

Ilona Korsoff

SERVICE BLUEPRINT: CASE RUSH WORKOUT RAUMA

Degree Programme in International Business

2018

## SERVICE BLUEPRINT: CASE RUSH WORKOUT RAUMA

Korsoff, Ilona

Satakunnan ammattikorkeakoulu, Satakunta University of Applied Sciences

Degree Programme in International Business

September 2018

Number of pages: 43

Appendices: 7

Keywords: service design, service blueprint, Funrun, SWOT, customer journey map, Palvelumuotoilu

---

The purpose of this thesis was to research the execution of a new event *Rush Workout Rauma* by utilizing a service design tool called service blueprint. This was a functional thesis with the outcome of a blueprint and improvement suggestions for the client company. The client company was a well-known Finnish sport event provider called Funrun Finland Oy which organizes different kind of extreme sport events in Finland and in other European countries.

The main objective was to conduct a clear service blueprint about the event where the company would easily see the issues that effect to the customer's service experience. The empirical study was conducted as a descriptive research where both survey and action research were used. The data gathering happened by using a multi-method qualitative studies, where the main focus is on qualitative research and quantitative method is taken under consideration to support the qualitative data. The qualitative method was used in customer interviews which were executed by using structured interview technique. In addition to qualitative research, the company conducted a digital survey to all 481 participants of the event and the data from the survey is analyzed in this study.

The blueprint was made to fit the needs of the client company and it was conducted in close collaboration with the client company. The data was gathered on 24<sup>th</sup> of February in 2018 to support author's own insights about the company's event. With the help of this thesis the client company can improve their event, which will have a positive effect on the customer satisfaction and ultimately it can increase sales and profits of the client company.

The findings indicated that the service was successfully executed and there was mostly positive feedback given by the respondents. However, there were also issues that required modification and these factors are listed in the service proposal part of the thesis. The major suggestions were a separated family price for families, higher number of water stations in future events and co-operation with local companies or sport clubs. Hopefully this study will benefit multiple companies with the interest on investing in service design.

## CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION .....	4
2	ABOUT THE PROCESS .....	5
2.1	The client company: Funrun Finland Oy .....	5
2.2	Research Questions .....	7
2.3	Theoretical Framework .....	7
3	SERVICE DESIGN .....	8
3.1	Service design thinking .....	10
3.2	Service design process .....	10
3.3	Positive outcomes in Service Design .....	12
4	SERVICE BLUEPRINT .....	13
5	SECONDARY TOOLS TO ANALYZE DATA .....	16
5.1	SWOT.....	17
5.2	Customer journey map .....	18
6	METHODOLOGY .....	19
6.1	Research design.....	19
6.2	Research method .....	20
6.3	Population and sample .....	21
6.4	Questionnaire .....	21
6.5	Data collection and analyses .....	22
6.6	Validity and reliability .....	23
7	DATA COLLECTION .....	24
7.1	Implementation plan.....	24
7.2	Discussion with the CEO .....	25
7.3	Customer interviews.....	26
7.4	Survey Data from Funrun Finland Oy.....	27
8	DATA ANALYSES .....	29
8.1	SWOT-analysis of Funrun Finland Oy .....	29
8.2	Customer journey map .....	31
9	SERVICE BLUEPRINT FROM RUSH WORKOUT RAUMA –EVENT .....	34
10	SERVICE PROPOSAL FOR FUNRUN FINLAND OY .....	36
10.1	Activities .....	36
10.2	Timing and scheduling .....	37
10.3	Pricing .....	38
10.4	Co-operation.....	38
11	CONCLUSION .....	39
	REFERENCES .....	42
	APPENDICES	

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Service design is a way to improve the quality of company's current services or invent totally new service. It is a convenient way to improve organization's effectiveness, customer satisfaction and increase competitiveness. Service design course taken in University of Satakunta Applied Sciences in 2016 got me interested about the topic and now two years later, I decided to find a thesis topic where to apply these learned methods into action. Conveniently, Finnish sports event provider was in need for help among their newest innovation and from there originated the research topic for my thesis.

The company has invented a new concept which will be a group workout event, and they will arrange a pilot event of it six months before executing it out in a larger scale. My role in this process is to participate on the pilot event and write down my thoughts and experiences with it. The aim is to help the client company to make their future event the best possible version by providing them tools and ultimately proposals learned from service design. Due to the market economics now days, consumers are expecting more from the services and events than future generations. By mapping up the customer's perspective from a service experience, the company will see the business through customers' eyes and gain important insights that will eventually prevent customer satisfaction, reduce costly service failures and help them to build better customer relations. Insights before, during and after the use of service are critical for the service provider to receive the complete service experience.

With the help of literature and previous researches among service design, the purpose is to create a well-executed empirical study which not only benefits the client company, but the whole service industry as well. The research will be operated from January to September in 2018. Inside this time frame, there will be conducted a literature review, author's own participation on the client company's service, data gathering by interviews from other participants, blueprinting and analysing of the insights with service blueprint and finally providing a service proposal for the company. By the end of this research both the author and the client company will have new information about service design process and the tools around it.

## 2 ABOUT THE PROCESS

The purpose of the thesis is to improve the customer experience by helping the client company to reach the best possible outcome with their newest innovation. With literature review, data collection and blueprinting the aim is to give the company the keys to success in their business. The client company will benefit from this research by having verifiable ideas to improve their service with reliable data from the author. I am connected to the client company by working there in 2016 as a summer assistant. With my previous experience among the company, I know how the company operates and that their priority is to constantly improve themselves by innovations and improvements.

The research will be made for a company called Funrun Finland Oy. The main objective is to conduct a clear service blueprint about their new event, Rush Workout (explained on next chapter). The blueprint will be used as a service design tool to map the service experience and insights before, during and after the event. Blueprint alongside with other analyses have been made based on the author's own experiences and customer interviews. With the help from the blueprint, it was possible to make the service proposal for the company. The service proposal is meant to improve customer satisfaction by understanding the customers and their wishes better. The solution of a successful service design can make the customers value the company's service more and spread the positive word around, which will increase the profits for Funrun Finland Oy.

In approximately eight months, the author presents the blueprint alongside with the proposals and gathered data to the client company. With the help from this research, the company can make changes to their strategies with the event. The ideas from a person outside the company are good for gaining a perspective from a customer's view, in contrast to having only personnel's view about the event execution.

### 2.1 The client company: Funrun Finland Oy

Funrun Finland Oy is a sports event provider originally founded in Rauma, Finland. They began their business by arranging different kind of extreme running events in 2014, for best known ones; The Mud Run and The Color Obstacle Run. They have had over 300 000 participants

from all over Europe in their previous events. (Website of Rush Workout 2018) The turnover for the company was 1,6 million in 2016. (Website of Kauppalehti 2018) Now in 2018, they are having events in addition to Finland in Sweden, United Kingdom, Germany, France and Austria. Funrun has a team of Finnish employees who tour around the Europe during summer when the event season is on. They also have local employees at the countries abroad, to help them in cultural and language issues.

The largest popularity arose with their running event called Color Obstacle Rush, where the participants ran through 5 kilometers long running route with inflatable obstacles to cross and color powder tossed at them. After it received huge popularity in Finland, they decided to expand the concept overseas to the United States and Europe. The event was a huge success in European countries and after the year 2015, they decided to concentrate primary on European markets since there was the highest demand for their services. Especially United Kingdom and Germany were great target market countries for their popular international event and now days many people recognize ‘‘The Rush’’ brand there. (Website of Color Obstacle Rush 2018)

The Rush Workout is a completely new concept where the participants will experience a physical workout with warm-up, inflatable obstacle route and a cool-down in a bouncing castle. They use kangaroo jumping balls in warm-up and all sort of different inflatable slides and obstacles in the workout part which makes the event different from other workout events. It is different from Funrun’s previous events since there will be no kilometers long running route nor color powder to make the event immediately interesting to try out. There are other workout events at the markets but *Rush Workout* still has multiple aspects to make it different from the competitors. The company will test the new event in February 2018 indoors in the town where everything started in 2014, in Rauma. The actual event will be held in summer 2018 in at least three outdoors locations in Finland and in United Kingdom. (Website of Rush Workout 2018) Before that, they want to find out all the issues a potential customer could point out from their pilot event and improve the event to its’ best.

## 2.2 Research Questions

The Service Blueprint's research primarily focuses on The Rush Workout Rauma -event and the customers' opinions from their pilot event on 24<sup>th</sup> of February, 2018. This research is important for improving customer experiences and the value of the services. There are a few main questions that will be answered during this thesis that can help Funrun Finland Oy to understand the customers and possibilities better:

- I. How to improve customer experience and the value of the service?
- II. How does the Service Blueprint reflect the customers' experiences at Rush Workout Suomi?
- III. What are the major issues that customers pointed out from the pilot event?

When these questions are answered and analyzed, the company has a solid base to improve their event to suit the customer's needs better. This Service Blueprint's aim is to give a clear vision how is the service experience on customer's perspective.

## 2.3 Theoretical Framework

Figure 1 illustrates theoretical framework of this Thesis, it visualizes theoretical variables of this research and the relationships between them. In the beginning, literature review was done by studying information from books, scholarly journals and websites. The theory part consists of service design in general, service design thinking, service design process and positive outcomes of service design. Service design process explains the whole process from defining the problem to solving it with the help of service design. The service design process requires tools to analyze the data and the chosen tools used in this study are; service blueprint, customer journey map and SWOT analysis. With the help from these three tools it is possible to conduct a comprehensive service proposal for the client company. The main tool used in this study is service blueprint, both customer journey map and SWOT analysis are secondary tools to support the results from service blueprint.

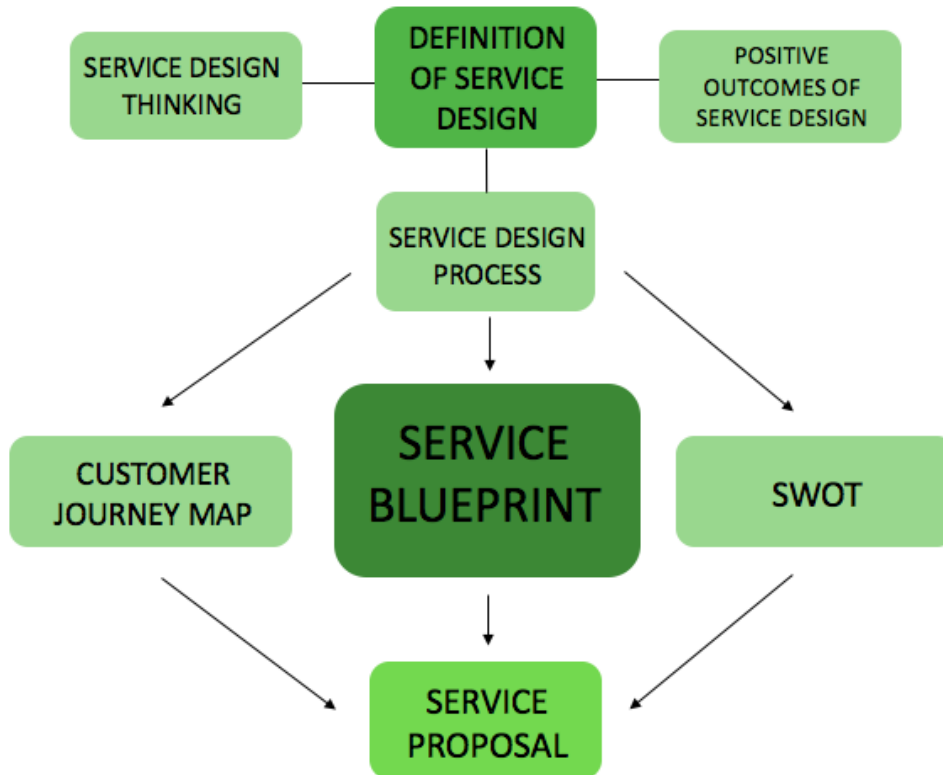


Figure 1. Theoretical framework.

### 3 SERVICE DESIGN

Nielsen Norman Group defines service design as the activity of planning and organizing business's resources in order to improve the employee's experience and ultimately, the customer's experience (Gibbons 2017). Another description of service design comes from Stephan Moritz: "Service design helps to innovate (create new) or improve (existing) services to make them more useful, usable, desirable for clients and efficient as well as effective for organizations. It is new, holistic, multidisciplinary, integrative field" (Curedale 2013).

Services has been planned as long as we have had services. Service design in other hand is relative new field of knowledge. It has appeared to businesses in the early 1990's century when the service industry grew significantly. The aim of service design is to create good quality services, which will bring competitive advantage to the operating company. (Tuulaniemi 2011) The oldest design approaches are designed for mass manufacturing and communications, then



the thinking and practices was influenced by industrial design and branding, and finally it spread to service marketing, where the first service blueprints were conducted. The service design responses to industrial and product design development to mass manufacturing by having economic, social and technical trends. The meaning in economic trends is the tendency of build the value in services as economics mature. In social aspect, when consumers expect more from the services than previous generations, the increase in customer expectations is enormous. The third trend, technical, is an outcome of today's *digital revolution*. Services that has been delivered by humans with expertise can now be partially or even fully provided by technology. (Reason, Lovlie, Brand 2015)

Service industry is growing increasingly worldwide all the time. In 2016, the amount of services was 68.94 % of the world's GDP compared to 1995 when it was only 58.27 % (Website of The World Bank 2018). The change is 10.67% in 11 years, and the biggest increase was in years 1996 to 1997. In Finland as an individual developed country, the percentage of services have been slightly higher, 70.2 % in 2016 and 62 % in 1995 (Website of The World Bank 2018). Since the Rush Workout -event will be held in the United Kingdom also, it is reasonable to compare the current percentage of services in Finland to the UK's which is as high as 79.23% (The Website of The Word Bank 2018). From the numbers, we can see that the services are even bigger portion of the GDP in United Kingdom than in Finland.

While the services are taking larger portion of our GDP every year, the competition among the companies is getting higher and higher. The only way to stand out from the competition is to make the services better than the competitors are. For example, two companies that operates at the same location, provide the same product or service for the same price, service design is the key that can differentiate these two. According to Andrew Polaine, physical elements and technology are easy to copy but service experiences with company's own strengths are much harder to duplicate. Consumers choose to use the services they feel giving them the best value for their money, whether it is flying with low-cost airlines or investing in comfortability and choosing to fly in first-class. (Polaine 2013) The organization needs to understand the industry and business and with those tools improve the services in area where it's needed and therefore make the services better and finally, more profitable also.

### 3.1 Service design thinking

According to Stickdorn and Schneider, there are 5 principles of service design thinking. First principle is to design services to be *user-centered*, which refers to the point that services should be experienced through the customer's eyes. Often stakeholders who have been working with the same projects for long time, become blind to the customer's point of view and only see the service with their own perspective. (Stickdorn & Schneider, 2011) Second principle is to be *co-creative* and include all stakeholders in the service design process. Even if everyone could not participate in the decision making, at least make sure all stakeholders are aware and that's how they are capable of providing recommendations and fresh ideas to the service design process.

Next principle is called *sequencing*. The meaning of sequencing is that the service should be visualized as interrelated action, for example with the help of customer journey maps or blueprints. Sequencing helps the stakeholders to understand the causation between the activities made in the service process. *Evidencing* means visualizing intangible services in terms of physical artefacts. The last principle means the importance of considering the entire environment of service and it is called *holistic*. Service designers should always take under consideration also the environmental issues, such as locations and weather certainties.

### 3.2 Service design process

The aim in service design process is to utilize different tools and methods to discover, define, develop and deliver the service design actions.

The main objectives are:

- I. Understand customers, their lives and needs better
  - II. Discover new business opportunities
  - III. Plan and develop operative services
  - IV. Implement the plan
- (Tuulaniemi 2010)

Many organizations rely on feedback from customer surveys and uses various methods to try to find out areas of improvements. Service design goes beyond asking feedback of the service from customers, it is more learning of the customer experience when they consider-, purchase- or interact with the organization, and also whether the customer is finding an alternative solution for their needs. (Reason, Lovlie, Brand 2015)

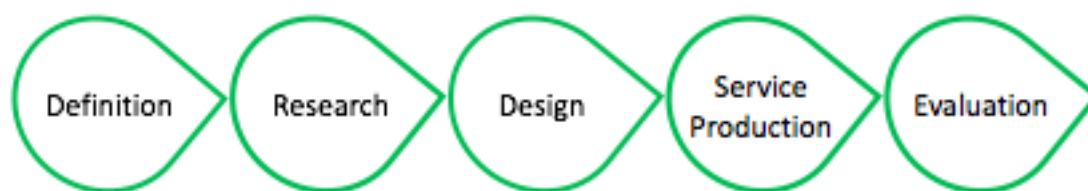


Figure 2. Service design process. Tuulaniemi 2011.

Here (figure 2.) you can see Juha Tuulaniemi's service design process map with five different phases indicated in his book called *Palvelumuotoilu*. The first phase is to *Define* and create holistic understanding of the design problem and the environment; understand what needs to be changed or improved and define a clear vision for the process ahead. The objective is to define and describe the process that will be made.

After defining, there starts *Research* phase to deepen the organization's understanding of the customer's needs, desires, expectations, values and motives. Genuine and deep interest in the target group shows the empathy of the organization, and it is one of the most important things in service design. Osterwalder says in *Business Model Generation* that good business model consists of viewing the model through customers' eyes and this approach will lead the company to the discovery of completely new opportunities. (Osterwalder 2010, 128) He emphasizes the fact that the customer thinking is not the only place to start improvement initiative, but that should definitely be one part of the process. After researching, it is time to plan the process strategically and define the objectives.

When objectives are clear, starts a creative process for generating a large number of service design ideas and for the company's best interest decide the best ones to use. This idea exploring is happening in *Design* phase and it includes all stakeholders. It can be executed with brainstorming technique, where designers throw ideas to the table without thinking more at that point. When the stakeholders have commonly agreed which ideas to use in practice, starts prototyping phase. The designer will try out service either in reality or in similar circumstances to identify both the problem areas and the areas of success. The pilot event *Rush Workout Rauma* is one example of prototyping and by reviewing the processes from the pilot event helps in identifying the problems early via trial and error.

The next step is called *Service Production* and it refers to implementing the proven well-worked concept in action. The company will utilize the service proposals into action to improve & innovate their current services. Without implementation, the service design is not putted in action and it doesn't create changes in the organization. (Tuulaniemi 2011)

After the implementation, it is reasonable to *Evaluate* how the process and service itself went, and provide the feedback to everyone among organization. Stakeholders can utilize the learned outcomes in future research and the most important issue is to continue improving and innovating the services with service design. (Tuulaniemi 2011)

### 3.3 Positive outcomes in Service Design

As told before, service design can provide an opportunity to change the organization by executing a process of innovation. While organizations see the value on service design work, the designers begin to feel more optimistic that by concentrating on the ability to design services through new ways of thinking, doing and making will affect in a positive way on how organizations are managed. When more services with higher quality are produced, service design ideas are common in organizations and innovative plans and agreements affect social issues, employees will keep exploring new ideas and discover opportunities to make changes in services. (Lee 2011)

Service design gives the organization the tools to constantly develop the services and combine both the customer- and business aspects together. It also defines the company's resources which

brings most value to the company. The results are usually user-oriented, when the user's need is at the starting point, which automatically creates value to the customer and that means more happy customers and also more recommendations and applauses from them. When the customers are happy and services work well, it also increases employee satisfaction and improves employee experience at the same time. In general, the main advantage service design brings is that it creates competitive advantage which can be seen increase in revenue, employee bonuses and salary raises and better profits to shareholders. (Tuulaniemi 2011)

#### 4 SERVICE BLUEPRINT

Service Blueprint is a comprehensive tool for mapping the user journey step by step using different touchpoints. (Polaine, Lövile & Reason 2013, 93) It includes specific detail about the elements, experiences and the way the service itself is delivered. Figure 3 illustrates how the frontstage of the blueprint indicates the channels when the company interacts with customer and backstage capabilities are the ones that stakeholders do when they produce the service without the customer involved. The blueprint maps how the service is executed and constructed, by connecting all the touchpoints to the customer journey among with the backstage processes that are needed to deliver them. When executed correctly, it provides service designer a change to reveal where in the service real value was created and where the value was not distributed the best way possible. (Polaine, Lövile & Reason 2013, 96)

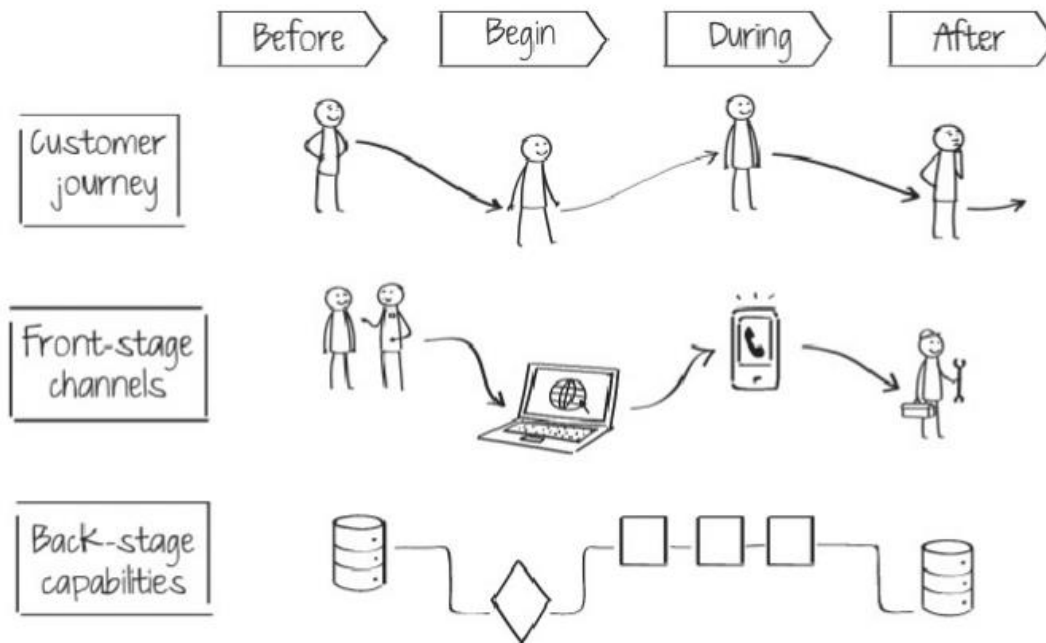


Figure 3. Service Blueprint. Reason, Lovlie & Brandt, 2015 pp 19

From figure 3 can be seen the basic model of how the service blueprint is conducted and how it works. It indicates what happens to customer before, during and after the engagement. This basic view helps to find issues and gaps in the engagement with customer and the service provider as well as show the overall picture of the service. The blueprint separates what different front-stage channels such as face-to-face, smartphones, web or third-party services the customer has used and how those align to the customer journey. When the organization can see how these front-stage channels are used, they can quickly have an overview of how personnel in organization need to align their back-stage capabilities to meet customer expectations. (Reason, Lovlie & Brandt 2015)

For comparison, here below (figure 4) is more concise service blueprint template by Andrew Polaine. This blueprint consists of five different stages on the top row; aware, join, use, develop and leave. Underneath these channels there are various touchpoint channels and in the lowest row, the backstage activities. The main purpose in the blueprint is to map out the service experience by collecting all the people involved in the usage and delivery through the channels of interaction. (Polaine, Lövile & Reason 2013, 93)

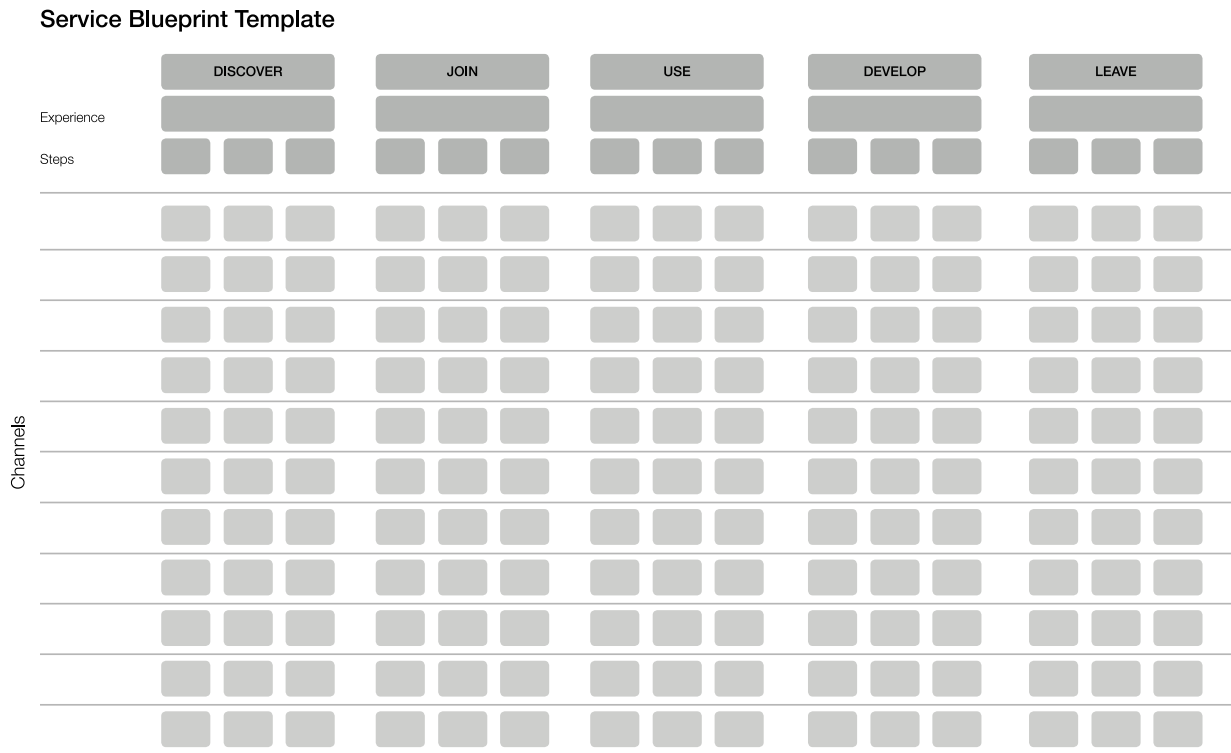


Figure 4. Service Blueprint template. Polaine, Löville, Reason 2013

The first stage is aware, where customer will get knowledge about the service and knowing what it is in general and what are the date, time and place for the service. Customers can reach out to the company in different channels for questions and read the common asked questions from the company's website. The information is found in the website on several different languages and in the advertisements on different social media channels. Join-stage in blueprint means the part when people registers themselves to the event. Registration is often made online or by the phone. The payment is made through online banking or cash. Use-stage means participating on the actual service. Arriving to the venue, participating in activities and creating service experience. Develop-stage is where the user expands the usage of the service for example by giving feedback about the service experienced. Leave-stage comes when customer is finished with the service experience, and how is the ultimate feeling of the service experienced.

Service blueprinting provides numerous positive outcomes throughout the organization. Determining the processes and failures of costs will help the financial management of the company for example in conducting financial analyses. In human resources, blueprint can be used as a useful operations training tool as well as a tool to measure performance and determine

different aspects of tasks for operating the work. The final result of a service blueprint process can also help marketing professionals in their work: with the information gathered from the customers, the management may receive new strategic perspective for the marketing from customer insights received from the blueprint. (Szende & Dalton 2015, 210-211)

## 5 SECONDARY TOOLS TO ANALYZE DATA

In this section, the reader can find information about the theory of the business analysing tools used in this research. The tools are decided to help the company to see the gathered data with a useful way and utilize the data on the best way to meet the objectives of the research. The main tool to be used is service blueprint, and secondary tools are SWOT –analysis and customer journey map. The secondary tools are added to gain better understanding of the service experience and also, to give the reader wider perspective of the client company.

SWOT –analysis is a good analysis to make of the company to gain the basic understanding about the company now or in the future. It is important to have the knowledge of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats before conducting a service proposal for the company.

The customer journey map illustrates customers journey before, during and after the service by providing important insights about the service experience. The customer journey map together with service blueprint are main tools to use in service design. The importance of customer journey map comes in place when the company needs a customer’s perspective to their service and help them to understand how the service experience appears to the customer.

The service blueprint which was explained in the previous chapter is the ultimate outcome of this report, and it differs from customer journey map from having fewer experience details but more information about the processes that deliver the service. The blueprint is important to include also the background factors into the map and have the stakeholders to see also the issues outside the customer’s view.



## 5.1 SWOT

The name SWOT analysis comes from the shortening of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the organization. It can be used to a many different situation, it can be made for organization's own activity in its entirety, for some specific action or position of a product or service or to measure organization's or competitor's competitiveness. The most important thing is to define the issue wanted to evaluate, so that the results are comparable. (Lindroos & Lohivesi, 2009, 219) The aim in SWOT analysis is to find out and point out the internal factors (strengths and weaknesses) and external factors (opportunities and threats) to a table and conduct a written analysis to explain them. As a result of SWOT analysis can often be noticed, that same issues can be seen as strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and it is completely understandable. (Lindroos & Lohivesi, 2009, 219)

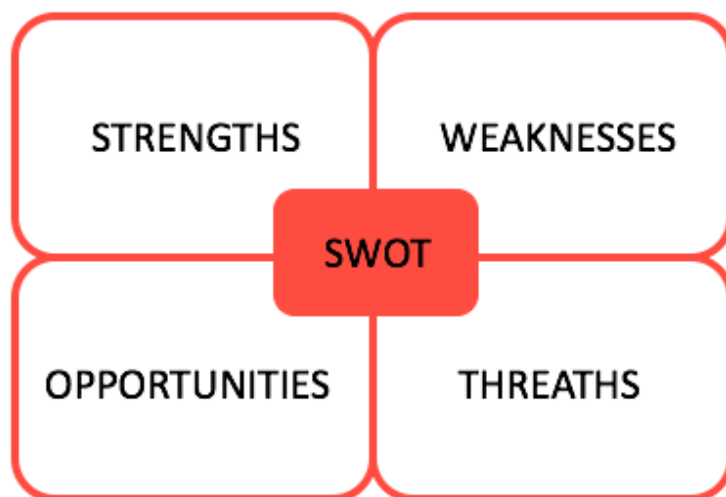


Figure 5. SWOT analysis.

In general, the internal factors, strengths and weaknesses comes from inside the company and the company can improve these areas. The strengths are usually explained as the company's competitive advantage. The more strengths the company has, the better it can separate itself from the competition. For example, good marketing communications, customer service and leaders can be strengths of a company. Weaknesses are issues that the company lacks in knowledge or don't have the resources to do in the same efficiency than a potential competitor. Large amount of weaknesses make the company lose their competitive advantage.

Opportunities are external possibilities for the organization. It can be an opportunity to be one of the only business providers in specific area. Threats are issues that come outside the company and make the organization's business harder to execute. One example of external threats could be government legislation about the amount of people allowed in the certain size of venue at the same time, that is an issue that the company can't do anything about it internally.

## 5.2 Customer journey map

Customer journey map is a description of the journey that a user has made across different touchpoints that describes customer's interaction with the service. It includes what the customer is doing, thinking and feeling rather than going in to the details about the processes that deliver the service. Touch points might be people, environments, objects or other concrete things or events that customer is in contact in order to go through the service. The map illustrates the steps customer go through in engaging with the company, whether it be a service, or a product, an online experience or any combination of these. The more touchpoints map has, the more complicated but also detailed it becomes.

Here (Figure 7) you can see an example of a simple customer journey timeline that includes first engaging with a customer (for example by advertising), next is buying the service or product, using it, sharing the user experience with others (in person or online), and finally completing the journey by adding, upgrading, replacing or in worst case, choosing a competitor and re-starting the journey with a competitor company. (Richardson 2010)

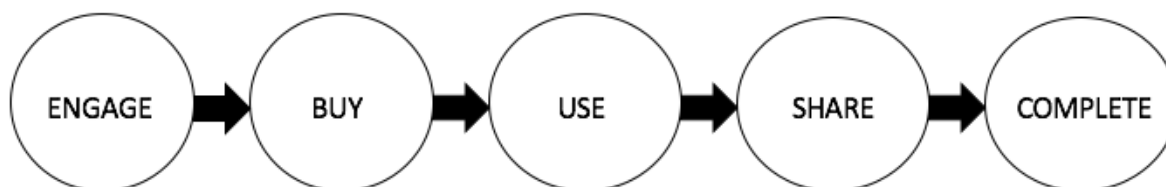


Figure 6. Customer Journey Map. Richardson A, 2010

The best value for the company is to widely share customer journey maps throughout the organization, including internal stakeholders and trying to highlight the key strengths. Also,

there is no use of customer journey map if the insights are not taken into action. Managers need to prioritize opportunities based on customer and company value and make effort on changing the organization to better from yesterday. The company will contain their progress by sustaining the learnings over time by monitoring customer feedback constantly. (Temkin B 2010)

## 6 METHODOLOGY

### 6.1 Research design

Research design is the plan for the research execution that guides the data collection and analyses in the research process. It can be kept as the framework of the study which keeps the research study relevant to the research questions and objectives. There are three types of research designs: exploratory, descriptive and experimental or causal. (Sontakki 2010, 65-67) In this study, the descriptive research method is used.

Descriptive research is the most commonly used design and as the name says, it is used to describe the characteristics of users of the given product, event, situation or the markets in general. A descriptive study guarantees a clear definition of who, what, when, where, why and how dimensions of the research. Descriptive research has been divided to two distinct methods: case method and statistical method. The purpose in case study is to discover new ideas about the industry, for example conducting a consumer survey about the opinions of a new product, new product package or product design. The difference in case method and statistical method is that the case method involves complete study of a one or few cases and statistical method involves the research of only few factors in a larger number of cases. (Sontakki 2010, 65-67)

There are two types of statistical method: longitudinal analysis and cross-sectional analysis. Longitudinal study, also called as a panel study means a fixed sample of respondents from which the research is made repeatedly after a certain period. The sample members of the panel are committed to be measured repeatedly in compared to cross-sectional study, where one-time measurement is typical element of the study. The main advantage of a longitudinal study is the capacity of study change and development over time.

This research is made as a cross-sectional study since the study is made only once and the purpose is to gain information on how did the specific sample of customers' feel about the pilot event. With cross-sectional analysis, it is possible to have an overview of the opinions and thoughts of a customers at this specific time. The data is typically collected from multiple types of people, for example from male and female consumers, from different ages, from people in different social or economic classes or consumers with different levels of education background. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) In this cross-sectional study, a mix of survey and action research was used as a research strategy since the author not only interviewed participants but also participated to the event as a customer to gain insights from a customer's perspective.

## 6.2 Research method

The empirical study of this thesis is made by using a multi-method qualitative studies, where the main focus is on qualitative research and quantitative method is taken under consideration to support the qualitative data.

The qualitative research is executed with customer interviews. By interviewing five people on the event day from different ages and genders. Qualitative research is holistic information gathering, where all data is collected in natural, real situations. In this case, all data is collected at the event venue from real customers. The reason that qualitative research method is used is that the client company requested to receive in-depth knowledge and suggestions from small amount of people with different background factors. That way they can get a holistic picture of the research target and more reliable answers than they can get in surveys. The interview questions were ready on the event day but they did vary depending on the path of the discussion. The ideal amount of questions was 10-12 questions, with the option to have follow-up questions which made the interviews semi-structured.

As a support to the qualitative research, the quantitative research method was used in this study. The client company conducted a digital survey to all participants after the event, from where they wanted to share the data with the author for result analysing. Author's role in the quantitative study was to analyse the results and have aspects to the final recommendation from quantitative side also.

The main focus of the study was on the qualitative side, and the data from quantitative research was mainly to support the qualitative research. Qualitative research method helps the researcher to understand customers and gain valuable insights from individual interviews as the quantitative side brings the larger population sample to the study. Both methods are valuable and by combining these two methods it was possible to conduct a good service proposal to the company.

### 6.3 Population and sample

Population refers to the entire group for whom the results of the study will apply. The sample is the group of individuals who participate in the study, in other words sample is a subset of population. Researcher can either measure the entire population or take a sample. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) In this study, population includes all the 431 participants of the *Rush Workout Rauma* –event and the sample is all the people who participate in the study; 5 interviewees and 80 survey respondents.

In qualitative research, purposive sampling method was used. It is a most frequently used form of non-probability sampling where the researcher uses own judgement to select the sample who will best be able to help answer the research questions and meet the objectives. (Saunders & Lewis, 2012) The researcher chose five interviewees at the event with the purpose of having all respondents from different demographic factors.

In quantitative research, self-selection sampling was used. In self-selection sampling the possible sample members are asked to take part on the research and in this case, everyone who were willing to participate, became members of the sample.

### 6.4 Questionnaire

Questionnaire is usually a written document or electronical file with a set of standardised questions. The discussion held with the CEO had a major effect on the questions since there were issues that the client company requested to be asked or solved, and the hopes of the company were naturally fulfilled by the author. All interviews are made to support this research by using interviewer-administered questionnaire, which can be used via telephone or in person.

These are structured personal interviews with delivery and collection type surveys. There were three demographic questions; age, gender and place of living. These factors are essential information about the customer for the company. With the knowledge of age and gender the company receives data of the biggest customer segments and it may help the company to update their target segment in the future. The following questions were about warm-up, workout, length of the activities, timing, pricing and improvement ideas. The interviews were focused, structured interviews where there were same set of questions presented to chosen respondents. However, as the conversation went on, the questions were modified to fit the conversation at that point. The questions were clear and understandable which is obligatory to receive reliable data from the answers.

The electronic questionnaire was created by the client company, the base was from the previous events' feedback surveys, the questions were modified to fit the *Rush Workout Rauma* –event. There were two demographic questions; age and gender. The rest of the questions were about the customer's feeling about the warm-up, workout, cool-down, length of the activities, staff, overall atmosphere and event pricing. The questions were similar to the ones in qualitative study, and for that reason it was easy to compare the results from both sides.

## 6.5 Data collection and analyses

Data is collected with face-to-face interviews and digital survey. These two methods are very different ways to collect the data, as interviews can be more time-consuming and expensive alternative to digital survey which is usually rather inexpensive, fast and easy alternative. There are many opportunities but also limitations in computer-administrated surveys, since there can occur sample errors. In interviews, the researcher can have a genuine connection with the respondent and the risk of having sample errors are smaller.

The data from the interviews was collected on the event day, February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. In digital survey, the link of the survey was sent via e-mail to all 481 event participants on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 and they could fill out the survey from any mobile device.

The data was analyzed with various service design tools, with the most important one being service blueprint. The service blueprint describes the customer's journey indicated from the customer interviews and author's own participation to the event, it includes front-stage channels and back-stage capabilities. The SWOT –analysis is used to give the reader broader understanding about the client company and its' strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The customer journey map is one customer's experience among the service, with clear insights about the service before, during and after the event.

## 6.6 Validity and reliability

The importance of considering the validity and reliability of the research is enormous. In face-to-face interviews, there can be subject bias and observer errors as well as in digital surveys respondents might answer to questions without concentrating. Respondents might skip questions or choose answers without reading the question to save time. These situations have their effect on both to the validity and to the reliability of the research.

Validity measures whether the research findings are what they appear to be about, for example is the relationship between two variables a causal relationship. Internal validity examines whether the research measures what it is supposed to measure and external validity is about can the results be generalised to a larger population to another research setting. (Saunders & Lewis 2012) Both the collected data and followed service proposal did answer to the research questions and objectives set on the beginning of the research process, and from there we can state that the research is valid. The main objective was to conduct a clear blueprint about the service experience in Rush Workout Rauma –event, and the objective was fulfilled. The first research question was about customer experience improvement and the tools to improve customer satisfaction and value of the service have been described in literature review and recommendations are given in the service proposal part, based on the gathered data. The following questions were about the service blueprint's reflection of the customer's experiences and what kind of thoughts did the event raise on customer. The blueprint alongside with customer journey map represents the customer's journey through different touchpoints and indicates the ultimate feeling that the customer had in each part of the event.

Reliability in the other hand measures the consistency of research findings and whether the used measures would produce the same results on another occasion. Other aspects of reliability are; could similar results be reached by other observers and has the research process been described transparently. The principal factors that threaten the reliability of the research findings and conclusions are subject error, subject bias, observer error and observer bias. (Saunders & Lewis 2012) As said before, in face-to-face interviews there is a chance for subject bias, which means the respondent giving unreliable information because they think that telling the truth may show them in a bad light. However, this rarely happens in a study subject like this, this might be more common on a study that measures for example work well-being. Observer error means different researches may ask the same questions in a different way by influencing the reliability of the research. Observer bias refers to the situation where different researchers interprets the same data in different ways, thus biasing the findings and conclusions. In digital survey, the sample size was 80 people out of 481 population which makes the response percentage 16.6%. The response percentage is relatively high and that also increases the amount of reliability of the research. In this study, the same results were received from both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which can also be considered as a fact that increases reliability of the research. Reliability can be measured also by repeating the study.

## 7 DATA COLLECTION

### 7.1 Implementation plan

The process starts by having a discussion with the CEO of the client company. The discussion is held by phone and the purpose of the discussion is to set the objectives for the research and receive background information about the new event and its' expectations. After setting the research objectives with Markus Niemelä, the process continues by conducting a literature review and determining the service design tools to support the ultimate outcome of the thesis; service blueprint. The references are found from libraries in Finland and in United States, also reliable internet sources and e-books are used. After a deep familiarizing with the theory of service design, the author should have enough knowledge about the subject and the interview questions can be made.



The data collection starts on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018 when the event *Rush Workout Rauma* takes place. Author interviews five event participants from different background factors to have a holistic picture about the service experience. The client company conducts a digital survey to the event participants approximately one week after the event takes place. The company shares the answers of the survey to the author for further analysing as soon as the given response time is over.

After the research data is gathered with the interviews and digital survey, it is time to analyse the data by combining the learned theory and collected data into the service tools. The main tools are service blueprint and customer journey map, both indicates the customer's journey from the beginning to the end with the service. When all data is analysed and service blueprint conducted and explained through, it is time to make service proposal for the company and conclude the thesis process.

## 7.2 Discussion with the CEO

Discussion with Markus Niemelä, the CEO and founder of Funrun Finland Oy, was conducted on the phone in February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018. The main interest were the creation and ideas of new event; how the idea came up, how it has been developed and what company's competitive advantage is. Important data were also the target customer group and number of people expected to participate to *Rush Workout Rauma*. Niemelä stated that the company wants to improve themselves constantly by inventing new events and keep their selves competitive in the sport event markets. They have noticed during their many years in sports event industry, that exercise and fitness has become a popular trend in the industry. Group fitness exercises are a way to combine a social event with a workout, and that attracts consumers.

Niemelä expects 300 to 500 participants to the event and since the tickets are mostly sold in advance with lower price range, he can be optimistic that they will achieve the desired numbers. The main objective with the *Rush Workout Rauma* event is to have enough participants to test the operability of the obstacles and staff, and also to gain opinions on how people feel about the new concept. If everything goes well with the pilot event, the plan is to launch the new concept later in the spring and arrange the events during summer of 2018.

### 7.3 Customer interviews

All the interviews were made in February, 2018. Discussion with the CEO was mainly to gain more information about the company and their new Rush Workout –event and its' purposes and objectives. Customer interviews on the event day were the main concentration in this research and those were meant to support author's own opinions and experience with the event.

As said before, there were five customer interviews made at the pilot event, on February 24<sup>th</sup> 2018. The questions are created on the focus on the information what is needed, and it is determined by research problem, -objectives and research hypotheses. The aim was to interview five participants with different background factors to gain the widest possible perspective. The goal was to interview both men and women, have different ages and background factors involved to reach the widest possible data. There was one male and four female interviewees, ages varied from 21 to 40. The interview questions can be seen at appendix 1.

There were 12 questions made, the first question was to collect the demographic data about the respondents. The following question was about the earlier participation on the Funrun's events, to know is the respondent familiar with the company or is he/she totally new customer. Two respondents had an earlier participation on the Funrun's events, and three other respondents were first-timers. The opinion about length of the warm-up was the next question and it raised opinions, it was felt as a heavy 30-minute exercise, but most of the respondents felt that the length and toughness of the warm-up were very reasonable.

Most desirable issues at the event were inflatable slides, kangaroo jumping balls at the warm-up, crawling obstacles and fun atmosphere. Only one of the respondents stated that the bouncing castle at the end was something that she did not like as much as the warm-up and obstacle route. All four other respondents stated that everything was fun and there were no boring activities at the event. The respondents were asked to rate the event from 1 to 5 and the calculated average value was 4.9 which means that the respondents were almost perfectly satisfied with the event.

The timing of the event was one of the questions, the event was scheduled to the afternoon on a Saturday, and the question was whether the timing was good or should it be moved to the morning or midday. All five respondents stated that the timing was good in the afternoon, it should not be changed to earlier time.

The price of the ticket was during November and December's pre-sale only 10 euros and after that the price range raised to 20 euros. There were no child, student or military discounts given at this point. Opinion on the ticket price was asked from the respondents, and four of the respondents bought the tickets from the pre-sale with 10 euros and one paid the full price of 20 euros. All respondents thought that the ticket price was reasonable, some said it was even low for the experience they got. 35-year-old female mentioned, that the price was good for adults but if she would attend the event with whole family, the ticket prices would be too expensive. She suggested that a discounted family price would be a good idea to have children and parents involved also.

The client company pointed out that they would like to know how participants would feel if the event would be only for women in the future. This was one of the questions, and all five respondents were unanimous about the answer, they thought it was unnecessary. One male respondent told that the event went beyond his expectations and he would definitely attend to similar events again. All four female respondents thought that it is better to keep both genders at the event than make it only for women.

All five respondents were ultimately very satisfied with the event and told that they would definitely attend to it again. When there was a question about what the respondents would add to the event, they suggested that a water point after the warm-up would be necessary, more obstacles and the wildest respondent thought that there should be a bar for adults after the route. Also surprises, color powder or something else exiting during the route were requested from 24-year-old female respondent.

#### 7.4 Survey Data from Funrun Finland Oy

The client company conducted a digital survey after the event, which was send via e-mail to all the 431 participants of the Rush Workout Rauma. They got all together 80 responses and shared

the data from surveys with the author, to have a quantitative perspective to support author's qualitative research. From the respondents, 94% were female and 6% were male which is understandable since the majority gender at the event was clearly female. Ages of respondents varied from under 18 to over 41-year-olds. The company used the same template as in their other events, with slightly modified questions and answers. The client company wanted to share the data with the author to have the results analyzed and receive even wider view of the customer's thoughts. The questionnaire from digital survey can be found from appendix 2.

To start with the warm-up, from a scale 1 to 6 respondents rated on average 5.01 the warm-up. Which supports the qualitative research above, the interviews showed also that the warm-up was a success. 84% of the respondents thought that the length of the warm-up was ideal for the event, 15% responded that it was too long and only 1% responded that it was too short. Most of the respondents (77%) thought it was good to have the warm-up done fully with kangaroo jumping balls and the rest would like to have 50% with kangaroo jumping balls and other 50% of the warm-up regular exercise or exercise in a bouncing castle.

51% of the participants responded that the 25-30 minutes' time on the exercise route was a good time, 46% felt it was too short and 4% thought it was too long. Over half of the respondents did have time to do three laps of the exercise route, a third did two laps and 14% had time for four laps. 61% felt that the number of obstacles were sufficient and 39% felt that the number of obstacles were too little. No-one has answered that there were too many obstacles. These are also supportive facts toward the qualitative research, some interviewees said that there could be even more obstacles and some thought it was perfect on how it was.

From a scale 1 to 6, the average score was 4.93 whether a respondent would attend to the event again. The score on the interviews were similar, there all five respondents responded that they would attend the event again. What comes to the time and date of the event, 94% of the digital survey respondents felt that the event should be on a weekend and only 6% wanted it to be on a week night.

The functionality of water points was rated 4.7 from a scale 1 to 6, which is a relatively good score compared to the fact that in interviews two people out of five requested for additional water point right after the warm-up. The common atmosphere was rated 5.25 from a maximum

of 6, and the fun atmosphere was praised also by the 21-year old female respondent on the event day's interviews.

One of the most interesting questions was the one where the company asked whether the event should be only for women or not, and 100% of the respondents answered prohibitive to that. There were no respondents who thought it would be good to arrange a *Rush Workout* –event just for women. The same result we got already earlier with the interviews, all interviewees were against of having only women at the event. This was very important data at this point since the company strongly considered on changing the event for only women, since the majority gender in all of their previous events have been female.

From the digital survey data, we can see that the answers from qualitative and quantitative research are very similar to each other. It was good to execute both interviews and digital survey, to receive deep and comprehensive feedback combined to the majority's opinions about the event. The similar results on both research settings shows that the research data is reliable and consistent.

## 8 DATA ANALYSES

### 8.1 SWOT-analysis of Funrun Finland Oy

By using SWOT to analyze Funrun's internal strengths, weaknesses and external threats and opportunities we can get into to insights of the company and area on the markets.

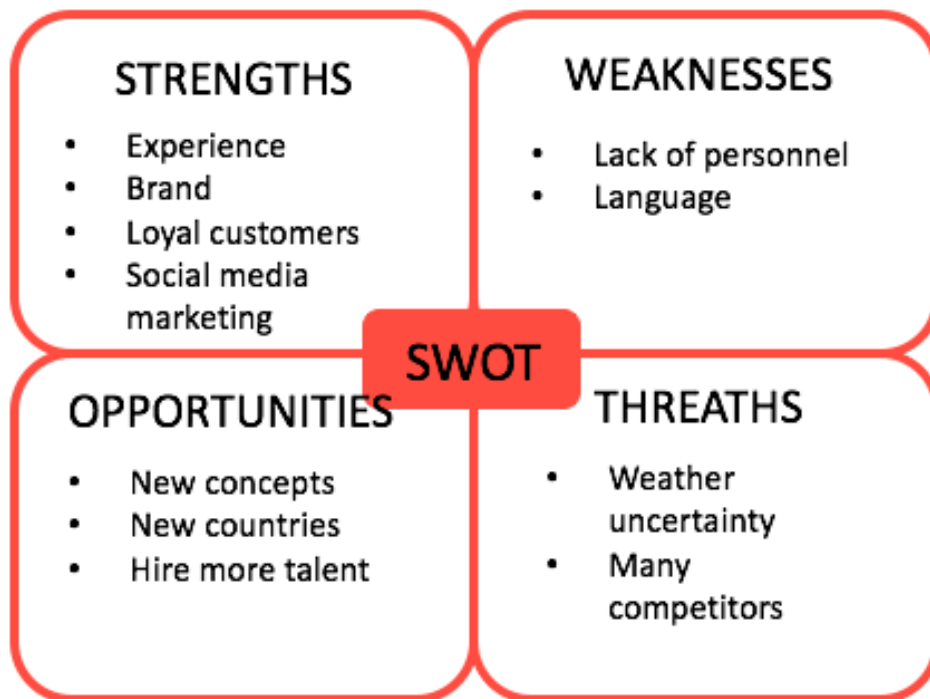


Figure 7. SWOT –analysis of Funrun Finland Oy.

Beginning with the strengths of Funrun Finland Oy, we could point out their strong “Rush” brand that they have managed to build during the years with their previous events. People recognize their logo and may already have positive experiences with the company or possibly have heard good from this company. Funrun has experience among sport event industry from three years and they have the knowledge of how the industry works. They also have relatively young personnel which can be seen as strength for having employees from their target age sector. The personnel have got a strong social media knowledge and they only advertise their events on social media. They have many followers on their global Instagram-, Facebook and Snapchat accounts. And of course, everything has started from the CEO, who is very talented on inventing new concepts and developing them to worldwide events, like he did with *Color Obstacle Rush*.

With the second internal factor, weaknesses of the company are harder to define. The fact that the company has expanded rapidly brings the issue of not having enough personnel to keep up with the work having to be done. The management of the company have to spend long days at the office and at the venues, when they must have everything done on time. Also, the fact that this is a Finnish company with almost only Finnish employees, makes the language different from their European locations.

Introducing Rush Workout to new countries can be seen as opportunity for the company. They already have made their running events to several different countries in Europe, and they could easily expand even further with their experience. Also, new concepts like *Rush Workout* are great opportunities for expand the business and increase profits.

The sport event industry is highly competitive with multiple companies in the industry. Fitness and well-being have gained huge popularity during recent years and it can be seen as a profitable industry in the future also which makes the number of competitors arise all the time. The biggest competitor of Funrun Finland Oy to Rush Workout Rauma is most probably Extreme Run, which is one of the most popular sport events in Finland currently, one big reason for that is their marketing strategy where they hire popular social media influencers to advertise their event to the public.

## 8.2 Customer journey map

From figure 8 you can see the customer journey map, created by the author from the *Rush Workout Rauma* –event. It indicates one customer’s experience on what happened before, during and after the service, and which touchpoints were used in order to achieve the service. On the lowest row, there are smileys added to indicate the feeling that the customer had at that specific moment.











STAGE	Pre-Service		During Service					After Service
STEP	Customer sees an interesting event ad in Facebook (Rush Workout) and clicks the link to their website and books a ticket online → receives it immediately via e-mail.	Customer goes to the event with her friends by car, and they are happily surprised how much free parking spots are reserved for the participants.	Customer arrives to the venue 1 hour earlier than her workout starts and checks herself in with friendly volunteer workers on the event lobby. She receives free bandana scarf and is very pleased with that.	Customer is waiting for her group's starting time and watching other groups taking their warm-up. There was a good atmosphere at the moment but nothing to do → she got bored.	At 16.00 it was customer's time to go for 30 minute warm-up and she had a blast! The warmup was hard and she felt thirsty after that, so she would have needed water provided right after that, before starting the workout route.	The workout started and it took 30 minutes, the inflatable obstacles were super fun to run and walk through. There were water provided on the route.	When finishing with a cool-down, customer and her friends took pictures of themselves by the inflatables and posted them to her Instagram account using promoted hashtags.	The company sends digital feedback survey via e-mail one week after the event and customer responds to it by giving good reviews of the successful event. She also recommends it to her friends and family.
TOUCHPOINT	Social media Website E-mail (Mobile)		Volunteer workers (Face-to-Face)		Warm-up instructor (Face-to-Face)	Event staff (Face-to-Face)	Smartphone Social Media → Instagram (Mobile)	Smartphone (Mobile & Face-to-Face)
FEELING				 	 			

Figure 8. Customer journey map (*Rush Workout Rauma 2018*)

As you can see, this customer journey map's stages have been divided to pre-service, during service and after service. The pre-stage includes *engage* and *buy* stages from Richardson's explanation of customer journey map. During service indicates the customer's *use* phase and after service is when *share* and *complete* takes place in customer's journey. The touchpoints used were mobile and face-to-face. The printed materials are becoming old-fashioned, when everything can be replaced with digital files, even the entrance ticket.

The pre-service experience started with a Facebook ad that the customer noticed few months before the actual event. With a decent time of consideration, the customer decided to purchase the ticket from company's website. There were multiple side products for sale on the registration page, from tattoos to phone holders. The electronic ticket was sent to the customer's e-mail address after payment confirmation and the customer was all set for the event in February. There was also an information letter sent to all the participants via e-mail one week before the event, where the company gives specific information about the location, registration, dressing and timing of the event day. Until this point, there were only mobile touchpoints used in the form of Facebook, company's website and e-mail letter. The pre-service stage continued when the event day took place and the customer drove to the venue, and was pleasantly surprised about the amount of free parking spaces.



During the service, customer arrived at the event registration one hour before their workout time was, as instructed at the information letter. The customer felt welcomed and well guided by the friendly staff, which was gathered mainly from volunteer workers. All participants received *Rush* branded bandanas for free to wear at the event or afterwards as a memory. The free bandana meant a lot for the customer with only a little effort for the company since all products were one size and the manufacturing costs are low. In this situation, there was only face-to face communication used. In next phase, the customer enjoyed the good atmosphere at the venue when they played good music and there was possibility to watch other groups workout and warm-up sessions. However, this one hour time felt little too long and the customer got bored.

The customer's warm-up start time was 4 pm which was the latest possible start. There was family start at 3 pm and other regular start at 3.30 pm. The amount of start times felt good, and especially the fact that there was a separate start for children was a functional solution. The warm-up was fun and extraordinary, the usage of kangaroo jumping balls brought back delightful childhood memories. After 30 minutes of sweaty warm-up, it was time to move into the workout route. The customer and a few other participants felt thirsty at this point but there was no water point at this point. There was one water point at the middle of the exercise route, but the participants felt that there was need for water right after the warm-up, before starting the exercise route. There were multiple staff members among the route to ensure the participants can run the route safely and the obstacles work out the way they should. Until this point, only face-to face communications were used during the service.

The work-out was finished with a cool-down and stretching, there was a bouncing castle for cool-down which was a pleasant surprise and already a second extraordinary activity of the event. After guided stretching session the event was over. The customer took pictures by the inflatables among other participants and they posted them to social media afterwards. The picture taking was fully optional and the customer's own idea. Smartphone and social media were used in this situation which adds mobile as the next touchpoint to the journey.

A one week after the event it was time to give feedback to the company in form of a digital survey which was sent via e-mail to all participants. The customer gave the company nearly only positive feedback since she was extremely satisfied with the event and would definitely

attend to similar events in the future. The customer recommends the service to her friends and family and leaves from the pleasant service experience with memories that lasts a lifetime.

### 9 SERVICE BLUEPRINT FROM RUSH WORKOUT RAUMA –EVENT

As said earlier on the theory part of this Thesis, the service blueprint is a tool to map the customer’s service experience by using different touchpoints and it indicates both front stage- (the ones that customer is included) and back stage actions (the ones that stakeholders do in order to deliver the service). The layout of the blueprint below this text (Figure 9) was made with online tool called “Realtimeboard” and it is a combination of Polaine’s and Reason’s blueprint models, as seen previously in the theory section.

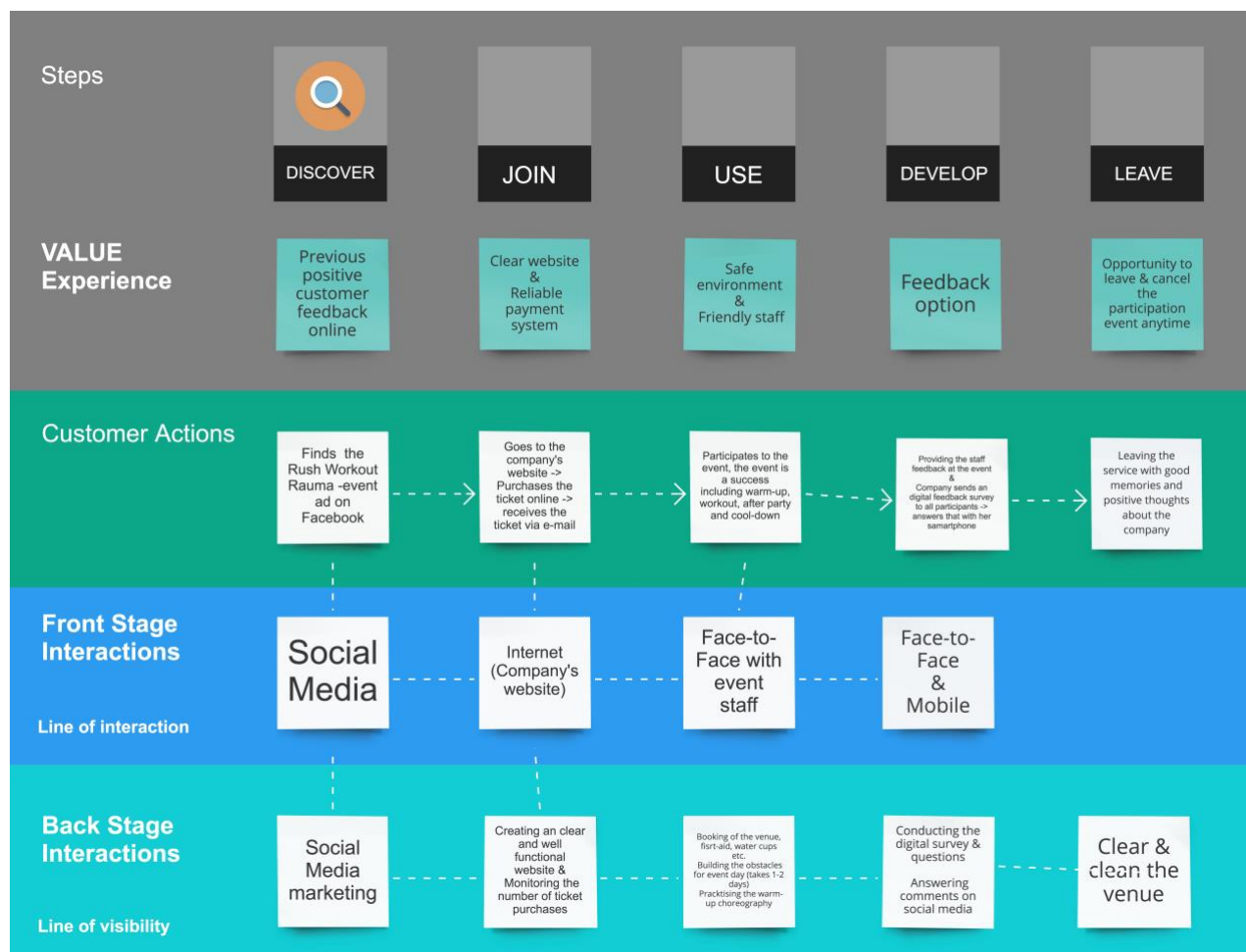


Figure 9. Service Blueprint (Rush Workout Rauma 2018)

The steps are marked in the upper row; discover, join, use, develop and leave. The next row is about the author's values towards service indicated by previous experiences among services. In discovery phase, previous positive customer feedback brings high value to the people when customer is discovering new services. When joining the service, the issues that are valuable to customer are both clear website and reliable payment system when purchasing the service, for example Paypal or secured credit card payment. During the service, customer would value safe environment and friendly staff. When the basics are under control, the customer can enjoy the rest of the service experience. In the area of development, feedback option gives the service provider honest picture in customer's eyes. The last stage *leave*, is valued if there is a change to leave from the event whenever one wants to, or cancel the participation fully before the service.

The customer actions section look similar to the customer journey map (Figure 8) seen before, except in here the information is not as comprehensive as in customer journey map. The customer actions begin with discovering the service from a Facebook ad created by the company, continues to the link to the company website where customer can purchase a ticket to the *Rush Workout Rauma* –event. Customer receives the ticket via e-mail and participates to the event with delighted outcome; all members of staff were friendly, warm-up was extremely fun, workout was sweaty and after party together with cool-down was the perfect ending to the event. At the event, there were management present to ask opinions and feedback from the event and approximately one week after the event the company sent a digital feedback survey to all participants. The customer left the event feeling happy and satisfied with the service experience.

The next section is about front stage activities occurred during the service experience. The touchpoints that user used in addition to face-to-face, were only in digital form. The awareness started with social media where the company does all its' marketing, continues to the company's website where participant can register for the event by using any mobile device (author used computer). In using phase, there was only face-to-face interactions among customer and check-in workers, warm-up instructor and other event staff. The development occurred both face-to-face at the event location and mobile when customer filled out the digital survey sent after the event (author used smartphone to do that).

In lowest row, you can find the backstage activities that were needed from stakeholders to deliver the service. Social media marketing was the only marketing the company conducted, they marketed the event in Facebook and in Instagram prior to the event. The company has to take pictures, edit them and create ads with good slogans to get people's attention in social media. For the *join* phase, the company needed to create clear and concise websites and they have to constantly monitor the amount of participations online. In order to participants to use the service, the stakeholders need to book the venue, first-aid crew, water cups and other relevant issues to make the event happen. They need to start to build the obstacle route for 1-2 days before the event and the warm-up instructor must practice and prepare choreography for his performance. After the event, the staff need to clear and clean the venue which usually takes one whole day of work. They also need to conduct the digital survey layout and questions, usually analyze the answers and perhaps answer to comments sent in social media.

## 10 SERVICE PROPOSAL FOR FUNRUN FINLAND OY

The research shows that the pilot event *Rush Workout Rauma* was a successful event with many satisfied participants. However, there were a few notices which could make the event even better in the future. Together with the interviews, digital survey data and author's own insights about the event, the service blueprint was made to help the company to see the entire service experience from a customer's perspective. The customer experience can be improved by answering to customer's feedback by adding, improving or replacing aspects of the event. The value of the service increases when the number of satisfied customers increases. The following paragraphs are recommendations for the company to improve the event to the best possible form, all the data is from the customer interviews and the author's own experience with the service.

### 10.1 Activities

The event started with warm-up which was fun, energetic and hard according to the feedback from participants. The kangaroo jumping balls were liked and they should be kept at the event without a doubt. The 30 minutes' time of the warm-up felt suitable and the instructor, music

and the atmosphere made the warm-up a success. As mentioned earlier, there was a need for a water point right after the warm-up, before starting the exercise route. Especially during the summer when weather is warm and the sun is shining, the amount of water points is good to be high, to avoid dehydration of participants. The exercise route was liked but some participants hoped more inflatable obstacles or longer time on the route. However, the majority felt that there were a reasonable good number of obstacles and the 30 minutes' time at the route was enough.

One respondent wished to have a surprise spot on the route, something that the participants didn't know beforehand. She suggested it could be like a smoothie bar where there is possibility to buy non-alcoholic drinks but that might be little difficult to organize by the company. Another idea with easier execution would be a photo spot added during the route, it could be a photo booth where participants could take fun group pictures for memories and add them to social media later with company's mention. The visibility that the company could get from the pictures in social media is indescribable important.

At the event, there was striking that many groups were dressed similarly and they had really put time into their outfits with printed t-shirts or fun costumes. The idea of rewarding the best dressed groups would tempt groups to participate and stand out from the regular participants. For example, bachelorette, workplace or even sport teams could get excited for the dressing aspect and participate to the event for that reason.

## 10.2 Timing and scheduling

The time of the event was on the afternoon on a Saturday, and the respondents thought it was good time and day of the week to have the event. One of the interviewees suggested, that a separated start time for adults with good physical condition would be a positive addition to the event since there were points at the route where people who wants to go the obstacle through faster need to wait every now and then behind the slower ones. With separate 'fitness start' the company could ensure that people who wishes to go the route faster and even race a little, could choose that start -time. The family start got positive feedback from several respondents, so that will be good to keep in the schedule on how it was. Then there would be one start for

families and children, one ‘‘fitness start’’ and one regular start for people who only wants to have fun and enjoy the atmosphere and workout.

### 10.3 Pricing

Pricing of the event was one of my interview questions, and it turned out to be one of the many issues that participants were really pleased with. However, the pilot event was considerably lower price than the event will be in the future. There was a conversation about a different pricing packages and the number of students at the event made me think about the different pricing possibilities to the company to try on.

One of the interviewees, 35-year-old woman brought up an idea about family pricing packet. Even if the price was low for the pilot event and most participants were pleased with it, buying a separate ticket for 5-persons’ family would probably be too expensive for most families. A discounted price for parents and children would get the children and parents to participate. Children often requests the parents to purchase side products at the registration so the money could return to the company on that way.

Student and military discounts would be a good addition to the ticket pricing. Student discounts are often highly advertised by universities and the company can get free advertisement if they conduct a student discount. By showing a valid student or military card, the registration can easily recognize who are eligible for the discount. Both students and military servicers are strong communities where a world of mouth is strong and the word about the event or the possible positive experiences after the event can spread quickly.

### 10.4 Co-operation

Co-operations with local companies are good ways to combine customers with other companies in a way that profits both companies. For example, an accommodation or a meal after the event are good ways to combine two different businesses together. Also bus rides can be necessary in some areas where there is no public transportation. When there are multiple companies involved in the service, all the companies can get new customers from the existing customers from each company.

Funrun already had one co-operation with local restaurant for discounted food and free entry for the nightclub entrance on the event day. That was a good deal for both companies, since both companies marketed each other before the event and on the event day they had customers outside their traditional customer target groups. In addition to restaurant co-operation, there could be a hotel co-operation to have participants of the event have a discounted price on one of the local hotels. That way also long-distance participants would have smaller resistance to participate to the event, and the hotel would benefit from it by receiving more customers.

Funrun could also work together with different sport clubs in the city for asking them to volunteer at the event. For exchange, the company could give them free tickets to the future events. The members of sport clubs are often sporty and social people who fit the target market of Funrun perfectly. That means the members of the local sport clubs can get familiar with the event and the company can get involved with their target customers.

In the future world of social media and popular influencers, a co-operation with a social media influencer with many followers would bring more visibility for the company. Many famous bloggers and vloggers are easily reachable and they are willing to make videos and posts about the events. By genuine and honest post from the influencer, potential customers can get a look on how the service works and might get interested about it more than from a Facebook ad.

## 11 CONCLUSION

The results of the research have been analyzed and recommendations to the company have been given, and now it is time to conclude the process. The process started in the beginning of the year 2018 but the idea of writing the thesis based on service design was determined a lot earlier. Service design is coming more and more popular every day while the number of competitors among service providers keep increasing. As the main objectives were to provide the client company a clear service blueprint with recommendations and suggestions for their new service, we can say that the research was successful.

The company will improve the customer experience by answering the customer's needs, in this case by adding a water point after the warm-up, adjusting the start groups, adding more price groups for families and students and for example, adding a photo booth to the venue. The customer satisfaction affects positively to the value of the service. The service blueprint reflects the customer's experience at *Rush Workout Rauma* by opening the service experience from beginning until the end of the use of service. The company received a well explained blueprint with both front-stage and back-stage –activities described.

The process went the way it was planned and the objectives were reached at the end of the process. The ultimate outcome was the service blueprint and it followed with the service improvement suggestions for the client company. This half a year long process taught a lot to me and it firstly improved my research skills and with literature review the I learned much more about service design than I could have ever imagined. I also learned a lot about referencing and how to find reliable sources through different channels. The fact that the study was conducted for a client company gave me motivation during the process and made me ambitious to do well in this research.

The beginning was hard, the information felt overwhelming and it was difficult to find reliable sources. But as the time went by and with the help from the libraries, the right sources were found and it was time to internalize the knowledge from the sources and explain it in the theory part. The interview part felt easier, the questions were easy to conduct since the I knew what the client company wanted to find out and what was necessary to know in service design's perspective. The actual interviews felt intimidating at first but when the actual event took place, participants were open and easy to interview.

The originally chosen research method was qualitative, which gave the researcher change to concentrate on five respondents and collect qualitative data from them. However, it limits the data to be only from small quantity of participants. The chosen method was right for the study but obviously, it gave only a narrow picture to the company on how the majority of participants felt, and that is why it was good that the company conducted the digital survey to support the qualitative side. It was mutually agreed with the client company, that the quantitative study is analyzed by in this research and of course, it increased the amount of work to this study. But I felt comfortable adding that extra time since in my opinion, these two methods combined made



the research complete. Also, it affected positively to the reliability of the research by receiving the same results from two different methods of the same customer group.

The results can be utilized in working life by the client company and other companies on service sector. Service design can be used in every company that produces services and is willing to improve them by concentrating on service design. Especially companies that are on event production industry can gain important information from this research. Here in Finland customers tend to be quiet and resist straight feedback, the research data from this research can help the companies that does not have the resources to conduct a research of their own.

I'm satisfied of the outcome of the thesis, this was a first larger scale research for me and I'm proud of the learning journey I got go through. If I would do the research again, I would probably start the literature review from Finnish sources and then move on to English ones. I think it is important first to gain the basic information on native language and have a solid ground to the topic. In this research, I started from English sources since I lived in North Carolina, and the theory felt hard to understand. I spent many hours working with this Thesis and I am happy with the amount of effort I was able to put on this. For the future research among service design, it is important to concentrate on the customer's journey to find out what the customer value the most on the service experience. The client company should keep on conducting feedback surveys after each event, that way they can constantly monitor the customer satisfaction and increase it by investing in service design.

## REFERENCES

- Curedale R. 2013. Service Design: 250 essential methods
- Estrin J. 2009. Closing the innovation cap. *The capacity for change*. Pp. 10-22.
- Gibbons S. 2017. Service Design 101. Retrieved April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from <https://www.nngroup.com/articles/service-design-101/>
- Lee K. 2011. Beyond Blueprints and Basics: A Service Design Conference Report. Retrieved April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from <https://web-b-ebSCOhost-com.lillukka.samk.fi/ehost/detail/detail?vid=4&sid=97c59250-0f3f-4a3c-ac48-d67959d75928%40sessionmgr103&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBIPWNvb2tpZSxpcCxz aGliJnNpdGU9ZWWhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRl#AN=66347252&db=bsh>
- Lindroos J.E. & Lohivesi K. 2004. Onnistu Strategiassa. *SWOTanalyysi*. Pp. 219.
- Osterwalder, Alexander, Clark, Tim, Pigneur, Yves, 2010. Business Model Generation: A Handbook for Visionaries, Game Changers, and Challengers. *Design*. Pp. 128-132.
- Polaine A., Lovlie L. & Reason B. 2013. Service Design: from insight to inspiration. Chapter 5, *The Service Blueprint*. Pp. 91-100.
- Reason, B., Løvlie, L., & Brand, F. M. (2015). *Service design for business : a practical guide to optimizing the customer experience*. Retrieved April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>. Pp 10-12.
- Richardson A. 2010. Harvard Business Review. *Using customer journey maps to improve customer experience*. Retrieved April 17<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from <http://www.iimagineservicedesign.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Experience-Maps-Using-Customer-Journey-Maps-to-Improve-Customer-Experience.pdf>
- Saunders & Lewis 2012. Research Methods for Business Students. *Choosing your research design*. Pp 103-129

- Sontakki C.N 2010. Marketing Research. Retrieved May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018, from  
<https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/samk/reader.action?docID=3011289&query=>. Pp 65-67.
- Stickdorn M. & Schneider J. 2011. This is Service Design Thinking.
- Stuart F., I. & Tax S. 2004. Toward an Integrative Approach to Designing Service Experiences: Lessons Learned from the Theatre, *Journal of Operations Management*.
- Szende P. & Dalton A. 2015. Service Blueprinting: Shifting from a storyboard to a scorecard. DOI: 10.1080/15378020.2015.1051429
- Temkin B. 2010. Mapping the customer journey. Retrieved 18<sup>th</sup> of April, 2018 from  
[http://crowdsynergy.wdfiles.com/local--files/customer-journey-mapping/mapping\\_customer\\_journey.pdf](http://crowdsynergy.wdfiles.com/local--files/customer-journey-mapping/mapping_customer_journey.pdf)
- Tuomi T. & Sumkin T. 2012. Strategia arjessa. *Strategia ymmärrettäväksi*. Pp. 61-63.
- Tuulaniemi J. 2011. Palvelumuotoilu.
- Website of Color Obstacle Rush. Retrieved December 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017 from  
<https://www.colorobstaclerush.com/>
- Website of Kauppalehti. Retrieved 16<sup>th</sup> of April, 2018 from  
<https://www.kauppalehti.fi/yritykset/yritys/funrun+finland+oy/26623521>
- Website of Rush Workout Suomi. Retrieved February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 from  
<https://www.rushworkout.com/>
- Website of the World Bank. Retrieved April 7<sup>th</sup>, 2018 from  
<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NV.SRV.TETC.ZS?locations=FI>

## APPENDIX 1

Interview questions for the qualitative research:

1. Age, gender and city?
2. Have you participated to Funrun's events before?
3. Did the event meet your expectations? If not, how?
4. Was the length of the warm-up suitable for you?
5. What was the best thing at the event? What about the worst?
6. How did you feel about the price of the ticket?
7. Was the timing of the event suitable, or should the event be rescheduled to earlier time?
8. Rate the event from a scale 1 to 5
9. Would you attend the event again?
10. What would you liked to be added to the event?
11. How would you feel if the event would be for women only?
12. Other comments?

Digital survey questions from Funrun Finland Oy (In Finnish):

1 → **Kuinka tyytyväinen olit tapahtumaan kokonaisuudessaan? \***



3 → **Minkä arvosanan antaisit alkujumpalle?**

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

5 → **Olisitko halunnut, että alkujumpassa olisi ollut muitakin kuin kengurupalloja? Jos, niin mitä?**

A Tykkäsin, että jumpasta 100 %:a oli kengurupallojumppaa

B 50 % kengurupallojumppaa ja 50 % "tavanomaista" jumppaa

C 50 % kengurupallojumppaa ja 50 % jumppaa pomppulinnassa

D Muu

6 → **Oliko alkujumppa mielestäsi sopivan mittainen?**

A Oli sopivan mittainen

B Liian pitkä

C Liian lyhyt

7 → **Oliko alkujumppa mielestäsi sopivassa suhteessa liikunnallinen ja hauska?**

**A** Oli sopiva

**B** Liian hupipainotteinen

**C** Liian liikunnallinen

8 → **Oliko 25-30 minuutin aika esteradalla sopivan pitkä?**

**A** Sopiva

**B** Liian lyhyt

**C** Liian pitkä

9 → **Montako kierrosta ehdit kiertää esterataa?**

**A** 1

**B** 2

**C** 3

**D** 4

**E** Muu

10 → **Oliko esteiden määrä radalla sopiva?**

**A** Sopiva

**B** Liian paljon

**C** Liian vähän

11 → **Kuinka todennäköisesti osallistut Rush Workouttiin uudelleen? \***

1	2	3	4	5	6
---	---	---	---	---	---

Erittäin epätodennäköisesti

Undecided

Erittäin todennäköisesti

13 → **Mikäli Rush Workout tulisi paikkakunnallesi 3 kuukauden välein (eli 4 kertaa vuoden aikana), kuinka useaan tapahtumaan osallistuisit vuodessa (lippu tapahtumaan maksaisi 20 €)?**

**A** 0

**B** 1

**C** 2

**D** 3

**E** 4

14 → Ostaisitko tapahtumiin kausikortin, jos sillä saisi osallistua kaikkiin neljään tapahtumaan 50 €:lla (näin ollen yhden Rush Workoutin hinnaksi tulisi 12,5 €.)?

A Kyllä

B Ei

15 → **Toivoisitko tapahtuman olevan**

A Viikonloppuna

B Arki-iltana

**Kiitos vaivannäöstäsi ! Loppu alkaa jo hämmöttää näköpiirissä :)**

16 →

Seuraavaksi haluaisimme tietää minkä arvosanan annat ...

a → **... tapahtuman nettisivuille ?**

Vastaaminen on vapaaehtoista, halutessasi voit jatkaa suoraan eteenpäin.





**c → ... tapahtuman henkilökunnalle?**

Vastaaminen on vapaaehtoista, halutessasi voit jatkaa suoraan eteenpäin.



**e → ... juomapisteen toimivuudelle reitin varrella?**

Vastaaminen on vapaaehtoista, halutessasi voit jatkaa suoraan eteenpäin.



**g → ... yleiselle ilmapiirille tapahtumassa? \***



a → Sukupuoleni on \*

**A** Mies

**B** Nainen

b → Ikäni on \*

**A** alle 18

**B** 18-23

**C** 24-29

**D** 30-35

**E** 36-41

**F** 41 +