A Plan on How HAMK Could Establish HAMK Ambassador Programme

HAMK
HÄMEEN AMMATTIKORKEAKOULU
HÄME UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Bachelor's thesis

Valkeakoski, International Business

Spring 2019

Edona Mulaku

Name of degree programme: International Business
Campus: Valkeakoski

Author	Edona Mulaku	**Year** 2019
Subject	A plan on how HAMK could establish HAMK Ambassador Programme	
Supervisor(s)	Harri Tuomola	

ABSTRACT

When studying International Business there is seen a great interest and potential in developing the marketing structures within various organizations in Finland and abroad. Focusing in universities such as Häme University of Applied Sciences, there is seen a potential in adding another marketing tool for the marketing department. While writing this bachelor thesis, the author will use the acronym HAMK University to refer to Häme University of Applied Sciences. In this bachelor thesis the author aims to create a plan for HAMK Ambassador Programme.

While interviewing HAMK staff members and students. The idea is to create another platform for the university to be marketed in a new level. The research method that will be used is interviews, and benchmarking other similar programmes. The aim of this research is to analyse the idea of implementing a new marketing programme for HAMK University and following that procedure to create a recommendation on how HAMK University could implement it.

The data collection plan was decided to not only include the universities staff but their students' to. Thus, having a more accurate date selection in order to reach a greater level of efficiency on the research process. The thesis consists of four chapters, where the author starts with the introduction of the topic and the foundation of the idea. The thesis then continues to campus recruiting, data collection plan, SWOT analysis and recommendations.

Keywords   International Business, marketing, new programme, ambassador, higher education, university, implementation procedure, marketing ring, street team.

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION

Häme University of Applied Sciences has a well-established reputation in Finland and abroad. Throughout this thesis, Häme University of Applied Sciences will be referred to as HAMK University. While offering studying degree programs in English, HAMK University has gained the attention of many international students. Due to the highly well managed marketing arrangements, HAMK University continues to have its name well recognized in Finland and abroad. With Finnish and International professors, HAMK University guarantees a safe and productive environment for its students. With seven campuses within Finland, the university offers high quality of global education services.

As a student of HAMK University, the author participated in a three month internship as a marketing assistant for the university's marketing department. There she received the opportunity to gain first-hand experience in the developments of activities which HAMK University practices, where the university's marketing platforms stay updated and offer the correct information to enrolled and upcoming students. Thus, the information provided publically is accurate, updated and well distributed in all the marketing channels. The headquarters of the university are based in the city of Hämeenlinna.

While finalizing her internship, under the supervision of Eveliina Toivonen it was noticed that there was a great opportunity to incorporate a new programme to advance the marketing structure of the university. The new programme would be organized by the university and would highly involve interested students and would be supervised by a HAMK official. Thus ensuring smooth progress and achievements of the programs goals. The above mentioned and suggested programme would be known as the HAMK Ambassadors Programme.

The idea behind a programme such as the HAMK's Ambassadors Programme is to implement marketing activities to HAMK's degree programmes conducted in Finnish and English. Marketing activities such as digital marketing, content marketing and social media marketing would be highly advocated. While seeking to highlight the cooperation between the university's campuses with the idea of correctly representing each degree programme.

2   CAMPUS RECRUTING FOR THE PROGRAMME

While thinking about creating such program, one of the crucial factors which needs to be taken into account is the recruitment of appropriate students and the visualizing of the correct idea. The idea behind the

project is to highly involve the students and alumni's of the university, thus creating a process of campus recruiting. Since the university has seven campuses, high cooperation between its campuses is required, where students could receive extra credits depending in their involvements in the project and alumni's would have a platform to showcase their achievements regarding their career.

However, when researching campus recruiting it is seen that there are three main challenges which need to be observed and overcome. One of the main challenges would be the competition for young talent. The HAMK students are always seeking internship opportunities in and outside Finland, it is important to advertise the program in a way which it is appealing for the students to devote their attention and time. Thus, the university needs to create a worthy programme where students with a fresh perspectives are committed to helping the institution develop the marketing content. There is a need for creating the right application process for the HAMK Ambassadors Programme and for the right students to be targeted. Following this paragraph a prototype of the questions which would be applicable to the application process (Martic K, 2018).

Questions:

1) Name and surname:

2) Which degree programme are you enrolled in and campus

(If you are an alumni please write your past degree programme and campus which you attended university which offers various degree opportunities for its students. Varying from different fields of engineering to business, it has created a well-known)

3) Why are you interested in participating in the HAMK's Ambassador Programme?

4) What has been your favourite part of your degree program/academic career so far?

5) What has been your favourite on campus event?

6) What type of initiatives can we expect from an applicant such as yourself?

7) In maximum 1000 words please tell us how has HAMK University helped shape your character as a professional?

8) What do you wish to gain from participating to the ambassador network?

(Ashacollins21, 2016).

Continuing with the campus recruiting challenges, the second challenge would be project branding, as HAMK University has had different programs such as street team and marketing ring which have a similar idea to HAMK's Ambassador Programme. The two above mentioned programmes are marketing tools which the university has formed in order to aid with the student recruitment process in Finland and abroad. Thus, the ideas of the programmes do not need to be confused with the idea behind the HAMK Ambassadors Programme. Taking into account street team, it was organised by the university where student would travel to various counties to promote the university in university fairs and high school. Whereas marketing ring was organized with the idea to promote HAMK University in Finland and not abroad. The need to differentiate the Ambassadors programme from previous programme is crucial. Where the attention of the applicants is not to only promote the university, but to also assist students in various aspect of their studies and social activities. With the motto being to promote, assist and connect the students of HAMK University from all campuses (Martic K, 2018)

Continuing with the third and final challenge of campus recruiting, it is the mistake of continuing to use traditional recruiting methods. With the advancement in technology, all aspect of modern recruiting require digital knowledge. Especially when involving an international university such as HAMK. Keeping in touch with the audience and keeping the information updated is one of the most important factors. Such as the idea of the programme would be known in each by HAMK students. Thus, the idea of the HAMK Ambassadors Programme remains to be as much digital as possible. Where online meetings would be highly practiced and encouraged between the applicants and the universities supervisors. When having seven different campuses located in Finland, having a more digitally updated platform makes the information flow faster and more accurate. HAMK University is known to be greatly involved in social media, and with the ambassadors programme we want to continue such practice. When launching this programme the first notice would be the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Since our students are subscribed to the above mentioned online channels, it makes it the spread of the idea easier and faster (Martic K, 2018).

Although there are challenges of recruiting the correct applicants for such project, there are also various techniques in order to overcome such encounters. As mentioned above, the programme would need to be as highly digitalized as possible. Thus, starting with an online page within the universities official website. Where online social networks would be used, however, the main information, description of the programme and application process would be easily accessed. In order for such programme to be successful for more than three years, it is crucial to establish long term relationship with our students. Where we keep in touch with the developments of our alumni's (Martic K, 2018).

2.1 Promoting the University and Recruiting New Students

As mentioned above, the motto of the programme is to promote, assist and connect the students of HAMK University (BusinessTampere, 2018). Now when focusing in properly promoting the university, there is a need to establish the right formula for such recruitment. When reading the paper written by Dwight B. Sanchez named "Success Formula for Student Recruitment and Retention" the attention needs to be targeted in providing the correct information. The author, Dwight B. Sanchez focuses on answering the question of how does a university decide its enrolment scheme to adequately affect development, meet the tuition goals and ensure an increment of the graduation rate. The formula which the author has designed consists of as following: formula of P2=Fit Factor: (Predictive)(Potential attrition root)=Fit Factor. Thus, this is where the need for the right students to be involved with the project becomes crucial. The required student group consists of traits such as developing discussions within the group and helping arrange in a line the values and goals of the educational contributions of the university together with the diverse social environment and personal preference of interested students in the university. The presented formula of P2=Fit Factor, focuses in establishing a well equip class. This is why there is an immense necessity for university alumni cooperation, due to the idea that previous students have participated in the universities courses and they can bring new perspectives and ideas on how to better the selective student system and university promotion (Sanchez, 2018).

2.2 Building the programme

While the idea of the programme is very specific, focusing on the laying emphasis on the community spirit of the university there are a lot of specifics which need to be determined. As mentioned above, digitalization of the programme is key. Due to the large number of campuses, online data and meetings increase efficiency. As the university already uses the online platforms quite frequently, the programme would continue on those pillars. Where documents such as Google documents, or online word documents would be accessed by all members. Another mechanism which needs to be carefully handled with is that the programme needs to keep an open and fresh perspective especially when change is crucial in the development of the programme. Even though an idea might work at first that might need to be changed or updated. Since this is a programme attended by students and alumni's, we would need to create the backbone idea that quality matters over quantity. Where we do not create a hostile environment of competitiveness and negativity for the HAMK Ambassadors attendees (McGowan & Tinnerello, 2018).

When building the program, there are two key ideas that need to be meticulously managed. Those ideas are defining the team members' roles and community building. Starting with defining the roles of each attendee, with the idea of increasing productivity. We want each participant to be
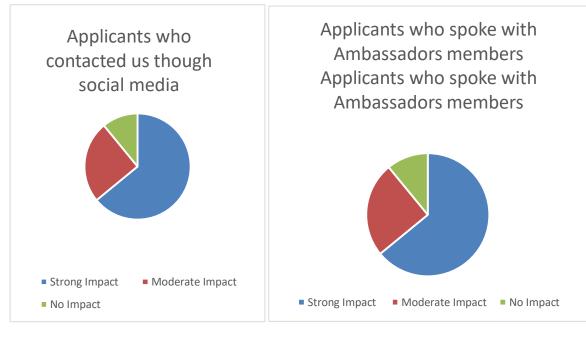
aware of their tasks, however, we do not want to be inflexible. As mentioned above change throughout the programme is crucial in order to functional. Hence, providing opportunities within the programme will be seen as an advantage in attracting students who are seeking personal development. With the use of the online platforms, I would propose the idea to utilize the application of Skype Business in order to have organised monthly meetings. With the elected university supervisor and team leader, the tasks would need to be evenly distributed within the team. Thus, having clear expectations, and not leave any space for confusion. When highly promoting communication, increases the teams productivity and creates more room for positive outcomes. In conclusion, with a define programme structure and role we would reach clarity and programme accountability (McGowan & Tinnerello, 2018).

Continuing with community building there are various aspects which need to be managed. Starting with active participation, we want participants who take their role in the programme seriously and are responsive. Thus, creating social event, such as meeting days that can be in person or online. Social events, as such meetings for lunch or afternoon drinks every month would increase the intensity of the programme activity. It would also encourage participation from the attendees. In addition to social events, we would need training days, where the tasks would be fairly distributed. With a successful community building, the positive outcomes for the project would follow to exist. The outcomes being constant investment and development of the programme, liability within the group and most importantly creating a fun and creative environment for all (McGowan & Tinnerello, 2018).

When using these ideas, we would also want to measure the productivity of such programme. This measure can be calculated in the end of each application period of the university with an example chart such as the one attached below (McGowan & Tinnerello, 2018).

Campuses	Accepted Students	Enrolled Students	Enrolled Percentage
Forssa			
Hämeenlinna			
Riihimäki			
Valkeakoski			

However, to accurately measure the involvement of the applicants with the recruiting procedure of new student we can refer in using similar charts

that Fordham University used to present their statistics. As shown below (McGowan & Tinnerello, 2018).

Applicants who contacted us though social media

- Strong Impact
- Moderate Impact
- No Impact

Applicants who spoke with Ambassadors members Applicants who spoke with Ambassadors members

- Strong Impact
- Moderate Impact
- No Impact

(McGowan & Tinnerello, 2018).

2.3 Difference between the Ambassadors programme from previous programmes

Universities in Finland tend to have advanced programmes in interacting their students. As seen from HAMK University, previous similar programmes have been organized. Programmes such as marketing ring, street team and student tutors. Thus it is crucial to differentiate the key differences that these programmes have in common.

When focusing in the Ambassadors programme it is important to list general tasks that participants need to participate in (UWE Bristol, N.d).

1) Participating in student open days for applicants

2) Participating in selected events such as helping to organise Halloween parties

3) Participating in photography and filming of the marketing activities

4) Holding presentations within and outside HAMK's campuses

5) Participating in interactive workshops

6) Promoting HAMK in various organized high school visits

7) Providing tours of the campuses for the upcoming full time, part time and exchange students.

8) Participating in university fairs which are regularly organized by the university

9) Help students resolve issues regarding their studies and accommodation.

(UWE Bristol, N.d)

2.4 Background research on the term of student ambassador

The idea of using such programme as Student Programme started in the United Kingdom. The core idea of the programme has developed through the years. In the beginning, Student Ambassadors Programmes were used as a backbone help to only orientate new students. Unfortunately there is not much research regarding such programme. However, Annamari Ylonen from the University of Exeter in the United Kingdom has made written an interesting paper which provides some interesting statistics regarding the statistics of the programme Student Ambassador. When organizing the programme it is crucial to understand what motivates the student to fully be committed. Thus, the previous mentioned article provides us interesting statistics. When asking the question, what motivates students to become Student Ambassadors (Ylonen, 2012)?

From 105 individuals who participated this survey, these are were their answers.

1) 72% of the participants answered that work experience is a key motivate as the first choice.

2) Whereas 71% answered that earning money is the second best motivate.

3) However, 66% of the respondents answered that a general interest in the programme will attract the proper individuals.

4) Whereas the desire to improve their CV would rank as the fourth most popular answer with 53% of the votes.

5) 44% of the participants introduced the concept of enhancing communications skills is another crucial benefit of such programme.

6) Lastly 31% of the partakers identified the idea of having a desire to boost self-confidence is also taken into account when student take such programme seriously.

(Ylonen, 2012).

Later the article tends to specify more into the terms and conditions of the programme and what it can and cannot offer. When looking at the concept that the Student Admissions programme would be an unpaid programme offering services. Thus the survey later on focussed in the programme being a volunteering programme. There was seen a drastic change in answers from the participants. (Ylonen, 2012).

1) 52% of the participants of the survey answered that they would still participate in such programme.

2) 22% of that participants said that they would not volunteer.

3) And 25% answered that they were unassertive.

(Ylonen, 2012).

However, from both questions the participants tend to agree in the following benefits of the programme. As shown below in the chart.

Table 1. Skills and qualities acquired by the SAs as percentages (*n* = 84)

Please rate how much improvement or development you have experienced in gaining the following skills and abilities during your time as a student ambassador? (based on 84 responses)

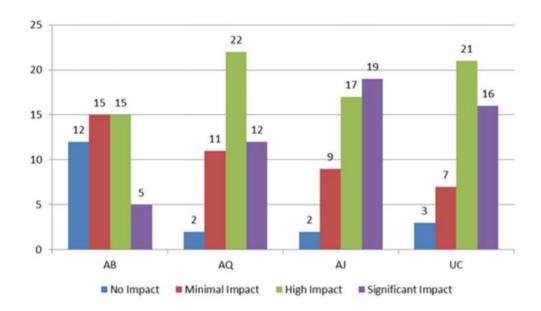|	A great deal (%)	Quite a lot (%)	A little bit (%)	Not much (%)	Not at all (%)	Don't know (%)
Confidence	28	45	23	2	1	1
Communication skills	29	42	23	5	1	1
Presentation skills	19	37	26	12	5	1
Teaching skills	34	33	17	12	4	1
Leadership skills	25	35	28	6	4	2
Planning and organising skills	24	30	30	11	4	1
Team working	33	32	25	5	4	1
Flexibility	25	36	24	12	1	1

(Curtis & Shani, 2002)

When comparing the article written by Annamari Ylonen to the article written by Susan Curtis & Najah Shani (2002), both reached a similar conclusion. Where the students who participate in programmes such as Student Ambassador Programme or any other extracurricular activity or part time job, are noticed to develop their level of communication and confidence (Curtis & Shani, 2002).

When continuing in the aspect theory of the programme, there is a research paper which provides more interesting results. The research

paper which this thesis paper is referring to is Evaluation of the Widening Participation Student Ambassadors Initiative written by the authors, Gannon, Tracey and Ullman. Their research was based in the Western Sydney University. Since the Western Sydney University has been incorporating such Ambassadors programme for years, however, they have made a survey regarding the impact which the programme has had during the year of 2016. Their survey had been distributed through three divided student groups. The three groups consist of current student ambassadors, student ambassador alumni and program stakeholders (Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017).

Due to the authors' interest of incorporating a Student Ambassadors program in HAMK University, the focus was towards presenting statistic which were directed to student ambassador's alumni's.

The following statistics presented is based from the previous mentioned research paper, where they referred their results by surveying forty-eight previous participants of the programme. The following table shows the alumni's opinion regarding the impact of a Student Ambassadors Programme (Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017).

(Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017)

As seen from the statistics, the majority of the Student Ambassadors Programme have stated that such programme has improved their qualifications in regards to applying for vacant jobs in the future. Hence, stating that it has improved their experience in the university, by giving them a higher sense of community. However, when focusing in the fright that such programme would set students back with their studies, 57% of the students had disagreed with the statement by answering with a minimal impact in the survey (Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017).

Continuing with the research, next the author will reference the following table. The following table shows the impact on alumni's ability and career progress from being a Student Ambassador (Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017).

Items	Mean	Standard Deviation
Feeling you can make a difference in the community.	3.96	0.79
Your leadership capability.	3.17	0.83
Your effectiveness in communicating and operating in social situations.	3.13	0.72
Your skills to cooperate in a team situation.	3.11	0.74
Your open mindedness and ability to think about things in a different way.	3.11	0.8
Your confidence and belief in your personal ability to be successful.	3.11	0.77
Your ability to find solutions in difficult situations.	3.04	0.82
Understanding of social issues that affect our communities.	2.96	0.84
Your ability to work hard to make things happen.	2.87	0.81
Applying effort to achieve the best possible result.	2.87	0.75
Self-control and calmness in stressful situations.	2.85	0.87
Efficient utilisation of time.	2.85	0.82
Your ability to cope with change.	2.85	0.84
Feeling connected to the broader Western Sydney area where I worked as a Student Ambassador.	2.76	0.9
Taking responsibility for your actions and success.	2.7	0.99
Your overall effectiveness in all aspects of life.	2.65	0.82
Feel like external forces determine or control my own success.	2.26	0.88

Note: N=46.

(Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017).

Benefit	N
Skill development	23
General comments on skill development, e.g. 'Gained new learnt knowledge and practical skills related to my career'.	4
Leadership skills	6
Communication and interpersonal skills	9
Problem solving skills	2
Time management skill	1
Technological skills and literacy	1
Gaining experience of working with young children which contribute to participants' future career as a teacher	11
No benefit or not sure about the benefit	5
Student Ambassador experience motivated him/her to continue to work with young children and learned how to help the youth to identify difficulty and found the solution.	3
Increasing confidence	3
Helping them to position themselves in the community and inspiring them to pursue professions within the community	2

Note: N=39.

(Gannon, Tracey & Ullman 2017).

As an International University, HAMK University has an honourable reputation in Finland and abroad. As an educational institution, it is always necessary to ensure a career path for their student. Thus establishing pilot project such as the Student Ambassadors Programme is an important factor in developing the universities study programme. Above there are listed the benefits that such program has in a participants career, which is not only present a crucial importance to the students but to the university as well.

3 DATA COLLECTION PLAN

When conducting this research, the chosen data collection plan consists of interviews regarding the HAMK staff members and selected students from the university who have previously participated in similar programs. The interviews track the general opinion of extracurricular activities which HAMK University has targeted until now. The purpose of the interview is to receive more feedback from the staff members regarding the actual possibility of conducting such programme. The author will also aim the attention of the questions in the possibility of funding for the programme or the possibility of registering the course as a possibility for students to gain extra credits.

3.1 Interview Template

On ninth of April 2019, the first three HAMK staff members were interviews. They were representatives of the marketing department of the university. The attendees were chosen due to the fact that they were more informed of the universities procedures and administrative needs and offerings.
The questions asked were as followed:

1) What would be your personal idea of such project?

2) Do you think there is a need for such project? And why?

3) Do you think HAMK University has the funding for such project? If so what details do you think they could and could not cover?

4) Is HAMK's organizational cooperation between its campuses improved with such project?

5) What are the main challenges of such project according to your opinion?

6) What would be the correct implementation method according to your opinion?

7) What would be your expectations regarding the results of such project?

3.1.1 Analysing the interviews with three HAMK Officials from the International Affairs Department

When analysing the data following the core idea of the programme, the HAMK representatives agreed on these key ideas of the programme. The planning of such programme is thought to be coordinated from the universities headquarters which are located in the city of Hämeenlinna. The programme would be highly involve in the tasks and organizations of the marketing department. With advised and need of a project manager. The project manager would be a university official with the inclined knowledge of pedagogic tactic and marketing abilities. When talking to the HAMK representatives it was discussed of the possibility of having two project managers. In the sense which this programme would require more than just marketing skills in distributing tasks. Thus, a university professor would ideally be much fit to organise such programme. Although the tasks are highly involved with marketing, such it would highly be advised for the programme to be coordinated by two individuals. The tasks which they all saw fit to be distributed through the students were webinars, HAMK story blogs, Instagram and Snapchat representative reserved for the attendees. The programme was advised to be highly advised to be executed and controlled in order to reach and use the full potential of the students.

Following the need of such project, it was agreed upon that the university does have the capacity to make such arrangements. During this interview it was discussed that HAMK University is in the process of increasing its student number. Thus, additional marketing techniques and tools currently are highly valued. As set from the university admission, by the year 2030 there is set to reach an increment of 2000 more students. The HAMK Ambassadors programme, is seen to have a positive impact in reaching the required statistics which are set in place.

The funding of such programme is not seen to be a problem. The organizing of the programme is seen to be utilized remotely, thus decreasing any additional needed funds. The funds needed to be covered are transportation fees, lunch vouchers and activity coverage such as supplying access on the universities accounts. When discussing with the HAMK representatives, it was decided that the university does have the financial stability to offer support in organizing the programme.

Another key factor which this programme will tackle is the increment of the universities collaboration between its campuses. When focusing in international marketing for its international students, it is crucial for the university to have a well-established and known flow of information. It was agreed upon that this programme would assist and advance to collaboration between the university campuses. When having student representatives of each degree programme in English who communicate between one another, while being coordinated by two HAMK officials is bounds to advance the communication flow. The changes and developments done annually would be updated and better communicated through such programme.

When implementing a new programme in the framework of the university which includes the staff and the student body, there are bound to be challenges. The author was interested in exposing those challenges earlier and confront them before they pose a greater problem. When discussing the challenges, the HAMK representatives were highly concerned with the motivation of the students. Such programme is perceived to be organized remotely in order to reach higher success. However, with remote work there also derive additional challenges. Challenges such as having an ongoing student motivation, thus the activities are carried as planned. The supervision assigned needs to ensure an ongoing motivational route for the activities to go in line with the marketing coordinating tasks. It was agreed that after selecting the students, there needs to be an appropriate orientation day, so the importance of such programme is highly understood from its attendees. For the programme to be efficient and effective the work distribution need to be equal. Furthermore, another challenge which was identified was the creation of cells inside the group. Since the participants will be selected from various campuses and will be asked to join services and work as a joint unit, there is still the uncertainty that the students will create units within the group based on the location of the campuses. Thus, here we see a higher need for a strong orientation day in order to create a sense of devotedness between the students as a group. An additional focus which needs to be emphasized is the pedagogical skills that the programmes supervisor needs to have acquired. In order for them to be well-found to offer a strong orientation from the beginning

After identifying the challenges of the programme, the author wanted to shift the attention of the interview towards the implementation tactics regarding the programme. When discussing the appropriate procedure which needs to be in place, together with the HAMK representatives we agreed on the following procedure: application process, interview session, selection of the attendees, orientation day, obligatory training, and start of the activities

When finalizing the interview with the three HAMK representatives, one final question dealt with the expectations of the programme. Where the expectations of the programme were clear and set. Thus, it was agreed upon that the main expectation was the increment of the international students attending HAMK. Where it was discussed that, the university would see an elevation in number of eligible students displaying interest and applying for the offered courses. Furthermore, there is a need and expectation for such programme to better involve the student voice with the marketing department (Three HAMK Officials from the International Affairs Department, personal communication, April 9, 2019).

3.1.2 Analysing the interview with Eveliina Toivonen

Continuing with the staff interviews, next Eveliina Toivonen was also interviewed. Ms. Toivonen is responsible for the HAMK University's unit's domestic and international marketing and student recruitment. Following up with the questions one of the main reasons that stood up for needing this programme was the constant want for a multi-channel marketing approach for the university. While developing the universities research towards peer marketing. As the programme highly involves the student body, the university would highly see an improvement toward marketing influences.

When suggesting the idea of the programme, the key factors which make the programme more appealing are the fact that the work will be online and remotely. Where the students would approach potential students through various social media platforms such as Facebook. When taking into account more of the supervision of the program, together with Ms. Toivonen we agreed that the programme should be led by two individuals. Thus, being as mentioned above that the programme needs two point of direction. The pedagogical and marketing view. In a sense that the students would have a safe working environment offered by the institution. When discussing the results of the programme with Ms. Toivonen, it was agreed that they would be as following: there would an increment in the number of adequate applicants, an increment in study motivation, a raising the satisfaction level for the registered students and a development of the programme throughout the years (Eveliina Toivonen, personal communication, April 9, 2019).

3.1.3 Analysing the interview with Harri Tuomola

On eighteenth of April, 2019 the next interview took place with Harri Tuomola. Mr. Tuomola is currently a professor of HAMK University, where he was in charge of other marketing programmes organised by the university. Programmes such as marketing ring and street team. When discussing with him the idea behind the programme, a major key factor that was discussed was the decision of the programme's goal. In the sense of is the programme more directed towards the universities marketing or the students' welfare? Implying that student recruitment does not equal the student welfare. As it was decided, the programme would be directed towards the universities marketing with the intention of creating a new marketing tool. Nevertheless, the supervision of the programme would have a pedagogical supervisor thus ensuring that the student welfare does take place. As a marketing person, Mr. Tuomola agreed that for the programme to be successful it should be focused towards the marketing of the university and the recruitment of students. However, that would only be possible with a proper division of labour. Where each of the student attendees would be in charge of specific tasks, and then an overall group task. Where everyone would have a sense of responsibility towards the project.

When taking the sense of responsibility under consideration, it would also increase the students' motivation and devotion towards the programme. As Mr.

Tuomola also pointed the group of students attending this should not be larger than ten students in total. Continuing with the implementation of the program, he agreed that the orientation days are crucial in establishing a successful and productive mind set for the students. As he suggested the orientation for the programme should be two days and one night. As the students would have more of a bonding opportunity with each other. Thus, neglecting the opportunity for cells to be created within the group. As the idea behind the programme is remote work, Mr. Tuomola also agreed that it is important to take the group outside the virtual world. Where the students would be more appealed in focusing their attention to effectively complete the assigned tasks. With a clear division of labour and the right orientation the programme has the potential to be very profitable for the university. Thus, it is understandable that the university should invest time effort and money, to get the programme on the right track and set to a smoother start. As the places for the programme should be limited Mr. Tuomola agreed. The application process should be very competitive. Thus, the results would be seen as in regards to an increment in student satisfaction, an improved coordination between the students and an increased satisfaction from the new students (Harri Tuomola, personal communication, April 18, 2019).

3.1.4 Analysing the interview with the students from marketing ring

When finalizing the data collection plan, on 25th of April 2019 the student group from the HAMK University programme marketing ring was interviewed.

The questions asked were as followed:

1) What would be your expectations from this project?

2) What would you think it is the adequate support needed from HAMK in this project?

3) What do you think is the acceptable compensation regarding such project?

4) According to your opinion how many hours per week would you think are adequate to work in this project?

5) What do you think there are some tasks which could be delegated to the new project? Ex: video editing, video review.

6) What do you think it is the right implementation for this project? How long of a time period would it be needed to be?

The interview was targeted to the group as a whole with the aim to spark a discussion and the elaboration of the ideas. Marketing ring is a programme offered in the degree programme International Business. Where a selective student body works with a professor from the university to promote the university in Finland. The conducted promotion is aimed towards advertising the university in various high schools throughout Finland. Part of the programme also requires fair participation, and blog content writing. Hence making marketing ring quite similar to the HAMK Ambassadors Programme. Thus, the interview with eight representatives of the marketing ring was supportive and helpful. One of the key issues which the marketing group students tackled was the duration of the programme. The student agreed that the programme should be one academic year, however, they thought that it would be a good idea to have an overlapping time period between the old and new group of the HAMK Ambassadors group. Since the tasks given are specific and do require experience, there should be at least one month of an overlapping period before changing the student attendees for the programme.

The next issue which was discussed in the interview was the compensation needed for the applicants. Since the programme would not offer any specific salaries, for the students thus, it needs to offer additional services in order to make the programme appealing for the recruitment of potential students. When presenting the compensation ideas, the marketing ring students agreed that they would be valuable. The compensation ideas are as followed.

- Lunch vouchers
- Transportation coverage
- Ambassadors programme certificate
- Credit compensation as seen fit
    - Coverage of credits for the applied/similar courses such as digital marketing or English writing

When finalizing the interview one of the issues mostly discussed with the marketing ring students was also the division of labour and measurement of work. It was agreed from the group that the work should not be measure in hours. Due to the idea that it might take different individuals more or less time to complete certain tasks than other. Hence it would be more effective and efficient to measure the work in the tasks completed per month. For example when assigning group tasks such as content marketing, the material given to cover should be evenly distributed.

(Marketing Ring Students, personal communication, March 25, 2019)

4   SWOT ANALYSIS

When thinking about the implementation of the HAMK Ambassadors Program, SWOT Analysis presents a unique pathway to better understand and analyze the program. Especially when focusing in utilizing the advantages and overcoming the disadvantages. The SWOT framework will also aid to better create a strategy for the program. Thus, differentiating the program from similar programs and assist in the start of the program. As followed I will use the SWOT Analysis Template, which I am utilizing from referring to the Mind tools template (Mind Tools Content Team, 2019).

4.1   Strengths

1. What advantages does your organization have?
2. What do you do better than anybody else?
3. What unique or lowest-cost resources can you draw upon that others cannot?
4. What do people in your market see as your strengths?
5. What unique resources can you draw on?
6. What do others see as your strengths?

(Dag Øivind Madsen, 2016)

4.1.1   Answers to Strengths

1. The main advantages of the HAMK Ambassadors program are its students. Where utilizing the student body in the work force, will create a well balance of profits for the students' welfare and the universities international marketing. Another advantage is developing a new marketing tool specially targeted to the international student body.

2. The programs main focus will be the universities marketing. The aim is to create a new marketing tool while incorporating the students'. No other marketing tool which the university currently uses does not have only this international student targeting. Thus, what this program will do better than others is targeting international platforms to recruit international students.

3. The main lowest-cost resources which the program will be using is as above mentioned its students'. Where there will not be a need to pay additional employees. Thus, better delegating marketing work throughout a selected student body. The program will not require a high amount of funds.

However, it will require to pay for the students' lunches and the commuting throughout HAMK's campuses.

4. As seen from the interviews with the universities officials, the main strength with benefits this project is the low costs which are required to have the program started. Furthermore, the use of peer marketing will be another factor which differentiates this program from others.

5. A unique resource which the program will be based on is the online platform. Where tasks such as webinars or online blog writing will be distributed to the attendees. Thus, decreasing the costs needed and creating a faster responding marketing tool for the university.

6. A strength which is seen by others is the length of the program. Where the schedule will be set for one academic term. Hence the training of the students will be used for a longer period. A key factor which would increase the strengths of the program would be continuity. Where the program would create a reputation within the university as a well-established course, which is valued inside and outside the university.

4.2   Weaknesses:

1. What could you improve?
2. What should you avoid?
3. What are people in your market likely to see as weaknesses?
4. What factors are seen as disadvantages?
5. What factors are seen to decrease the profits of the program?

(Dag Øivind Madsen, 2016)

4.2.1   Answers to Weaknesses:

1. Currently there is still some space left in filling the schedule portfolio. Although as described in the next chapter of the thesis, there is a recommended schedule. However, with every new group and changes in the degree programmes there should be changes in the schedule. Although it is a weakness, this should be well modified and seen through with every new upcoming group of the HAMK Ambassadors attends.

2. One crucial factor which should be avoided is the creation of cells within the programme. Even though the students will be operating from different campuses of HAMK University and thus there might be the need to have a stronger support from individual campuses. In orientation days this should be confronted and taught. Thus, creating a group work sense between all attends from all the campuses combined.

3. One of the weaknesses of the programme would be, the trying to overly archive all the involvement within the marketing department. As discussed previously in the interviews, this programme has a promising potential, hence, implying this to the student attends might create too much pressure. Therefore, making the orientation days of the programme more important. As previously suggested it should be at least two days, so all of the idea and concepts would be well discussed and explained by the supervisors.

4. Currently, as discussed in the interviews as previously stated a major disadvantage is the lack of motivation which the students might partake. Since the idea behind the programme includes remote work and the utilization of the online platforms, the students might not feel that the work done by them does not carry much of an importance. Thus, to overcome this disadvantage it is important to create group work and trips to the HAMK Universities headquarters which are in Hämeenlinna.

5. In a sense the profits of such programme would decrease if the rate of the students' motivation drops. The whole programme rotates around the productivity and attendance which the students will show. Hence, making the orientation days even more crucial, in underlying the need to invest in having a two day preparation programme.

4.3 Opportunities

1. What good opportunities can you spot?
2. What interesting trends are you aware of?

Useful opportunities can come from such things as:

3. Changes in technology and markets on both a broad and narrow scale.
4. Changes in government policy related to your field.

5. Changes in social patterns.

<div align="right">(Dag Øivind Madsen, 2016)</div>

4.3.1 Answers to opportunities

1. One of the best opportunities spotted is the increment of the student satisfaction level. Where the extracurricular course offered will present much more opportunities in regards to benefit their career. Furthermore, there are also opportunities regarding the universities curriculum development in order to differentiate the university from others.

2. The interesting trends which affect the programme is digital marketing and content writing. Where in the business industry are highly required and appreciated.

Answers to useful opportunities can come from the above mentioned criteria's:

3. As the programme will be focused in remote work, the changes in technology will have a major effect on the work produced. Since the targeted group is international students, to connect with potential students abroad the utilization of technology is seen to have a large impact.

4. The changes in government policy do not affect the HAMK Ambassadors programme, however the changes done within the university do affect it. Changes in the universities policy regarding work authorization, credits, and certification will need to be taken into account and thought in advance.

5. Social patterns will have an impact in the programme. When taking into account the usage of social media such as Instagram and Snapchat, with time the social media development needs to change. Where the supervisor of the group and the students need to follow popular trends on where to target the program for where the programme needs to be conducted.

4.4 **Threats**

1. What obstacles do you face?
2. What are your competitors doing?

3. Are quality standards or specifications for your job, products or services changing?
4. Is changing technology threatening your position?
5. Do you have bad debt or cash-flow problems?

6. Could any of your weaknesses seriously threaten your business?

(Dag Øivind Madsen, 2016)

4.4.1 Answers to threats:

1. Currently one of the obstacles noticed is the task division throughout the students attending the programme. However, in the recommendation section of the thesis the issue will be discussed more in depth and solutions will be presented. Furthermore, another obstacle is the fear that the motivation of the student will not be constant. As for this obstacle too, in the recommendation section of this bachelor thesis there will be a solution. However stating the obstacles and thinking beforehand is at all times appreciated and recommended.

2. In the sense of competitors this thesis will refer to them as other universities that are implementing this programme. As discussed above, one advantage which other universities have at the moment is that they do offer salaries for the attending students. Currently, this is not part of the offerings which is recommended in this programme, however, the programme will offer additional benefits to the student attending the programme.

3. The qualifications which the students need complete are as stated:
   - Active in social media
   - Skills in digital marketing
   - Skills in content writing
   - A GPA of at least 3.0 out of 5.0
   - Shown interest in marketing

4. No, the changes in technology do not pose a threat to the HAMK Ambassadors Programme. As it is seen to be the opposite. The developments in technology will continue to brand and shape the structure of the curriculum of the programme. With the possibility of additional tasks to be delegated to the HAMK Ambassador students.

5. This question is not applicable to this thesis due to the fact that the programme will be an extra course offered by the HAMK University. The course will also not require additional funds which the university might not be able to cover. As stated before from the interview with the HAMK staff members, HAMK University currently has the funds needed for this project to be approved and conducted in the four campuses that do offer English degree programmes.

6. No, when stating the weaknesses there is no known threat that is capable of compromising the programme. All of the threats that might post obstacles can be solved with the right management through the programme. As this bachelor thesis will also go more in depth in the recommendation section.

5 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final part of the thesis consists of the conclusion and recommendations driven from the research done, the data collection plan and suggestive template obtained from an online source as it will be stated below. The data collection plan together with the question of the implementation of the HAMK Ambassadors programme has been successfully analysed and met. Thus, helping in shaping the thesis paper structure, recommendations, and as well as answer the research question. Furthermore, in the beginning of the thesis writing process the authors' point of view was that the HAMK Student Ambassadors programme would be prioritizing the universities marketing over the students well-being. However, in the phase of the research and data collection plan it was noticed that the programs first responsibility is toward its students. Where HAMK University provides an extra opportunity for its students to advance their skills and expand their knowledge. However, the work being done and the task distribution would be directed in promoting HAMK University.

5.1 Recommendations

While researching the topic of Student Ambassadors, benchmarking other universities and conducting the interviews, a few issues were identified and will be furthered discussed.

5.1.1 Focus of the programme

As organising such programme to increase the universities marketing strategies, one of the key issues which needs to be decided is the focus of the programme. When thinking where to direct the orientation in the matters of the increment of the marketing tools or the students' welfare, it is crucial to be more specific. The recommendation determined from the research and the data collection is that a balance would be established. The key factors that are needed to be established are as followed:

- Determine two supervisors (one professor and one representative of the marketing department)
- Register the programme offered as an elective to gain extra credits
- Determine the specific compensation of the programme and its activities

5.1.2 Students Welfare

When planning of implementing such programme in HAMK University, one issue is maintaining the students' welfare where their satisfaction through the curriculum offered is satisfying. The author suggests that in the end of the programme, the survey would be distributed to the attendees of the programme in order to measure the satisfaction level. The template being suggested from the author can be found in the chapter of this thesis paper. The template in mention has been taken from the Technical Assistance Survey Template. Which was adapted from materials developed for AIDS Housing of Washington's Technical Assistance Program, Clegg & Associates, Inc., Seattle, WA, 2003.

5.1.3 Task Division

Due to the fact that the Students Ambassadors Programme would be a cooperation between four campuses of HAMK University, the division of tasks needs to be established during the implementing process. Furthermore, the work that needs to be accomplished needs to be equally divided. With the idea that the group as a whole is active. Following this paragraph are some key tasks which can be delegated to the students of the HAMK Ambassadors Programme. Additional tasks will be added, accordantly to fit the universities curriculum.

- HAMK Universities webinars
- Content writing for the official pages of the university
- Attending Facebook groups from various international countries, thus representing the university and creating a larger network with potential students

Ideas for additional tasks:

- Creating new educational events in cooperation with the university and the student unions

- Mentoring the first year students such as having orientation seminars during their first month of their arrival.

REFERENCES

About Häme University of Applied Sciences. (N.d). Retrieved February 29, 2019 from HAMK. https://www.hamk.fi/hame-university-of-applied-sciences/?lang=en

Ashacollins21. (2016, October 1). A Reply to 5 Questions To Ask A Student Ambassador. Retrieved February 24, 2019 from ashacgl. https://ashacgl.wordpress.com/2016/10/01/a-reply-to-5-questions-to-ask-a-student-ambassador/

BusinessTampere. (2018, August 28). WHAT IS THE AMBASSADOR NETWORK? Retrieved February 25, 2019 from BusinessTampere. https://businesstampere.com/talenttampere/networking/tampere-ambassadors/what-is-the-ambassador-network/

Creating and Implementing a Data Collection Plan. (N.d). Retrieved February 29, 2019 from strengtheningnonprofits. http://www.strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/e-learning/online/datacollection/Print.aspx

Curtis, S., & Shani, N. (2002). The Effect of Taking Paid Employment during Term-time on Students' Academic Studies. Journal of Further and Higher Education, 26(2), 129–138

Dag Øivind Madsen. (2016, March 22). SWOT Analysis: A Management Fashion Perspective,' International Journal of Business Research. Retrieved April 20, 2019 from MindToold.
https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2615722

Gannon, S., Tracey, D. & Ullman, J. (2017, July). Evaluation of the widening participation student ambassadors' initiative. Reterived February 28, 2019 from Western Sydney University. https://researchdirect.westernsydney.edu.au/islandora/object/uws%3A43167/datastream/PDF/view

Martic, K. (2018, September 28). Campus Recruiting: Tips for Recruiting Students and Recent Graduates. Retrieved February 24, 2019 from talentlyft. https://www.talentlyft.com/en/blog/article/208/campus-recruiting-tips-for-recruiting-students-and-recent-graduates

McGowan, S & Tinnerello, V. (2018, April). Creating & Sustaining a Student Ambassador Program. Retrieved February 26, 2019 from Nagop. https://nagap.org/sites/default/files/th_1100_1a_mcgowan.pdf

Mind Tools Content Team. (2019). SWOT Analysis – Discover New Opportunities, Manage and Eliminate Threats. Mindtools.com. Retrieved April 20, 2019 from MindTools. https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm

Sanchez, D. (2018, March 22). Success Formula for Student Recruitment and Retention. Retrieved February 24, 2019 from Diverse Education. https://diverseeducation.com/article/112742/

Slideshare. (2015, August 13). 10 Questions to Ask when Setting Up your Ambassador Program. Retrieved February 22, 2019 from Slideshare. https://www.slideshare.net/NickVinckier/10-questions-to-ask-when-setting-up-your-ambassador-program

UWE Bristol. (N.d). Student Ambassadors. Retrieved February 24, 2019 from uwe. https://www1.uwe.ac.uk/students/careersandemployability/studentamb assadors.aspx

Ylonen, A. (2012). Student ambassador experience in higher education: skills and competencies for the future? British Educational Research Journal, 38(5), 801–811

Appendices

Appendix 1   the Technical Assistance Survey Template

The following template has been taken from the Technical Assistance Survey Template. Which was adapted from materials developed for AIDS Housing of Washington's Technical Assistance Program, Clegg & Associates, Inc., Seattle, WA, 2003. As it is going to be explained by the author in the recommendation chapter.

1. How satisfied are you with the following aspects of our services?

	Extremely Dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Not Sure
Knowledge demonstrated by staff					
Responsiveness of staff to your needs					
Usefulness of information/assistance provided					
Overall quality of the services provided					

Comments:

2. How do you think we can improve the programme service delivery to you?

3. To what degree to you feel you have improved your knowledge or skills in the following areas as a result of your work with us? Complete one line for each topic or skill area addressed by the training and/or technical assistance you provided.

	No Improvement Whatsoever	Minimal Improvement	Moderate Improvement	Large Improvement	Not Sure

Comments:

4. To what degree do you feel the programme has improved its knowledge or skills in the following areas as a result of your work with us? Complete one line for each topic or skill area addressed by the training and/or technical assistance you provided.

	No Increase Whatsoever	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase	Large Increase	Not Sure

Comments:

5. To what degree do you feel the programme has improved its capacity in the following areas as a result of your work with us? Complete one line for each topic or skill area addressed by the training and/or technical assistance you provided.

Comments:

	No Increase Whatsoever	Minimal Increase	Moderate Increase	Large Increase	Not Sure

6. What do you feel is the most valuable result of your work with us?

7. What additional assistance do you think would help the programme?

8. Any other comments or suggestions?