

Marketing communication among tourism companies in Porvoo

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<p>This Bachelor's thesis is a research-based thesis commissioned by Porvoo Tourism & Marketing Unit. The unit is responsible for city marketing including housing, self-constructions, recruiting; tourism and event marketing; promotion of Porvoo city as destination at national level as well as for marketing communication of tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The commissioner played a role of platform for analyzing marketing communication of the tourism companies in Porvoo.</p> <p>The study involved discovering the nature of marketing communication and how it is implemented among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The aim of the study was to improve the marketing communication among tourism companies in Porvoo by identifying the challenges of marketing communication of the examined companies, by defining the most effective communication channels and by obtaining good marketing practices for the commissioner.</p> <p>The theoretical framework composing the notion of external communication, marketing communication tools and mix, features of digital and internet marketing in tourism industry as well as integrated marketing communication creates a strong base for analysing marketing communication and elaborating practical recommendations for the commissioner.</p> <p>The research was conducted among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The research questions were answered through a quantitative research method that includes distributing an online questionnaire to the respondents.</p> <p>The research findings determined the most effective communication channels and revealed the incredible popularity of social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube as well as various forums and blogs in the marketing communication among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The research results also proved that collecting customer satisfaction feedback is essential part of building effective marketing communications as well as relevant visual and digital content of the messages. The data obtained proved the hypothesis of the study and emphasized the importance of using integrated marketing strategy comprising internet and digital marketing as well as advertising and Public Relations.</p> <p>Based on the research findings, the author developed improvement suggestions for the commissioner in order to support marketing communication of the examined companies. The recommendations are presented in the discussion part of the thesis. Further research can be carried out in order to identify other factors that influence on marketing communication in tourism industry. It would be helpful for tourism and marketing organizations, since the situation on the market is changing rapidly.</p>	
Keywords Marketing Communication, Tourism Industry, Marketing Research, Marketing Mix	

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1 Introduction

Modern tourism companies manage a complex system of marketing communication. Every company has a communication relationship with its intermediaries, consumers and various members of the public. Tourism today is the sphere of the national economic complex, which in many countries of the world has become a rapidly developing industry. The success of the tourism business, like that of any other business, depends on the effectiveness of communication that provide the link between the provider of tourism services and the consumer.

The topic of the research is relevant due to the fact that marketing communication is very important part of the effective functioning of any enterprise. It is the exchange of information that takes place between the enterprise and the external environment, allowing the enterprise to be aware of the needs of real and potential buyers, business partners as well as competitors.

Now, increasingly, tourism companies are pre-advertised with PR campaigns and materials that introduce tourists to the peculiarities of new tourism products. The consumers should be informed about new tourism product and its characteristics while they are not related to it.

The thesis is a research-based and it is commissioned by Porvoo Tourism & Marketing Unit. The unit is responsible for Porvoo's marketing as a city that includes living, recruitment, building lots and tourism as well as for marketing Congress and Cultural center at the Art Factory in Porvoo. The commissioner is also responsible for the marketing communication of tourism services in Porvoo. It has broad business connections with different tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. Therefore, Porvoo Tourism & Marketing unit played a role of platform for analyzing marketing communication in tourism industry.

The research problem is improving the marketing communication among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The purpose of the study is to determine the most effective marketing communication channels and practices among the examined companies. The research sample included the tourism and hospitality companies, which have a cooperation with the commissioner. The author did not examine the marketing communication of the commissioner, but based on the findings developed improvement suggestions to support marketing communication of its business partners (tourism and hospitality companies of Porvoo).

The aim of the study was achieved by analyzing the best marketing practices and by studying the peculiarities of marketing communication among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The author set up the following research questions:

- What are the strengths and weaknesses of marketing communication of tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo;
- How efficient the current marketing communication is;
- What are the most effective marketing communication channels and tools;
- What are the challenges of marketing communication among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo.

The thesis consists of seven chapters. The first chapter is an introduction part; the second chapter is devoted to the nature of external communication (since marketing communication is a significant part of it). In the third chapter, the author highlighted the structure of marketing communication within the tourism industry, digital marketing as well as the notion of marketing mix and its elements. In the fourth chapter, the organizational structure of the commissioner, its aims and objectives are described. The data and the methods of the conducted research are presented in the fifth chapter of the thesis whereas the discussion of the results and recommendations are considered in the six chapter. The last chapter of the thesis is a conclusion part.

In order to achieve the aims of the thesis, the author used the quantitative research methodology. The research was carried out in the form of online survey including both multiple-choice questions and open-ended for discovering interesting insights regarding marketing communication among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo.

A preliminary analysis of the theory and the research problem made it possible to formulate a hypothesis of the study. It consists in the assumption that the effectiveness of marketing communications in the tourism industry is based on the integrated marketing approach (the notion of integrated marketing communication is considered in the subchapter 4.4 of the thesis) in which advertising, PR and social media play an important role.

The methodological basis of the study is the works of foreign authors, who disclose fundamental theories and practices of marketing, the specifics and characteristics of organizational and marketing communications as well as the concept of marketing communications within tourism industry (Kotler, Armstrong, Belasen, Hayes, Blundel, Mercer etc.).

2 Porvoo Tourism & Marketing Unit

In this chapter, the author briefly described the organizational structure of the city of Porvoo as well as its administrative process and tools. The main part of the chapter is devoted to the commissioner's working process, goals, objectives and target markets.

2.1 The Porvoo City organization

The City Board of Porvoo carries out the management and development of the city in accordance with the goals, plans and decisions made by the City Council. The tasks of the City Board include the preparation, the implementation and the legality of matters dealt with the City Council. The municipal law regulates the municipal government's powers and general tasks. They have also been specified in the City of Porvoo Administrative Code. The remuneration and travel allowances of the administrators are defined in the administrative regulations. (Porvoo 2015.)

The Porvoo City Council has 51 seats. Each member has a personal deputy. The Board of Trustees elects the members of the Board of Trustees and their alternates:

- The Swedish People's Party (16 seats);
- The Social Democratic Party of Finland (12 seats);
- The Greens (8 seats);
- The National Coalition Party (7 seats);
- The Centre Party (4 seats);
- The Finns Party (2 seats);
- The Left Alliance (1 seat);
- The Christian Democrats (1 seat).

(Porvoo 2015.)

The council meetings are always open to the public. Meetings are held at Porvoo City Hall at Raatihuoneenkatu 9. After the meetings of the trust bodies, a summary of the decisions is made, which is later published in the city news and is sent to the local media. (Porvoo 2015.)

The minutes of the meetings are published as well. The minutes of each meeting are kept on the Internet for about a year after the meetings. According to the Personal Data Privacy Guidelines, meeting documents containing personal data may only be published on the Internet for a limited period for effective communication and should be removed no later than one year after the publication. (Porvoo 2015.)

In addition to the City Council, the Porvoo City Organization consists of the Boards and Chambers. The Boards and Chambers are responsible for the production of public services. The roles and the procedures of the Boards and Chambers are defined in the Administrative Regulations. City development and activities are also guided by the city's strategy and programs approved by the trust bodies. (Porvoo 2015.)

2.2 Organizational structure of the commissioner

Tourism is a growing source of export revenue and significant provider of employment in Finland. Tourism has a multiplier effect on other sectors. One euro in tourism adds value 56 cents to the other sectors. (Peisala 7.3.2018)

The most important aim of Porvoo Marketing and Tourism unit is that the population continuously grows especially the amount of families with kids. Children and families are attracted to Porvoo through variety activities of city marketing. Porvoo's reputation is strengthened as a city of comfort, bilingualism and versatility. The focus of business development in Porvoo is environmental business, tourism and culture as well as services. (Peisala 7.3.2018)

As the author defined in the previous chapter, marketing communication includes advertising, direct marketing, branding, packaging, your online presence, printed materials, PR activities, sales presentations, sponsorships, trade show appearances and more. The commissioner's strategy is based on the following objectives:

- To implement a positive and visible city brand and communication;
- To build Porvoo's positive tourism image in urban marketing;
- To promote Porvoo as a friendly city for studying, living and working;
- To focus on the accurate marketing for able-bodied population and families with children;
- To develop products for entrepreneurs in the tourism sector, marketing and networking.
- To attract new residents and businesses by using active marketing programs.

(Peisala 7.3.2018)

The unit has the following areas of responsibility: (Peisala 7.3.2018)

- City marketing: housing, self-constructions, strengthening the employer's image, recruiting;
- Tourism and event marketing;
- Development of tourism by cooperation with stakeholders and partners - the creation and maintenance of tourism information as well as the promotion of tourism in Porvoo and lobbying it at national level;

- Marketing communication with Art Factory's Culture and Congress Center; Management, development and material production of the Porvoo City brand.

Porvoo Marketing and Tourism unit covers three main scopes of the city marketing: the awareness of “Porvoo-Borgå” brand; the promotion and the development of the website www.visitporvoo.fi; the promotion of activities of Cultural and Congress Centre at the Art Factory. (Peisala 7.3.2018)

The awareness of “Porvoo-Borgå” brand are aimed at families and able-bodied population in the Helsinki metropolitan area as well as Porvoo city employees. In the target groups of the website are included domestic tourists (Uusimaa, Kymenlaakso, Päijät-Häme), international tourists (Germany, Russia, Sweden, Japan, China), business groups of tourists, cooperation customers and hobby tourists. The target markets of Cultural and Congress center are conference and congress customers, the residents of Porvoo and the inhabitants of nearby areas. (Peisala 7.3.2018)

2.3 Tourism companies cooperating with the commissioner

The commissioner has plenty of business connections, primarily with the representatives of tourism and hospitality field of Porvoo. The cooperation includes accommodation (hotels, apartments, cottages, hostels etc.); different companies providing various services for tourists (museums, churches, galleries, tourist sights etc.); shops; restaurants and cafes; companies providing diverse activities and experiences for visitors (biking, fishing, nature trails, cruises, sports and wellness, outdoor activities etc.).

There are more than 300 connections both with companies and with private persons. All of the above listed companies are marketed on the official webpage of Porvoo Tourism and Marketing unit – www.visitporvoo.fi. In addition to the Internet marketing, the commissioner also promotes the tourism companies and organizations via different kind of printed marketing materials such as brochures, maps, catalogs, leaflets etc. There is also a possibility to order necessary kind of brochure on the bottom of the website.

Porvoo Marketing and Tourism unit has the following stakeholders:

- Companies, clubs and associations (e.g. Premium Visit, Old Porvoo Merchant Association, Porvoo Living Center, Porvoo Tourist Guides);
- Event organizers and publishers (including Cachecon, Porvoo bloggers); VisitHelsinki, VisitFinland, Uusimaa Tourism Group, Coastal Group (Sipoo, Loviisa, Kotka-Hamina);
- Posintra Development Company, Tourism projects;
- Educational Institutes (HAAGA-HELIA, Point College, Edupoli);

- City development units (communication, culture, recruitment, Event Factory).

(Peisala 7.3.2018)

The office of Porvoo Tourism & Marketing unit locates in the Art Factory, Porvoo (Läntinen Aleksanterinkatu 1). The team is small and has only four members. All of them are responsible for marketing communication.

According to the theory considered in the previous chapter, the most important line of activity of marketing enterprises within the tourist industry is a promotion of tourist products to the market, advertising and implementation of the prepared product or service. Currently, the mass media, special editions, advertising brochures are literally full of various tourist information. The main aim of the company is to bring to the potential client relevant information and to get feedback.

The commissioner of thesis has a direct connection to the marketing as well as to the tourism industry. The unit cooperates with most of the tourism companies in Porvoo and Porvoo's region. It has even more difficult task - integrated marketing communication. The industry is growing rapidly and therefore it is essential to conduct up-to-date research in order to get customer insights and to be familiar with the market trends.

3 External communication

Nowadays, many tools allow not only to convey a set of necessary messages so that people understand the company and its product, but also to form a special attitude towards to it. Marketing communications have a direct connection with organizational communications. It is implemented within the external environment of an organization. Therefore, the author decided to consider external organizational communications as the basis of the theoretical background for this thesis, and further move into the study of the types and the structure of marketing communications.

3.1 The nature of external communication

Any organization, even a "closed" type organization, is connected with the outside world. It can not exist without receiving information, energy, raw materials from outside resources. All of that turn into products or services of their activity. The organization is surrounded by an external environment, as the Earth is surrounded by an atmosphere. But the resources of the external environment are not unlimited. Many other organizations aspire to them in the same environment. Therefore, there is always the possibility that the organization will not be able to obtain the necessary resources from the external environment.

The external environment for an organization represents a complex set of participants, systems and its relationship. This set can be divided into two sectors. The first one includes the subjects and business systems that interact with the organization. The second group includes those entities and systems whose activities have some influence on the organization, but there are no direct communication between them. (Belasen 2015, 123-128.)

The aim of external communication is to meet the information needs of the organization, to establish the links with government organizations, suppliers, and customers. The image of the company is formed and maintained with the help of external communication. There are following subjects in the structure of external interacting with the organization: business partners; consumers; competitors; operators of market infrastructure; investors, analysts (financial ties); business systems (market infrastructure; business traditions). (Belasen 2015, 123-128.)

The external environment is characterized by:

- The relationship between the external factors - the level of force with which a change in one factor affects other factors. Changing any environmental factor can cause a change in others;
- The complexity of the external environment - the number of factors that an organization must respond to, as well as the level of variability of each factor;
- The mobility of the environment - the speed with which changes occur in the environment of the organization. The environment of modern organizations is changing with increasing speed. The mobility of the external environment can be higher for some units of the organization and lower for others. In a highly mobile environment, an organization or unit should rely on more diverse information to make effective decisions;
- The uncertainty of the external environment - the ratio between the amount of information and the confidence in the accuracy of this information. The more uncertain the external environment, the more difficult it is to make effective decisions.

(Jablin & Putnam 2016, 233-237.)

3.2 Types of external communication

The following types of communication can be considered in the external environment:

- B2B (business to business) - this concept includes the sender and the addressee of any information, goods or services. As a rule, this means business interaction. The difference from the ordinary business is that here as a consumer or client is another business, but not an ordinary consumer. The main task of B2B is to increase the efficiency of the companies in the B2B market by reducing the costs of preparing trading procedures and expanding the geography of the business. B2B tasks also include interaction between enterprises - quickly and conveniently; building secure channels of information exchange between firms; coordination of enterprises' activities and their joint development based on information exchange.
- B2G (business to government relationship) - legal norms, agreements and obligations. It includes communication with those structures, regulation of which is not mandatory for business.
- B2I (business to information sources) - examples of B2I communication can be a press release sent by the organization to the media channels, public statements by its representative at a press conference, publication of a newsletter for a wide audience etc.
- B2P (business to private persons) - it covers a communication with consumers and legal entities that make up a number of partners in business.

(Argenti 2016, 119-125.)

The last type of external communication (B2P) the author considered relevant for the thesis aim and topic, because the research was conducted among the business partners of the commissioner in order to evaluate their marketing communication and to identify its advantages and disadvantages.

Any organization exists within the interaction with its external environment. The nature and the ways of its communication depends on what factors of the external environment have the greatest impact on the organization (consumers, competitors, government regulation, public opinion, etc.) The task of external communication is to transform the desired strategic position and communication messages at the organizational, production and functional levels into the organization's behavior. (Argenti 2016, 187-195.)

3.3 The system of external communication

Managers should clearly decide how they want to represent the organization and its products and/or services, clearly identify the key groups of the public, and understand what their organization's image is. Then they should develop a set of tools for creating a corporate image that could bring the message to the public, while keeping an eye on the formation of a corporate image of competitors and its changes. A set of such tools should include:

- The definition of communication tasks;
- The selection of target groups (clients and representatives of the public that are relevant to the organization);
- The formulation of a suitable message (messages);
- The selection of funds and planning;
- The coordination of actions.

(Mercer 2017, 142-157.)

To achieve the company's objectives the external environment also includes marketing communication. A corporate feature (individuality) is a strategically planned self-presentation of the organization, which is based on the desired image. A powerful corporate identity contributes to:

- Increasing the motivation of employees;
- Creating a sense of confidence among representatives of key groups of the outside community;
- Gaining a good knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of both its own and other suppliers

(Mercer 2017, 142-157.)

Let us consider another part of the external communication - a strategic PR. Probably the most obvious type of activity is public relations, which make it possible to create popular and positive attitude towards to the company. In order to achieve that, managers should remember the following rules while communicating with outside representatives:

- Quick response to requests;
- Open and honest media policy;
- The readiness to deal with negative news;
- Availability of managers;
- Intelligible and easily usable information (not overloaded with unnecessary technical or other details);
- Proactive policy of maintaining contacts (regular, consistent, personal).

The main topics for mass media include marketing news, company policy, current events etc. Messages should primarily target articles on specific topics, but not just on self-promotion of the company. (Mercer 2017, 179-187.)

The preparation of public events can include planning of strategic communication and dealing with various audiences at the corporate level- with the representatives of government and/or business, press, public organizations, shareholders, trade unions and general public. Business communication include communication with various organizations within the same industry as the company. (Mercer 2017, 179-187.)

The choice of tools for communication depends on many factors, and it can not be universal for all enterprises. It is determined by the purpose of use - the effect that the enterprise expects to receive. The significant factors are the features of the industry and the specific products produced by the enterprise as well as the characteristics of the target consumer audience. Nowadays, marketing distribution channels reach saturation. Market segments become smaller and smaller. The cost of informing about a new product/service is increasing rapidly. (Mercer 2017, 302-310.)

4 Marketing communication in tourism industry

The environment in which the tourism enterprise operates is permeated with a complex system of communication. The company communicates with its clients, banks, insurance companies, manufacturers of tourism services and various contact audiences. Moreover, these relations are multidirectional and overlapping. The task of the tourism company is to form and to maintain the image of the products and the company in general in the eyes of the public as well as of its existing and potential consumers.

4.1 Marketing communication tools

Marketing communication occupy a special place in the activities of the tourism enterprise, as they represent the most active part of the marketing complex. The tools of marketing communication include four main elements:

- Advertising;
- Public relations;
- Sales promotion;
- Direct marketing;
- Personal sale.

(Kotler & Armstrong 2017, 120-132.)

Advertising is the most significant element of the marketing communication process. It has a great potential impact on all the other elements of this complex (it can attract broad masses of people) and is the most expensive.

A characteristic feature of advertising as one of the main tools of marketing communication in the sphere of tourism is determined by the specifics of both the advertising itself and the features of the industry and its product (tourist product). There are following characteristics of advertising a tourist product: (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 147-156.)

- Impersonal character. The communicative signal comes to the potential client not personally from the employee, but with the help of various intermediaries (mass media, prospectuses, catalogs, posters and other advertising media).
- Homogeneous directivity. Advertising actually has only one direction: from the advertiser to the receiver. The feedback signal comes only in the form of the final behavior of the potential client.
- Information saturation. Tourist services, which, unlike traditional goods, do not have a material form of constant quality. Therefore there is a need of priority development of advertising functions such as informative and propaganda.

- Showiness and the ability to persuade. The specificity of tourist services necessitates the use of visual means, providing a more complete representation of objects of tourist interest.

(Roberts & Zahar 2017, 147-156.)

Playing the main role in the entire communication system, advertising simultaneously informs about the company and its product, convinces potential buyers to stop their choice on your company and its product as well as strengthens the confidence of existing customers in their choice. (Kotler & Armstrong 2017, 202-218.)

In the tourism business, as well as in other areas, recently the importance of such an element of the communication complex as Public Relations (PR) has been increasing. Some tourism companies spend half of the money allocated for advertising purposes on PR. The reason for this lies in the fact that PR is a powerful tool and can sometimes have more influence on a potential client than advertising. (Kotler & Bowen 2016, 251-259.)

Public Relations is a management tool through which the organization presents its product in the media with the best possible hand. However, the difference between Public Relations and Publicity is that the latter only compiles information (this information can be presented by the organization both from the best and from the worst side), intended specifically for the media. While with the help of PR the organization carries out a kind of control over publicity and ensures that only a positive opinion is created about its product. (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 412-419.)

Sales promotion includes various types of marketing activities that increase the initial value of a product or service for a certain period of time and directly stimulate the purchasing activity of consumers (for example coupons or trial samples), the work of distributors and sales personnel. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016, 408-413.)

Sales stimulation is a means of short-term exposure to the market. However, the effect of measures to promote sales is much faster than using other elements of communication.

The instruments of sales promotion can be directed to:

- Personnel of the company that sells the services;
- Trade intermediaries (retail tourism companies and organizations);
- Customers.

(Kotler & Bowen 2016, 416-420.)

Direct marketing is a direct interaction of the seller (producer) with the consumer in the process of selling the goods. Direct marketing is a marketing communication, which is based on a personalized attitude toward to the client including close interaction and feedback without other informational intermediaries. Thus, direct marketing is not focused on target groups, but on individual personalities. (Armstrong 2016, 137-145.)

The purpose of direct marketing is the planned response of the buyer, expressed in the purchase of goods. There are plenty of tasks can be implemented by using direct marketing tool: (Armstrong 2016, 137-145.)

- Attracting attention of the consumer;
- Keeping the consumer in the sphere of influence;
- Developing a long-term personal relationships with the buyer;
- Stimulating the first purchase;
- Creating prerequisites for numerous repeated purchases;
- Studying the reaction of the consumer;
- Increasing sales volumes;
- Expanding the range of purchases;
- Increasing the frequency of purchases;
- Increasing customer loyalty.

There are following forms of direct marketing: personal sale, electronic trading, personal presentation, direct mail marketing, telephone marketing, telemarketing, Internet marketing, catalog marketing (distribution of catalogs). (Armstrong 2016, 137-145.)

According to F. Kotler, personal sale is the oral presentation of the goods in the course of a conversation with one or several potential buyers for selling. Personal sales or, as they are called, direct sales for the tourism industry are one of the important elements of the communication complex. They relate exclusively to the sales process and represent marketing, conducted in relation to customers. Their importance is predetermined by the ability of sellers to meet customers. (Kotler & Bowen 2016, 416-420.)

Personal sales constitute one of the parts of the company's marketing plan. They are, almost the only element of the communication complex, which provides feedback with the client, regardless of whether it was carried out through sales personnel or directly from the management of the company or its employees. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016, 321-325.)

Personal sale is the direct contact of a representative of the company with one or several potential buyers with the purpose of presenting a tourist product and committing a sale.

Personal sale is widespread in tourism industry. Almost all employees of the company are in the role of the sellers. (Kotler & Bowen 2016, 434-437.)

Communication with clients are established by phone, by means of mail, messages and personal dialogue. The abstract nature of tourism services, the complexity of their perception cause the presentation of special requirements for personnel. Employees of a tourism enterprise should inspire trust, be able to convince and skillfully advise consumers. (Kotler & Bowen 2016, 416-420.)

Thus, the main elements of marketing communications are advertising, Public Relations, sales promotion, direct marketing and personal selling. The most effective means in the tourism industry is advertising. It has a great potential impact on all other elements of this complex, since it can attract broad masses of people, but, in addition, it is also the most expensive. Public Relations is also a powerful tool and can sometimes have more influence on a potential client than advertising, as it affects the consumer of the non-contributing and causes more trust.

Sales promotion is used mainly to revive the fallen demand, increase the awareness of customers about the products offered, and create the necessary image for them. A special role is played by sales promotion during the introduction of a new tourist product on the market. The value of personal sale cannot be overestimated in solving such problems as the formation of preferences and persuasion of the clientele, motivation to purchase a tourist product. It is used when it is necessary to directly influence the target audience, establishing close relations with it and encouraging certain actions.

4.2 Marketing mix

Marketing mix model is the main element of any business strategy. The model is simple and universal in use, and is a kind of checklist for the effective development of the company's product on the market. Initially, the marketing complex consisted of four elements (4P), subsequently complicated and, as a result, moved into the marketing mix of 5P and 7P. In this chapter the author will consider all three models of marketing mix and will analyze each element of the modern marketing complex (according to Kotler's theory). (Kotler & Bowen 2016, 251-259.)

As it was mentioned above, at the beginning marketing mix included only four basic elements (4P): Product, Price, Place and Promotion. Product is what the company offers to the market and the consumer. The product can be either a physical product or a service.

Product - this is the element of the marketing mix. A successful product is always built on understanding and meeting the important needs of the target market. (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 101-106.)

Price is an important element of the marketing mix. It is responsible for the final profit. The price is determined on the basis of the perceived value of the goods by the consumer, the cost of the product, and the prices of competitors and the desired rate of return. (Kotler & Bowlen 2016, 251-259.)

Place ensures the availability of the product for the target market. It means that the goods of the company must be presented in the right place (where the target consumer can see and buy it) and at the right time (when the target consumer needs to buy it). In other words, the place of a sale is the company's distribution model. (Kotler & Armstrong 2016)

As competition becomes more complex in all markets, the 4P marketing mix model has also faced changes and has evolved first into the 5P model and then into the 7P model. Any company can use the main components of the marketing mix 4P. The new 3P's included in the 7P model are Process, People and Physical Evidence. This model is more suitable for B2B (business-to-business) market and for marketing of services. (Kotler & Bowlen 2016, 251-259.)

The element "People" appeared in connection with the development of marketing of services. It means people who can influence on the perception of your product in the eyes of the target market:

- Employees representing your company and your product;
- Sales personnel who contact your target consumer;
- Consumers who are the "opinion leaders" in the category;
- Manufacturers that can influence the cost and quality of goods;
- Loyal consumers and VIP customers generating an important sales volume.

(Kotler & Bowlen 2016, 347-358.)

Process - refers to the B2B market and the service market. The term describes the process of interaction between the consumer and the company. This interaction is given special attention, since it is the basis for making a purchase on the market and building customer loyalty. The goal of this process is to make the acquisition and the use of the service as comfortable as possible for the consumer. (Kotler & Bowlen 2016, 347-358.)

Physical evidence - the term describes the surroundings of the consumer at the time of the purchase. The physical environment allows you to form the right image of the company and to highlight the distinctive characteristics of the product. In the marketing strategy, it is recommended to separately designate the physical environment and its key objectives. (Kotler & Bowen 2016, 347-358.)

4.3 Digital marketing

Digital marketing (interactive marketing) is the use of all possible forms of digital channels for brand promotion. Nowadays, it includes television, radio, the Internet, social media and other platforms. Digital marketing is closely connected with the Internet marketing, but it has developed a number of techniques that allow reaching the target audience even in an offline environment (using mobile applications, sms / mms, digital displays etc.) (Kotler 2017, 47-62.)

Today, digital marketing uses widely traditional types of advertising, the main task of which is to grab the attention of the audience and to drag it into the virtual world. The most striking example is QR codes in advertising posters and magazines. Below the author highlighted distribution channels of digital marketing: (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 351-360.)

- The Internet - the most important digital distribution channel. It also includes the devices that provide access to it (computers, tablets, smartphones, etc.). This is the best mean of obtaining information and communication;
- Local networks - local computer networks of companies (extranets) in fact, are self-sufficient information systems. Where users can communicate and share the necessary information. At the moment, local networks are gradually integrating with the Internet;
- Mobile devices - earlier, companies delivered messages via SMS. Nowadays, there is a possibility to install mobile application;
- Digital television - develops rapidly and gradually integrates with Internet applications. Already now you can use the Internet on your TV, watch a video on YouTube or find out the latest news;
- Interactive screens - we often encounter them in the store, on the street, even in subway cars. This is a kind of digital media that gradually replaces the standard outdoor advertising, because it allows you to interact much more closely with the consumer, hook it with a message and help in making decisions;
- Touchscreens (Tablets), readers and other devices - special applications for them allow the user to get new knowledge, play, watch movies, go online and much more. For many, a favorite tablet is part of a life in which information is consumed around the clock;

- Digital gadgets - devices that can collect information and transfer it to other media. For example, smart watches, oculus rift glasses, fitness bracelets and other;
- Digital art - any kind of art where a computer is used to create or reproduce art-work. It can be a picture, sound, animation, video, game, website, algorithm, performance or installation. Many traditional forms of art integrate digital technologies, and as a result, the boundaries between traditional works of art and digital media become blurred.

(Roberts & Zahar 2017, 351-360.)

Internet marketing has evolved into digital marketing, which uses complex methods of online strategy, website development and mobile applications, creativity and copywriting, contextual advertising and SMM, as well as other interactive products. There are following advantages of digital marketing: (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 98-115.)

- It allows you to reach both online and offline consumers who use tablets and mobile phones, play games and download applications. So, companies can attract a wider audience, not limited to the Internet;
- The ability to collect clear and detailed data. Virtually all user actions in the digital environment are recorded by analytical systems. That allows you to make accurate conclusions about the effectiveness of different channels of promotion, as well as make an accurate portrait of the buyer;
- Flexible approach - digital marketing allows to attract an offline audience to the online market, and vice versa. For example, using the QR code on the flyer, you can send a user to the site. In addition, at the same time, using email, you can invite subscribers to a seminar or other offline event.

(Roberts & Zahar 2017, 98-115.)

Digital marketing is constantly evolving. New interaction tools with the audience are emerging. Customers form the desired products and services by themselves. They have the opportunity to communicate directly with companies, leave comments and be heard. Simultaneously, even small companies with minimal capital investments can promote their brand, deliver information about their products and services to millions of potential customers and grow into a large corporation. (Kotler 2017, 119-124.)

According to the American Marketing Association, the average consumer receives up to 10,000 messages from different companies every day. Therefore, it is important to highlight your product or service and offer it to the guest at the right time. (Kotler 2017, 140-149.)

According to the Institute of Digital Marketing, 51.9% of marketing professionals around the world are focused on video as a type of content with the best return on investment

(ROI). Moreover, 43% of Internet users want to see more video content. Video marketing helps to tell the history of the brand, to show what its value is and to form relationships with potential and existing guests. The usage of variety video advertising formats will add coverage to your brand. (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 255-259.)

It is expected that the number of people using messengers will increase from 1.82 billion in 2017 to 2.01 billion in 2018. It is essential to pay attention to the features of Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and Snapchat as well as advertising channels. The benefits of instant messengers within tourism industry: (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 430-437.)

- Distribution of relevant content, taking into account the interests of your target audience;
- Generation of potential customers;
- Increasing brand awareness;
- Sales;
- Messenger as a customer support service (work with complaints and suggestions, help in making decisions).

(Roberts & Zahar 2017, 430-437.)

According to the mentioned research, Instagram is a priority social network for tourism in 2018. This social network shows good results in the promotion of the tourist products. In Instagram tourists can visualize information about your company, product or service. You can share the user content on the company's page, collect video feedback, which also have a place in Instagram. (Kotler 2017, 151-153.)

4.4 Integrated marketing communication

The tendency to integrate marketing communications, i.e. joint use of advertising, public relations, sales promotion, direct sale and event marketing with other elements of the marketing complex, is one of the most significant marketing features of recent years.

IMC (integrated marketing communication) extends the promotion and includes all the ways the consumer communicates with the organization. It is not limited to traditional media and direct mailings, but also includes packaging, product demonstrations in the store, sales literature, online and interactive media. The success of any promotion program with the help of IMC elements depends on the ability of its developers to identify the members of the audience and understand what they want. (Juska 2017, 23-41.)

F. Kotler points out that it is necessary to consider marketing communication as a key element of the management system. Marketing communication occupies a special place in

the activity of the tourism enterprise and represent the most active part of the marketing complex.

As the author mentioned earlier, the complex of communication includes four main elements: personal sale, sales promotion, propaganda and advertising. In the most general form, a complex of marketing communication is a system of measures aimed at eliminating and maintaining certain relationships between the tourism enterprise and the addressees of communication. The role of communications is to introduce coherence and ensure the normal functioning of the internal environment of the enterprise and its interaction with the external environment. (Juska 2017, 23-41.)

Planning and implementation of integrated marketing communication in a tourism enterprise involves the development of a communication strategy, the preparation and implementation of specific activities for each of the constituent elements of the marketing mix. According to F. Kotler, the complex of IMC includes advertising, sales promotion, public relations and publications in the press, personal sales and direct marketing. (Hudson 2017, 127-130.)

At the heart of integrated marketing communication lie several principles that come from the basic marketing: (Hudson 2017, 180-203.)

- IMC begins with the study of consumer perceptions, with the passage of time transforming into a certain relation to a product or service. Therefore advertising is the most important component when promoting a tourist service or travel agency;
- IMC integrates marketing and advertising strategies. Advertising strategies should be a direct continuation of marketing strategies, and then such integration leads to a certain competitive behavior of a company aimed at obtaining competitive advantages, both internal and external;
- IMC coordinates all business communication, and the lack of control leads to a situation where the image of a tourist company is perceived ambiguously, i.e. there should be a single line of responsibility for all messages sent by the company to the target market (from the appearance of the office to the price lists of the products);
- IMC does not only inform the target market, but also establish feedback channel. So an organization that uses all possible communication tools (sales promotion, Public Relations, direct sales) becomes more efficient;
- Using IMC allows you to plan communication in relation to different segments of the target market, so that they more closely match the characteristics of individual consumers.

The strategic decisions regarding the marketing communication of the tourism company depend on the strategic marketing objectives of the organization. All of the above allows the author to conclude that IMC as an integral part of marketing strategies. It is a long-term plan of action for a tourism enterprise. The availability of such a valid strategy of using a complex of communication tools and organizing interaction with all subjects of the marketing system ensures stable and effective formation of a positive image within the industry. (Hudson 2017, 180-203.)

5 Data and methods

In this chapter, the author highlighted the approaches and the methods for gathering research data. The author described the process of designing and conducting survey research as well as he presented and analyzed the collected data.

5.1 Approaches and methods

In the theory of marketing, there is a division into economic and communicative effectiveness of marketing communication. The first category is the correlation of communication costs with sales due to communicative activity. The second category is more associated with psychological impact that provide marketing communication. The commissioner of thesis required to analyze the communicative effectiveness of marketing communication of its partnership organizations (tourism companies). Therefore, the author developed the survey based on the commissioner's aims. (Plooy 2016, 45-50.)

As indicators of assessing the effectiveness of marketing communication are awareness of the brand, memorability of advertising and communication solutions, distribution channels, marketing and feedback channels. The greatest attention should paid to the evaluation of the effectiveness of advertising, which is the main instrument of influence on the consumer. (Plooy 2016, 57-61.)

The survey is a method of collecting empirical information in marketing research. It provides an oral or written appeal of researchers to a certain group of people with questions concerning the research problems at the level of empirical indicators. Based on the survey research, the registration and statistical processing of the responses is done as well as its theoretical interpretation. This method is used in approximately 90% of studies. The advantages of this method are: (Plooy 2016, 67-71.)

- The ability to identify the needs of judgment, motivation, habits and other circumstances;
- The flexibility of the form of conducting;
- The possibility of statistical processing of information.

In order to assess the effectiveness of marketing communication within the company, each of the stages of communication process should be covered in the questions: the message, the communication channel, the awareness of the company and the creation of a certain image of the company, its products and feedback (the way of getting and providing a certain informaton to the company). (Plooy 2016, 83-87.)

Preliminary testing is essential and should be conducted among your focus group in order to measure physiological reactions on questions, to define the proper method of distribution, to check readability and clarity of the questions. (Plooy 2016, 83-87.)

5.2 Survey development and data collection

One way to obtain valuable information to support the development of a company is to create interactive business surveys that will help to determine the interests and level of satisfaction of your partner organizations. By creating a business questionnaire, you will be able to learn more about possible ways to strengthen relationships, to support and to communicate with partner organizations' interests and/or improve the operation of the website.

Therefore, the author decided to gain the research data by using an online survey, which covers all the necessary research areas. Partner organizations (in the study case tourism companies) very often are the optimal audience, which can provide the essential information about the state of affairs of your company. The anonymous survey is a good way to determine the level of satisfaction and find out their opinion.

In order to obtain useful results, the author decided to use quantitative methods of collecting the research data. In connection with the need of quick and quality data collection, the author designed an online survey using different types of questions such as selection and multi-selections, multiple-choice, matrix and multi-selection matrix as well as interesting open-ended questions. It helped to identify the nuances and to consider the research problem from different angles.

The author's aims were assessing the level of marketing communication among tourism companies in Porvoo, identifying the most effective marketing channels and obtaining some good marketing practices. At the development stage of the survey, the author was focused on the following issues:

- Comparison and identification of the most effective media resource;
- Determining the moments of advertising, which consumers consider the most memorable and interesting;
- The essence of perception (sound, visual, tactile) of advertising message by consumers;
- The most effective marketing channel within the tourism industry;
- Collection of customer satisfaction feedback;
- Benchmarking.

The chosen research methodology was implemented in the form of an online survey, using Webropol Software tool. The survey instrument was designed around the six primary objectives:

- To get overall understanding about the current level of marketing communication in the companies and its distribution channels;
- To find out the tools of marketing communication they use;
- To obtain the information about the trends in marketing communication within the tourism industry;
- To identify the effectiveness of existing marketing communication channels;
- To evaluate the effectiveness of feedback channels;
- To discover good marketing practices.

The main aim of the survey was to identify the ways in which marketing communication is implemented among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo.

At the developing stage of the survey, the author took the Plooy's theory into consideration and designed the questions regarding each of the stages of communication process. The questions covered the distribution and communication channels of the companies, the main aims of marketing communication as well as the ways of collecting customer satisfaction feedback. The survey questions were designed in order to identify the most effective and the most frequently used marketing communication channels and to obtain useful practices in conducting communication with the customers. The survey is presented in the Appendix 1.

The first version of the survey consisted of 10 questions including multiple-choice and open-ended questions. The survey included also an introduction, because it is a great way to explain the topic and the aim of the research to the respondents and thank them for their time. The author created a brief and informative text since a long and cumbersome introduction may scare off the potential respondents.

In order to make sure that the developed questionnaire is understandable and is easy to complete, it is necessary to conduct its testing. The author sent the survey link to the commissioner. It was distributed among the colleagues within the department. The author got useful feedback and comments concerning the survey. With the help of the thesis advisor, the author revised some survey questions, changed the layout and re-wrote the optional answers so they more reflect the interest of the commissioner. The final version of the survey consisted of 11 questions. The survey can be found in Appendix 1.

As it was mentioned above, the survey was online and was created using Webropol tool. In order to give the respondents a mental respite while answering the survey, the author

decided to put one question at a time and added a progress bar at the bottom of the page. If there are too many questions on one page, the survey is more difficult to perceive on mobile devices and exerts a psychological pressure on the respondents. (Plooy 2016, 35-37.)

The commissioner was satisfied with the English version of the survey. There was no need of translating the questionnaire in other languages.

The distribution of the questionnaire and the collection of the responses is the most difficult and the critically important part of the whole research. At this stage, the trust of the potential respondents needs to be earned. The correct distribution channels are the key to the trust.

The potential audience needs to be informed in advance about the purpose of the survey. It is important to explain them the importance of participation and to tell about the opportunities provided by this survey. In addition, by means of communication, an atmosphere of openness must be created in which the respondents will not be afraid to freely answer questions posed. This is possible only if confidentiality of individual information is ensured and guaranteed at all stages of the survey.

Therefore, in order to attract more people, it was decided to spread out the survey using Porvoo Tourism & Marketing unit's weekly newsletter. The newsletter covers the tourism companies, which have subscribed to the newsletter. The total number of the respondents were 234 subscribers. The link of the survey was distributed twice by sending it as a reminder in the next newsletter.

The timeframe for the conducting survey research was limited (2 weeks) due to the unforeseen obstacles that caused a change of the research problems. In order to gather more responses, the author decided to choose this kind of distribution channel. It is essential to use trustful and well-known sources of information, especially when you need to obtain the information quickly. The potential respondents likely answer the survey that they got from their direct business partner rather than from the unknown student email.

During the short period of the research, the author was able to get 27 answers out of 234 (more than 10 % in total). Due to the fact of having open-ended questions, the author obtained valuable information that can be beneficial for the commissioner.

5.3 Results

In this subchapter, the author presented and analyzed the obtained results of the research. The spelling and grammar of open-ended answers were preserved.

As we can see from Figure 1 below, most of the respondents were representatives of accommodation sector as well as restaurants and cafes.

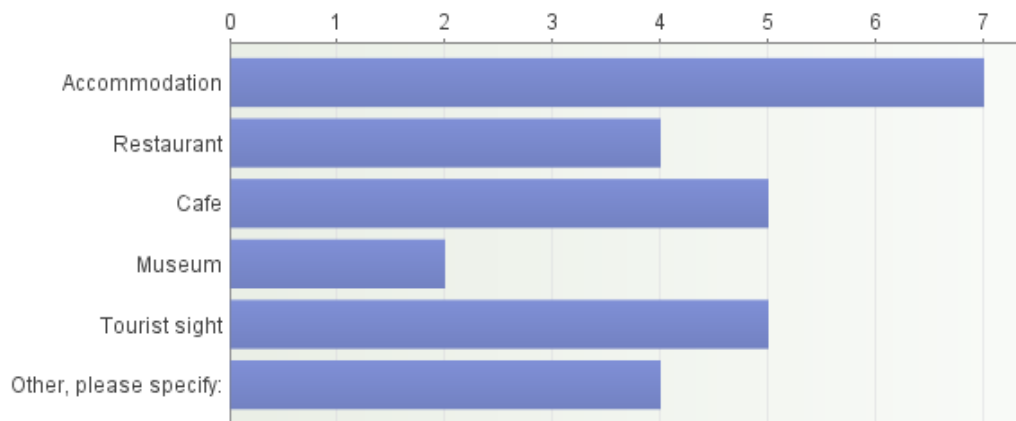


Figure 1. What is your field of business? (n=27)

Open text answer included:

- Kokous- ja luontomatkailukohde/Meetings and nature tourism;
- Outdoor activities;
- Sport activities;
- Kokoustilat/ meeting facilities.

The author was able also to get some insights of the representatives from tourist sights, museums, meeting arrangements companies and companies providing outdoor activities.

The author collected the following responses regarding the job position or title of a person, who is responsible for marketing communication in the companies:

- Marketing Manager;
- Omistajat / owners;
- Marketing manager;
- Maneger;
- Sales manager;
- Sales department;
- Sales manager;
- Sales specialist;
- Sales representative;

- Sales department;
- Director;
- Sales manager;
- Marketing manager;
- Sales unit;
- Marketing assistant;
- Sales team;
- Marketing specialist;
- Sales person;
- Sales department;
- Sales person;
- Sales manager;
- Owner;
- Sales person;
- Marketing team;
- Product sales specialist;
- Sales department.

Out of 27 investigated companies in total, 17 specified the role of marketing department performs by sales persons or sales department of the company. Only six organizations have marketing department in its state. In the rest of the companies (4) directors and owners are responsible for the marketing communication.

According to the Figure 2 highlighted below, most of the respondents use marketing communication for raising awareness about the company, for attracting new customers as well as for increasing sales volume. Nevertheless, all other aspects are still in demand such as creating relationships with customers, strengthening the brand and informing customers about new products and services.

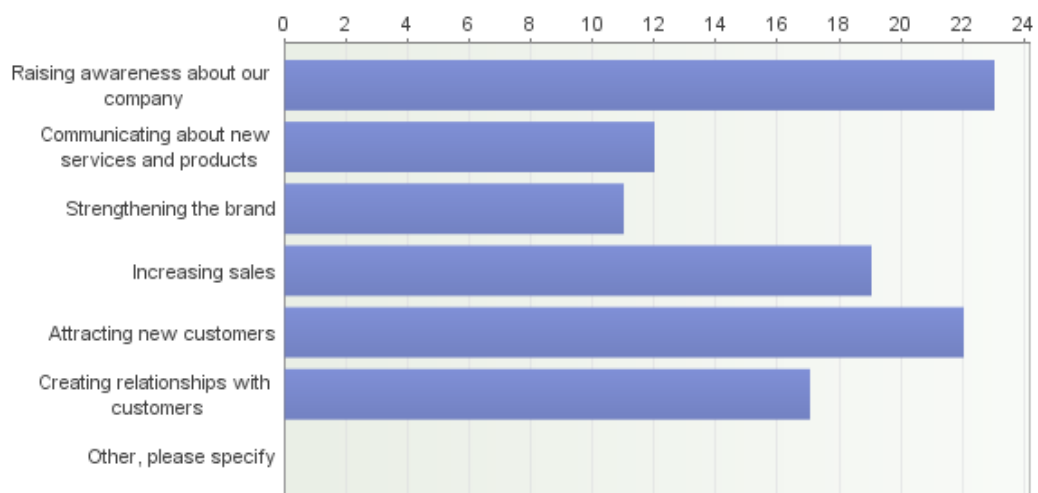


Figure 2. What is your main objective of the marketing communication activities? (n=27)

The question 4 shows us the main marketing tools, which the companies use in communication with their customers. Digital marketing and sales promotion such as brochures,

coupons and other printed material are the most popular answers. At the same time, direct marketing, PR and paid advertising are in use of the tourism companies in Porvoo. The less popular answers are events and personal selling.

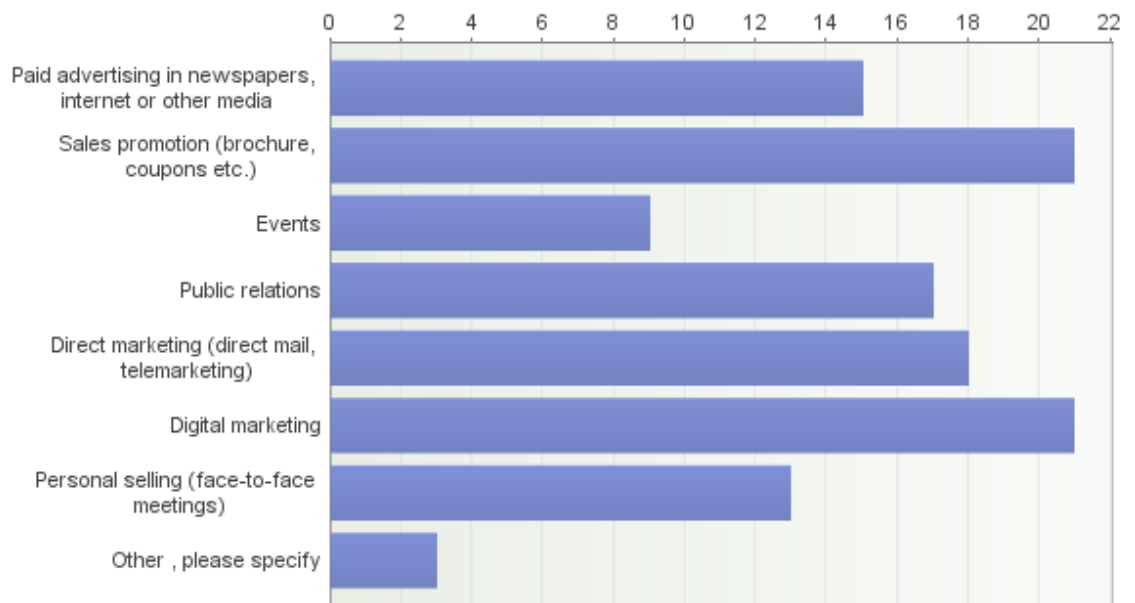


Figure 4. Which of the marketing communication tools does your company use? (n=27)

The following responses were specified as open text answers:

- Internet;
- Social media;
- Cooperating with other tourism companies.

Table 1. How often do you use each of the following communication channel with your customers? (n=27)

	At least daily	At least weekly	Less than weekly	Never	Total
Email	11	13	2	1	27
Text messages	0	1	7	19	27
WhatsApp	1	3	4	21	27
Phone	9	14	4	1	27
Face-to-face meeting	1	13	12	1	27
Social media, please specify	6	17	2	2	27
Other, please specify	1	5	1	20	27

According to Table 1, email is the most popular marketing communication channel among the companies involving in the research. Eleven out of total number of the respondents mentioned use email as a marketing communication tool on daily basis. The second popular communication channel is social media. Seventeen respondents use Facebook, Instagram and YouTube at least once per week. Six of the respondents use the same social networks for marketing communication every day. The results show face-to-face meeting and phone calls are in weekly use in the examined companies (13 and 14 responses respectively). The communication tools such as text messages and WhatsApp practically are not used at all.

The respondents specified the following communication channels in the open-ended fields:

1. At least daily:

- IG, FB, Blog;
- Facebook, Intsagram;
- fb, instagram;
- fb, IG, blogs;
- Facebook, Intsagram;
- Instagram, Facebook.

2. At least weekly:

- Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn;
- Instagram, Facebook;
- Facebook, official webpage;
- fb, instagram;
- blogs, fb;
- fb;
- IG; FB, tripadvisor;
- Instagram, Facebook;
- Instagram, Facebook;
- facebook, IG;
- Instagram, Facebook;
- instagram;
- IG;
- facebook;
- Instagram, Facebook;
- instagram;
- FB, IG, blogs;
- official website;
- our website;
- webpage;
- official webpage;
- our webpage.

3. Less than weekly:

- Facebook;
- YouTube;
- customer reviews.

Six respondents mentioned the use of Facebook and Instagram on daily basis. Two respondents use blogs as a communication channel at least daily. Fourteen respondents tend to use Facebook for communication purposes with their customers at least weekly. Thirteen companies use Instagram on weekly basis. Six companies use their official website for communication at least weekly. One of the respondents mentioned LinkedIn as a communication channel suitable for weekly use. There were three channels mentioned in the “less than weekly” option: Facebook, YouTube and customer reviews.

To conclude, besides the social media channels, some of the investigated companies use their official website as a marketing communication channel with their customers. Most of the respondents use the mentioned communication channels at least on weekly basis.

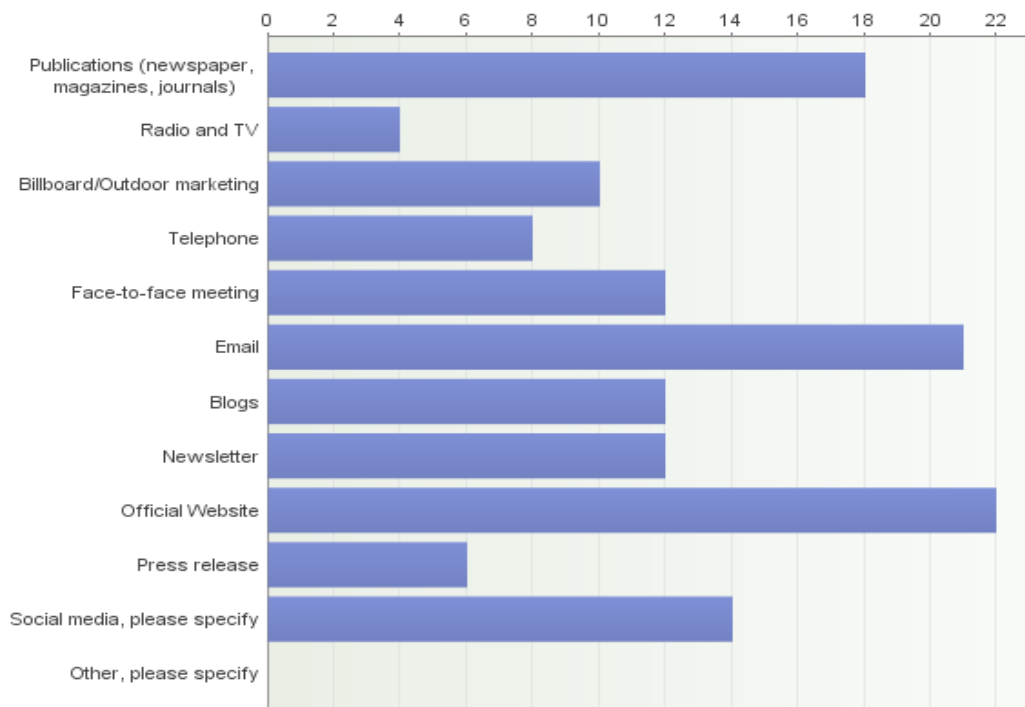


Figure 5. Which of these communication channels do you most often use for marketing your products and/or services? (n=27)

According to the responses presented in Figure 5, the investigated companies most often use the following communication channels for promoting their products and services:

- Official webpage;
- Email communication and publications in newspaper;
- Magazines and journals.

Newsletters, face-to-face meetings and blogs take the second position in the list of frequently used marketing communication channels. The less used channels are outdoor marketing, telephone calls, press release and advertising of radio and TV.

Many respondents noted the use of social media such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and TripAdvisor in marketing their products and services.

Table 2. Please evaluate the effectiveness of each of the following social media regarding your marketing communication with the customers (n=27)

	Not effective	Somewhat effective	Effective	Very effective	Extremely effective	Not in use	Total
Facebook	1	0	13	8	5	0	27
Instagram	1	0	5	8	13	0	27
Twitter	1	10	1	1	1	13	27
LinkedIn	1	9	1	1	1	14	27
YouTube	1	0	3	7	10	6	27
TripAdvisor	1	0	10	8	1	7	27
WordPress	1	1	1	0	1	23	27
Tumblr	1	1	1	0	0	24	27
We use another social media, please specify	1	0	0	0	0	26	27

As we can see from the results presented in Table 2, almost all of the respondents evaluated the use of social media as either very effective or extremely effective in marketing communication.

Instagram is rated as the most effective social media among others – thirteen respondents indicated it as extremely effective tool for marketing communication, at the same time five and eight points are in the options “effective” and “very effective” respectively. The data show that Facebook and YouTube play an important role in marketing of the presented companies. Thirteen respondents evaluated Facebook as effective communication tool for

marketing, in turn the rest of the answers are under “very effective” and “extremely effective” options (8 and 5 responses respectively). Ten respondents categorized YouTube as extremely effective social media for marketing communication. Simultaneously, seven respondents considered it as very effective and three - as effective social network.

Almost none of the examined companies use WordPress and Tumblr at all (23 and 24 out of 27 respondents respectively). Ten respondents considered Twitter as somewhat effective in marketing communication and at the same time in thirteen companies, it is not in use at all. Fourteen of the examined companies do not use LinkedIn at all for marketing purposes, but nine respondents defined it as somewhat effective tool.

The responses presented in Figure 6 below show us that almost all of the researched companies collect customer satisfaction feedback. The most popular ways for collecting feedback are email and contact forms, monitoring social media channels and website analytics. Phone calls and observation are also quite popular among the respondents.

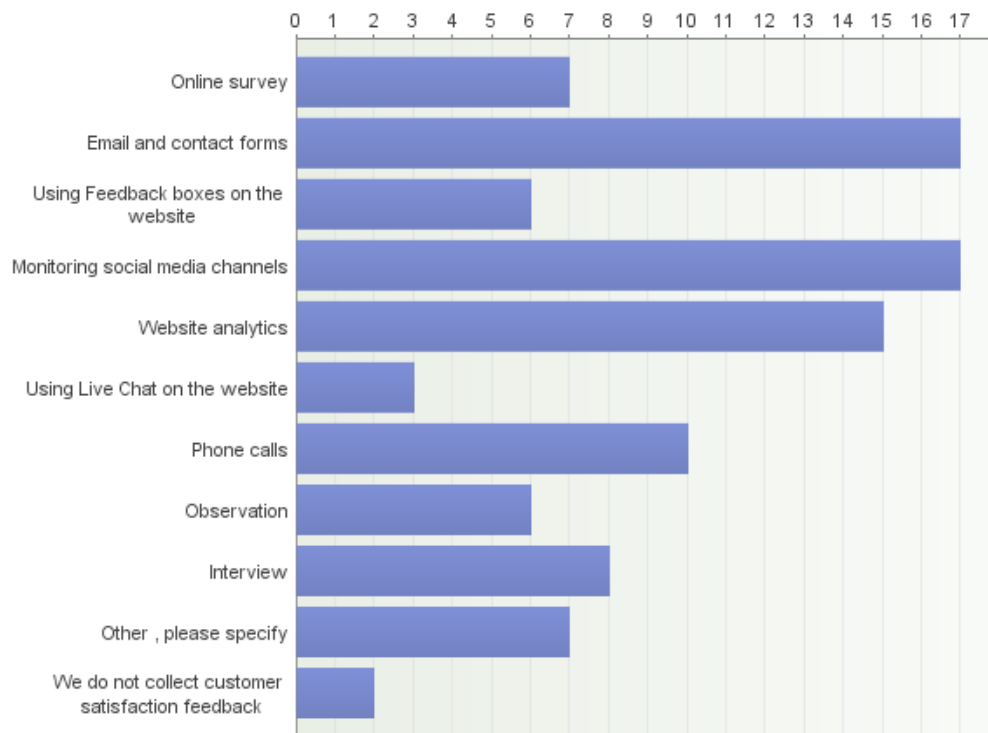


Figure 6. How does your company collect customer satisfaction feedback? (n=27)

As we can see in the chart above, online surveys, feedback boxes and live chat are less used tools in obtaining customers' feedback. In addition, the forms of collecting feedback such as face-to-face communication, paper format and reading customer reviews are effective ways of getting know the level of your customer's satisfaction.

The following forms of collecting customer satisfaction feedback were also mentioned as open text answers:

- Feedback paper form;
- Face-to-face dialogue;
- Collect feedback when we serve our clients;
- Reading customer reviews;
- Paper feedback form in the rooms;
- Communicating with customers during the tour;
- Customers reviews.

As we can see, three out of seven gathered open answers were regarding face-to-face communication with the customers during the serving. Two respondents mentioned paper form as a tool for collecting customer satisfaction feedback. In addition, two respondents specified the use of customer reviews in assessing the level of customers' satisfaction.

The author gathered the following answers concerning the use of customer satisfaction feedback in the companies (n=27):

- We improve our product and pricing according to feedback;
- To improve and modify the products and service, to know what the customers think and feel, to regain the customers and have a positive reputation, to motivate the staff and ourselves;
- Improve service quality;
- We improve quality of our products and create new ones;
- Use positive feedback in our brochures and on the webpage to attract new customers;
- Increase quality; attract new customers; increase professional skills of our employees;
- Increasing quality of products and designing new ways of service;
- Revise tour program, develop new activities;
- Improve our service;
- It helps to find out what you are doing wrong and what is the best part of your work
- Correct our service and products;
- Based on the feedback we get , we can develop new programs , create new services and improve what our current offers;
- Improve quality of our service, our skills, to find out the customers needs and wants;
- Update our service and products; train our staff accordingly to customer's needs;
- Trainings for personnel;
- It helps to improve our service and quality of our products;
- We design new programs;
- We improve our service and skills of our personnel;
- We change /improve our service, add some extra services , refine price policy;
- We award personnel;
- Correct our service;
- Using positive feedback for attracting new customers;

- Improve service quality.

According to the results, 16 companies out of 27 use collected feedback for improving the quality of their products and/or services. Eight respondents mentioned that they use customer satisfaction feedback for training the personnel and as a motive to award them. In four responses were indicated the use of feedback as an effective tool for obtaining customers insights as well as their getting know their needs and wants. Six respondents defined the customer feedback as a basis for designing new products and services as well as using positive feedback and comments as references for example on the webpage of the company or in printed marketing materials.

Most of the responses contained all of the above-mentioned points regarding the use of customer satisfaction feedback.

The following answers were gathered in the open-ended question 10 concerning the challenges in marketing communication (n=27):

- Marketing budget is limited. Bigger campaigns require more money;
- To raise awareness and be distinctive in a positive and relative way, to have enough time for marketing, too, besides running the destination;
- No feedback;
- It is hard to reach different target groups;
- Lack of money;
- Do not have enough resources;
- Difficult to create the effective content in social media to attract customers and to distribute it among the biggest number of users;
- Sometimes not effective distribution channels and not right time of doing marketing hard to raise awareness;
- Different needs of customers;
- Language barrier;
- Challenge to make your instagram and facebook popular;
- Sometimes it is hard to meet the needs due to the lack of info; there is a need to make marketing research time to time to be in touch with your customer;
- We would love to use tv, magazines and so but we do not funds;
- Difficult to maintain the level of communication , always need to be active in social media etc. otherwise the popularity is getting down very quickly;
- It is challenging to find customer's motives to buy our product -> as a result it is difficult to find a proper way for marketing our products;
- Difficult to be unique and stand out of the crowd , a lot of similar products already exist;
- Getting found by customers;
- Market overloaded;
- To find enough content for updating social media regularly;
- Fundings;
- Find the right people for marketing team;
- High competition on the market;

- You should be active all the time , it is getting harder due to the lack of info;
- Lack of resources.

Six respondents mentioned the lack of resources (funding) as the biggest challenge in marketing communication. At the same time, six out of 27 pointed out that it is difficult to maintain the level of popularity in social media as well as to create quality and relevant content that will be interesting for different target groups. Nine respondents defined the market overload as one of the challenge that face tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo nowadays. It is difficult to be unique, to provide uncommon service or product, and to reach different target groups. The lack of marketing specialists and information about current trends was also mentioned in six of the answers. The companies feel the need to do market research in order to conduct effective marketing communication with the customers.

Despite the fact that Question 11 was not a mandatory one, some of the respondents shared their good marketing practices (n=23):

- Building longterm relations with customers is a key, patience, and to have networks for promotion, too, is important. I would emphasize also cross-marketing amongst the companies and recommendations about each other;
- Social media, PR and high quality and honest approach works. It is also good to have many target groups, and an interesting brand. Porvoo and Finland as interesting tourism brands and attractive destinations are essential;
- Social media is good source;
- Using modern technologies is a must;
- TV and radio are expensive, but very effective tools;
- Marketing in the internet is the cheapest and the most effective way to get people know about your company;
- It is good to share customer reviews and feedback both in the internet and at the physical location so new customers can see it;
- We have cooperation with some other companies which promote our services;
- TV, radio and billboards advertising do its work, but it is expensive; also nowadays instagram , facebook and youtube are very popular and it is important to update it regularly and use up-to-date sources;
- Is essential to use visual content, beautiful photos and VIDEO!!;
- mobile application is a popular way nowadays to share knowledge about your company;
- It is good to have a qualified marketing department or manager , who will responsible for marketing communication in your company;
- Discounts for loyal customers /groups etc. different kind of competitions can attract more customers; word of mouth;
- Cooperation with bigger enterprises;
- Facebook and Instagram are excellent platforms to market you place, especially food sector;
- It is important to share lots of colorful photos and videos;
- Inviting some famous persons , organizing events , using trending stories and techniques is the key;
- It is good to share customer stories and reviews in social media and be active all

- the time;
- You can attract customer by organizing events, competitions with good prizes;
 - Discount promotion;
 - YouTube channel is good way to promote ;
 - Be a part of bigger chain or mobile app within your industry;
 - It is good to do bench marking and market research to obtain knowledge about your customer's needs and desires.

Seven respondents indicated the power of social media in marketing communication, especially nowadays in the world of the Internet (Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube). According to the data, seven representatives of the investigated companies shared their opinion about being active in social media channels and sharing good quality visual content such as photos and videos is necessary. It helps to attract new customers and build a positive image especially among other tourism products and services. Six out of 23 respondents noted that cooperation and networks are keys to success. Organizing some massive events involving famous figures or popular companies are good way to attract new customers. Four respondents also mentioned using customer reviews and feedback as a source of marketing their services. Two of the investigated companies would love to use TV and radio as a marketing channel, but it is too expensive to implement. At the same time, two of the respondents advised to use mobile application as a tool for marketing communication as well as discounts and different kind of competitions in social networks.

6 Discussion

In this chapter, the author interpreted and described the significance of the research findings in connection with the highlighted theory background as well as new insights about the investigated problem were explained taken the results into consideration.

6.1 Reliability and validity

It is worth noting that the number of responses was very low for a quantitative study, because the data collection method had limitations. The commissioner of the study requested to revise the research questions and designed completely new survey three weeks prior to submitting the final version of the thesis. Therefore, taking into consideration the time spent on reconsidering the theory and developing new survey questions, the author had two weeks for gathering the research data. The low number of the responses size of the research weaken the internal and external validity of the study.

The research process had geographical and operational limitations, since all of the examined companies are located in Porvoo and are representatives of one field of business – only tourism and hospitality companies. Therefore, the author cannot draw the general conclusion and it can prevent the findings from prolonging.

The practical significance of the results obtained in the study lies in the new improvement suggestions, which were developed using the elaboration of theoretical and methodological provisions that are brought to the specific recommendations in the previous subchapter.

Nevertheless, the validity and reliability of the results obtained in the study can be confirmed by the following:

- The adequacy of the used data collection method considering the unforeseen change of the research problems;
- All the objectives and external factors were taken into account when conducting the research (different types of questions were used in the survey that allowed to gather data regarding the most important and actual insights of the research problems);
- Strong theoretical evidence;
- The hypothesis matched with the results obtained by empirical methods;
- The consistency of theoretical conclusions with the results of its actual experimental verification.

The reliability of the results is confirmed by an analytical approach used for developing of the recommendations as well by modern research methods that correspond to the goals and objectives of the study. The scientific provisions, conclusions and recommendations formulated in the thesis are supported by convincing factual data, clearly presented in the tables and figures.

The methods of statistical processing of the results obtained are adequate to the tasks posed. The recommendations and development suggestions formulated in the study are argued and logically follow the results of the research.

Due to the limited period for collecting the data, the future research can be conducted in order to cover more diverse sample group. Notwithstanding, the obtained results clearly indicates the answers on the research questions and shows the similar perception of the respondents regarding effective marketing communication.

6.2 Analyses of the results

According to the research results, the author can argue that all marketing communications are aimed at providing the target audience with certain information or convincing it to change their attitude or behavior. All marketing communications are focused on the solution of certain tasks, which, in turn, must correspond to the goals of the communication program. Typically, these goals include creating brand awareness among consumers, information distribution, enhancing the culture of the market, forming a positive image of the company or its brand. The ultimate goal of any strategy of marketing communication is to help the company to sell its goods and thus keep its business.

The marketing department plays a huge role in the existence and normal functioning of the organization. If such department does not exist in the company, then it becomes very unstable and less adapted to changing conditions. The market today is rather volatile. Each company has many competitors, who try to get the better of the others. Therefore, the relevance and importance of the marketing department is increasing every day.

The research results showed that all of the investigated companies use integrated marketing communications as one of the most popular and progressive concepts of marketing development at the moment. This concept has become another stage in the development of advertising and communication technologies impact on consumer demand in order to increase sales of goods and services in highly competitive markets and the changed attitude of potential consumers to advertising.

The tourism companies in Porvoo tend to use different marketing tools such as sales promotion, PR, direct and digital marketing, paid advertising etc. According to theory highlighted in the chapter 4 (Kotler 2017), it allows not only to use a certain tool more efficient, but also through central planning to avoid mistakes, to reduce costs, as well as to create a seamless and complete image of the promoted product and a single style of the entire advertising campaign. All these tools allow you to influence the customer's decision to buy, directly influence on the behavior of the buyer and the formation of sympathy for your products or services.

The results from this study indicated that the incredible popularity of social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, various forums and blogs has made them major platforms for marketing communication, especially among tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo.

If we compare the use of social media with traditional advertising (for example, outside advertising), there are a number of advantages of promoting your company through the social media:

- Low cost of an advertising campaign (the price for one contact is at least twice cheaper than traditional advertising, with each contact being a real value);
- More broad and accurate coverage of the target audience. Moreover, social networks are more popular than traditional resources, not exceeding the relevance of search engines. In addition, the audience of social networks is growing daily;
- The ability to receive quick feedback from customers and react quickly to it, as well as to increase customer loyalty due to "humanizing" the company's brand. Advertising in social networks is not so obvious. It is not considered by users as being imposed, rather the message is perceived as recommendations of acquaintances.

(Roberts & Zahar 2017, 226-232.)

One benefit that is more significant is that social media are not subject to the crisis and in general the influence of any external factors. It does not depend on the political and economic situation in the country or region. The only danger they can be exposed is the drop in attendance (in this case you can go to a more popular platform). (Roberts & Zahar 2017, 226-232.)

It should be noted that accounts in social media cannot replace the official website of the company. Each of the information sites fulfills its function and should become part of the

overall marketing communication system of the organization. The high skill is to get the maximum benefit from each tool and to force it to develop business in accordance with a single integrated communication strategy.

The research results supported the importance of collecting customer satisfaction feedback. Almost all of the companies involving in the study collect customer reviews and make a beneficial use of it. Many respondents use the collected feedback as a reliable and valuable content in different marketing communication channels. The importance of feedback cannot be underestimated, because it improves your business as a whole.

You can collect reviews not only to show off, but also to find out whether all departments and employees are acting the way you plan. It is a good way to achieve the following goals:

- Improving the quality of customer service and products;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of PR and advertising;
- Training of employees;
- Increasing sales and revenue;
- Searching for development etc.

According to the research, email and online surveys are the most popular and easiest way for obtaining customer satisfaction feedback. It allow you to communicate with a loyal audience at the same time informing users about new promotions and offering interesting content to them.

The main reason for collecting feedback is increasing customer satisfaction with a product or service. It is becoming more difficult to keep the wave of leadership in the oversaturated market. Only by offering a new experience of customer interaction with a product or service, you can stand out of the crowd.

In order to create such an experience, it is necessary to study the client, to understand his needs and expectations from your product or service. If you give the consumer what he wants, it will make him ignore the offers of competitors.

Nine of the investigated tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo mentioned the lack of resources and marketing specialists as the main challenge associated with implementing marketing communication. At the same time, the respondents pointed out the need of professional market research in order to develop proper marketing strategy.

The need of market research is driven by the desire to reduce the risk of making the wrong decisions. It can be done by getting better knowledge and understanding the dynamics of external environment factors. The purpose of conducting market research is to identify the company's ability to take a competitive position in the market, to reduce the degree of uncertainty and to increase the likelihood of success in marketing activities.

The present study confirmed the findings about the importance of visual and digital content in marketing communication within the tourism industry. The development of tourism is difficult to imagine without a bright, label and effective advertising. It implements a significant psychological and sociocultural influence on society. Tourism products and services, unlike traditional goods, do not have permanent properties, such as quality, taste, utility, and therefore require priority development of advertising functions such as information and propaganda.

The results now provides evidence that the specificity of tourist services dictates the need for visual aids, which fully illuminate the object of tourist interest. In tourism industry, advertising should correspond to the principle "it is better to see once than hear a hundred times". For instance, a high-quality picture of the advertised destination provides a much greater emotional impact on the audience than the most eloquent story of the same place. Therefore, it is extremely important to use photo, video and other multimedia tools in marketing communication within the tourism industry.

6.3 Recommendations

The author believes that the marketing communications of tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo are closely connected with the marketing communication of Porvoo as a destination. Therefore, the first and the most important thing is to make people travel to Porvoo. Once travelers come to Porvoo, they will definitely need the services and the products of tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo such as accommodation, restaurants, cafes, tourist sights, activities etc.

Taking into consideration the gathered marketing practices and the trends in marketing communication among tourism companies, the author developed practical recommendations for Porvoo Tourism & Marketing unit in order to support marketing communication of the examined companies. The development of the recommendations was based on the main aims and the objectives of the commissioner, on the gathered research data and on the highlighted theory involving marketing communication mix models such as 5P and 7P as well as digital marketing and communication tools.

It is necessary to use an integrated approach to attract tourists to the destination. This approach will create a positive image of Porvoo as a tourist destination. In addition, the state has the necessary tools for promoting the territory in the world tourism market.

According to the results of the study, using innovative tools and being interactive with the consumers are the keys to the successful marketing communications in tourism industry. Therefore, the author believes that for the development of inbound tourism, it is necessary to consider extra components for the official website of the commissioner. Now, the official website (www.visitporvoo.fi) presents general information of the region, but such element as "Tour planner" widget can be beneficial and interesting for the potential visitors.

This kind of widget can implement both informational and marketing tasks. For example, "Tour planner" can include the necessary destination data such as tourist sights, accommodation, infrastructure etc., which, in its turn, is linked to the interactive map. Functional elements of this kind of widget can include booking systems (flights, hotels, restaurants, events etc.) and other online surveys that help the visitors to create and to plan their own travel route, interactive travel diaries and so on. At the same time, this kind of widget is a good platform for marketing practically all of the tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo.

It will allow the commissioner to combine key components of marketing communication (content, consumer involvement, communication and sales) and achieve maximum effect in the presentation and promotion of the destination. This kind of widget will be beneficial, because usually travelling is limited to a specific timeframe. This system will help tourists to set up the priorities of visiting a particular tourist sight and estimate their time.

Based on the research findings, the author also recommends making the official website of Porvoo Tourism and Marketing unit more informative by adding travel stories and customer reviews. It will form a positive image of the destination and help to make more people travel here. The reviews can also contain the customers' feedback concerning tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. It will not only support the marketing communication of the examined companies, but also will help to build a positive attitude towards Porvoo as a destination based on the reviews of high quality tourism companies.

As for the digital marketing, the author suggests the following ways of marketing communication:

- Product placement - involves the use of Porvoo as a tourist destination as well as tourism and hospitality companies of Porvoo in movies, serials, music videos, books, etc.;
- Multilingual mobile applications for promoting the destination along with the tourism and hospitality companies of Porvoo.

The results of the study clearly showed the importance of being active and updating social media channels at least few times per week. Instagram and Facebook are the most popular and frequently used social media among tourism companies in Porvoo. The author proposes to provide and to maintain the quality visual content in each social media channel that are used in Porvoo Tourism & Marketing unit at least on weekly basis (photos, videos, virtual tours etc.)

The first thing a user sees in Instagram is the picture. Thanks to it, the person decides whether to read further your post or not. Therefore, it must be qualitative and relevant to the content of the post. In Instagram, people come for inspiration, so beautiful and colorful pictures are very important. It attracts attention, encourages the user to read the text and to subscribe to the account. In Facebook, you can post publications without photos, but in this case, the post will cover less people.

Marketing communications, especially within the tourism industry, should involve PR tools such as press releases. It will be beneficial to publish press release before official holidays or some other massive events in order to prepare the visitor for the upcoming season. For each media, the press release is written separately and does not contain a direct appeal for the purchase of the services of a specific travel company, but it can promote the tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo in general. Usually, it is an article in a newspaper devoted to the topic of tourism or to a particular destination.

A very important stage in public relations is sponsorship. For example, the City of Porvoo can become a sponsor of sports, charity events or different kind of performances. It thereby not only improves its image in the eyes of visitors, but also indirectly reports its welfare. Therefore, the potential visitor will be supportive towards the destination and not be afraid to spend money on travelling here.

According to the research data, event marketing is also one of the effective tool in marketing communications in tourism industry. The author suggests organizing major international events (musical concerts, movie festivals etc.), national and local celebrations, sports competitions, highlighting unique natural phenomena in a specific territory in specific time, specially organized competitions in exotic sports (for example, streetball, extreme-biking) etc. The commissioner can cooperate with tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo in order to support its marketing communication. For instance, during the events they can organize guided tour covering all the famous tourist sights, restaurants and café or to provide accommodation with a discount for big groups of visitors etc. At the same time, big massive events is a good platform for conducting marketing communication of the examined companies – distribution marketing material such as brochures and magazines, organizing competitions among the visitors, presenting new products and services etc.

The events can be organized even in other cities in Finland (in larger cities, since arranging massive events requires financial resources). The commissioner, in particular the City of Porvoo, can cooperate with other cities, and in its turn, they will place a promotion about Porvoo and its business partners (in this study case tourism and hospitality companies) during the events.

7 Conclusion

In recent years, along with the increasing a role of marketing, the role of marketing communications has also increased. Nowadays, modern marketing requires much more than just a creation of a product or a service that satisfies the consumer's needs. It is much more than just a assigning a suitable price and ensuring product's availability for all target groups. Companies need to communicate with their customers.

The author can conclude that, in tourism industry, a success is largely determined by the effectiveness of the choice of marketing communication channels, which provide a link between the manufacturer of tourist services and the consumer. It is impossible to imagine in modern conditions the business activities of any enterprise without a well-established network of communications.

In this paper, the author highlighted the theory concerning the nature of external communication and described in detail the structure of marketing communications. Such marketing communication tools as advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal sale and direct marketing as well as marketing mix and the role of integrated marketing communications in tourism industry were studied.

The research was conducted among the tourism and hospitality companies in Porvoo. The obtained research data allowed the author to answer on the research questions. The strengths and the weaknesses of marketing communication among tourism companies in Porvoo were identified. The results of the study clearly defined the most effective marketing communication channels in tourism industry along with the main challenges that tourism companies faced nowadays.

The research findings proved that it is impossible to achieve the desired result when only one communication channel is used. In the effective marketing communication strategy, various methods must be combined. The success of marketing communication within tourism industry depends on the correct use of integrated marketing communications, which allows tourism companies significantly reduce the costs of promotion. Advertising, as the main tool of marketing the tourist product is not cheap and not always effective. The use of integrated marketing communications will make it possible rationally use the resources of the tourist enterprise to promote its products and services as well as it will help to choose the most effective communication channel for each tourist product.

The examined study confirmed the hypothesis that social media channels have become an integral part of the new information era. It provides a great platform for communication, creativity and work in various spheres of life. This is not only a leisurely reality of the life of the younger generation, but also a sphere of active interest on the part of modern business. Social media provide plenty of opportunities for the development of any business and it is simply unreasonable to ignore it.

Using social media as a tool of marketing communication can help you to solve a wide range of problems: to attract new customers, to maintain feedback from the target audience, to recruit new employees, to conduct marketing research, to improve the image of the company, to track customers' insights about the brand, company, products and much more.

The thesis writing process was valuable for the author both professionally and personally. Dealing with the time constraints, which were outside of his control, as well as with unforeseen challenges and changes helped the author to build strong time management skills and ability to work under pressure and tight deadlines. The author applied theoretical knowledge obtained in Haaga-Helia into practice and got familiar with the practical skills of business management. The thesis was a beneficial process within which the author developed his organizational, analytical, self-organization and self-control skills as well as refined the ability to use the basic methods and means of obtaining, storing and processing the information.

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9 Appendixes

Appendix 1. The final version of the survey

We invite you to take part in the survey, which is devoted to study the marketing communication of tourism companies. Your answers will help to improve our work and to make the terms of cooperation more effective. Your answers are anonymous and are not subject to disclosure. This study is done as a commissioned thesis by a student of HAAGA-HELIA Porvoo Campus. Please answer the survey by **23.05.2018**. Questions regarding the survey can be addressed to Tanja Peisala (marketing manager of Porvoo Tourism & Marketing Unit) via email: tanja.peisala@porvoo.fi Thank you for your cooperation!

1. What is your field of business?
 - Accommodation
 - Restaurant
 - Cafe
 - Museum
 - Tourist sight
 - Other, please specify_____

2. Who is responsible for marketing communication in your company? (please specify: Job Title or Position)

3. What is your main objective of the marketing communication activities?
 - Raising awareness about our company
 - Communicating about new services and products
 - Strengthening the brand
 - Increasing sales
 - Attracting new customers
 - Creating relationships with customers
 - Other, please specify_____

4. Which of the marketing communication tools does your company use?
 - Paid advertising in newspapers, internet or other media
 - Sales promotion (brochure, coupons etc.)
 - Events
 - Public relations
 - Direct marketing (direct mail, telemarketing)
 - Digital marketing
 - Personal selling (face-to-face meetings)
 - Other, please specify_____

5. How often do you use each of the following communication channel with your customers?

At least daily – At least weekly – Less than weekly - Never

- Email
- Text messages
- WhatsApp
- Phone
- Face-to-face meeting
- Social Media, please specify
- Other, please specify_____

6. Which of these communication channels do you most often use for marketing your products and/or services?

- Publications (newspaper, magazines, journals)
- Radio and TV
- Billboard/Outdoor marketing
- Telephone
- Face-to-face meeting
- Email
- Blogs
- Newsletter
- Official Website
- Press release
- Social media, please specify
- Other, please specify_____

7. Please evaluate the effectiveness of each of the following social media regarding your marketing communication with the customers:

Not effective – Somewhat effective – Effective – Very effective – Extremely effective – Not in use

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- YouTube
- TripAdvisor
- WordPress
- Tumblr
- We use another social media, please specify_____

8. How does your company collect customer satisfaction feedback?

- Online survey
- Email and contact forms
- Using Feedback boxes on the website
- Monitoring social media channels
- Website analytics
- Using Live Chat on the website
- Phone calls
- Observation
- Interview
- Other, please specify _____
- We do not collect customer satisfaction feedback

9. How does your company make use of customer feedback?

10. What challenges do you face in marketing communication with your customers?

11. You are welcome to share with us some good marketing practices of your company