



# Customer Understanding and Marketing Plan for Food Truck in Finland

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Customer Understanding and Marketing Plan  
for Food Truck in Finland

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With the global trend of increasing fast food lovers, this thesis develops a marketing strategy for a Food Truck, which is the most advanced member of street food vendors. Based on the street food market of Helsinki, a concise marketing plan is developed.

The main objective of the thesis is to examine the concept marketing plan and study the general customer understanding of the food truck as a service concept. This thesis focuses on how customers think about and understand the process of consuming food from a food truck. The final outcome of the thesis is a marketing plan on how to increase the number of customers and provide them good service. The purpose of the thesis is to study customer understandings and focus on how to draw up a good marketing plan for entrepreneurs to develop the food truck business.

The food truck business is flourishing worldwide, especially in the big and mega cities in the world. Helsinki, the capital of Finland, has also an increasing popularity of food truck customers. The food trucks have been placed in busy locations of the greater Helsinki area. The major objective of the thesis is to deeply understand the trends customers follow and understand their behaviour on having a meal from a food truck and map the prevailing customer experience of having street food. Based on the researched information and theoretical framework, an effective marketing plan is developed and formulated so that customer satisfaction can be enhanced.

Authors have used interview, survey and observation as the method of obtaining data and information from customers and food truck employees. The theoretical framework covers the concepts of customer understanding and marketing and marketing plan.

The main outcomes of the thesis are a marketing plan, buyer personas and a business model canvas for food truck. The authors have also done SWOT analysis of marketing plan in brief.

Keywords: Food Truck, Business Model, Service, Customer, Digital Marketing, Customer Understanding, Personas, Customer Experience.

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## 1 Introduction

Food Truck is one of many forms of street food. Generally street foods are ready to consume foods sold in public spots by a vendor usually through a cart, trailer or truck. These sorts of street food can be spotted in crowded places like parks, malls, bus stops and train station. Among these different varieties of street food, Food Truck appeals with ease of transportation, cosy space and kitchen like experience. These days street foods are marching toward next level with better food quality, more dishes, cheap rate and blazing fast service. As we can see huge number of people moving around in all over the places in summer time as well as the large number of tourist from all over the world comes to visit Finland especially in summer. Lately with improved food quality and hygiene number of street food lovers have increased and can clearly be noticed by crowd among such food stalls.

The primary objective of this thesis is to create a marketing plan for Food Truck's in Finland. While doing so, risk and rewards associated with this venture and how costumer understandings can help grow this venture beyond expectation are also discussed. This thesis discusses customer viewpoint and customer understanding of food truck based on market research of the sector and tries to find out the best suited marketing plan for future. it's value proposition and then formulates possible marketing strategies. The thesis also focuses on how to understand costumer viewpoints and use that for advantage for both parties. The thesis also includes analysis of threats to the opportunity and ways to mitigate them. The customer research is conducted through interview, survey and observation. Data and information obtained through market research are gathered and analysed with regards to the existing marketing strategy. Swot analysis is used to find out any deviation among customer's expectation, prevailing customer service of food truck and marketing strategy. On the basis of that, possible improvisation in marketing plan and strategy will be discussed.

This thesis can be portioned into two parts, namely theory and practical implementation. Under each chapter author first discuss the basic theory about the topic and then use the knowledge for practical implementation in test case which is Food Truck. The chapters discussed include important topics on customer understandings, marketing plan and business model canvas. The thesis also draws business model canvas for food truck business, describes basic marketing concepts and techniques and then applies them on practical case of food truck Finland. On the other hand, it also shows how knowing customer better can help elevate food truck and others street food businesses in Finland based on Helsinki and enlists major findings from this whole work.

At the current stage of time, the food craze in Finland is increasing day by day. Helsinki's culinary scene is booming and many food happenings like the Baltic Herring Fair organized

since 1743 and Restaurant Day, which is now an international food carnival, unite all the generations around good food (City of Helsinki, 2018). It can be seen many people moving around in summer and many people around the markets and shopping malls during the winter also. The whole summer is treated as festivals and the environment also makes the people to go for outing. There are many outdoors music festivals and sports in summer. This kind of things are very positive for the food truck business.

History of food truck dates back to as back as 17th century when mobile food carts were first introduced. During 19th century food truck evolved from push carts to horse drawn wagons. Most notable of this was Chuck wagon invented by Charles Goodnight. It was used to feed cattlemen and wagon trains traversing the old West. During 20th century it evolved further to include automotive vehicle. US Army's mobile canteens were first to do so. Later hotdog carts and ice cream truck became popular. In late 20th century old trucks were used as stationery kitchen. tacos and sandwiches were the primary foods of such trucks. In 2008 the first full commercial food truck was operated by Kogi BBQ. After that various street vendors started using food trucks. Now days modern food truck operates with fully equipped kitchen and are capable of providing a diverse menu of food. (Myrick 2018.)

The authors are fast food enthusiast and has been around street food stall as costumer for quite some time. As a student of hospitality student author has seen opportunity in fast food business with rising love among people for fast food. On analysing different street food vendors, Food Truck appeared to be most effective choice. Also being mobile, food truck required a unique approach on contrast to other restaurant and food vendors to prepare business model. The requirement of different perspective on restaurant business fascinated authors. The authors are also more inclined to marketing and customer understanding division on management. As a result, authors choose to work on marketing strategies and customer understanding for Food Truck.

## 2 Customer Understandings

Customer understandings is an art of providing customer what they want, when they want, where they want and how they want. Having a good customer understanding means to have a single integrated view of the costumer and is achieved through advanced data manipulation. Most business keep costumer track only during sales but not before and after. Having a deep costumer understanding means to have a complete knowledge of your costumer. Information like what product were they using before, what made them switch, what they like about this product, how they have used the product etc are vital. These information are only available if costumer data is collected before and after sales too. So, for this particular venture, costumer data will be collected before and after sales. This will ensure there is enough information to

improve overall customer experience. Customer experience is highly underrated aspect of marketing. Often managers become so busy to maximize profit they forget customer satisfaction is important for long term. (Solomon 2011, 34-35.)

Marketing with product centric strategies have long gone. (Kotler et al 2011.) mentions that a company doesn't own product brand once they are successful. Once a brand is adopted by consumers it's their property, any attempt to exercise control over brand only degrades the customer relations. As consumer adopt a brand, they also adopt its mission. So companies now have to align their action along brand missions instead of business mission. This is why customer Understanding is so important in modern marketing. (Solomon 2011, 35.)

## 2.1 Components of Customer Understandings

Understanding customer behaviour or customer understanding includes different topics related with whole consumption process. There are many elements of customer behaviour starting from needs and desire to have some product or services to post purchase behaviour which is supposed to be an ultimate stage of customer behaviour. First of all, when there is need of something, customer as a person starts thinking of it. At the phase of market research. a customer starts searching availability of products or services which will satisfy his/her prevailing need. In this stage of customer behaviour, there might be many options to choose. There can be vital role of different influential factors to choose the best suited option among different products or services, such as, lifestyle, social status, family background, friends, income level, education, fashion, age, gender, pressure groups, opinion leaders and so on. (East et al 2017, 8-9.)

After having different available options evaluated as per own perception and being affected by different influential elements, customer choose a product or service to consume. At the stage of consumption also, customer shows different attitude and feeling whether he/she likes or not and whether he/she feels comfortable or not. Measurement of customer satisfaction after consumption of a product or service requires deep understanding of whole customer consumption process. There can be various factors which play a great role in customer satisfaction, such as, product or service quality, quantity, price, post purchase service, durability, service staffs' attitude and behaviour, whole service experience and so on. (Askegaard et al 2013, 6-7.) Customer understanding involves deep research and evaluation of whole consumption process of a product or a service. It is very important to understand customer behaviour to be able to address customer expectation correctly in future and to make correction of any mistakes. Understanding customer behaviour is not an easy task and reconciliation of mistakes accordingly needs a very careful attention.

### 2.1.1 Customer Segments

One way of understanding customer better is to divide them into groups based on similar characteristics. The characteristics may be demographic (age, race, religion, gender, family size,

ethnicity, income, education level), geographic, psychographic (social class, lifestyle, personality), behavioural (Spending, consumption, usage, desires) or any other characteristics. Customer segmentation is done differently for different business as different business aim to address different needs, wants and demands. In many cases there are multiple customer segments with diverse needs and demands. In such case business must put forward different value proposition to each segment addressing to their needs. By matching customer segments with dedicated value proposition for each segments and employing a business model that is best suited for segment's need, companies can acquire high revenue streams. (Solomon 2011, 37-39.)

Dividing customer in different segments of similar needs and desires enables managers to treat the each customer segment as a single customer. This also helps to build a clear idea of what customer want and remove unnecessary clusters of data from the way. Customer segmentation allows organization to target specific set of customer with effective resource allocation, ensuring both parties get maximum opportunities with optimum resources. Segmentation also helps in measuring the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. By building customer segments, companies can now enable segment specific CRM (Customer Relationship Management) strategies and channels which will help elevate customer experience (Rouse 2015). Companies also use customer segmentation to determine value of each segments. They analyse revenue they generate and cost they need in serving and maintaining relations with them. Companies use these data to adjust their budget and marketing plans towards each segment. (Solomon 2011, 41-42.)

Customer segmentation is a process of dividing customer group from different dimension and implementing marketing strategy as per each segment feature. First of all, customer data are collected from various sources like, computer, internet, market survey, questionnaire, interview and so on. Then collected data and information's are analysed to find patterns and groups. After having data analysed, segments are created with similar data patterns. Finally, created segments are implemented with relevant business units. Customer segmentation helps managers a lot in identifying the core demand and pattern of customer behaviour of target market segment. There are many ways of getting data and information from market to correctly understand the market segments such as computer and internet, database marketing, relationship marketing etc. (Solomon 2011, 40.)

Customer segments are a well categorized group of customers where each group consists of customers of similar traits. Such traits might be spending habits, age group, gender, ethnicity, location etc. A well designed product or service shall have a targeted customer segment and will design the product based on needs of that segment. A company might create several large and small customer segments. In such cases the management must make a well thought decision on which segments to serve and which to ignore. (Osterwalder et al, 2010.)



There are different types of customer segments. Mass Market Companies focus on single value proposition, customer segments, distribution channels, customer relationship for a very large group of customers. Niche Market Companies focus on single value proposition, customer segments, distribution channels, customer relationship for a small, specific specialized customer segment. Segmented Market Companies focus on multiple value proposition, customer segments, distribution channels, customer relationship for distinguished market segments with slightly different needs. Diversified Market Companies focus on multiple value proposition, customer segments, distribution channels, customer relationship and multiple products for distinguished independent market segments completely different needs. Multi-sided Market Companies focus on multiple value proposition, customer segments, distribution channels, customer relationship and multiple products for distinguished interdependent market segments completely different needs. (Osterwalder et al, 2010.)

The major questions to ask while preparing customer segment are for whom is the business solving problem for? Which people will value ventures value proposition? Are they another business? What are the characteristics of people who are looking for this value proposition? The market size and available customer in each customer segment plays an important role to understand how the market plays out for venture. (Sheda, 2016)

For food truck, mass market customer segmentation model is used. This venture will target middle class people. This venture will try to provide quality food at cheap rate in minimum overhead time. This will help people with busy work schedule and little less budget to spend on daily food. Also this business venture will target people of age group 20-30. These age group of people mostly spend time outdoors and have very little time to spend. The food truck customers are mostly the foodie people who love to have different tasty food during the course of their daily lives. This business is basically focusing on all people who want to have tasty fast food within a limited amount of time in a comparatively lower price range than those of big restaurants. On the other hand, it is also related with the customer segment of those people who feel something good or fun to have meal in the street in the open environment.

### 2.1.2 Customer Experience

Peppers and Rogers (2016) define customer experience as perspective of what is it like and should be like to be a customer. Customer experience is the perception of venture imprinted on customer throughout their interaction with venture. Each customer will have their own experience in interacting with a venture, though service provided by such venture may be same for a lot of customer if not all. This is more prominent in service than in product. Customer experience is defined by interactions between a customer and an organization throughout their relationships. (Peppers & Rogers 2016, 17.)

Some research have shown customer experience is reflected on customer response to different interaction with business venture. Customer experience comes from the customer's involvement in different levels of interactions which might be rational, emotional, sensual, physical and spiritual. It is theorized that subjective response from customer point of view to the direct or indirect encounter with the hotel's multiple service interaction. Moreover, it is the key consumer behavioural outcomes through customer service, service delivery, word of mouth, brand loyalty and customer satisfaction. Various studies have also shown that customer experience also affects the willingness of a customer to be a loyal brand advocate. The happier customers are with brand the longer they stay with same brand. (Peppers & Rogers 2016, 19.)

MacDonald (2019a) has described some ways through which companies can deliver better customer experience. Companies need to create a clear vision of customer experience. This vision must be communicated and understood by whole organization. Every members should know these vision and embed it in all process. Companies can use customer segment-oriented customer experience vision. This is done by creating segments and their personas. Creating emotional relation with customer improves customer experience by a margin greater than any other tools. Showing empathy to customer is a great way to build a mutual relationship. (Peppers & Rogers 2016, 21.) Collecting customer feedback is another important task. One can only improve after knowing current state. Customer feedback provide valuable insights on things company is doing right and things company is doing wrong. Providing training's on employees is another effective method. It ensures each member of organization to know what to do. Collecting employees' feedback can also provide some interesting insights. Excellent customer service is only possible when employees too are happy. After each activity effectiveness of such activity must be measured. Tools like ROI provide knowledge that are helpful for future iterations. (Peppers & Rogers 2016, 26.)

### 2.1.3 Customer Relationship Management

Peppers and Rogers (2016) define Customer Relationship management as activity company performs to optimize value of each customer. Customer Relationship Management is the practice of analysing customer experience throughout service period. It's a way through which a company connects with customer. It may start with human interaction or digital communication. Customer relationship will enable companies to involve costumer throughout the product life cycle from design to implementation. This ensures that the product produced solves customer needs and meets expectation. Customer relationship management is a strategy to learn more about customers' needs and behaviours in order to develop stronger relationship with them. (East et al 2017, 33.)

Customer relationship management offers considerable benefits for customer as well as to the businesses. Better revenue stream can be generated by analysing historic trends. On the other

hand, good market research and customer relationship on the basis of better customer understanding can identify needs of customer more accurately. An effective market research and customer understanding can determine ROI of each customer segment and then companies can target segments that are profitable only. Success of any business or organization largely depends on formulation and implementation of better marketing strategy targeted at specific customer needs. Customer relationship management can provide more personal approach of communication with customer and hence enhance customer experience. (East et al 2017, 35.)

Implementing CRM on business is a complex process but is totally worth for advantages it provides. Effective CRM programs starts with collecting information about organization and its customer. This data is then formatted and stored. Later this data is analysed through various sorting and mining algorithm to generate insights on customer trends, marketing effectiveness, customer experience etc. Using these insights customer behaviour can be predicted. Now all these information is used in marketing and sales to target most valued customers. As a result, customer experience of such customer improves which further results in higher revenue stream for company. (East et al 2017, 36-37.)

Food Truck will use digital media to stay connected with its clients. Facebook and other social media pages will provide venture with insights on customer needs and expectation. It will also help business to test how customers will react on new ideas before implementation by conducting surveys and polls. Customer relationship is very crucial topic for every businesses. Managing good customer relationship is backbone of every business success. The question of how to have better customer relationship to flourish the business for long term is very important. Customer relationship management can be different aspect for different type of businesses. Customer relationship management is a technical as well as human aspect which needs certain skills to deal with the people of different nature, different attitude, different needs and different expectation. Customer relationship is based on customer's individual attitude, preferences, interests, personality and expectation. Therefore customer understanding is the core of customer relationship. Understanding customer's actual demand is vital for better customer relationship. (East et al 2017, 31.)

First of all, business organizations should focus on understanding customer behaviour in a very factual and realistic way so that customer's demand could be addressed in a appropriate way to develop a sound customer relationship. Customer relationship is an ongoing process which requires continuous attention to maintain long term relationship. It is not a thing that once done, it is complete. There should be new creative ideas come on the way to enhance once developed customer relationship and keep it for long time. As long as businesses able to maintain customer relationship, as easy as it is to be a competitive player in the market. (East et al 2017, 32.)

In business model canvas customer relationship is how business interacts with customer. It describes if the interaction is maintained over phone, one to one in person, online, events, third party or by other means. Customer relationships help us to create a journey map of customer as they move through business. It further helps business to track their point of engagement with customer and improve their experience. For this case of food truck business customer relationships are maintained one to one. this interaction is generally between bus boy and the customer. Another point of customer relationship is online website where customer interact with this venture through its website. This website offers user to locate nearest food truck, book them for specific events and many other advanced features.

For food truck business, there can be different special offers and discount scheme for customers to maintain a good relationship. Besides this, special discount for special day such as Independence Day, vappu, Mother's Day, Father's Day. If there are regular special customer, they can be asked for their birthday or any special day and can be offered with something special. On the other hand, strong commitment towards environment protection can be a means of good customer relationship. Food truck can focus on bio plastics or paper products for take away foods which supports the public who are aware of environment protection.

#### 2.1.4 Customer Service

The primary action of any business is to provide customer with some kind of service. To do so, it is needed to understand needs of customer and inclination of them towards the offer. Providing customer with their need alone is not sufficient, the process needs to be customer friendly too. Customer service is a channel by which customer acquire value proposed by organization especially during and after sales. This often happens while customer is making transaction like buying product or returning a product. Customer service can be provided through different means and highly depends upon where you meet your customer. Physical support centres to online forums provide different means for customer interaction. (Barbara & Vincent 2009, 11.)

Email, social media, Live chat, telephone etc are some modern channel from which customer service can be provided. To provide a stellar service to customer the staffs need to know their product inside out. Positive mindset and smiling face always goes a long way. Adapting to customer tone is another great skill any other front desk person can have. It also helps to have excellent communication skills and creativity. (Barbara & Vincent 2009, 11-12.)

Food Truck will ensure each customer is provided with excellent service and hospitality. Highly trained busboys shall enrich customer experience. The whole process of eating at food truck shall be as pleasant possible. This will be carried out by regularly analysing customer feedback and their responses toward changes.

### 2.1.5 Customer Satisfaction

A satisfied customer is a returning customer. A customer will develop a feeling of emotions toward a business after they have interacted with business through different touch point. This emotion of happy, sad, discomfort, intimate etc are what define customer satisfaction. A feeling of intimacy is created within customer when they get service that reflect closely with their needs through experience that is most comfortable to them. When customers become comfortable to an experience it's highly unlikely to change their service provider. Customer satisfaction in terms of metrics can be defined as the level of customer happiness after using a product or service. (Yuksel et al 2010, 274.)

Customer satisfaction is the central point of any businesses or enterprises. Why someone undertakes business activities? The answer of this question seems to be simple. We can say that to earn profit or to earn more money people do the business activities, however, how they can ensure more profit from their business is a very important question. Who are the potential people giving money to an entrepreneur? Of course, they are the customers, or in other word, the ultimate user of the product or services. Therefore, customers are the determinant of an entrepreneur success or failure. As customers are the ultimate people to be satisfied, first of all customer understanding is an essential factor to be considered carefully. To satisfy the customer's need, firstly, it is necessary to understand their needs. What are the actual necessities of potential customers? What are the changing demand of the potential customers? What the existing companies are doing to satisfy the needs of the customers? What are the factors affecting the customer's demand? What are the things which motivates the people to buy the new product or services? All of these questions are related to the customer understanding and targeted towards satisfying customer's demand. (Yuksel et al 2010, 274-275.)

### 2.2 Customer understanding based on business model

A business model is a tool or a framework that could help in figuring out how could you use the things you have got to make something of value for a customer while making money for yourself. It is the way and arrangement of exercises meets up to make an item or activities offering and delivering it to the clients. A decent plan or business model obviously clarifies the core logic behind the system, how everything works together to create and capture the value. (Spencer 2013, 3.)

Business model canvas is a graphical tool used by business strategists to quickly visualize and communicate a business idea. It's a single picture showing the basic components of business in a coherent way. The business model canvas consists of nine elements and are arranged in a tabular form. The left half of this figure focuses on internal workings of a business and right half focuses on external things of business, mainly customers. The both halves meet around a

central block named Value Proposition, which is the exchange of values between business and customers. As the thesis is mostly focused on customers and external things of business, the authors try to clarify mostly the external and customer sectors of business model canvas.

Business model canvas is a one-page replacement of business plan. It brings all the important aspects of business together into a single frame. Business model canvas strips off pages of traditional business plans to improve clarity and focus on what is driving the business. In a nutshell business model canvas thrives to provide some of these important things; a quick visualization of business idea, all important business relations in single frame and hence makes easy to understand the relations between them, facilitate quick communication about business idea, high flexibility as it is more manageable to change and tweak things that is on single page, increased clarity by stripping off all unnecessary things that are getting in the way, clear picture of how customer experience will affect your business, etc. (Spencer 2013, 3-11.)

Osterwalder et al. (2010) has listed some most popular value proposition, which are: newness, performance, customization, getting the job done, design, price, brand, cost and risk reduction, accessibility, usability, etc. And the value proposition part could find out what the problem business is solving, why would customers want to have this problem solved and what is the underlying motivator of the problem (Sheda 2016). And for this case, food truck used to offer quality fast food service. This offers customer cheap and fast alternative to other food business. This business venture tries to solve the problem of not finding quality fast food service of a medium demographic customer with limited time and budget.

Spencer (2013) refers that business model is the blueprint of agreement between a company and its customer, that ensures all parties will get what they want. This agreement though not written and legally binding, frames out expectations and reactions. It's an agreement that ensures fair exchange of value between business and its customer. But when business model is not valid anymore, customer don't know what to expect and firms don't know how customer will react. As a result a connection gap between customer and company is created and both customer and company are dissatisfied with value they are receiving.

Business model is a thought process, a tool to frame ways of creating something of value to customer while making money. They include all the components needed to create, deliver and capture value. It incorporates all the elements of business including manufacturing to distribution. It helps to bond company and customer together by forcing company to break down what they do and look for how they contribute to building and capturing value. Business model is something that should be continuously revised. As a organization grows, business model should grow too, ensuring while firm is generating and capturing values, it is also competing in market. As a brand gets recognized and have large loyal customer segments, customer shall become integral part of business model. If there is one aspect of business model that would become

consistent among any businesses is that it should look to solve problem. Solving problem is how value is generated for customer. Unless a business model can solve a problem in better ways than competitors it is going to fail. Innovative business model sometime use customer to solve their problems too. Sometimes customer can help improve the product, sometime they help to promote product. (Spencer 2013, 11.)

Being too focused on product and services sometimes blindfold managers while deciding what is valuable. While it's tempting to offer technologically advanced superior product, it's not up to managers to decide what value will they offer. It should be always considered that customer are the one who will decide what's valuable and what's not. Every customers have own desires and needs. They look to associate themselves with product that offer high benefit vs cost ratio .A firm sets the product, price, access and interaction, so a product with many features might not accommodate in customer's budget. Or a product might not be accessible to customer, some might not like the interaction. A business model should cleverly find a equilibrium between these deliverable. (Spencer 2013, 9.)

A customer value proposition while starting is a clever assumption on what customers want. This must be tested and improved continuously. To do so experiments on business model is necessary. However, these experiments should be small, and introduced to centre stage after verification of its viability through those experiments. New Market trends are emerging, customers taste is changing so to remain competitive business model should not be stacked on files after creating but should be part of every activity of business and constantly improved through market feedback loop. (Spencer 2013, 10.)

### 3 Marketing and Marketing plan

Marketing is the tool which manages profitable customer relationships in any kind of business. The main aim of marketing is to attract new customers by promising to provide higher value and keeping and growing current customers by delivering satisfactions in regular basis. Marketing exists everywhere, at home, at school, at work, while playing or almost everywhere. It is a wide network of people and activities competing for the attention of people and making the purchase of products and services. Marketing is not only the things of selling and advertising, but it is the process of satisfying customer needs. Hence in a broad sense, Marketing is the process by which companies create value for customers and build strong customer relationships in order to capture value from customers in return. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 28-29.)

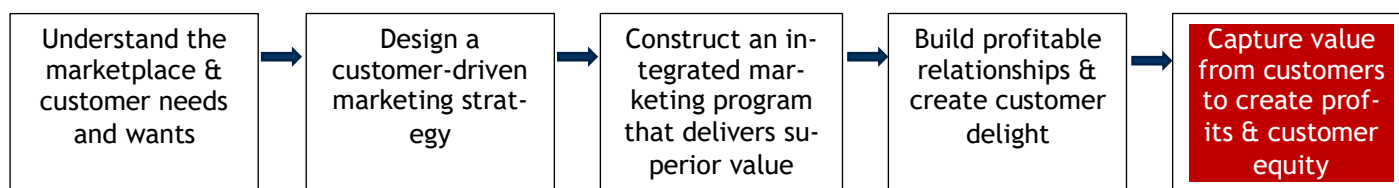


Figure 1. A simple model of the marketing process (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 29.)

The figure 1 shows the simple five step model of the marketing process. It shows how the companies work to understand consumers in first step whereas creating customer value in second step, providing superior value to customers by building good customer relationships in third and fourth step. In the final step, companies wants to take off the benefits in return from customers by providing high customer value. By providing all benefits and high value from customers, companies in turn capture value from them in the form of sales, profits and long term customer equity. This figure is in overall the process of marketing where any kind of business needs to apply for getting more rewards along with higher satisfaction of customers as well.

On the other hand, Marketing management is the art and science of choosing target markets and getting, keeping, and growing customers through creating, delivering, and communicating superior customer value (Kotler 2012, 32). At the core of every marketing campaign trio of needs, wants and demands take centre stage.” Needs are basic human requirements like food, water, air etc. These needs become wants when they are directed to specific objects that might satisfy the need. Demands are wants for specific products baked by an ability to buy” (Kotler 2012, 36). This can be better understood with following example: All Finland costumer need food and hence food is a need, some of them might want food’s available at food truck which is wants and again only a fraction of them will be able to afford the food which is demand. To form a marketing strategy, it is necessary to understand what needs a business solves, what are the wants of customer and what will be demand.

### 3.1 Needs, Wants and Desires

While it seem obvious the need that food truck is going to solve is need of food, there are other needs that are hidden too. Marketing Management (Kotler 2012, 13-24) states there are five types of needs: Stated needs where customer wants good food and real needs where customer need good food at affordable price in the convenient location. There are unstated needs where the customer needs good service from the food truck, delight needs where customer desire to have fast service and the secret needs where customers want some fancy foods rather than smile and regular. It is necessary to not only look at stated needs of customer, business ventures must help customer better learn and shape about their needs. Only then it is possible to own and get progress a truly successful venture.



### 3.2 Four P's of marketing mix

Kotler (2012, 34) modified the four P's of marketing mix to reflect the holistic marketing concept: People, processes, programs and performance. The people as a marketing mix is a marketing approach replaces customer with people. To be able to create a more customer oriented business we need to view customer not just as a client but as people with their own lives and needs. It also reflects importance of internal marketing and fact that employees are vital to marketing success. The food truck business venture will treat customer as individual and will work to understand their lives broadly contrary to treating them as consumer that only consume products.

Processes includes all the activities performed by marketing management to bring company and customer closer. Marketers must use right programs and activities that promotes mutual long term benefits for both customer and company. Another important aspect of this approach is that a business should actively work on to create breakthrough product services and marketing activities. The food truck venture will use state of the art marketing strategies instead of impromptu planning's. Program reflects all the consumer oriented activities of firm. This segment is equivalent to traditional 4p's of marketing mix. These activities must be performed in such way that they should fulfil the multiple activities of firm. Performance is the ability of firm to capture all possible results of marketing activities. This is where the firm should ensure the activities carries out will fulfil financial and non-financial needs of company as well as no implicit needs. This venture shall create a marketing feedback loop to constantly monitor the performance of marketing strategies and correct when necessary. (Kotler 2012, 22.)

Besides this, author also can't deny to use the integrated marketing mix, product, price, place and promotion in planning and implementation. These all have been used in process of planning, marketing analysis, implementation and control. The tasty product and services of food truck at a suitable and competitive price, at a very convenient location with good advertising is useful for successful operation of this business.

### 3.3 Marketing Tasks

Making and operating a fluent marketing management and strategies can be braked down into some simple steps. Of course the first task will be to have a plan of what should be done. A good strategy will identify prospective future opportunity, a suitable customer segment and an efficient approach to execute. Next task would be to accumulate marketing data that can closely reflect marketing environment. It should be able to access current market and predict future demands. It should also consider all close player that affect the venture such as suppliers, producers, distributors etc. Next marketing team should consider how they can communicate their value proposition to costumers and develop a mutual long lasting relationship with

customers. This is done by developing customer segments and targeting each customer segments with products that reflect their needs. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 56.)

Strong brands is essential. Customer are more likely to choose products and services that they know about. Marketing team should look to develop a brand that closely reflects the consumers feeling. The product is what the whole marketing campaign is about. It's the firms offering to consumers. Having a strong products with more to offer than competitors brings competitive advantages. Another thing marketer should work on how they are going to deliver value to customers. Firm's product and services should be easily accessible to the consumers. Marketers must ensure value provided by firm's products are well known to customer. This is usually achieved by advertising, promotions, mass communications and other activities. Every firm's should be looking to grow. New products and services are what will keep them in the markets for the foreseeable future. (Kotler 2012, 51.)

Channels are the path through which customers reach to the product. Channels help to initiate the business, customer interaction and then turns them into part of successful business cycle. These are generally defined in the marketing strategy of business ventures. There are different questions which will help business to recognizes their channels. For example, how business is going to broadcast it's value proposition? where are the target customers? how value proposition will be delivered to customer? are customers reading newspapers ads or are they in any kind of social media? or are they around traditional marketing tools? etc. (Sheda 2016.)

Here in the food truck business, the primary channel to reach customer is food truck itself as this kind of business is very accessible to the people around street. Food truck means to be movable from place to place, it's portable nature will help to cover a lot of market. But in the context of Finland, most of the food truck are almost not movable, very few are only operated in those kind of nature. Especially in summer and in case of some events and event centre the food truck used to reach otherwise, they are almost in the same place and location for most of the days. Hence, this venture will adopt online channel and traditional marketing as well. Online channel includes social media, Search engines and website, blog marketing, word of mouth, billboards, TV radio, etc. And also most of the people think social media as a main marketing channels but in real, it is just one of many channels to attract more customers. (Sheda 2016.)

The task of marketing is a continual process, it should change according to customer needs and changes in wishes. For satisfying customers, firstly one has to understand who they are. Hence, before developing a new service or product, one needs to think about future and possible changes in customers 'desires and needs and not just about their current necessities. (Gosnay & Richardson 2011, 5.)

### 3.4 Marketing Plan

This section describes the marketing plans and strategies that shall be used for operation of food truck business in Finland. As any other business, marketing here sits in core business administration. Here a detailed assessment of business situation is carried out, a goal is set and overall path toward that goal is drawn. The marketing planning process will provide a solid base of information for present and future projects and the plan will be reviewed and updated as it is implemented. Marketing planning will enable to achieve the marketing objectives which relate to the elements of marketing mix; product, price, promotion and place. (Westwood 2013.)

Planning is always one of the most important roles of management in any kind of business. Likewise, in food truck business also it is a key input to operate successfully. It is an opportunity for food truck business and outline how to penetrate, capture and maintain positions in this field of markets. It should be used as a communication tool combining all of the elements of marketing mix in a coordinated action plans. It makes out who, what, when and how will the things done. The overall marketing plans can be made up of a number of smaller marketing plans for individual products and areas. Marketing planning are used for market segmentation, identifying position of market, estimating size of market and to plan feasible market share within each market segment. (Westwood 2013, 1-7.)

### 3.5 Digital Marketing

Digital Marketing uses digital media like websites, social media and other platforms to communicate brand value with customer. These platforms also provide abilities of interaction between consumers, ventures, value creation, value delivery and sustainable value addition. Digital marketing with respect to other approach can be efficiently used to target only selected customer segment. Digital marketing can be defined as: Achieving marketing objectives through applying digital technologies and media. The use of internet and other digital media and technology to support modern marketing has given rise to a new range and labels. The digital marketing is also named as web marketing, internet marketing and e-marketing. (Chaffey et al. 2016, 11.)

There are many tools under digital marketing, social media is one of the recently very useful for business to reach the information and product up to the targeted customers. Social media marketing is one of the various category of digital marketing. It is one of the most trending and useful category of marketing. It is one means of digital marketing where customer involves directly to the industry in different ways of communication and It also get social presences such as Facebook or twitter, or in specialist publishes sites, blogs & forums and to a company's own site (Chaffey et al. 2016, 11). It can be used in hospitality sector where the customers are directly connected with the business. Especially in restaurant business, people are connected through technologies and media. Almost every customers carry mobile phones and or any other

kind of gadgets with them, and most of the customers are connected with internet. The menu of every day, opening and closing time of restaurants (food truck), extra services and many more information can circulate through these kinds of devices.

Statista (2018) a website that keeps various stats of the internet users in Finland according to age group and gender can be seen in the figure 2 below.

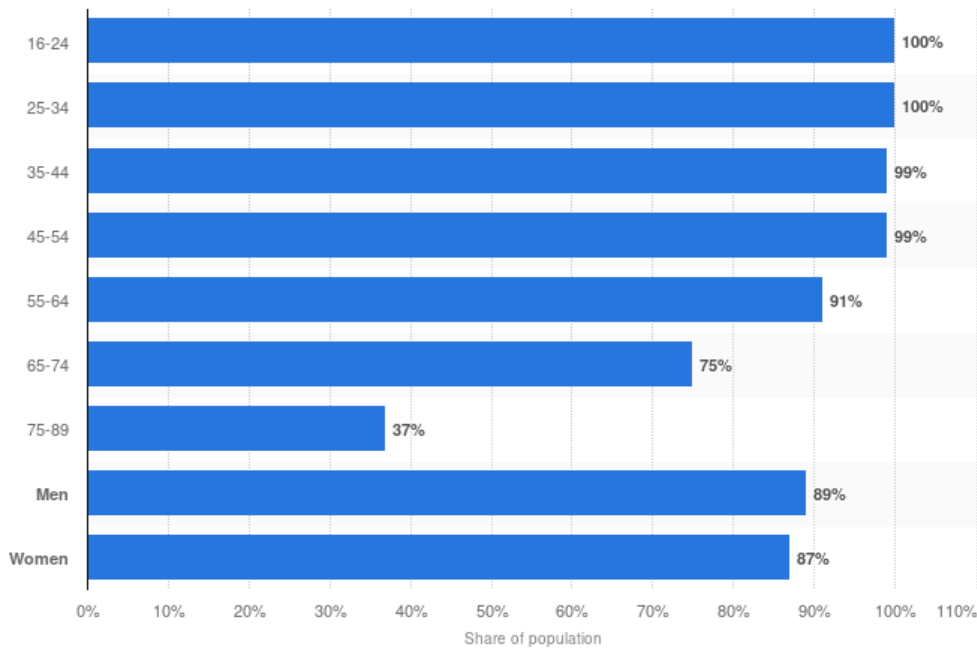


Figure 2: Internet Users in Finland as of 2017 (Statista 2018.)

The statistics in figure 2 shows that age group of 20-40 are all internet users. This ensures that this approach of using digital marketing will reach targeted customer segment. As the activities digital marketing would include having online brand presence, advertising in different digital platforms and maintaining a connection with customer. As platforms, authors are planning to use following tools of digital marketing in the projects plan and would suggest these tools in this kind of venture: (Statista, 2018.)

### 3.5.1 Facebook, Twitter and Instagram

Statista (2018) shows that nearly 80% of people in age group 20-40 use social media daily. Facebook has been leading social media for more than a decade now and with its features enabling business to connect with customer, it's being used more and more as marketing tool. Food truck venture will have a Facebook business page through which it will stay connected to customers. This page will act as communication link between business and customer. It will act as broadcasting platform where business can announce new schemes, communicate values and collect customer feedback. Facebook review is an important feature to know customer feelings

about brand and services. Furthermore, highly customised adverts from Facebook will ensure that business is reaching to its target customers.

In the last few years social media is getting cluttered. People are overwhelmed with content. An average person on Facebook is connected to 130 people plus an additional 80 groups, events and pages. This means that there are over 200 people fighting for attention of another person or Facebook account each day. If each of those people post five times a day it adds up to over 1,000 updates in a single day. This could be happening just in Facebook where other medias and platforms are also available. (Neher 2013, 02.)

Twitter is another major player in social media, though not as powerful as Facebook in terms of connecting business and its advertising with customer, nonetheless Twitter is a leader on its own term. This venture shall use a twitter account to continuously communicate value, offers, schemes and other information to customer. This account will also be used to collect customer experience. Instagram is another social median that allows its user to share photos. It is owned by Facebook and quite similar to it. Food Truck will have a business page on Instagram and will share photos of different dishes, location and offers through it. The paid promotion is same with Facebook and will appear on both platforms. Instagram has more than a billion users and every day over 95 million photos are shared on this app. Hence, nowadays it is more necessary to the marketers to use Instagram as a prime place to effectively reach the right audience and establish a sound brand reputation. (Weber 2018.)

### 3.5.2 YouTube and Website

YouTube is a video sharing platform. Users here can post different videos publicly and privately. Food Truck will create a YouTube channel and post videos of creating different dishes, promotions and other information. According to Statista, as of July 2015, 400 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute. So, if you want to be successful on YouTube, you need to make sure that you have the time and the resources to publish quality content on a consistent basis. It means that, there is highly required a good marketing plan of YouTube. (Statista, 2018.)

Nowadays business website is compulsory as it serves as first face of business. websites provide information to customer about business itself, it's values, principles and morals. People tend to attach themselves with brands with good websites. The food truck business will use a website to introduce every activities of business to customers. It will provide customer with platform to provide feedback and reviews. The website will also list the current location of food trucks so that customer can easily find the nearest food truck. It helps to find out the menus, price, opening-closing time and almost every kind of information that customer needs.

Creating a website is being the first step for most of the business. And beyond simply creating website, marketing team should plan to design an attractive site and find the ways to get consumers to visit the site, and stay around as well as visit often. The websites are designed in different ways according to needs. Basically, corporate or brand type website are used to designed which helps to build customer goodwill, collect customer feedback, and supplement other sales channels rather than sell the company's product directly. The food truck also can use this type where no direct selling are done rather for building customer relationships and provides information to large number of targeted customers. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 537.)

### 3.5.3 Google and other Platforms

Google is the leader in digital marketing field. Google can help business to reach targeted customer segments and make their online presence noticeable. This venture will use Google and google AdSense to create highly customised advertisements. Also google reviews and maps will help customers to better connect with the services. The author found that the street food lovers usually search in google maps and or in just google using "restaurant near me" and hence google also shows the restaurants which includes the food truck as well around the potential customer.

There are some other business specific platforms that can help business reach target customers. Food. Some other platforms like Yelp, four square and eat.fi, are new ways of searching restaurants and food truck areas. According to eat.fi, it is popularly used in Finland to search the restaurants and it also features maps to show restaurants and it is also free for owners and customers to use the services.

### 3.6 Traditional Marketing

Though digital marketing is highly efficient and customized, it's not always enough. Sometimes, it is necessary to provide some tangible association of brand. This is where the traditional approaches of marketing comes in. Hence, it is efficient to use various kind of marketing processes by the food truck. Food truck will paint trucks with brand logo and name. This will ensure physical association of brand name with food truck is created in customers. It can also use existing customer to promote itself to new customers. Word of Mouth is proven and effective approach of marketing. Designs and pamphlets will again introduce new customers to brand. Food Truck participating on food festivals and events also could increase the promotion for the business directly within the targeted customers. For example, different kind of food events such as; Fast food & Café & Ravintola event organized by easy fairs in Helsinki, Gastro Helsinki, etc. where business could present the food and its culture for large number of potential customers. (Kotler & Armstrong 2012, 156.)

Through the observations and research, authors found out that the marketing through newspapers, and printed paper form of advertisements are also quite popular in context of Finland.

Large number of people could get easy access of advertisement paper at home, in metro, train as well where food truck advertisement can be display. Different kind of new trends food and discounts and offers can be spread through these channels.

#### 4 Methods and Implementations

Research design of the thesis involves both primary and secondary data collection. Secondary data collection is the way of collecting data that includes the data that already exists. Secondary data sources can be from published documents, reports, news, articles, and statistics from established sources. Similarly, primary data collection is the way of collecting original data through research. This thesis uses both direct and indirect method of data collection. The indirect method uses data available on other publication's and books. Such data where used are cited with accreditation to original author. The direct method uses data collected by author himself. This methods are very useful in findings the market situations. This kind of collection of any facts and relevant to a marketing decisions are considered as a market research (Hague et al. 2013, 09).

The methods used are all based on the market research and its implementations in practice in future to all food trucks. In order to survive and grow all companies should need to have good market research and understandings of customers. The market research method is so valued, as it is systematic, organized and specific to a goal (Hague et al. 2013, 02). The market research and data in this thesis are mostly collected based on interview, questionnaire & survey and observations conducted among food truck employee and customers in Helsinki, Finland. Helsinki, capital city of Finland is quite popular for its street food and offers vast diversity among provided dishes mostly in summer. Due to the condition of weather, it is not that much popular in winter as in summer. The street food here signifies local, authenticity, freshness, modern and different international cuisines. The survey questionnaire and interview used with customers and food truck employee are attached at the end of this thesis as appendix 1 and appendix 2 respectively.

##### 4.1 Interview

In research methodology interviews can be defined as "Conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation." (Boyce & Neale 2006). Interview is considered one of the best method to collect data from people as it operates on very basic principle of learning by asking. Primarily there are three different type of interview techniques namely structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Structure interviews consist a pre-defined set of questions in a specific order. In most cases possible answers to such questions is also predefined which makes analysis quick and easier. On contrast, unstructured interview has no specific questionnaire but communication is conducted in informal manner. Data gathered in these type of interviews are messy and

hard to process. There is also a high chance of misleading such interviews towards unintended direction. Semi-structured interviews combine a little of both. There are some structured questions together with informal discussion.

Beside these categories interviews can also be categorised according to the number of participants and the way of conducting interviews. Few such categories include; direct interview, group interview and focus interview. Direct interview involves both parties communicating with each other once at a time. The communication mode may be a meeting, phone call, email or other media. Such interviews are conducted to gather facts and key insights. Group interviews involve multiple participants in a dynamic group. Extensive amount of data is collected by observing such interactions. There type of interview have added benefit of reflecting sociological and psychological aspects of participants. Focus group are similar to group interviews but are moderated by a team leader or moderator. Such provision ensures dissection remain in track of original purpose. These types of interviews are conducted in fields that are relatively new. (Boyce & Neale 2006, 5.)

Interviews are considered best method of primary data collection as researcher has complete control over the flow of information. As researcher is involved throughout the process and in such case any issues can be clarified on the spot. However, this in depth involvement also means researcher has to refrain to inject own viewpoints or disagreements. Researcher must keep open mind about the topic and should create a friendly non-threatening atmosphere. The complete process needs to be well thought and planned. The questions should be prepared by keeping the research objective in the mind. If wrong questions are asked, results obtained will be incomplete and can be misleading. On top of researcher must consider interview timing so that participants can provide their thoughts without any external influence. (Boyce & Neale 2006, 7-11.)

The authors have conducted interview with an employee of food truck in Helsinki. The interview was semi-structured as some of the questions are planned before while few arise at that moment of conversation. And also the interview was taken face to face at the work place of an interviewee. Both the authors were participated in that interview and asked questions according to plan as well as on the spot risen questions due to the curiosity of authors. Both the authors used to observe that food truck by being there as a customer as well as outsiders in the beginning and hence choose one particular day to interview with one of the regular employee used to be seen there. The interview was conducted at day time during the month of August of 2019. The planned interview questions were prepared to find out about the factors of food truck, customers flow, employee view of perspective and overall food truck business and also its marketing strategy. The employee with whom the authors interview was really friendly and



welcomed, as she was happy to share her thoughts and ideas in the food truck business and its related things and helped to authors to write thesis on related field. The interview questionnaire is attached in the appendix 1.

#### 4.2 Survey

Survey is one of the important methods of market research where survey questionnaire is sent to the respondent from where data are to be collected. Data obtained from the survey are statistically analysed to draw a meaningful conclusion. In this age of 21<sup>st</sup> century, a survey is an important tool of market research for every business firms who are curious to understand what the customers' is thinking about their products and services. Research can be done in multiple ways but surveys are taken as of most effective and efficient way of market research. Surveys are conducted in various ways. (Burns et al, 2017.)

Methods of survey can be classified as per research tool and technique and duration of time for completing the survey. Basically, there are three type of survey research method based on medium of doing survey - Online/Email, Phone and face to face survey. Online survey is very popular survey method in this age of computer and internet. Online survey is an economical survey method which consist of very minimal cost. Besides this, online survey can cover large number of respondents and can collect comparatively accurate data. On the other hand, in online survey, chances of less response from respondents is high compared to other methods. From phone survey, there is advantage of collecting data from large number of respondents whereas on the other hand, cost and time spent of phone survey are comparatively higher than other methods. Face to face survey is one of the most popular survey method from where sophisticated problem can be solved. There is high response rate in face to face survey, but it is an expensive method of collecting data. (Burns et al, 2017.)

Survey research method can be divided into two type on the basis of time spent on completing the survey, longitudinal survey research and cross sectional survey research. Longitudinal survey consist of detail and depth survey which may take one year or even a decade to conduct it. Respondents' overall preferences, attitude and behaviour and subsequent changes are observed and analysed in different span of time over the survey period. For instance, a researcher intends to learn about eating habits of teenagers tends to follow a sample of teenagers over a reasonable duration of time so that the collected information be reliable. Cross-sectional survey research is conducted at a specific time period from target respondents. This survey method can be used in different sectors like in education, healthcare, retail, SME businesses and so on. Cross sectional survey method can be of descriptive or analytical in nature. This survey method does not take long time and data can be collected and information can be analysed in a de-scripted manner. (Burns et al, 2017.)

A survey was conducted among customers of Black Grill & Cafe in Helsinki city centre. A questionnaire was used to collect information from customer. The questionnaire was prepared in a semi-structured format so that customer had to spend little time providing the answer as well as same time the information collected was meaningful. Authors have conducted face to face paper survey method for getting valuable information from target customers. Questionnaire are designed in advance and printed in paper before having face to face survey with customers who came to eat in black grill and café. Survey was took place from 8<sup>th</sup> of January to 12<sup>th</sup> of January 2019, five days in total in black grill and café, Helsinki city centre. Approximate time duration to complete the questionnaire was five minutes. The time of having questions filled was vary in different days. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, survey time was in the afternoon after 12:00. On the other hand, in weekends, Friday and Saturday, it was taken place at night after 21:00. Total number of respondents were 21. On Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday, number of participants were 3, 3, 4, 6 and 5 respectively. Some of the participants are really enthusiastic to participate, some are positive to answer, some are confused and some are not ready to answer. The questions asked in survey are listed in the appendix 2.

### 4.3 Observations

Observation is another method of data collection in research methodology where researcher collects data by observing and participating in research environment. In observation method, researchers directly or indirectly observe or oversee the current fact or situation of some issues which can be more reliable than the data collected through other means like questionnaire and market survey. In this method, researchers have power to witness their selves about the situation rather than believing to the things said by others or trusting what others think about it. There can be participative or non-participative, direct or indirect, structured or unstructured, human or mechanical observation. (Hughes 1971, 311-317.)

Direct observation is observation of direct behaviour of people whether indirect observation is looking over the result or impact of the certain activities. In participative observation researcher directly participate in the observation process but in non-participative, researcher simply observe the activities, not all part of it. On the other hand, structured observation is already set observing subject and programmed whereas unstructured is random observation without exact planning of issue, rather it is overall observation of the study. If someone employs machinery or device or digitalization tools and techniques in observation, it is called mechanical observation. (Hughes 1971, 316.)

It was one of the first methods used by market researchers to collect data. It is worth reflecting on the important role that observation has played in the formative years of the market research industry. Watching people is not only interesting but it also tells you a huge about them. The observation method can be used by researcher while they believe that people's behaviour may

provide insights what can't necessarily be obtained through direct questioning. In this method, researcher could get natural result of the questions searching for, as the people there don't know about who is observing. Observation works well with product tests. (Hague et al. 2013, 81-89.)

Authors observed the operations of the Food truck in Helsinki as customer, interviewer (student), and outsiders for about couple of weeks. During the time, customer variations throughout the day, café's operation, services, etc. were observed. The authors also observed the food variety offered and mostly the service for customers. Authors also observed other few food trucks around Helsinki as well as in some places of Espoo region while travelling from and to home and school. Mostly the pre-planned observation started in the month of August 2018, and it was continued during couple of weeks for gathering main information's. However, during the whole thesis time period, authors tries to observe most of the time while getting to see any food trucks around the city. During that time period, authors observed different types of food trucks, for example; some used to operate only in weekend and night-time while some of the food trucks used to operates at a same place without moving and with a design of feeling like a indoor restaurant. So, from this kind of strategy also it is clear that, the owners are trying to attracting more number of customers by making them feels like restaurant. And most probably, this is very essential marketing strategy for customers due to the icy and freezing cold in winter.



Figure 3: Black Grill & Café

Figure 3 shows one of the main places (food truck) observed by the authors in the city center of Helsinki during the research work is carried on.

#### 4.4 Creating Personas

“Personas are detailed description of imaginary people constructed out of well understood, highly specified data about real people.” (Pruitt 2006). Buyer’s persona is the fictional representation of a business ideal customer. The buyer’s persona is built by keeping in mind about who are our customers instead of who we want to be our customers. Often business ventures make mistake of creating buyer’s persona based on who they think is the ideal customer, this creates a huge gap between customer experience they are providing vs the experience actual customer’s want. (Revella 2015, 11.)

A buyer’s persona is important in sense now you have only single customer to please instead of hundreds or even thousands. As buyer’s persona is representation of all your customers things that improve his experience will improve your customers experience. And better customer experience is needed for better acquisition and holding of customers. (Pruitt 2006) Using a buyer’s persona throughout the product development stage will increase product’s usability, utility and general appeal, streamline processes and activities and help make decisions that favour both customer and company. (Revella 2015, 12.)

Personas creation is a complex process and is often breakdown into some serial steps. These steps indicates the different phases of persona development and complex process associated with it which are planning, analysis, testing, commissioning and termination. (Revella 2015, 25.)

Persona development process begins with planning. During this phase a team for developing persona is built. This team then research organization to find out problems and needs associated with it. During this phase the team would also collect data for personas. A capable team with enough data and plan is the output of this phase. The next phase is to analyse the data collected in previous step. Here the team extracts useful information hidden in those data. In this phase information’s like number of different personas needed, their target market segment etc are derived. Here a basic guideline for next phases are also rolled out. These guideline describe how personas are tested, when they are complete, how to incorporate them in organization. At end of this phase the team will have converted collected data into characteristics of proper persona that will be part of organization. (Revella 2015, 26.)

At the phase of testing, a full persona based on characteristic identified on analysis phase is created. This persona, then, is tested with organization. Here persona interacts with organization components, gets familiar with product team and learns about its role. The team introduces the persona to organization and ensures it is understood properly. Modification are

brought to improve the persona usability within organization. Once team ensures this persona can effectively fulfil its role, it is moved to next phase. On the other hand, in commissioning phase the persona is sent to do its job. The product team now fully embraces the persona. It is now used to provide feedback and customer perspective for product team. Personas are used to plan, design, evaluate and release products as well as in marketing, advertising and sales strategy. The major aspect of this phase is that persona now must belong to organization rather than the team. However, the team must ensure the personas stay true to the nature of source data from which they were created. When persona divert from their original path can cause great deal of loss to organization. (Revella 2015, 26-27.)

Personas are terminated when the purpose for which they were created is complete. The team analyses the performance of the persona and keeps record for future reference. Personas can sometime reused if another activity with similar objective is started. The team must validate the worth of persona at end of their life cycle. (Revella 2015, 28.)

The buyer persona for food truck is created rather than focusing on traditional market segmentation is mainly because of accuracy and reliability of buyer persona as it is based on practical implementation of survey and observation.

## 5 Results of methods

Authors have attained many information from interview with employees working in this Black Grill and Café. The interviewee was very helpful and open to answer the questions which were written beforehand. Some of the questions were just asked in the process of interview. Very friendly environment was created from interviewers to make the interviewee feel comfortable in the whole interview process. The Black Grill and Café is doing good business since its establishment from 2 and half year of time period. It is having more customers in weekends than in weekdays. The food of black grill café includes grilled chicken wings and burger items having chicken, pork, veg and beef options.

Mostly the people who passes by this street and who comes to visit Helsinki centre are the customer segment. Young people loves street food and so they do love Black Grill café' food, in weekend lots of people visits at night. And in summer lots of tourists visit the place to grab food. For black grill café, location, Posters, visiting cards, word of mouth, quick service, comparatively lower prices, tasty fast food are major marketing tools. There has been working 8 to 10 employees who are happy to work with Black Grill Café which they found to be interesting, flexible, good customer service, changing shift, reasonable salary and good working environment. Sometimes, it is challenging job to serve lots of customers in busy hours without compromising the quality and quick service value of the café. The café is in very busy location as everyone can see, it is very near to central railway station, bus parks and near metro station is

strength part of the café. The sales are lower in winter compared to summer, there are very few number of people in winter and Opening hours are also longer in summer.

Black grill and café has their own marketing plan and strategy. Authors have found the website of the café to be simple and informative, however it is not that much effective as of restaurants. It could be better if there is platform for rating site like trip advisor and eat.fi in the website itself to receive direct feedback from customers and it could be seen by customers as well. Besides this, seasonal marketing strategies should be formulated for food truck business because of seasonal impacts on business and it is very important here in Finland. For instance, different kind of cold beverages can be offered to customers along with their meal to attract more customers in summer. Likewise, hot meals are the most preferable in winter time. Therefore, changes in menu for different time period can be a good idea to get more customers.

From survey, authors found that customers' behaviour and preferences are changing. Most of the participants replied that they would prefer to have more hygienic, healthy and nutritious foods. Many customers are visiting food trucks because of their easy locations and quick service. Besides this, some customers are price sensitive also who want good portion in reasonable price. Some of participants answered that they would like to have some beverages with the meal. On the other hand, customers love to eat by sitting rather than standing while having meal in food trucks. Apart from these things, warm welcome from service staffs, polite and helpful staffs, quick service, easy menu to select the meal and off course tasty food are the factors affecting customer satisfaction. The following figures are derived from result of survey:

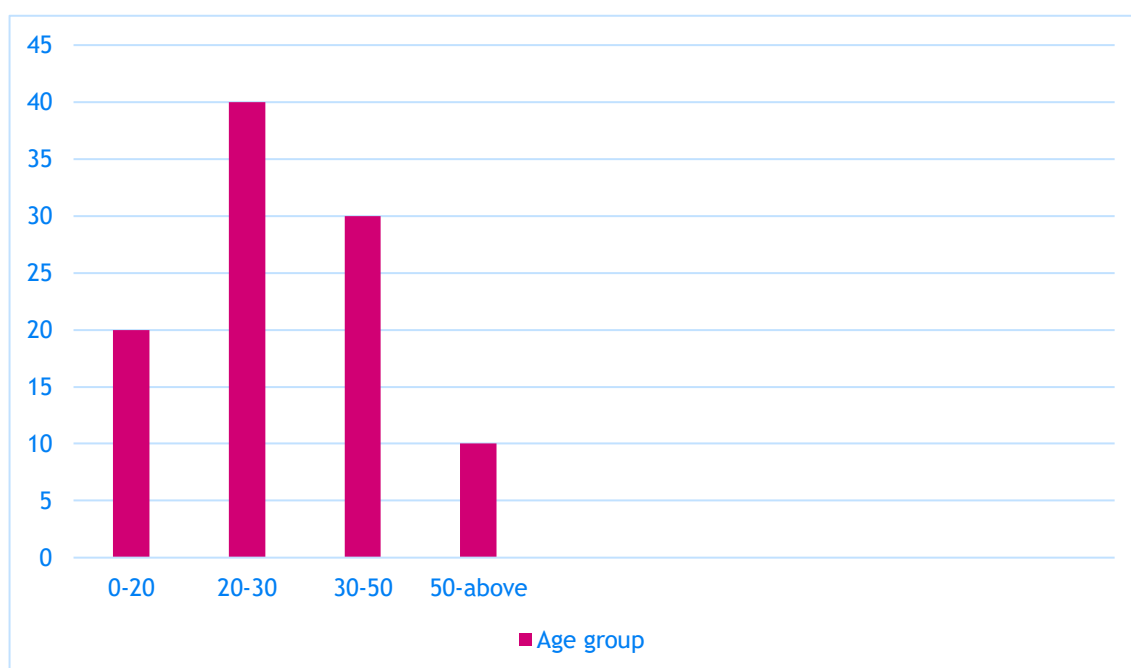


Figure 4: Age composition of customers (n= 21)

The figure 4 is drawn through the answers obtained from the participants of survey who mentioned their age. The most important customer segment is age group between 20 to 30 which is 40 percent. Second largest customer group is 30 to 50. People up to age of 20 are supposed to be the third majority of customer segment. On the other hand, customers 50 plus aged are of few numbers which is 10 percent. From the figure, it is obvious that the most important customer segment is young people i.e. age group of 20 to 30.

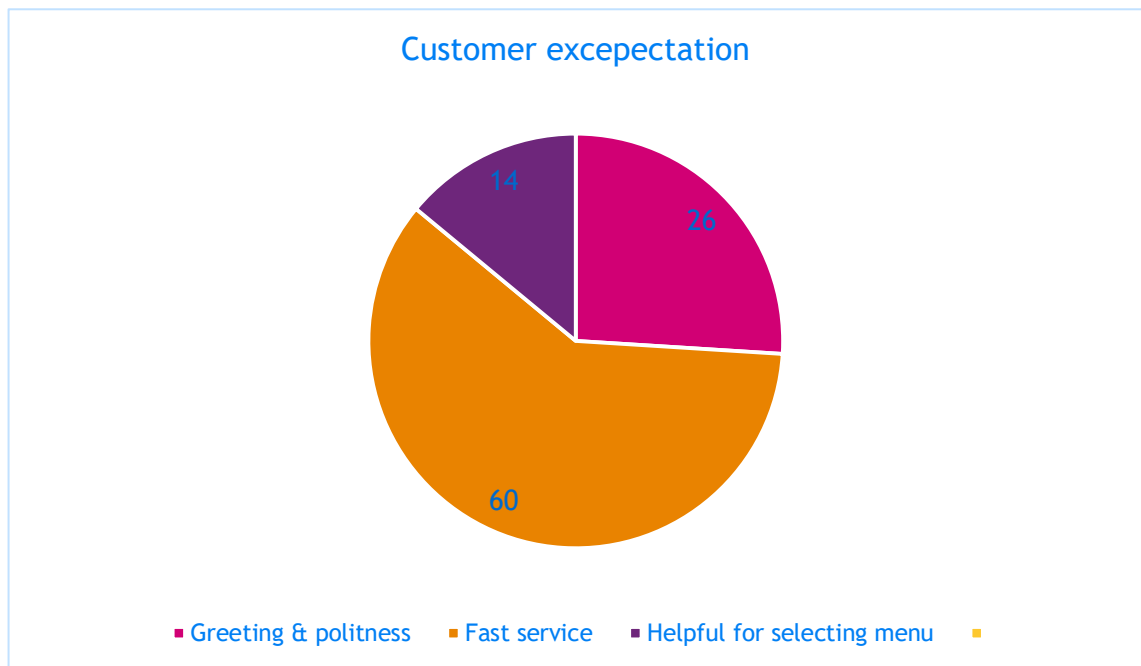


Figure 5: Customer expectation (n=21)

Figure 5 shows customer expectation from food truck business based on questionnaire on survey. Most of the customers i. e. 60 percent choose food truck because they expect fast service from food truck. Considerable amount of people i. e. 26 percent are more attracted by the greetings and politeness which refers to the good customer services as well. On the other hand, 14 percent are concerned with the help they get while selecting menu.

From observation, another method used for market research, authors have found some more information which could not be noticed through interview and survey. Observation is the most effective tool of market research. Observation is the collecting and recording of the behaviour of the sample through own direct or indirect involvement. From time to time field visit and observation in different food truck at different time, authors have identified the customer behaviour such as- either they are happy to have meal in the existing food truck or not? What kind of meal the customers are mostly having? How do they look feeling like while having meal and chatting with their friends and relatives? How much time do they spend in food truck at

one time? Are they supposed to tell their friends to visit the place again and what about themselves? Are they seem to be satisfied with the existing service and service environment? What is their symbolic or facial reaction after having meal or at the time of leaving the place?

Customer survey and observation helped a lot to gather information about customer understanding, customer satisfaction, customer feelings, customer behaviour, customers' expectation, customers' needs and demands and so on. The data collected by different methods were analysed to correctly formulate those plans.

As street food culture has increasing popularity in Finland, new rules and regulations have created an easier environment for entrepreneur to obtain licences for moving food trucks and kiosks with a monthly or yearly charge in a specified area. An involvement of lunch coupon so called lounaseteli as a payment means has increased motivation to eat in restaurant or food trucks which consequently increased the sales of the businesses. Operating standards and rules and regulation for food truck business are same as for restaurant businesses. Customer behaviour is changing in nature. Customers want optimum value from the product or services for which they have paid for. Factors leading to success for food truck businesses are to have competitive advantage, clear vision, effective marketing strategy and business model, ability to understand customer and customer behaviour and focusing the business activities to fully satisfy the customers' demand.

## 6 Outcomes

After having market research about customer and marketing plan of food truck business based on survey, interview and observation, outcomes of the thesis are derived. The outcomes of the thesis are backed by theoretical background of concerned topic. The goal of the thesis was to understand target customer segment in depth and to formulate marketing plan for the food truck business as per customer understanding and analysis of prevailing marketing plan of the market.

### 6.1 Marketing plan for Food Truck

Being a street food venture, focus should be primarily on getting pedestrians and general people, street food lovers, tourist wanting for tasting street food in Finland, etc. To ensure this, a target market is first developed. An efficient way to do this is defining the most likely buyer of products. Then those customer segments are informed of brand presence by using different marketing activities including digital and traditional marketing. And closely following customer response towards such activities, a more and more efficient system is built.

The target is to build a sustainable market within large group of people and increase the trends of food truck as well as street food in Finland, applying different marketing plans and strategies. As found in research (interviews with employees and observations) among the food trucks



operating in Helsinki, total sales are much varied in different seasons. The food trucks are much more popular in summer while the sales are very low in winter not considering the sales in weekend nights. The weekend nights are also busy among the young customers even in winter. But the weekend nights in summer is much busier again than winter.

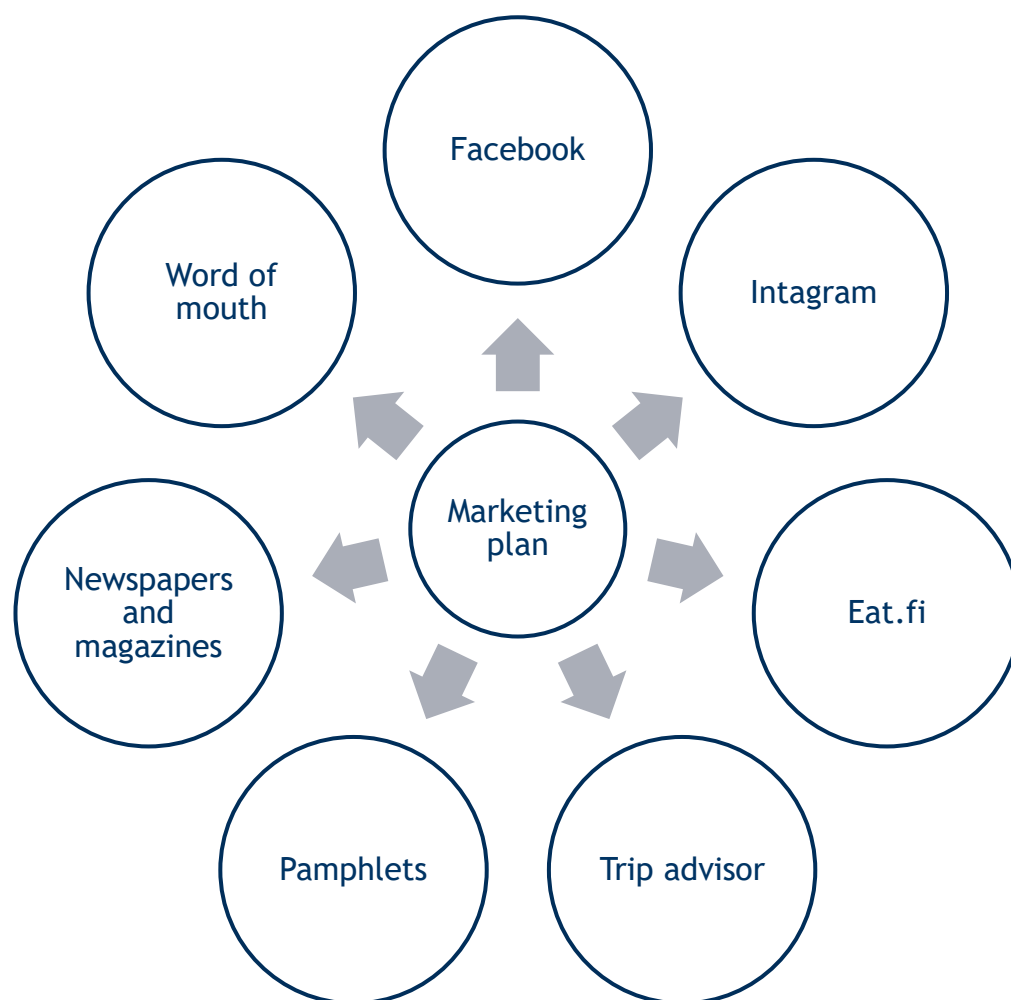


Table 1: Authors marketing plan

The authors concluded some marketing plans which is shown in table 1. Focusing on summer tourist and the local customers, authors plan to be active for food trucks in “trip advisor” and “eat.fi”. Customers can find out the particular food truck from this site and visit nearby and give feedbacks and rate the business through trip advisor. The eat.fi is also another popular site for local customers in Finland to find out the place to eat desire food. For example, a tourist X staying in a hotel, if want to have lunch in Helsinki can first search available places to eat through trip advisor or eat.fi and choose the best suited place for him/her. Almost all of the restaurants are in these kinds of rating site and get more customers who have good feedback and rating. Therefore, in case of food truck business also this can be very effective and useful marketing tool to attract a greater number of customers.

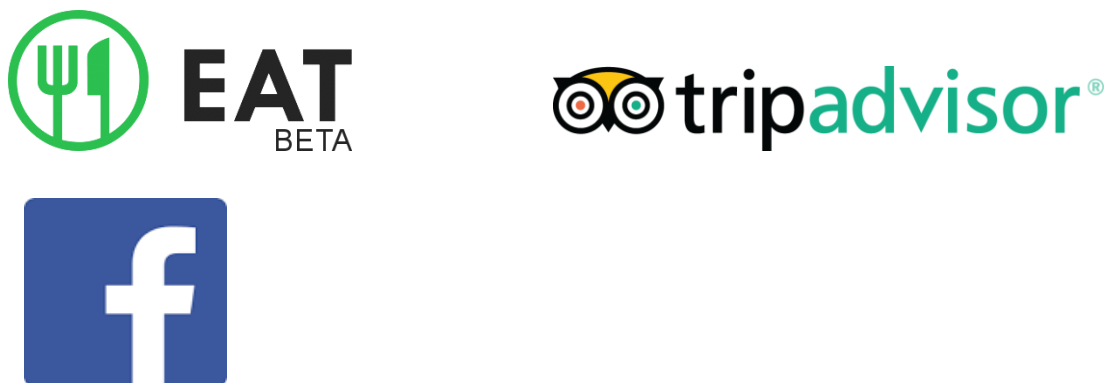


Figure 6: Logo of online media for marketing plan

Moreover, authors plan to have Facebook and Instagram as one of the most promising marketing means to reach with more customers. As most of the people are using Facebook and Instagram throughout the world as well as in Finland, this can be an effective and efficient marketing tool. As already mentioned above theoretical part, that the age group between 20-40 almost all of them uses internet and maximum number of people uses Facebook. Facebook review is an important feature to know customer feelings about brand and services. Furthermore, highly customised adverts from Facebook will ensure that business is reaching to its target customers. It could be very essential for Food truck entrepreneurs that they can create event in Facebook and share it with the customers as well as the different kind of offers and special discounts for special days or weeks etc. Sharing of different pictures through Instagram could be added advantage to reach mass number of customers.

Furthermore, through the observations and research, authors found out that the marketing through newspapers and magazines which are also quite popular in context of Finland. Large number of people could get easy access of advertisement paper at home, in metro, train as well where food truck advertisement can be display. Different kind of new trends food and discounts and offers can be spread through these channels. Good customer service, tasty food with reasonable and competitive price is another tool for self-promotion with word of mouth.

#### 6.1.1 Swot analysis of Marketing plan

The authors did the swot analysis of marketing plan through the basis of research and own experiences. SWOT analysis is a framework used to evaluate a company's competitive position and to develop strategic planning (Kenton, 2019). SWOT analysis is a simple but powerful tool to organize business top strength, weakness, opportunities and threats into a simple chart. It is used to identify internal and external factors that have effect on reaching the targeted objective of a company. Strength and Weakness are internal to company and are subject to own action while opportunities and threats are external and can't be controlled by company.

SWOT analysis helps managers to check if the given objective is attainable or not (Parsons 2018).

Strengths are internal factors of organization that offer competitive advantage over other competition. The marketing plan are online advertising and customer attractions as well as word of mouth. The main strengths for using trip advisor, eat.fi etc are to attract a greater number of young customers who are used to check this kind of internet platforms to search for eating food. As well as, the Facebook can attach large number of people with company. Moreover, the strengths of using newspaper and magazine advertisements are the easily accessible and daily habit of Finnish people reading these kinds of papers in morning as well as throughout the day.

Whereas, Weakness are another internal factor that offer competitor advantages over organization. These are the factors organization look to improve to be able to beat competition. The main weakness might be the budget for all kind of advertisements and promotions. Other weakness of our marketing plan might also be the use of more online medias and platforms. The authors also focused on Facebook marketing whereas Finland is not so much popular for Facebook users. Though most of the Finnish people do have Facebook account, they do not actively use it regularly.

Opportunities are external factors which are likely to help organization attain its objective. These factors are not in control of organization. Being able to provide service in any place of choice helps to always get customers with low level of marketing tools applied. And using the platforms like trip advisor is nice opportunity to recognize the food truck in foreign countries. For example, people traveling from USA can see the food truck through this platform and hence he/she can visit and enjoy meal during visit to Finland.

Threats are another external factor which will hinder organization to meet its goal. Again, these factors are out of organization's control and require contingency plan to handle them safely. Having limited food storage and limited staff capacity also impose some serious threats with wide range of marketing results a greater number of customers, for example. Moreover, the way of marketing might be threats in different seasons here in Finland. It might work during summer whereas, due to few numbers of people mobility and low number of tourist in winter could be one threat for similar kind of marketing tools and its cost used in overall.

## 6.2 Buyer's Persona for Food Truck

For this particular venture it's important to have a solid buyer's persona, as a manager it would be nightmare to satisfy all those customer without having understanding of what they want or who they are. Building Buyer's persona takes time and data, in fact a lot of data. So, to build

a buyer's persona that actually reflects actual costumers, a large amount of data about costumer's to be acquired and that too without violating costumer privacy. This can be done through customer feedback, social media interaction, reviews, interviews, forms and surveys.

Using these methods different data like demographic, social transactional and behavioural data are to be acquired. After this an extensive data manipulation, it will tell how ideal costumer looks like. With these a more extensive marketing strategy and highly efficient costumer experience can be built. The buyer's Persona for food truck business can be presented as follow which is based on information obtained through survey and observation:




	<p>Name: Elina</p> <p>Age: 26</p> <p>Interest: Travelling, Cooking, eating with friends, music, make new friends</p> <p>Field of study: business management</p> <p>Style: fashionable, modern, working girl</p> <p>Residence: Puotila with boyfriend, parents live in porvoo</p>
	<p>Name: Roosa</p> <p>Age: 24</p> <p>Interest: Studying, visiting new place, outing with friends, love to taste new food</p> <p>Field of study: Restaurant entrepreneurship</p> <p>Style: well dressed, frank with everyone, prefer to be in group, work part time</p> <p>Residence: lives in Lauttasaari apartment building with husband</p>
	<p>Name: Ville</p> <p>Age: 22</p> <p>Interest: Music, football, swimming, fast food in the street</p> <p>Field of study: Social studies</p> <p>Style: dressed comfortably, enthusiastic, positive in every situation,</p> <p>Residence: lives with family in Herttoniemi, family of 4 members with one younger sister</p>

Table 2: Imaginary buyer persona for food truck

Table 2 explains three different buyer personas for food truck. The buyer persona is imagined and created based on research conducted through interview, survey and observation. The figure represents the age, interest, preference and life style of target customers, i.e. buyer persona. The name and faces of the people are imaginary. There are some similarities of interest of these personas. The most common interest of the personas is travelling and eating. People having interest of outing with friends, love to taste new food, enthusiastic and positive thinking are the common characteristics for this buyer persona of food truck.

### 6.3 Business Model Canvas for Food Truck

The segments with their corresponding value to Food Truck venture are illustrated in the table 3 below. This table tries to clarify various elements of business model canvas for food truck venture. The value proposition segments talk about what your business is going to offer and how this will differ from those already providing it. In business model canvas Value proposition is the linking block between business and its customers. Value exchange is achieved when business provides a product or service to client for money to solve their problems. While developing value proposition for a business venture it is necessary to have context around the target the venture is trying to reach for their customer segments. A good way to figure this out will be to look at customer segment and where the product or service solves their problems. A value proposition creates values for a customer segment through a distinct mix of elements catering to that segment needs. These elements might be quantitative or qualitative.

Revenue streams are the source of a business's income. It's the way by which a business it's value proposition into monetary value by providing customers with some products and services that will solve their problem. It is important to keep balance between cost of purchase to cost of solving problem. For this particular case of food truck business venture revenue stream is generated on pay per product basis from sales of food from food truck. The key resources tab in business model canvas consists of all those resources which are needed to perform the key activities of business. Key resources are prerequisite for business. Key resources needed can be categorized into two groups, non-human and human resources. The first group will include all food truck, necessary equipment's, cooking utensils, raw foods, serving utensils and other physical resources. The second group will include all human resources including cook, service people and other people needed to run business.

<b>Key Partners</b>	<b>Key Activities</b>	<b>Value propositions</b>	<b>Customer Relationships</b>	<b>Customer Segments</b>
Suppliers	Selecting suppliers	Budget food	One to one	Middle demography
IT Consultants	Selecting raw food and materials	Quality service	Online	20-30 age group
	Quality control of raw food, cooking and cleaning	Variety and authenticity		
	Inventory management			
	Customer service			
	<b>Key Resources</b>		<b>Channels</b>	
	Food truck		Food truck	
	Cooking equipment		Social media	
	Human resources		Website	
	Quality raw materials		Search engines	
			word of mouth	
<b>Cost Structure</b>		<b>Revenue streams</b>		
Fixed cost	Variable cost	Sell of food		

Table 3: Business model canvas for food truck

Key partners in Business model canvas shows all other external parties who are needed to fulfil the key activities and deliver promised value to the customer. This segment lists all those people and companies that will help to attain business goal if it is not attainable on own. To run a successful business venture, it important to have all partners in same page and have clear understanding of all partners expectation from venture. The primary reasons for having key partners in a business ventures are; optimization of cost and service, reduction of risks and uncertainties involved, acquisition of activities and resources, etc.

The important partners for running the food truck business are suppliers and IT consultant too. Running food truck smoothly do need many resources ranging from raw food itself to cooking utensils and cleaning equipment's. Suppliers will provide that and in return will expect this venture to make timely payments. Since the venture itself is not creating raw food materials and cooking equipment's, suppliers will provide those to this venture so that Food truck business can deliver it's promised value to the customer. On the other hand, marketing strategy of Food Truck venture is heavily based on digital platforms like social media and websites. So to utilize these digital platforms, IT infrastructure like website, social media pages and accounts, hosting space etc are needed. IT Consultants will provide with these services and will help venture to gain and retain customers.

On the other hand, to run a successful venture it is important to have a business cost structure. The food truck business also do need various cost structure as shown in the above figure. Business cost structure is monetary cost of operating a business. It is obtained after calculating; cost to perform key activities, cost to acquire key resources, additional cost needed to operate business, legal fee, insurance, etc. The cost are also fixed and variable cost. The fixed cost includes cost of acquiring business including setting up business, legal expenses, equipment, etc while variable cost are cost of raw food, human resources, marketing, etc. (Sheda 2016, 3.)

## 7 Conclusion

This thesis presents possible business model and marketing strategy for successful operation of venture. From all those analysis made upfront it can be concluded that running a food truck in Finland really has a business opportunity although isn't free from risk. Customer understanding is the core of every business success, and food truck business cannot stay out of this rule. From the interview, survey and observation, it is found that customer behaviour is not an easy task to identify and more importantly it is further complex job to correctly address the identified customer's desire and expectation. Various marketing strategy presented upfront will ensure venture will keep acquiring costumers and with deep costumer understanding will be able to hold them for a foreseeable future.



During the first phase of this thesis, authors got familiar with different aspects of creating marketing and customer understandings. This theoretical knowledge set foundation for research work done in later phase. Different techniques and process followed for designing marketing strategy were studied and compared. Different aspects of customer understandings how it could be used to make a business bloom was main outcome of this part. Moving deep into the theoretical aspect, the authors were able to broaden vision from narrow traditional marketing models to modern wide marketing principles and mix. Modern technological advancements had completely redefined the customer experience. So, leaving digital aspects of customer understanding and marketing was not an option. In later phases of thesis, authors got more involved in research work. Here, author got to test all theoretical knowledge acquired in first phase against real world problems. During surveys and observations, authors got opportunity to actually test and experience different models of customer understandings.

Moreover, authors analysed and evaluated existing marketing tools and strategy and compared it with the customers' expectation and demand. Problems and Weaknesses of the prevailed marketing technique is examined through SWOT analysis tool. Modern marketing plan and technique is learnt through different books and online resources as well as through practical implementation by means of survey and observation in food truck. The result was a working marketing model that closely described the actual marketing mix of food truck business. Overall, understanding customer and customer behaviour is very important for success of every business. Appropriate marketing plan and strategy based on customer research is the bridge to get success. Effective marketing mix leads to a greater number of customer flow whereas better customer relationship management maintains the flow for long term. From the thesis, authors got more confidence and interest towards understanding customer for future purpose. At the same time, acknowledgement of marketing technique and modern marketing mixes helped to broaden the horizon of upcoming food truck business model.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Interview questions for Employee/duty supervisor

1. When did you started your job here?

.....  
.....

2. What do you do to attract more customers here?

.....  
.....

3. What are the most important factors of food truck business from customer point of view?

.....  
.....

4. How many staffs do you work here?

.....  
.....

5. Who are your target customers?

.....  
.....

6. Do you have seasonal effect on number of customers and type of food they would like to have?

.....  
.....  
.....

7. What marketing tools do you apply to attract more customers?

.....  
.....



## Survey questions for customers

## Appendix 2:

Name:

Age:

1. Do you often like to eat on food truck in the street?

- Yes
- No

2. How often do you visit food trucks?

- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Twice a month
- Once a month

3. What motivates you to come to eat on street food?

- Taste
- Price
- Time
- Location

4. With whom do you mostly come to eat with?

- Friends
- Families
- Alone

5. Do you like to eat by sitting or just standing?

- By sitting
- By standing

6. What kind of meal do you prefer?

- Fried
- Boiled
- Grilled
- Spicy
- Non spicy

7. Do you prefer to have meal with some drinks?

- Yes
- No

8. How do you think of food quality for this food truck (Black Grill Café) ?

- Good
- very good
- It 's okay

9. Do you want to have some alcoholic beverages while having meal on food truck?

- Yes
- No

10. What do you expect from the staffs of food truck?

- Greetings and politeness
- Fast service
- Helpful for selecting menu

11. How do you think of customer service of food truck?

- satisfactory
- good
- very good
- excellent

12. How do you know about this food truck?

- just by passing through this street
- from advertisement in newspapers
- social media
- from friends