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# PROVIDING A NEW SERVICE IN A SMALL RESTAURANT

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#### Abstract

Customer attraction is a very important part of the hospitality industry and in the restaurant business as well. Managers and owners of restaurants or hotels need to make their company competitive in the services market and to attract clients. Nowadays there are many ways how to do this, which are described by different authors in online articles, magazines, and books.

The purpose of this thesis was to attract new customers to Pannukakkutalo Restaurant in Mikkeli via providing a culinary master class for children. A lot of literature was read about the customer attraction and event industry as well to write relevant theoretical part of the research. Also, qualitative primary data was collected via interviews with the manager of Pannukakkutalo to understand the current situation of the restaurant and find out her expectations of the event. Quantitative primary data was collected via survey with the participants of the event to identify their satisfaction and desire to return. Then, the information received was analyzed based the theoretical part of this thesis.

As a result, some conclusions were made and recommendations were given how to improve this event in the future. Based on the information and feedback, the event was held well enough and there were children who wanted to participate in the next master class.

# Keywords

Culinary master class, realization of culinary master class, customer attraction, kids' event

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the restaurant business is one of the leader fields in the service sector. That is why owners of restaurants have to think about how to excel in the competition, keep and attract customers. There is a lot of ways how to do it, such as offering loyalty or making a contest and others. Besides, one of the ways is to create a new service for a restaurant which has never been done before and which will be interesting for the customers.

Thus, for example, a culinary master class is a widespread event in many restaurants in different countries. It can help restaurants to show special dishes from the inside, to attract new customers who are looking for new interesting services and even those who are not particularly interested or just tired of ordinary going to restaurants and cafes.

The culinary master class provides contact with the atmosphere, workers and the menu of a restaurant, and at the same time allows participants of this event to see the concept of the company and discover something new for everyone. Moreover, the master class gives the restaurant an opportunity to distinguish itself between other restaurants and cafes, and increase profits.

This thesis was developed on the basis of the practical training at Pannukakkutalo Restaurant in Mikkeli from October 2017 to April 2018. This pancake restaurant is located in the centre of Mikkeli, and it is the commissioner for this thesis.

For this company, it was decided to organize a culinary master class for children of the ages from 5 to 9. The main reason for choosing the master class based on the desire of the restaurant owner to attract local residents of the city of Mikkeli and families. Moreover, kids quite often visit this restaurant and sometimes parents organize birthday parties of their children in Pannukakkutalo, so at the same time, the culinary master class for kids can be presented as a new idea for a special birthday party. In addition, this service can create lots of loyal

customers, for example, children who will remember their cooking lessons and will want to return to the restaurant in the future.

The research question of this thesis is the following: "How to attract new clients to a small restaurant?" Thus, the main goal of the thesis is to attract new customers to Pannukakkutalo, the pancake house of Mikkeli.

Nowadays there is a huge number of opportunities how to attract customers, for example, promoting the company in different ways, like advertising or public relations, or creating an event based on the upcoming holiday. Thereby, it was decided to try to increase the number of the guests by making a new service for children that had never been in the restaurant before.

The objectives of the thesis are:

- to produce a concept of the master class for children;
- to promote this event to potential customers
- to form an interest in visiting Pannukakkutalo and make a desire of the customers to return to the restaurant

## 2 CUSTOMER ATTRACTION

Attracting customers demands developing a quality product or a service, and suggest it in a charming package and advertise it to the target market. So, customer attraction means ways of identifying the positive interest of customers in business.

According to Figure 1 based on the online article "Think: Attract, Convert, Retain" (Paul A., 2013), it is not enough just to attract a client to a company, but it is necessary to convert him/her to a customer and then retain him/her for a long time.

To **attract** clients to any company, it is necessary to force potential customers to find out about the offered service or goods, so it is necessary to know at what target audience this service is aimed. The methods of information distribution will

depend on what generation it is necessary to attract as those methods that are suitable for one generation may not suit others. There are many such methods as the social media, for example Facebook, Instagram or printed media, or television, radio and so on. The most important thing is to attract the attention of customers, so they will come to look at the offered service or goods.

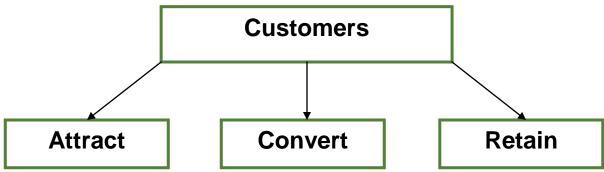


Figure 1. Business strategy concept of customers attraction (Paul A., 2013)

To **convert** clients into customers of a company, it is necessary to follow the expectations of clients and provide the benefits of the product or service for their needs.

**Retention** of customers is not only the preservation of the same client for the purchase of a presented service or product; it is the preservation of a happy customer who will probably spread information about the acquired service to other potential customers. Therefore, after attraction and conversion, it is necessary to focus on the engagement of current consumers.

According to Wiley J. (2014, 91) and online article "How To Attract Customers" the attraction of customers can be provided by different ways, such as to make an event or contest; to offer loyalty or something extra (for example, coupon for the next purchase); or to promote the company in different ways, offering a bonus.

#### To make an event or contest

The company can suggest events, special parties at New Year, Easter and so on. The special design of the restaurant in the style of the upcoming holiday shows the atmosphere and mood of the event to the customers. A kind of advertising for the event describes the idea of the event and attracts people.

# To offer loyalty or referral discounts

To stimulate the most regular customers with bigger discounts or some bonuses through a punch card or coupon for a next purchase that can be distributed via website or email, or social networks.

# To promote the company in different ways

According to Chunawalla S.A. (2007, 1), promotion is a communication tool in marketing which provides exchanging information between customers and sellers. The promotion consists of four broad components: advertising, personal selling, sales promotion and publicity, and public relations. (Figure 2)

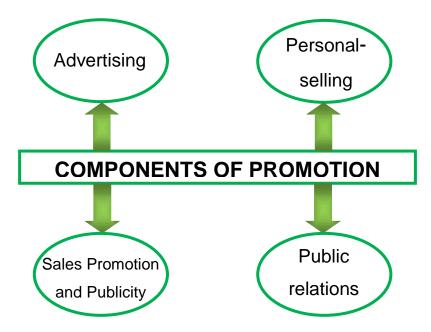


Figure 2. Components of the promotion

According to Chunawalla S.A. (2007, 1) and Mackay A. (2009, 23), **advertising** is spreading information about ideas, services or products in a media mix. The advertising should be based on a clear designation of the people with whom the company is trying to communicate, on an exact idea of what the company needs to tell. In addition there must be an understanding of the expected effect of the

message, and last the company needs to have a precise understanding of the working of the communication process.

The purpose of advertising is to identify potential customers' desire to purchase or order the offered product or service. Below different types of advertising are presented (Figure 3) according to Chunawalla S.A. (2007, 18).

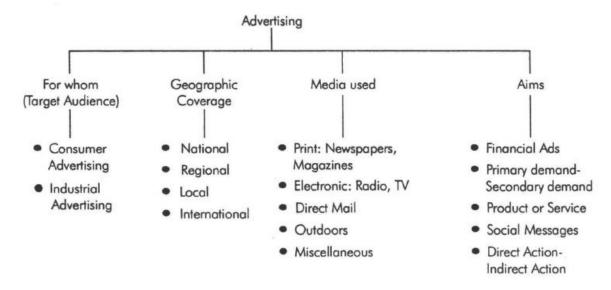


Figure 3. Classification of Advertising (Chunawalla S.A. 2007, 18.)

**Personal-selling** is a spoken demonstration created to potential customers so as to generate sales. Personal sales occur directly with the client and in the oral form, in which the seller explains how well the product or service provided will meet the needs of the potential buyer. This process involves helping the buyer, as well as at the same time convincing him/her to buy the goods or services in a face-to-face situation. During the process of personal sales, a demonstration of various goods takes place, focusing on the features of the offered product and demonstrating its functions.

Companies usually practice personal sales together with advertising. Personal sales cannot replace advertising since they are used to strengthen marketing efforts. The seller performs many roles, which are presented in the table below (Figure 4), referring to Rajput N. (2008, 127)

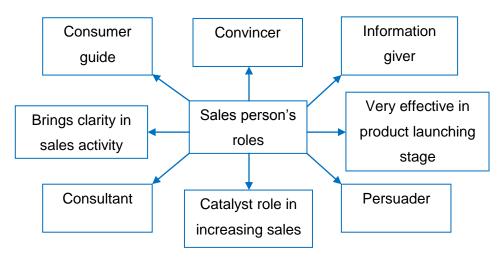


Figure 4. Sales person's roles (Rajput N. 2008, 127)

**Sales promotion** is a short-dated, marketing performance that stimulates effectiveness of purchasing goods by the customers and person's effectiveness of the seller. (Chunawalla S.A. 2007, 2.)

If there are shortcomings between advertising and personal sales, then to supplement their efforts sales promotion is used. According to Chunawalla S.A. (2009, 175), sales promotion is carried out in three steps:

- Consumer promotion (for example, giving free gifts to customers)
- Trade promotion (to create sales contests or display competitions for dealers)
- Force promotion (to offer bonuses, sales for sellers)

**Publicity and public relations** provoke request in an impersonal way. Public relations provide effective relationships of the company with employees, shareholders, customers and so on. Public relations put commercially important news in media or get a good inclusion on radio, TV or stage. Public relations can modify a target audience by building confidence.

Offering a bonus

Planning a sale can help to attract more customers. A company can offer different discounts that will be interesting to potential customers, for example on St. Valentine's day make a discount when buying two products and pay for one

and so on, but the manager must be sure that he runs the figures which can be covering costs and gets a good return on investment. This type of attracting customers is more beneficial for customers than for owners since the main purpose of a company is to get more money, but sometimes attracting customers for example for new companies, can exist in this way.

The use of these four methods of promotion occurs to convey information to the audience and after receiving a response to it the attitude or purchase changes. (Chunawalla S.A. 2007, 2.)

#### 3 EVENT INDUSTRY

One of the ways to attract new customers to a restaurant is to create a new event which had never been done before. Earlier events have been a part of the hospitality industry but now events industry is becoming to exist by itself. It became a full-fledged profession.

Recently, many different books, textbooks, articles in journals and on the Internet about the event management, event planning have appeared. Everyone can find a lot of useful information.

Before talking about the industry of events, it is necessary to understand what an event is. According to Bowdin (2011, 14), event is a meeting, a holiday conducted with a specific purpose for several or more people. Regardless of the event type, each of them has its own objectives and every event is aimed at uniting people, sharing experiences and achieving results.

# 3.1 Types of events

All events can be divided into groups by different ways and each of them can include various subtypes of events. Nowadays there are many articles on the Internet and a lot of information in the books by different authors like Bowdin (2011, 15) or Damm S. (2012, 8) about the event types. According to the online article "Do You Have Regular Events At Your Restaurant?", the table below

(Figure 5) shows the types of events held especially in restaurants and they are usually used for attracting customers.



Figure 5. Types of events in a restaurant

# Wine tasting events

If a restaurant sells wine, then it is possible to conduct a wine tasting, which will help attract loyal and new customers. For this event, usually small glasses are used, which allows to reduce losses. Also at such an event, a special appetizer menu is presented. To make the event educational and informative, a sommelier is invited to talk about wines.

# Food tasting events

During a tasting, the chef can offer dishes that are not regularly presented in the restaurant menu. The aim of food tasting is to offer something unique so that the managers can attract new customers and keep the regular ones.

#### Live music

Usually, local musicians are looking for a place to perform. It can be useful for organizing live music evenings, for example, once a week one night is dedicated to jazz. People come to restaurant eat the food and enjoy beautiful music.

## Charity events

Hosting a fundraiser is one way to connect a restaurant and a community. The restaurant provides a place to raise funds, thereby helping to collect money for charity. This type of event also allows restaurant owners to earn money.

## Private Parties

A restaurant can host private parties. For example, it can host weddings, birthdays, and business meetings. There may also be a private area for these events which can be rented completely.

## Culinary master class

A culinary master class is an event where the lovers of a certain cuisine or people who wish to learn something new can practically learn how to prepare several dishes of the restaurant. In addition, there are customers who can meet likeminded people and get to know a restaurant kitchen from the inside.

A culinary master class for children is usually held in a game form immersing kids in the atmosphere of a cooking school. Cooking classes for children is the best way to acquaint little kids with the cookery pleasure. Children love learning something new, for example, kneading the dough, making pancakes, designing their own dishes, and so on. So, when children cook something themselves, it raises the level of understanding the taste, consistency and so forth.

# 3.2 Event management

According to Bowdin (2011, 268), the event management process consists of five stages, such as initiation, planning, implementation, the event, and shutdown. (Figure 6) Each of them includes various management methods, tools, and uses different fields of knowledge.

Event management also deals with the following knowledge areas, such as scope, marketing, finance, time management, design, risk management, procurement, human resources, stakeholder management and communication. (Bowdin 2011, 271-272) They change and evolve at each stage.



Figure 6. The event management process based on idea of Bowdin (2011, 57)

#### Initiation

According to Bowdin (2011, 268), at this stage, the idea of the event develops, as well as the objectives that depend on the sponsor of the event. In addition, this stage may include a feasibility study, a draft budget, possible risks, and so on. At the end of the initiation phase, a decision is issued to continue selling or to terminate it.

# Planning

Before carrying out an event, it is necessary to answer to several questions that will help in the implementation of the event. According to the online article "Five Ws and How of Events Planning", these questions can be described as Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. It was decided to find out attentively what these questions mean, and identify the steps that are be important for the creation of the event.

First, it is important to understand **who** the guests are because before the organizer conducts an event, he/she needs to identify a specific target audience. This knowledge helps you to select appropriate decor for the event, prepare the entertainment, and choose the correct place and time.

**What** is the event? This question is also important for reflection. Knowledge of the event type gives organizers the opportunity to design and plan the event. Depending on whether this event is a family or corporate event, for example, each of them is planned in its own way.

When is the event? It is not always possible to immediately answer to this question, although it seems rather easy. The answer to this question affects all the aspects of the preparation and conduct, for example, on the design of the room, the preparation of the program by the deadline, and even the entrance. In addition, it is necessary to carefully plan the days of the week, the time of the day, and sometimes even the time of the year.

When choosing the place where to hold an event, it is necessary to think about several things, such as internal or external space, what services will be offered, all possibilities and accessibility. It is necessary to answer the question: "Where is the event?"

To answer the question "**Why** is the event happening?", organizers can define the goal and objectives of this event, which will help make difficult decisions and make choices. In addition, the organizers will figure out how and where to spend the budget.

The last question "**How** much money in your budget?", it was already said that one of the main points of the planning an event is its budget. It is difficult to estimate the budget, but it is very important to know what the maximum costs will be. After that, you can plan an event within the limit of your budget.

After answering to these questions, it is possible to imagine your event and concentrate on its small parts.

## *Implementation*

The next stage includes (Bowdin 2011, 269):

- the application of all the plans
- monitoring and controlling
- making decisions based on the comparison between the plans and reality
- work in progress reporting to the key stakeholders
- active risk management.

During this phase, communication is needed between all parties that make decisions in the key issues of the event, and the team should focus on the scope of the project and on the alignment of all plans to each other, without forgetting the objectives of the event.

#### Event

According to Bowdin (2011, 270), when an event occurs, tasks and responsibilities can be detected regardless of what the management wants to do. During the event, the number of personnel can increase dramatically.

Management, in turn, cannot rely on the same management methods as during the preparation for the event

#### Shutdown

According to Bowdin (2011, 270), the last stage is called Shutdown, which includes the on-site shutdown and management closure. Ideally, these shutdown plans should be installed during the planning phase, and at which stage they are implemented. It is necessary to make timely decisions by the management, as well as monitoring because at this phase the event may end in a failure, instead of success if the management does not take the right decision on time. The shutdown also includes the preparation for the next event, so it is also necessary to archive documents and assess the management. Ultimately, at this stage, it is revealed whether the management was successful, and the baseline plans are created for future events.

# 3.3 Event is an experience

An event can be considered as an experience. Experience is always in the centre of different kinds entertainment which make customers buy goods and services.

Each company based on the customer's desire tries to develop its experience. Thus, according to the book by Pine II and Gilmore (2011, 34), it is possible to identify the differences between experiences, goods and services. So, goods are tangible, while services and experiences are intangible, but the main point is that experiences are memorable. In addition, each of them has its own characteristics and qualities.

According to Pine II & Gilmore (2011, 57-62), the combination of these points defines four spheres of an experience (Figure 7):

- Entertainment experience is the oldest type of the experience when people participate passively (as viewers) in the shows, concerts and so forth.
- 2. **Educational experience** assumes active participation of a person and it is aimed at improving people's knowledge and skills.

- Escapist experience implies active participation of guests in contrast to the entertainment and educational experiences, for example, customers take part in dance performances or in different tournaments and so on.
- 4. People are immersed in some event or environment without exerting any influence on it. This is **esthetic experience**.

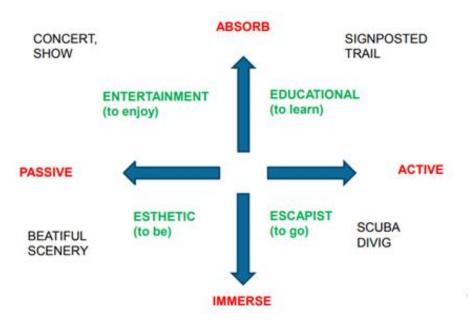


Figure 7. Types of experience (Pine & Gilmore 2011, 57)

Companies that want to create an impressive experience should start with five principles that will help them explore all the opportunities which await them in the future.

Five principles together constitute the act of theming or THEME-ing (Pine II & Gilmore 2011, 93):

- Choose the theme;
- · Harmonize impressions with positive cues;
- Eliminate negative cues;
- Mix in memorabilia;
- Engage the five senses.

Every experience has a **theme**. Despite the fact how well designed or executed the experience is the detection of the theme is the most important moment for the experience design.

There are five principles for developing a theme (Pine II & Gilmore 2011, 79-82):

- 1. An engaging theme must alter a guest's sense of reality.
- 2. The richest venues possess themes that fully alter one's sense of reality by affecting the experience of space, matter, and time.
- 3. Engaging themes integrate space, matter, and time into a cohesive, realistic whole.
- 4. Creating multiple places within a place strengthens themes
- 5. A theme should fit the character of the enterprise staging the experience.

Harmonize impressions with positive cues. Impressions convey the theme to the guests, that is, the customers take away their impressions after experiences and the organizers should make them such that clients, leaving the experience, have in their minds the most important things.

There are six dimensions of overall impressions (Pine II & Gilmore 2011, 93):

- 1. Time
- 2. Space
- 3. Technology
- 4. Authenticity
- 5. Sophistication
- 6. Scale

It is necessary to exclude and **eliminate** all the things that distract from the implementation of the theme. (Pine II & Gilmore 2011, 86)

**Mix in memorabilia.** People always buy any goods that will remind them of certain memorable events, experiences. Thus, event organizers need to add memorabilia that will help to expand the experience into a person's mind over time.

There are **five senses**, such as sight, sound, touch, taste and smell, to which each cue will have an intended effect as planned by the event manager (Pine II & Gilmore 2011, 93)

#### 3.4 Kid's events

Considering what the industry of events can offer for children these days, it is easy to notice that the Internet has a lot of information on how to organize a holiday for kids. This point makes it easier for parents to organize the celebration for their child because it is really easy to find a place and price for any product, service, etc.

In addition, there are many companies that provide an end-product for a children's birthday, for example this service can be with food services, with a place, style or entertainment. The only thing that is required by the parents is to choose what the most suitable one for their family is and make an order.

Moreover, today there are various events for children and families with kids in general. They are presented in the market of the event industry, such as animation for children, evenings for children and their parents, where customers are either families with children or children themselves. So, for example, on the site www.mikkelinyt.fi, there are many upcoming events for children and for families with children in the city of Mikkeli.

## 4 METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

Choosing the right methods is a very important step in the research process. Kothari C.R. (2004, 1) identified the meaning of "research" as a scientific and standardized search for appropriate data on a concrete subject. In addition, he described the main goal of research. It is to reveal the truth which had been not clear before and answer questions using scientific procedures. Thus, the research is the way of collecting information, after which the relevant conclusions are identified.

According to Kothari C.R. (2004, 95-112), there are two types of data collection: primary and secondary. **Primary data** is the original data since they are collected for the first time by such methods as interviews, schedules, questionnaires, observation, and others. **Secondary data** is the data that was collected earlier and analyzed by somebody else. Using this type of data, it is necessary to study the sources from where this data was obtained. Usually, such information can be obtained from publications of the government, newspapers, and magazines and so on.

This chapter describes how the primary data was collected using the research methods described below.

#### 4.1 Research methods

The next step in this research process was to decide what method to use to collect the primary data. There are two main methods of research, which are called qualitative and quantitative method. Each of these has its own characteristics and also the possibilities for gathering information. **Quantitative** approach generates information in a quantitative form. Its purpose is to create a database in which the characteristics or attitudes of people are collected. The most popular form of this approach is a survey which consists of structured questions. **Qualitative** approach subjectively evaluates opinions, behaviour and attitudes in a not quantitative form or in the form that is not needed a rigorous quantitative analysis. Basically, this approach uses ways of data collecting such as interviews, focus groups and observation. (Kothari C.R. 2004, 5)

In this thesis primary data collected via a quantitative and a qualitative approaches were used to gather information, namely there were interviews and a survey. The survey helped to understand whether any expectations of customers had been met. The interviews with the manager of Pannukakkutalo to establish the purpose of the event, to identify the target group, interests and needs of the owner, and then her feelings after the event, discover her satisfaction, and find out feedback from the customers. The results of the survey were analyzed on the site www.survio.com, which helped to see clearly the real situation with the event.

# 4.1.1 Sample selection for the promotion

One of the problems of the research is to find people who will participate in the gathering of the data. In this case, they were people who participated in the kid's master class: children and the manager of the restaurant.

To attract kids to the event, advertising was distributed to different kindergartens but not all kindergartens of Mikkeli took part in the sampling. The posters were distributed to the kindergartens which are located not more than 1 km from Pannukakkutalo. In this way, only 5 kindergartens of Mikkeli from 26 ones were involved in the spreading of advertising. It was made so that children could see the posters and then distribute the information to their parents or parents could note the advertising when they brought their children to the kindergarten.

Besides printed advertising, also online advertising was made on Facebook page and Instagram of Pannukakkutalo Restaurant, Facebook page "Puskaradio Mikkeli", and also on the official website "Mikkeli nyt", so people had an opportunity to note the information and register to the event without leaving their house.

#### 4.1.2 Interview

Qualitative research can be conducted in many different ways; an interview is one of them. Based on the idea of Saunders M. (2009, 318) an interview is a guided conversation about a specific topic; it consists of open-ended questions to get more detailed information than from the survey in order to provide a more persuasive explanation of the goal of the study. Moreover, the interview also helps to practice interviewing skills and learn how to install a trustful and friendly atmosphere between an interviewer and a respondent.

An interview is a discussion between two people which is aimed at collecting reliable data relating to research. Interviews can help achieve the goals that were set in the research work. They are usually conducted individually when the meeting is held face to face. In addition, it is possible to do via the Internet or by

phone. Interviews are used for a qualitative analysis of the acquired information of which will be used to answer the "what", "how" and "why" questions.

According to Saunders M. (2009, 320), there are three types of interview: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

**Structured interviews** are conducted through questionnaires that are created on a prearranged set of questions. The respondent's task is to write down his answer in a standard form, usually with pre-prepared answers. During this interview, there is an interaction between the interviewer and the respondent, when the interviewer provides preliminary explanations about the interview and also reads questions just like written on paper so that there is no bias.

Semi-structured and unstructured interviews (they can be called in-depth interviews) are "not standardized", in contrast to the first type described above. Before **semi-structured** interviews respondents have a pre-prepared list of topics and questions that will be discussed, but it can be that not all of them will be considered during the discussion. The questions asked are based on the content of the research topic, and the order of questions can also vary from the conversation. If the interviewer needs to ask additional questions that may be required for the research, he needs to record them down by recording audio or notes.

**In-depth interviews** are informal. They are conducted without pre-prepared questions from respondents, but the interviewer should have a complete idea of what he will ask, and his questions should be based on an aspect that needs to be researched. During this type of interview, the interviewer directs the conversation, and the respondent answers questions.

To collect qualitative data for this thesis two semi-structured interviews with Tarja Lappalainen, the manager of Pannukakkutalo Restaurant, were made "face to face". (Appendix 1)

The first one was conducted before the culinary master class to achieve the purposes that are shown below:

- To identify the target group for the event;
- To determine the expectations of the manager of this event;
- To plan the concept of the event.

The second one was made after the event to understand:

- If the expectations of the manager were met;
- If the manager was satisfied with this event;
- To determine the results and feedback of the customers if clients had left them to the manager.

The interviews were conducted in the restaurant, lasting approximately 25 - 30 minutes. Open-end questions were asked, after which the information was obtained and was used for the research.

# **4.1.3** Survey

A survey is helpful for getting quantitative information from a group of people. The survey questionnaire consists of the research questions that help in the data collection. The survey includes short variants of answers, multiple-choice and scaled answer questions. It can be printed out so the participants personally fill out the response form, besides the survey can be carried out online, or sent by mail.

After preparing pancakes with children, a survey was made with them (Appendix 2). There were only 16 participants that not enough for real survey, but this method was chosen as only via survey was possible to collect data from the group of small children in a short time and to do it interesting. It was not possible to collect information from them via interview or via focus groups method because of problem with the Finnish language, as only one Finnish worker played with the kids. Moreover, there was no time to speak with each child and not every kid could talk with an unfamiliar person. It was conducted in a game form to maintain a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. Firstly a few games were hold to

create a trustful environment and only after that the survey was realized according to the following scenario that is described below.

The children had received four cards that they needed to put to the boxes depending on their answers. The survey consisted of four simple questions in Finnish. Three of them required answering only "yes" or "no" and revealed their satisfaction with the event and desire to come back to Pannukakkutalo. The first box was for the answer "Yes", the second one was for "No". The children were required only to put the card in the box corresponding to their answer. One of the questions consisted of four different answers to determine what kids liked more during this event; a response was required according to the same scheme as in the previous questions. The survey took about 20 minutes.

#### 5 CHILDREN MASTER CLASS IN PANNUKAKKUTALO

This chapter describes the commissioner and also the practical part of this thesis, namely, all part of the provided event management process. In addition, in this part, the culinary master class is characterized from the point of view of the educational experience.

# 5.1 Commissioning company

Pannukakkutalo is a pancake restaurant chain which is known in Finland. Besides Pannukakkutalo Restaurant in Mikkeli, there are some others in Oulu, Jyväskylä, Pori, Levi, and Turku. The menu of these restaurants includes many various pancakes with different fillings. Guests can find a sweet or salty pancake for every taste. There are about 100 different variations of pancakes.

According to Kaakon Viestintä Oy (2015), the first pancake house was opened in Oulu in 2010. In Mikkeli, this restaurant was opened in 2015 by Tarja Lappalainen. Now it has 50 seats. Pannukakkutalo Mikkeli organizes various events, for example one of them consists of tasting pancakes and it is called a pancake buffet. Events of this type are rather popular among customers, especially students. Besides, this restaurant provides the possibilities to celebrate

birthdays, business meetings and other events for different holidays like Christmas, New Year, Valentine's Day and so on. In addition, the restaurant usually provides various bonuses for the guests.

Moreover, pancake house of Mikkeli has its own pages on the Internet, for example, on Instagram (Appendix 3) and on Facebook (Appendix 4) as well. From these networks, the customers learn about the upcoming holidays which are held in the restaurant, contests and bonuses.

# 5.2 Culinary master class as an educational experience

An educational experience involves active participation of the guests, as well as the absorption of the provided information. This experience was in the centre of the event of a culinary master class for children. Simultaneously, an educational experience has its own characteristics and qualities, for example, improving kids' knowledge and skills in culinary skills, specifically in preparing pancakes.

Five principles that made up the act of THEME-ing for the culinary master class for children in Pannukakkutalo were:

- 1. The **theme** of the event is the culinary master class for kids. It was decided to come up with a name in Finnish as not many children know English, so the event was named "Lasten pannukakku koulu" that can be translated in English as "Children's pancake school".
- 2. Customers take their impressions after the experience, so **positive cues** were caused not only by the culinary lesson, but also by the appropriate decoration of the hall, children's music, and also by the kindly behaviour of the staff.
- 3. **Negative cues** for the event might be ordinary guests who could have decided to just go for a snack. On one hand, a huge number of customers could be in the restaurant during the event, because the start time of the event was chosen at 15:00, so this point could lead to additional orders. Besides, children could interrupt clients enjoying the lunch or, conversely, children might be disturbed by guests if they occupy a table next to the area for the kids' event.

To exclude and eliminate these negative cues that could distract from the implementation of the theme, the following decision was made. Since the restaurant is divided into two parts by a beautiful designer wall, it was decided to leave one part for the guests who come to lunch, and the second one for the implementation of the master class. As for additional orders during the event, it was decided that the manager of the restaurant would work at the cashier's desk to take orders, as well as take the payments for the master class, and in the kitchen there would be a chef who, in addition to the children's pancakes, would cook pancakes for the guests.

- 4. To make the experience **memorable** every kid got a diploma of a young pancake cook.
- 5. **Five senses** on which each cue gave an effect were sight, sound, touch, taste and smell. The sight was influenced by the design of the restaurant; the touch was felt through preparing the pancakes, as well as their decoration; the taste and smell were felt during the tea party; the atmosphere of sound was created with the help of children's music during the whole event.

#### 5.3 Initiation

After conducting the interview with the manager about the possible events in Pannukakkutalo and analyzing the age population in Mikkeli (Figure 8). It was decided that a good option for the new services would be an event for the kids, especially a culinary master class. Kids like pancakes and quite often come to the restaurant with their parents to have lunch or celebrate their parties. So, it can be interesting to check if the kids are interested to know how to cook the dough and to create pancakes, and if a master class can attract children and their parents to the restaurant as well. In addition, if the event is held well, children will want to return, and hence their parents as well.

Thus, the main purpose of this event is to attract new customers. The objectives are to form a customers' interest in visiting Pannukakkutalo and make a desire to

return to this restaurant, in addition, customers can see a new type of celebrating children's birthday parties.

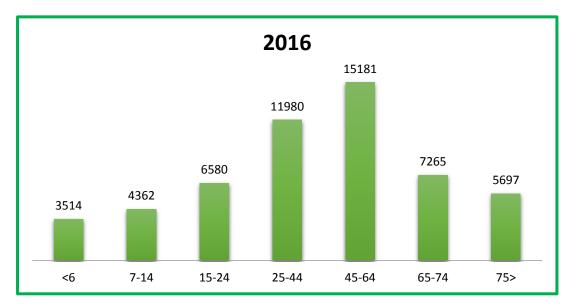


Figure 8. The demographic structure of Mikkeli by age group in 2016 (Mikkelin kaupunki)

The population of Mikkeli was 54,517 on 31of December, 2016. According to Figure 8, in 2016 children accounted approximate for 7836, which was 14,6% of the population of Mikkeli.

There the manager did not want to let the children bake pancakes in the kitchen. The target group of this event is children aged from 5 to 9, since just cooking dough and design of pancakes could be not really an interesting activity for older children and for too little kids.

# 5.4 Planning the event

A plan for any event helps not forget any important information, to divide responsibilities among employees, to prepare a restaurant for receiving guests, to identify the time limits of the tasks, and so on. Planning the master class based on six questions that were mentioned above, exactly five "Ws" and one "How".

# Who are the guests of the event?

They are children of the age from 5 to 9 years. So, the decoration was made in the bright colours with a lot of balloons, serpentine and the computer presentation with the pictures of various pancakes.

#### What is the event?

The idea of a kids' culinary master class was to learn cooking the pancakes and design them, besides to create children's interest in cooking. On the other hand, the event was held to sell the educational experience as well.

One of the main points in holding the event was to select workers who speak Finnish and would be able to play with children. So, in the first minutes of the event, it is supposed to introduce the children to each other, as well as to the restaurant employees in a game form. Then, to invite the children to the workplace, where a small lecture on the making of pancakes should be held, during which it is visually shown to the children how to prepare the dough, into which they can add the ingredients personally.

Next step, children should come up with their own design of the pancake and realize it. To do this, a variety of different fillings should be offered on the worktable, such as strawberry, blueberry, peaches, bananas, apples, nuts, marshmallow, raisins, two types of jam, milk and white chocolate, caramel and chocolate paste. To make it easier for children to think up what they want to do, it is necessary to prepare a presentation on a computer with pictures of readymade pancakes that will be played during the whole event.

During the master class, a contest for the most beautiful pancake was announced, and in the end a diploma to each participant of the event was given. After the meal, several games were hold, after which the survey would be made, also in a playful form.

## When is the event?

Since on weekdays parents work and not everybody has the opportunity or time to bring their child to the master class, it was decided to hold the event during the weekend at three or four o'clock in the afternoon. Since in Pannukakkutalo in February, there were a large number of events, such as the pancake buffet, Valentine's Day and brunch, It was decided to hold the master class at the end of February, namely on Saturday 24 of February at 15:00 for children who came with the parents.

#### Where to hold the event?

The event should be in the Pannukakkutalo restaurant, in the main hall with the biggest table and a large area for playing games. Moreover, the hall should be clean and designed in kids' style with balloons, serpentine and so on.

# Why is the event happening?

This event should be held to attract new customers to the restaurant, add a new service, also provide a new type of celebrating children's birthday sat a restaurant, and make the customers wish to return to Pannukakkutalo.

## How much money is in the budget?

One of the main points of the planning the event is its budget. The expenses that were supposed to be for this event were presented in Figure 9.

The manager of Pannukakkutalo decided personally to develop the budget of the event. After that, when all the expenses were taken into account, it was decided that the children ticket for the first culinary master class would be 4 Euros. Moreover, a special offer was made, namely, the price for a master class for a group of 15 children was 50 Euros.

The expenses for the kids' master	The expenses for the kids' master class in Pannukakkutalo Restaurant		
Products and needs	Additional Information		
Pancakes of small size	It was decided to choose small size of the		
	pancakes as it is necessary to cut		
	expenses on products.		
The fillings for the pancakes	Berries, nuts, chocolate, bananas,		
	peaches, jam, chocolate paste, caramel,		
	powdered sugar, and sprinkle.		
Advertising posters, diplomas	The cost of printing it out		
Decoration and other things	Straws, napkins, serpentine and juice		
Salaries of the workers	It was decided that two employees would		
	work in this event (a chef and a hall worker		
	who would conduct a lecture and play with		
	children), also the manager (she works in		
	the hall and behind the box office), and two		
	trainees to help children with preparing		
	pancakes and playing games, cleaning the		
	hall and so on.		

Figure 9. The expenses for the kids' master class in Pannukakkutalo Restaurant

# 5.5 Implementation

Implementation has a huge role for an event, as people should learn about the upcoming event via advertising and get enough information about it, to find out a desire to participate in the master class, to create diplomas for kids. In addition, there should be a clearly prepared place for the event, dishes and so on, as well as a survey to collect feedback.

**Advertising** for the children is master class was made in two ways: Internet (online) advertising and print advertising.

Online advertising was made on Facebook page and Instagram of Pannukakkutalo restaurant, on Facebook page "Puskaradio Mikkeli", and also on the official website "Mikkeli nyt". Printed posters were made for the restaurant and the kindergartens, selected according to the criteria already mentioned above. Guests who saw the advertisement in the restaurant and who had the desire to participate in the event could sign up at the cashier; others had to register via the Internet, writing an e-mail to the restaurant.

The promotional poster was made in green which good for the eyes and attracts the attention, also in Finnish, and with the children's pictures downloaded from the site pixabay.com. These images are free and do not have copyright laws, so they are publicly available for use in advertising. Children could see funny characters in the poster that was located in the children's room of the restaurant, for example, or in the kindergarten, and then show it or tell about it to their parents. The same pictures were made for the online advertising. (Appendix 5) The translated version of this poster in English is presented below. (Figure 10)



Figure 10. Poster of the event in English

Every child got a **diploma** of a young chef of pancakes, which was created in the Finnish language with a medal, Pannukakkutalo stamp and the same children's characters which were used on the poster. Then the diploma was signed by the owner of Pannukakkutalo Restaurant, Tarja Lappalainen. (Appendix 6) The translated version of this diploma in English is presented below. (Figure 11)



Figure 11. Diploma of a young chef in English

The decoration of the restaurant and other things were also prepared in advance. Workplace for making pancakes consisted of a long table decorated with serpentine; at one side straws, glasses and juice for children were prepared. In addition, baby napkins were beautifully laid out on the table, for each child a plate and cutlery were prepared. At the other end of the table there was a computer which showed a presentation with photos of possible pancakes played. All the possible fillings were laid out in the centre of the table that also children could used to decorate.

The area for the master class was decorated with balloons and posters.

Necessary tools were prepared for the games, as well as the stuff to conduct research, for example, three boxes and cards for collecting data.

An employee who knows the Finnish language was informed in advance about what games should be played with the children, as well as the rules of these games. The same worker also prepared the dough with the children and gave a lecture. In addition, all duties were divided between the restaurant employees. Someone was responsible for cleaning, another for cooking pancakes, the third for serving guests, others for helping children in decorating of pancakes, in the games and so on. Besides, special aprons and hats for the children were prepared.

## 5.6 Realization of the event and shutdown

The gathering of the guests took place from 14:30 to 15:00, and then the children played the game to get to know each other, after that everyone put on the apron and special caps, and a short lecture on the safety, hygiene rules and pancakes in general was held for them. It took approximately 10 minutes. Then the children began to prepare the dough, and when it was ready, the dough was given to the chief cook to bake the pancakes for the children, so during this time the kids were engaged in games.

The first game was called "Limbo". The children needed to dance and pass under a stretched rope, arched their body so as not to touch the rope which was put lower and lower with each round, which complicated the task for the participants. After "Limbo" the children answered the questions on the topic of gastronomy.

Further, the children were invited for the workplace where the contest was announced to create the most beautiful pancake. However at the end of the event, everyone was a winner because they were children and tried their best. After that a tea party was held, the children ate the pancakes, which they made with juice. At the end of the tea party, personal diplomas were awarded.

Besides, during the tea party, there were some games that were aimed at team building that taught the children to work in a team. After that, the survey was conducted, and at the end of the event there was a children's disco.

By 16:30 the event finished and when the children went home, the place of the master class was cleaned. Although cleaning is a part of the educational experience, it was decided that it was not necessary to force the children to clean the place. On Saturdays, Pannukakkutalo is open until 17:00, so when the last guest left the restaurant, the pancake house and its kitchen were thoroughly cleaned by each of the workers.

#### 6 RESULTS

All calculations and feedback analysis were carried out after the event, and then the results were presented to the manager. 16 children participated in the event, 10 of whom took part in the survey. Data collection and data analysis are presented in the Figure 12.

Research task	Timetable
Creating the interviews and survey	January 8-12
Conducting the first interview	16 January
Analyzing the first interview	January 17-20
Conducting the survey	24 February
Analyzing the survey	February 24-26
Conducting the second interview	26 February
Analyzing the second interview	February 26-28

Figure 12. Data collection and analysis schedule

# Results of the survey

The concept of the culinary master class was described in the planning part of this thesis. This chapter describes the answers of the kids who participated in the survey. 10 children out of 16 answered to the questions, the answers to which were analyzed and the results are described below.

The first question was about the satisfaction of the children in the master class, "Did you like the culinary master class?" It was the main question of the survey and 8 persons of the interviewed children answered that they liked the event.

The second one was made to find out what the children liked the most during the event, how they made pancakes and then had the tea party, or played games, or maybe everything, or nothing. According to the results, it is clearly to understand that most children liked the event, 3 kids only played the games and 2 children liked cooking. The answer "Nothing" was chosen by no one.

The next question determined the desire to return to Pannukakkutalo restaurant with parents or friends. All the participants answered that they wanted to come back. The last question was about the desire to celebrate the birthday party in this restaurant. 7 kids out of 10 ones answered "yes".

#### Results of the interviews

This part of the thesis describes the answers of the manager of the Pannukakkutalo restaurant in two interviews which were provided before and after the culinary master class for children.

According to the questions of the **first interview** (Appendix 1), it is possible to understand the current situation of the restaurant which is not so bad. Mostly, this place is popular with students and also families without and with children as well. In the Pannukakkutalo restaurant sometimes people celebrate birthday parties or have business meetings.

The manager wants to attract more families and inhabitants of Mikkeli. The best way to do it, to which Tarja Lappalainen is ready, is to suggest a new service that will be in demand among customers nowadays.

The promotion of the pancake house is mainly aimed at own pages on Facebook and Instagram. The information about new offers and their bonuses is also published through these social networks.

According to the questions of the **second interview** (Appendix 1) that was conducted after the event, it became clear that the manager was satisfied with the results of the event and her expectations were justified.

In addition, those parents who wanted to leave a review said that they liked the idea of this kind of activities for their children and the children would like to return to Pannukakkutalo to take part in the next master class. Besides, some feedback

was about that there were too many children at the same time, and when some parents wanted to help their kids, it was uncomfortable for them.

Thus, Tarja Lappalainen is planning to repeat the culinary master class for the kids and wants to suggest this special idea for celebrating kids' birthday parties in her restaurant.

#### 7 DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results that were obtained during the research. In addition, this chapter focuses on the shortcomings identified in the master class, as well as describes the ways to use them for further organization of such kind of events.

## 7.1 Interpretation of results and discussion

From October 2017 to April 2018, a practical training was done in the pancake house of Mikkeli, so for half a year of working with this company, its problems were identified from the inside. It was found that a high flow of customers in Pannukakkutalo occurs in the summer months. In winter there is a decrease in the attendance of the restaurant. It was also noticed that on weekends, compared to weekdays, the restaurant is more popular among customers. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was to attract customers to the restaurant by creating a new event.

Pannukakkutalo already has one regular event, namely pancake buffet. It based on the tasting of pancakes. This event was provided by Petrash A. and the process of his work was described in his bachelor thesis "Degustation as a restaurant promotion tool" (2017). The idea of his work was to promote the Pannukakkutalo Restaurant and also this event attracted customers, but mostly foreign students. At the desire of the restaurant manager to attract families and residents of Mikkeli to Pannukakkutalo, a children's master class was realized, which attracted Finnish children and Finnish families with children in particular. So, the main differences between the results of this thesis and thesis of Petrash

A. are the target audience of attracted customers, concept of providing event and ways of collecting primary data.

After the realizing the culinary master class, feedback was received from the parents, which indicated the satisfaction of the clients with the event, besides some parents said, that there were too many children at the same time. After analyzing the results of the survey with children, it can be concluded that 80% of the respondents liked the event, and 100% of them would like to return to the restaurant. Moreover, 70% of the kids answered that they would like to celebrate their birthday party in Pannukakkutalo, and as the manager liked the idea of a special master class for birthdays, so she would like to suggest it to the parents who will ask about holding children's parties in this restaurant.

During the event, some shortcomings and problems were identified. They were discussed with the restaurant manager and below are some recommendations for improving this event and for preventing the same mistakes in the future. After these improvements, it is possible to increase the customer satisfaction and reduce negative feedback.

In the future, according to this thesis it is possible to propose the creation of a master class for older participants that will include not only preparing the dough and decorating pancakes but also baking pancakes in the kitchen under the direction of the chef. The next idea can be about this type of event for arranging family master classes for several families at the same time.

### 7.2 Recommendations for further organization of the culinary master class

Recommendations for the organization and improvement of the children's culinary master class in Pannukakkutalo Restaurant were developed as a result of the research on this theme. They are based on the results of the event and the parents' feedback whose children participated in the event. The recommendations are based on the theoretical and practical parts of this thesis. The research was aimed at identifying the wishes of potential customers about

the implementation of a new restaurant service, as well as about the desire to visit this restaurant.

## Advertising

It is necessary to add the information about enrolling to the event in the description of the event on the social networks because we encountered a problem that we did not know about how many persons would come and it was too approximately a number of participants. So, the recommendation is to add information to the advertisement that people should register for the event through the e-mail of the restaurant, by phone or directly in the restaurant.

#### Decoration

The presentation can be played on TV which is located on the wall of the restaurant instead of the computer. It can help to free up space in the workplace and to make easier it for everyone to see the pictures.

#### Event

To change the content of the event, for example, to make separate groups of children aged 10 to 14 who can themselves fry pancakes in the kitchen under the direction of the chef. For children from 5 to 9 to make a demonstrative performance of the cook who will show how the frying of pancakes occurs.

It may be interesting to arrange morning hours for groups of kindergartens, for example, before the daytime sleep to carry out the culinary master class. It can be also provided with an additional discount.

Make an emphasis on the employees who speak Finnish and will work with children. For example, Finnish students who have practical training in Pannukakkutalo can be attracted to playing with kids.

### Data collection

To add feedback forms online or in printed form for the parents of the kids who took part in the master class that could express the opinions, complaints and suggestions that could help to understand the mistakes and preferences of the customers in the future.

#### Price

To increase the price as the trial event carried out well enough and there were persons who wanted to participate again, and some feedback from the parents indicating a good idea of the service for this type of the restaurant.

## 7.3 Reliability and validity of the study

The theoretical background of this thesis was collected from a set of selected books and online articles. These sources were analyzed to check the truthful and relevance.

During the research it was necessary to understand if an event could be a way of attracting customers, that after the analyzed results and feedback it became clear to understand that most of the participants wanted to come back to the restaurant and moreover some of them did it.

Two interviews were conducted with the manager. The questions of the method are presented in Appendix 1. Answers of the manager helped to understand the real situation of the restaurant, expectations from the event, and feedback from customers participated in it. This type of data collection was chosen relevant.

In addition, one survey was conducted with 10 participants. This method was not really relevant for such small group but for this research, it was the best method of collecting data from small kids, given the fact that there is the speech barrier, since the children speak only Finnish, and the data collector in English.

Moreover, the survey was in an unusual way, namely in the game form that

helped to find an interest of children in giving answers. The questions were prepared in advance in Finnish and checked by the Finnish teacher. The questions are presented in Appendix 2 in Finnish and in English. Only 10 children out of 16 took part in questionnaire because after the awarded the diplomas one group of 6 kids left with their tutor. This fact also reduces the level of relevance of the survey. Although the tutor of this group left a comment to the restaurant manager about the success of the idea of holding a culinary master class for children, which was mentioned in the chapter "Results".

All the results of both methods were analyzed and some problems and deficiencies were identified. After that appropriate recommendations and improvement were suggested and discussed with the manager.

#### 8 CONCLUSION

The last chapter sums up the conclusions of all the work done in the framework of this thesis.

An event is one of the types of attracting customers to a restaurant, café and so on but it is not really easy to create. It takes time to find the target group, determine the interests of clients, make advertising, promotion, planning, etc.

Culinary master class for children became a way of reaching the goal of this thesis, namely attracting customers to Pannukakkutalo Restaurant Mikkeli. The objectives of this thesis were also reached: the concept of the event was produced and it was mentioned above, as well as the online promotion of the master class was made in some social networks, and posters were distributed to the kindergartens that finally attracted children. At last, according to the results of the survey, most kids became interested in visiting the master class and Pannukakkutalo Restaurant, besides the desire of all participants of the survey to return to the restaurants with their parents or friends was formed. Moreover, some customers of the restaurant asked about the next culinary master class for participating in it in the future.

In the second interview with Tarja Lappalinen, it was determined that some parents of kids who took part in the cooking pancakes expressed gratitude to the manager and told that it was a good idea of realizing this type of the event for children. In this interview, she told also that she would repeat the culinary master class for children.

Some recommendations were given that can be useful in the future of Pannukakkutalo Restaurant in relation of this event. If the next organizers of this event take these notes into consideration, it will probably help them to increase the attractiveness, the number of customers and popularity of this wonderful small restaurant.

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#### **QUESTIONS OF THE INTERVIEWS**

#### First interview

- What do you do for attracting new customers to Pannukakkutalo currently?
- What about current situation with target group here?
- What type of target group would you like to attract to you restaurant?
- So, you would like to attract children, as well, to spend their birthdays in your restaurant? Maybe you want to offer them to spend birthday's party in a new form?
- Would you like to suggest something new to your guests?
- Did somebody ask about the next master class?

### Second interview

- Were your expectations about the master class justified?
- Are you satisfied with the concept and results of the master class?
- Did you get any comments, feedbacks or recommendations from the parents after the event?
- Do you plan to repeat this event in the future?
- Do you want to suggest culinary master class for celebrating children's birthday parties?

### **SURVEY WITH KIDS**

## Survey in Finnish

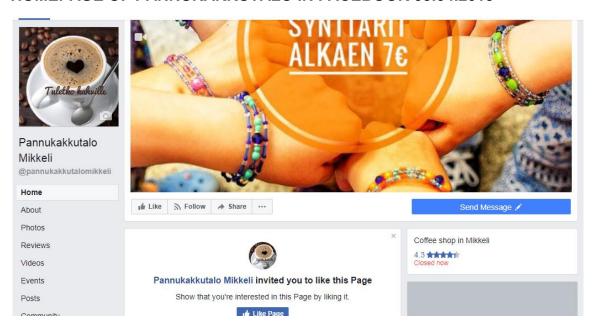
- 1. Tykkäsitkö oppitunnista?
- 2. Mistä tykkäsit eniten? Kokkaamisesta ja syömisestä, peleistä, kaikesta, et mistään?
- 3. Haluatko tulla pannukakkutaloon uudestaan kavereiden tai vanhempien kanssa?
- 4. Haluatko viettää syntymäpäivän pannukakkutalossa?

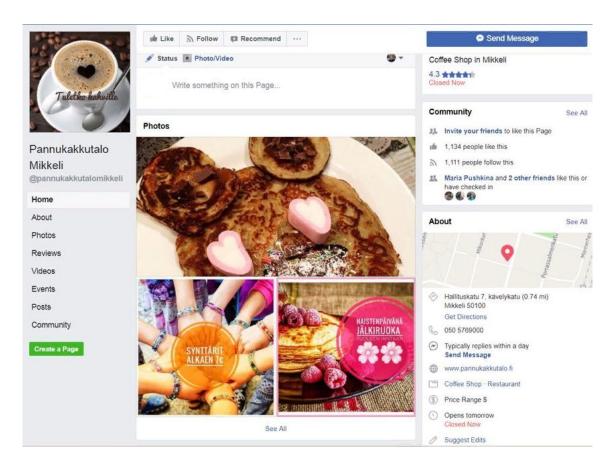
## Survey in English

- 1. Did you like this Master class?
- 2. What did you like more (cook and eat, play games, everything, nothing)?
- 3. Do you want to come back to Pannukakkutalo with your parents or friends?
- 4. Would you like to celebrate your birthday here?

## Appendix 3

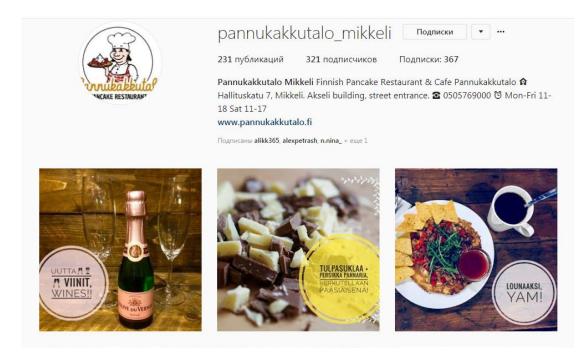
## **HOMEPAGE OF PANNUKAKKUTALO IN FACEBOOK 03.04.2018**





## Appendix 4

## **HOMEPAGE OF PANNUKAKKUTALO ON INSTAGRAM 03.04.2018**



03.04.2018

### ADVERTISMENT OF CULINARY MASTER CLASS FOR CHILDREN



# Appendix 6

## **DIPLOMA OF YOUNG CHEF**

