product is often consumed and produced at the same time. This means that both the service provider and customer are present when the service function happens. The simultaneous process of production and consumption can lead to circumstances where it is challenging to guarantee the overall satisfaction of customers. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, Wandhill (2008) p. 521-522)

5 TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

5.1 Product development with in tourism

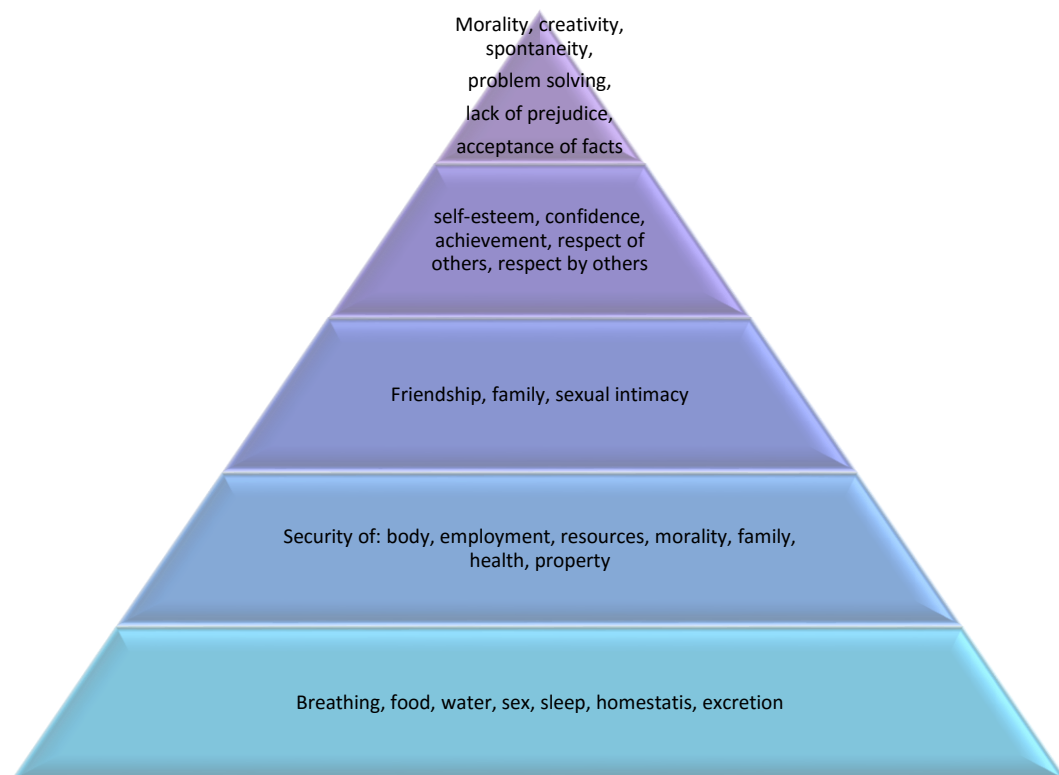
The aim of product development is to develop product that satisfy or/and benefit customers/markets. Therefore product planning should be approached from the consumer's point of view. Creating the right service or product is not easy; consumer needs, wants and desires change constantly and competitive forces typically carry product through a life cycle, so that a product that is successful at one point declines and "dies" at a later time. (McIntosh, Goeldner, Ritchie (1995) P.430).

The amount and variety of tourism products is continuously growing. With the growth of supply, intensifying competition and travelers becoming more demanding and conscious, one can say that also the needs of travelers have changed. The core need of a modern traveler is experiences. In this case the core of a tourism product should be the experience that the traveler receives. Other elements, such as sight, surrounding area, staff etc., are elements that support this core. In the Maslow's hierarchy of needs, experiences are rated in the highest level of needs called "Self-actualization". (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 123, 25)

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is probably the best-known theory of motivation. The theory is in the form of a ranking, or hierarchy, of the arrangements of individual needs. He argued that when the lowest needs are not satisfied, they will control the needs of a person. If these psychological needs were satisfied, they would no longer motivate and the individual would be driven by the next level of the hierarchy. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008) p. 45)

Customer needs are always the starting point when developing tourism products from the customer point of view. The needs and motivations of the traveler create a base for service development. Travelers have basic needs, which are food, rest and safety. Social needs, friendship, romance or sex are from the perspective of tourism a great force that motivates people to travel. Even though social needs are a huge motivator for travelling the core need for travelers seems to be the search

for experiences. When this is the case, tourism product development should focus on creating experiences. (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 129)



Picture 2 Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008) p. 45)

An experience can usually be illustrated by a story, where the experiencer has the central role. The traveler is the hero of the story, whereas the service provider acts as the writer, director, stager and assistant of the story. The creator of tourism product or service creates the stage, acquires the other actors and takes care that the equipment are in place during the experience. A successful tourism product is created when the main star, the traveler, lands a star role. (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 129)

Service product development can be demonstrated by a three level model. The highest level is the abstract product concept. The concrete level is the service system which includes the parts that are needed to create the product in real life. Those are equipment, space, staff and other customers. The third level of the model is the

service process, which is located between the above mentioned levels. In this level the actual product is created. The imagined product concept is fulfilled when the consumer uses the service system. The development of a service product is really the development of service or product concept, service system and service process. In actual service process the product is created through the interactions between consumers, staff and other consumers. (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 130)

The stages in service product development follow the steps in general product development but what makes service product development different, is linking the customer to the stages of development. The base for development is usually an idea. When a customer suggests some changes to a service or a product, or has a completely new idea, they have done most of the creative process for the service provider. Whereas if the idea for a new product is created by a service provider or a outsourced company and it is not compared to the needs of customers, a lot of useless work can be done. (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 131)

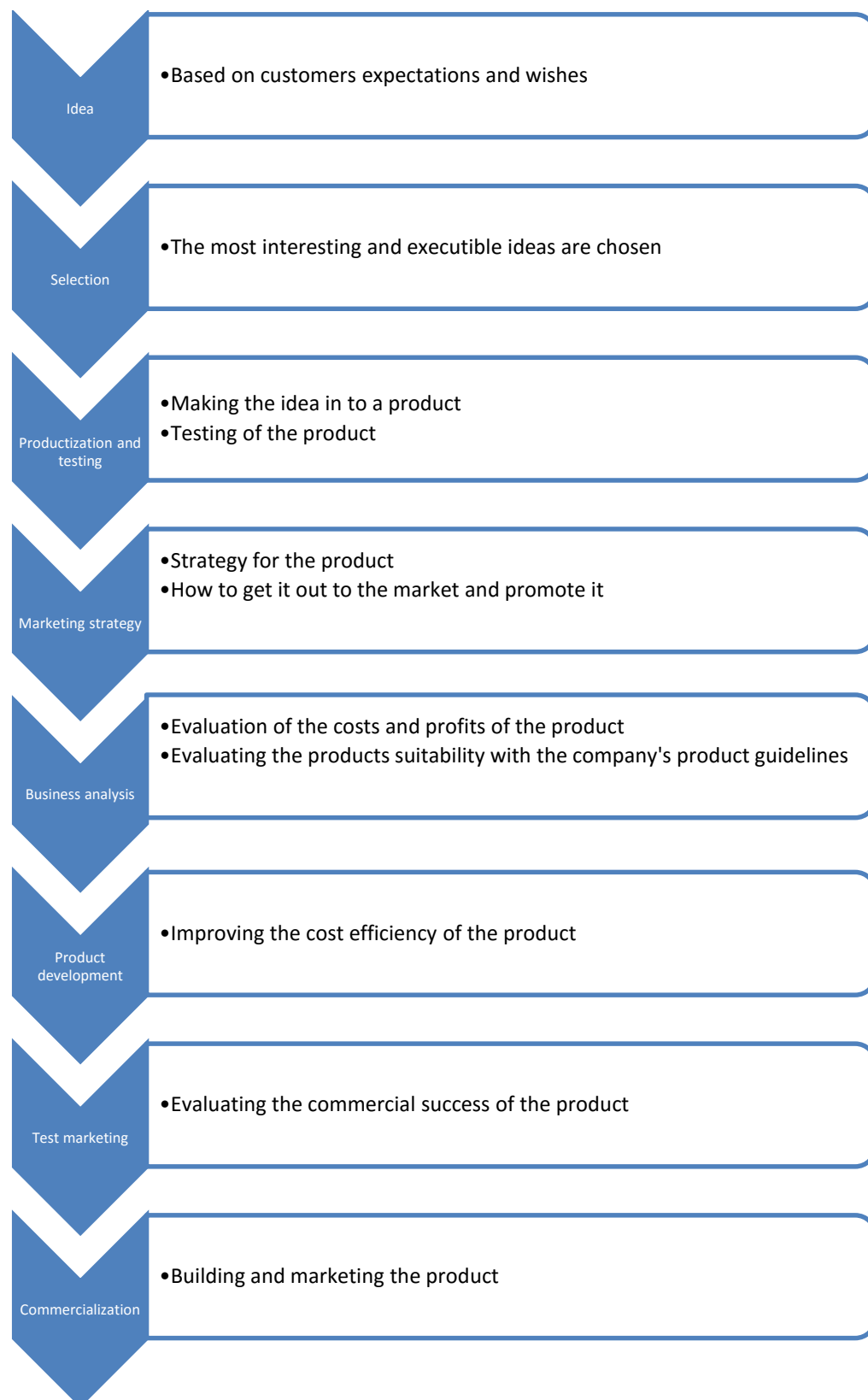


Figure 4 Product development of a new product within a tourism company (Borg, Kivi, Partti (2002) p. 134)

6 SERVICE QUALITY -MODEL

Quality service is important to any organization today. Yet the difficulty of providing constant quality service is matched only by the difficulty of defining and measuring it. The problem comes from its intangibility, subjectivity, and the gap between expectation and perception in service delivery. As mentioned before, service delivery itself is also variable and dependent on the individual. (A.V. Seaton, M.M Bennet (1997) p. 456-457)

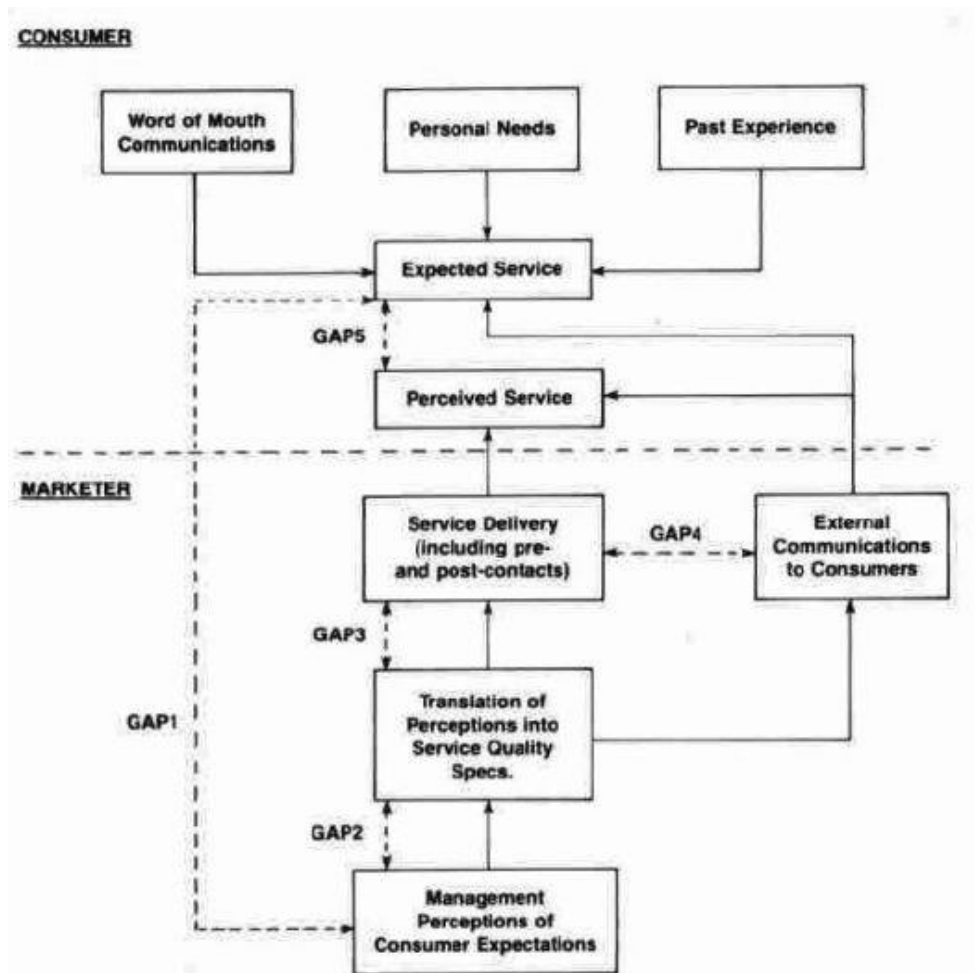
Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1990) define the service quality on the basis of ten dimensions used by consumers in evaluating service: tangibles, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security, access, communication and understanding the customer. (p. 446-447). The model of service quality claims that the consumer evaluates the quality of a service experience as the outcome of the difference between expected and perceived service. The model highlighted the main requirements for a service provider to deliver the expected service quality. By understanding the flow of this model it is believed that it is possible to provide greater management control over tourist service relationships. This should lead to better understanding of the key points of influence on the satisfactions of the consumer. (A.V. Seaton, M.M Bennet (1997) p. 446-447; Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert and Wanhill (2008) p.533)

There are five gaps in the service quality model created by Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry. These five gaps might lead to failed service delivery.

1. **Gap between consumer expectation and management perception.** Lack of understanding what consumers expect from a service creates this gap.
2. **Gap between management perception and service quality specification.** This gap results when there is a discrepancy between what management perceives to be consumer expectations and the actual service quality specifications established. Goals might not be high standard, clear or they might be unrealistic.
3. **Gap between service quality specifications and service delivery.** Poor employee performance might cause the gap. Even if there are guidelines on

how to perform service well, there is no guarantee that the employee will stick to the guidelines.

4. **Gap between service delivery and external communications.** If the service provider promotes an image that does not match the reality of the service provided this gap will occur.
5. **Gap between perceived service and delivered service.** This gap results when one or more of the previous gaps occur. (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, Wanhill (2008) p. 534-535)



Picture 3 Service Quality Model (Cooper, Fletcher, Fyall, Gilbert, Wanhill (2008) p. 535)

To find the level and extent of the Gap 5, authors developed 22 or 21 item SERVQUAL scale. The model's authors identified five core components of service quality:

1. **Tangibles** involve appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials.
2. **Reliability** is ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately.
3. **Responsiveness** means willingness to help customers and to provide prompt service, whilst capturing the notion of flexibility and the ability to customize the service to customer needs
4. **Assurance** means competence and courtesy of employees and their ability to convey trust and confidence. (This category includes this measured components: competence, courtesy, credibility and security)
5. **Empathy** represents provision of caring, individualized attention to customers. (Includes access, communication and understanding the customer)

SERVQUAL can be used or adapted to measure service quality in variety of service settings. Another advantage is that it can be used for compare competitors and wide range of services. (<http://www.qualtrics.com>)

A questionnaire based on the SERVQUAL the core components of service quality could be used as a tool to identify what the visitors at Kulttuurikasarmi would like to improve. As mentioned before *‘The aim of product development is to develop product that satisfy or/and benefit customers/markets. Therefore product planning should be approached from consumer’s point of view.’* This questionnaire could give the service providers a wider idea of problems that they need to fix. The questionnaire could be filled by multiple mystery shoppers, who would visit the barracks area on different occasions, for example opening nights, weekend, evening, during the day.

7 RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter goes through the theory and the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methods. It also covers the reasons why qualitative research methods was chosen for this thesis. At the end of this chapter the data collection tools and a short summary of the thesis questionnaire is provided.

7.1 Qualitative and quantitative methods

Qualitative research is a research method where the researcher relies on the opinions of participants. Data is collected through asking broad, general questions and the data consists mostly of words or text from the participants. The researcher then describes and analyses these words for themes, and conducts the survey in a subjective, biased way.

When conducting a quantitative study the researcher decides what to study, asks specific, narrow questions, collects numeric data from participants, analyses these numbers using statistics and conducts the inquiry in an unbiased, objective manner. (John W. Cresswell, 2005. p. 39)

This research uses qualitative research methods to collect data. Qualitative research gives more room for the participants to explain themselves and their needs, which is important when the thesis is about developing a product from the customer's point of view. When conducting the research, number of the participants does not need to be as high as in quantitative study, as the answers are usually broader and longer in a qualitative study.

7.2 Data collection

The data for this thesis was collected through mystery shopping. Contestants visited Kulttuurikasarmi and evaluated it through 22 questions based on the service quality model. They evaluated the previously identified five core components of service quality; tangibles, reliability, assurance, empathy and responsiveness; which are a good base for developing a business from the customer's point of view. The actual questionnaire can be seen in the appendix of the thesis.

The contestants were both male and female, of different ages and various backgrounds in order to get more varied survey results. The visiting time and date also varied, some of them went there during the week, opening nights, weekends, the day etc. This also helped to get more diverse answers to the questionnaire. Data was collected from the end of April to the end of May.

7.2.1 Mystery shopping

Mystery shopping offers companies with information a company could never gather themselves. It gives information on what business is to their customers in an unfiltered, measureable way with the goal of fixing any wrongs that were noticed during the evaluation. When designed correctly, mystery shopping can:

- Increase sales and cost-effectiveness with more involved and contented customers
- Offer a hands-on way to develop and enhance services
- Inspire personnel to better represent the place and create an pleasant atmosphere for customers
- Create enthusiasm amongst customers by meeting and then exceeding their expectations

Mystery shopping is all about valuable feedback. Email and in-store surveys can give a company a broad picture of customer satisfaction, whereas mystery shopping goes further by providing unbiased information about the “feel” of the company at a deeper level. (Mystery shopping 101: The basics of a customer experience assessment)

8 MYSTERY SHOPPING RESULTS

Overall feedback from the mystery shopping was neutral, the staff got most of the positive feedback. There are some things in Kulttuurikasarmi that need development but the area got positive comments as well. In this thesis the results are combined but divided in to five parts, as they were in the questionnaire.

8.1 Tangibles

Generally the feedback on the tangible part of the questionnaire was positive. The overall look of the area was enjoyed by all five respondents. The architecture and old buildings were enjoyable to all of the respondents and were considered to fit with the idea of having cultural actors working in the old barrack premises.

Complaints were only given to the lack of information online about the location of the place. The respondents felt that the information about the place was hard to find online and there was no exact address available. The signs in the actual premises were considered good. Some of the respondents found that the lack of “uniforms” made it hard to find out who was actually working there and who was just a visitor.

8.2 Reliability

Reliability received positive feedback from all of the respondents. The staff seemed reliable, friendly and helpful. Only one person commented that she did not really get any service while visiting Kulttuurikasarmi. Some of the respondents hoped for better guides/signs to the area.

8.3 Responsiveness and Assurance

As in the reliability part, also staff responsiveness received positive feedback. Mostly the respondents were the only customers when visiting, so the service was fast and attentive. One of the respondents did not get service right away when he was attending a gallery opening. He also mentioned that the language barrier might have been an issue, as he does not speak Finnish or Swedish as his mother tongue.

Also the assurance part of the SERVQUAL –questionnaire received positive feedback. The service was seen as polite and the staff knew a lot of things about the barracks area and other actors in it. The only negative thing was that the staff did not tell anything about the Kulttuurikasarmi unless they were asked directly about it.

8.4 Empathy

Most of the respondents were unaware of the opening hours of the premises. Late (until 18.00) opening hours were considered good as people who have jobs could come and visit the place after work. The areas' personalisation divided the group, as some of them felt like they were not really the target group and some of them felt like they fit in perfectly. There were wishes for English service as well as more attentive service. One of the respondents was an artist as well so he felt that the area suited his needs very well and that the service was specialized for every customer. He said that he can be a difficult customer but he has received very good service at Kulttuurikasarmi.

8.5 Other comments, development suggestions etc.

All of the people who took part in the research part in the study research also gave development suggestions, even though the answers were mostly positive. Ideas for future development:

- Some kind of lodging, for example a hostel. Previously there was a summer hostel in the barracks but it was considered to be quite expensive.
- Outdoor concerts, as there is a quite large sand area that is partly a parking lot. That is considered a good place to set up a stage.
- More marketing about the area and **clear** updated webpages
- Improve customer service by more actively showing the area, giving information to the customer etc.
- Develop the area from the point of view of the customers, update signs and webpage to suit customers' needs better.

9 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

9.1 Reliability

Reliability refers to the repeatability of the measurement results. Measurement or research reliability means, its ability to provide a non-random results. In other words, the term refers to research methodologies and indicators ability to achieve the results that were referred to. The reliability of a study can be measured in several ways. For example, if two scientists end up in the same kind of result, or if a person is examined in different times and the result is the same every time, it can be said that the study results are reliable. (Hirsjärvi, Remes & Sajavaara 2013, 231.)

Reliability is such an important concept that it has been defined in terms of its application to a wide range of activities. For researchers, four key types of reliability are equivalency reliability, stability reliability, internal consistency and interrater reliability. (Writing @CSU. Validity and Reliability)

Equivalency reliability is the amount to which two items measure indistinguishable concepts at an identical level of difficulty. Equivalency reliability is determined by connecting two sets of test scores to one another to highlight the amount of relationship or connotation. In quantitative studies and particularly in experimental studies, a correlation coefficient, statistically referred to as r , is used to show the strength of the correlation between a dependent variable (the subject under study), and one or more independent variables, which are manipulated to determine effects on the dependent variable. An important consideration is that equivalency reliability is concerned with correlational, not causal, relationships.

Stability reliability (sometimes called test, re-test reliability) is the agreement of measuring instruments over time. To define stability, each participant in the study completes the test twice. Results are compared and correlated with the original test to give a measure of stability. Internal consistency is the extent to which tests or procedures assess the same characteristic, skill or quality. It is a measure of the precision between the observers or of the measuring instruments used in a study.

This type of reliability often helps researchers interpret data and predict the value of scores and the limits of the relationship among variables.

Interrater reliability is the extent to which two or more individuals agree. There more than one individual observes behaviour of the participants. Interrater reliability addresses the consistency of the implementation of a rating system. (Writing @CSU. Validity and Reliability; John W. Creswell. 2005, p. 163)

The research questions can be re-tested on various people and if the conditions in Kulttuurikasarmi stay the same, the results will be the same. For this study the participants visited the area within a month, during different times of the day and still the results were quite coherent. So one could say that the stability reliability is high in this research. This study does not really function with equivalency reliability as it is used more on quantitative studies, whereas this study is a qualitative study.

9.2 Validity

Validity refers to the amount to which a research accurately evaluates the precise concept that the researcher is trying to measure. While reliability is concerned with the accuracy of the actual measuring instrument or procedure, validity deals with the study's success at measuring what the researchers are trying to measure. For example the research participants might have understood the research differently than what the researcher has thought out. In that case the research results are not valid. (John W. Creswell. 2005, p. 162, 164)

There are traditionally three types of validity that are discussed; content validity, criterion-related and construct validity. CSU writing guide mentions also face validity. Content validity measures how well the questions represent all of the possibilities of questions available. Researchers assess the content validity by examining the plan and the procedures used in creating the instrument of research. Instead of examining the specific questions of an instrument, another form of validity is to see if the scores predict an outcome you would expect them to predict. This type of

validity is called criterion-related validity. This form of validity is useful for stabilising if scores from an instrument can predict an outcome, but it requires that the researcher clearly recognizes the suitable results.

The third form of validity is construct validity and it is said to be the most complicated, as it is assessed using both statistics and practical procedures. This validity is established by determining if the results from a research are significant, meaningful, useful and have a purpose. (John. W. Cresswell. 2005. P. 164-165)

Unlike content validity, face validity does not rest on recognised theories for support. Face validity is concerned with how a measure or procedure appears. Researcher can ask questions like: does it seem like a rational way to gain the data the researchers are trying to gain? Does it seem well designed? Does it seem as though it will work consistently? (Writing @ CSU)

This research does have construct validity. The research results in this study do answer to the research questions and the results are useful and have a purpose in developing Kulttuurikasarmi as a tourism product. The data collection method does also seem as a rational way to gain the data, since the product development is done from the customer point of view. With this, it seems that the research also has face validity.

10 CONCLUSION

Kulttuurikasarmi is appreciated for its architecture and history but it cannot rely only on that to attract customers. One of the respondents said that there is a lot of potential in Kulttuurikasarmi to become an authentic and interesting attraction for tourists and a place that the citizens of Vaasa can be proud of.

10.1 Ideas for further improvement

Development of guides and signs in the area is needed, as well as a clear functional webpage for the area. The Facebook page is good for quick information, events and fan base but a proper webpage with information on the actors in Kulttuurikasarmi as well as opening hours etc. would improve the overall experience.

Kulttuurikasarmi would benefit from working in collaboration with Visit Vaasa which is under the Visit Finland organization, which also organizes Culture Finland program. As mentioned before in the thesis *the Culture Finland program targets to increase cultural tourism to and in Finland by improving collaboration among numerous culture and tourism industry parties in order to create new and attractive cultural tourism products and services*. This co-operation could ease the marketing of the area, as Visit Vaasa is a larger company with actual staff when compared to Kulttuurikasarmis' individual actors and Culture Departments' small staff.

The number of respondents in this survey was only five persons, the Culture Department of Vaasa could later re-do this survey with more mystery shoppers to also see for themselves what people in Vaasa want. The survey can be done all around the year, but as the summer is the high season for tourists in Vaasa, perhaps one of the mystery shopping times could be in the summer.

This thesis could also be used as a base for an actual product development project, that could be someone else's thesis research or a project funded by the city of Vaasa.

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APPENDIX 1

Thesis questionnaire in Finnish

Tehtävänä on tutustua Kulttuurikasarmin palveluihin mysteerishoppailun kautta. Tutustu kohteen palveluihin ja tarjotaan kuin olisit oikea asiakas ja sen jälkeen arvioi kohde tämän lomakkeen avulla. Toivon, että vastaat kaikkiin kysymyksiin perustelujen kera. Lopussa on tilaa vapaalle palautteelle, johon voit täydentää kokemuksiasi, jos mieleesi jäi jotain mitä lomakkeessa ei kysytty.

Milloin kävit Kulttuurikasarmilla (päivä ja kellonaika)?:

Konkreettinen ympäristö

1. Sopiiko tilojen ulkonäkö yhteen tarjotun palvelun kanssa?
2. Ovatko tiloissa olevat laitteet ajan tasalla?
3. Mitä mieltä olit kasarmin yleisestä ulkonäöstä?
4. Miten työntekijät olivat pukeutuneet?
5. Mitä mieltä olit tilojen siisteydestä?
6. Vastasiko ympäristö odotuksiasi?
7. Oliko paikka helppo löytää?

Luotettavuus

8. Auttoiko henkilöstö asiakkaita pulmatilanteissa?
9. Vaikuttiko henkilöstö luotettavalta?
10. Mitä mieltä olit Kulttuurikasarmin opasteista?
11. Vaikuttiko palvelu luotettavalta?
12. Oliko henkilökunta myötätuntoista asiakkaita kohtaan, jos heillä oli ongelmia?

Reagointialttius

13. Oliko henkilöstö palveluultista?
14. Oliko palvelu nopeaa?
15. Palveltiinko asiakkaita myös kiireen keskellä?

Vakuuttavuus

16. Oliko palvelu ystävällistä?
17. Pystyikö henkilöstö vastaamaan kysymyksiin, jotka liittyivät Kulttuurikasarmiin ja sen toimintaan?

18. Tuntuiko asiointi Kulttuurikasarmin tiloissa luotettavalta ja turvalliselta?

Empatia

19. Ovat Kulttuurikasarmin aukioloajat sopivat mielestäsi?

20. Oliko palvelu yksilöityä?

21. Onko mielestäsi asiakkaiden henkilökohtaisia toiveita ja tarpeita ajateltu Kulttuurikasarmia luodessa?

22. Ajatteliko henkilöstö asiakkaiden etua?

Vapaa sana:

APPENDIX 2

Thesis questionnaire in English

The task is to evaluate the services of Kulttuurikasarmi through mystery shopping. Observe the areas services and products as you would be a real customer and after that evaluate Kulttuurikasarmi with this questionnaire. Please answer all of the questions with reasons. At the end of the questionnaire there is more space for open feedback.

When did you visit Kulttuurikasarmi (date and time)?:

Tangibles

23. Does the appearance of the premises go along with the service provided?

24. Are the equipment in the premises up to date?

25. What do you think about the overall appearance of the barracks area?

26. How were the workers dressed?

27. What did you think about the cleanliness of the premises?

28. Did the premises match up to your expectations?

29. Was Kulttuurikasarmi easy to find?

Reliability

- 30. Did the staff help guests if they had some problems?
- 31. Did the staff seem reliable?
- 32. What do you think of Kulttuurikasarmi's guide signs?
- 33. Did the service seem trustworthy?
- 34. Was the staff compassionate towards customers, if the customers had problems?

Responsiveness

- 35. Was the staff willing to help?
- 36. Was the service fast?
- 37. Were customers served also during rush hours?

Assurance

- 38. Was the service polite?
- 39. Was the staff able to answer questions related to the Kulttuurikasarmi and its activities?
- 40. Did visiting Kulttuurikasarmi feel reliable and safe?

Empathy

41. Do you think that the opening hours of Kulttuurikasarmi are suitable?

42. Was the service personalized?

43. Do you think your customers' personal wishes and needs were taken into account when creating Kulttuurikasarmi?

44. Did the staff have customers' interests at their heart?

Free feedback: