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CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT FOR THE PARASTA PALVELUA- COMPETITION

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Abstract

This thesis is a developmental thesis based on Parasta Palvelua 2019 competition. The competition is an annual customer service contest founded by Kuopio Region Chamber of Commerce's. The objective was to create a guide for future project groups.

The theoretical framework consists of three main subjects, which are social media and marketing, customer service and events as well as project management. This topic division is based on the fact that this thesis has three writers, that all contributed their own specified aspects to the topics at hand through educational background or the tasks assigned in Parasta Palvelua 2019. The theoretical framework has been collected from various sources related to each of the major subjects covered.

Each subject is constructed of theory and the implementation, meaning that after each theoretical part follows the implementation of the respective topic as well as suggestions concerning the implementation in the future. Self-produced materials and primary information from the year 2019 is used to demonstrate the implementation.

It is to be noted that this thesis is the first multi-disciplinary thesis conducted in Savonia University of Applied Sciences. To elaborate, the contributors for this thesis were students from the Finnish BBA degree programme, the English BBA programme and from the Tourism and Hospitality degree programme.

CONTENTS

1   INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

For our thesis topic we have chosen to develop a concept for the Parasta Palvelua –competition (later may be reffered to as "the competition"). This thesis will be carried out as a developmental thesis commissioned by the Kuopio Region Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce had requested students from the Savonia University of Applied Sciences to act as interns and write their thesis concerning the project that the internship consisted of.

Kuopio region Chamber of Commerce promotes the interests of Kuopio in all aspects of the business world, such as commerce, internationality, production possibilities, employment and logistics. In short, according to their own description: "The Kuopio Region Chamber of Commerce promotes and defends the interests of the business community in Kuopio region" (Kuopio Region Chamber of commerce, 2020).

The Chamber of Commerce also organizes events, training and seminars for business owners and representatives in their area to further the areas development. The Chamber of Commerce currently employs 7 people and also have dozens of supporting members. At the time of Parasta Palvelua 2019, the acting Chief Executive Officer was Ms. Silja Huhtiniemi but she has since moved to another organization.

Parasta Palvelua is an annual competition searching for the best customer service in the Northern Savonia region, organized by the Kuopio Region Chamber of Commerce's committee of service. The competition has now been organized six times in the previous years, with an improved amount of popularity and exposure each year. Other co-operating parties for the event include Savonia University of Applied Sciences, the city of Kuopio and the newspaper Savon Sanomat.

This thesis will handle the key topics related to organizing the Parasta Palvelua -project. These topics include social media and marketing, customer service and event management as well as project management.

It is to be noted that this thesis is written by three individuals and thus, divided into three main sections. The topic sections were divided to the individuals on the basis of their respective tasks during the Parasta Palvelua 2019 -project. Okko Räsänen having been the marketing director during the internship discusses social media and marketing and Iiris Kettunen having been the company co-operation director and having an educational background in tourism and hospitality, will discuss customer service and event management. Furthermore, Ville Simola as the previous project manager will discuss project management in the final main section. All sections include relevant theoretical knowledge as well as a description of implementation to said theory.

The objective is to develop such a guide for the competition, that it is easy to start up annually for the new project team, while receiving the maximum amount of media exposure possible for the competition.

The thesis progresses through the key topics of arraging Parasta Palvelua from the prespective of the project group. Firstly, social media, marketing, service and event management are discussed as more specific topics to the project and finally, project management ties the entirety of the project in as the third section. All essential theoretical information about the topic is presented first, followed by a relating section of case study. Theory is presented first and then discussed in the case study in the perspective of Parasta Palvelua to help show the correlation of theory and practice. When these two parts are discussed, the thesis moves on to the following topic to help broaden the understanding of the reader.

1.1 Methodology

The aim of this developmental thesis is to describe and inform the reader about the key activities and topics related to Parasta Palvelua. The objective is that future project groups working on Parasta Palvelua can utilize the theoretical and practical information described in this developmental thesis when starting the annual project work with new goals for the competition.

The key questions of development are:

- What are the crucial things to consider when starting the Parasta Palvelua -project?
- What sort of know-how is required from the project team?
- What are the phases and steps in the process of carrying out the project?

1.1.1 Qualitative case study

This developmental thesis is conducted with a qualitative case study. Qualitive research mostly studies processes and practical phenomenons. The objective of such a study is to describe, understand and to interpret the case. As with any qualitative research, it is to be noted that a lot is left to the own judgement and decision-making of the researcher, so the risk of high subjectivity is present. This is especially true since in our case, the researchers have been working on the project processes studied in this thesis.

This thesis is compiled of theoretical topics to support the case study as well as a case study implementation of the theory in a practical sense. The information in the case study is mostly based on qualitative research data accumulated over the Parasta Palvelua 2019 -project. In most case studies based on qualitative research, the researcher is the research instrument, meaning the data is self-collected. Detailed and intensive information about this particular case has been produced, as is customary for case studies. The theoretical information was researched from varying documents, interviews, books and research articles.

In this developmental thesis, an informational guide and scheme was formed to help implement useful approaches to the Parasta Palvelua -project. A case study was chosen to be used used to find best practices, pre-emptive measures for common issues and helpful hints for carrying out the project. In the final chapter, conclusions and results based on the findings and experiences can be found.

2   SOCIAL MEDIA

Before we look into social media and social media marketing, it's good to go through traditional methods and a little bit of event marketing. Marketing an event differs from any other marketing in a way that the timing is the absolute key in success. As events are defined, they take place at a specific time and therefore the marketing must too. The ways to effectively market an event are the same as marketing any business, but there's always a twist of its own. In 2020 one could very roughly divide marketing into two – traditional marketing and digital marketing. Digital marketing, especially social media marketing will be covered in this thesis a bit more thoroughly later on so let's first go through the traditional ways first, since Parasta Palvelua -project also used a bunch of ways of traditional marketing. Traditional marketing is also important when considering the target group, as older people seldom use social media.

Traditional marketing methods include:

Print (magazines, newspapers, etc.)
Outdoors and public places (billboards, flyers, stands, etc.)
Broadcast (radio, TV, etc.)
Telephone (telemarketing etc.)
Direct mail (catalogues, postcards, etc.)
(Allred 2018).

Parasta Palvelua -contest used traditional marketing by using flyers, print and direct mail. As the Parasta Palvelua -competition can roughly be chopped into three phases in marketing, different methods were used along the way. First the marketing to businesses to get them to participate in the competition, then the marketing to the public to get people to vote and then obviously the after marketing. Social media was used all along the way, but every phase included some traditional marketing. The businesses who took an interest in the competition were all sent direct mail considering the competition and the letters included some visual marketing material. Sending this kind of brochures to a target audience is an example of direct mail marketing. At the phase of voting when it was crucial to reach as much public as possible, we made a tour where you could vote on stands. This will be covered in more detail later in this thesis. After marketing of this project can be found on chapter 6.2.

2.1   Social media in general

Social media refers to any application or website that allows people to share content, such as photography, text or opinions quickly and efficiently and in real time (Hudson, Matthew 2019). The definition of social media has changed over the years, but Hudson's description is, at this time, accurate. Overall, social media is about the meeting point of technology, content and people. Social media started to boom in the early 21st century by websites such as Friendster and LinkedIn, followed by e.g. Facebook, MySpace, YouTube and Twitter in 2004 to 2006 (Allen 2017). Popular

channels of social media nowadays include for example Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, although there are countless different applications in existence. As social beings, social media is something people have embraced within the last decade, but it also has a huge potential among the marketing industry. The possibilities are huge as well as the audience. In fact, it is estimated that there are 2,77 billion social media users around the world right now in 2019 (Influencer Marketing Hub, 2019). Keith Quesenberry claims that half of the 7,4 billion people have internet access and 37% of those, around 1,4 billion, are active users of social media (Quesenberry 2019, 13).

It is common for social media that you can share content, communicate and interact with others, seek advice and build relationships. Alan Charlesworth points out different types of social media platforms on his book about digital marketing. He presents it as Zhu and Chen's social media matrix (Table 1), which helps to understand different key concepts of social media such as connectivity and sharing. The format of a social media site can vary quite dramatically as it can be in a form a blogs, microblogs, wikis, photography or video, message boards and podcasts, just to name a few examples of social media. (Langmia etc., 2014)

	Customized message	Broadcast message
Profile-based	**Relationship** Allows users to connect, reconnect, communicate and build relationships (e.g. Facebook).	**Self-media** Allows users to broadcast their updates and others to follow (e.g. Twitter)
Content-based	**Collaborate** Allows users to collaboratively find answers, advice and help (e.g. Reddit)	**Creative outlet** Allows users to share their interest, creativity and hobbies with each other (e.g. Youtube)

Table 1. Zhu and Chen's social media matrix (Charlesworth 2018, 260).

The statistics show that Facebook and Instagram are the most used social media platforms in Finland with up to 65% of the population using Facebook and over a third using Instagram, meaning about 1,6 million Finns. WhatsApp is used by up to 70% of people, but it's not too good a tool for marketing. Snapchat (18%), LinkedIn (12%) and Twitter (11%) are also popular channels in Finland (Kohvakka, Saarenmaa 2019.)

2.2 Structure of social media

Social media works in a way, that without interesting content, it is challenging to work on that environment. It's wise to spend some time to plan and execute attention-grabbing content to attract the interest of folks. Interesting content may include photos, videos and texts. Content is the first of the 4 C's of social media. When creating content, the context of it needs to be considered carefully, because it is easy for posts to fade out to the constant rabble of social media (Soininen, Wasenius & Leponiemi 2010, 112-113). In the future, Parasta Palvelua -team should have a few people from outside of the group to evaluate the content to make sure it's appealing to the crowd and fits within the context.

With proper context, separate social messages can be bind together or as a part of a wider, more visible whole. You shouldn't focus on the organizations point of view as it is in the nature of social media that the receiving end has the chance to reply and re-evaluate the meaning of the message. The roles of sender and receiver have sort of flipped. Nowadays it is pretty standard that the posts in social media have a playful tone with re-narration (Soininen etc. 2010, 113-114).

The discussions attain their vivacity from the collaboration of content and context, and they play a huge role in getting the community to share and connect with the subject (Connectivity). A successful, long term social media use is based on continuity which can be earned by contributing to the community. As a conclusion – organizations social actions are built on "attractive content, addicting context, connections maintained online and continuity." (Soininen etc. 2010, 114). The 4 C's of social media are presented in chart 1 below.

CHART 1. 4 C's of Social Media (Soininen etc. 2010, 113.)

2.3 Social media channels

On this subchapter, we will go through some of the most essential social media channels for marketing and especially for Parasta Palvelua -competition. For us, the most important channels were Facebook and Instagram, because as previously said, they are the most used social media platforms in Finland with 2,7 and 1,6 million monthly users.

2.3.1 Facebook

Facebook, founded in 2004, is the most popular social media channel in Finland with around 2,5 million users and worldwide with approximately 2,2 billion users in 2018. Facebook allows users to build relationships, like and comment as well as create groups and forums. User gets publications of friends and subscriptions on his/her news feed. The feed contains some of the latest posts and also content which has been ran through Facebook's algorithms. The algorithm gives more visibility to pages which have lots of interaction (Pönkä 2014, 84).

Facebook allows businesses to create its own kind of pages and properly completed Facebook page helps to e.g. redirect users to your website or other channels. Facebook is the most popular social media channel for business users. When creating a business page to Facebook you must choose a classification from six options;

Local business or place.
Company, organization or facility.
Brand or product.
Artist, band or public figure.
Entertainment.
Community.
(Pönkä 2014, 92).

Instead of a page you can create a group page. Group pages are platforms where e.g. people with same interests can join and have conversations. These can be public or closed (invite only). Facebook presence can also be as an event page which function in the same way as groups. Those can be used to highlight specific activities e.g. a band playing in a restaurant (Charlesworth 2018, 280).

2.3.2 Instagram

Instagram is a more visual social media channel compared to e.g. Facebook. Similar to Facebook, also Instagram allows users to follow other accounts, like, comment and direct message (Pönkä 2014, 121). Instagram has 500 million daily users, so target audience of your organization will most likely be on Instagram. In Finland Instagram has around 1,6 million users (Image 1). The application has several new tools like stories and IGTV in addition to classic photo and video publishing (Lehikoinen, 2019).

Instagram is especially used by young adults, but as Facebook has shown, the older generations follow later. Instagram is optimized for smartphones, so the popularity of Instagram has risen as smartphones have developed. Simone Lehikoinen (2020) says in her blog that 85% of teenagers use Instagram as their number one social media platform. She also says that the average age of Instagram users constantly rises in Europe (Lehikoinen 2020). For Parasta Palvelua, Instagram played an important role in reaching out to companies about participation. More about this on chapter 7.

2.3.3 Snapchat, Twitter and LinkedIn

Twitter, Snapchat and LinkedIn are one of the most popular social media channels after Facebook and Instagram with nearly a million active users each in Finland (Innowise, 2019). Twitter is most popular in the United states with over 59 million users. Twitter could be described as a news studio in which the latest news is tweeted in real time. Twitter is great for influencer marketing and professional profiling, for example insurance or real estate agents (Komulainen 2019). One of Twitters unique qualities is that the posts "tweets" you make may only include 280 letters or numbers, so the posts tend to be easy to read.

LinkedIn is a network for professionals since 2003. It's the get-together place for experts, recruiters, businesses and futures professionals. LinkedIn is good for social selling and creating a personal brand of yourself (Komulainen 2019). You can highlight your own métiers, display your digital resume and achievements as well as network with others in your field of expertise.

Somepalvelujen käyttö Suomessa 04/2019

Image 1. Social media use in Finland.

2.4 Social media trends

Use of social media has risen tremendously in the past few years. Previous subchapter was about the most used social media channels, but the latest trends indicate new channels are getting more users all the time. This must be considered when thinking about the use of social media in marketing for example. Strongly specified platforms have gained a lot of users lately and for example TikTok, which was released outside of China in year 2017 had over 800 million monthly users at October 2019 (Tastula, 2020). Also, the streaming platform Twitch has strongly strengthened their position in the market. These platforms are especially used within the younger people (16-25-year-olds) and if your target audience is younger people these platforms should be considered. At the same time younger people use less Facebook every day.

Customer service and even purchasing products via social media is becoming a trend. Customers are demanding quick reactions to their questions in social media and a study by Conversocial says that 37% of consumers expect a reply to a message in 30 minutes. The need for fast replies has added the amount of e.g. chatbots and also employees in social media. In Finland for example Kotipizza allows customers to order food via Facebook messenger's bot. Instagram has published "Checkout" in the United States which gives the chance to do online shopping directly at Instagram without the need to go to online store (Tastula, 2020). Generation Z, born in 1996 to 2012, uses social media in a different manner than the millennials and transparency and authenticity become more important to brands.

Social media marketing trends include personized experience and the marketing seems to be more responsible and a trend is to have a certain statement. Also, as the time spent on social media has risen, the people are getting more critical point of view on things. Micro- and even Nano influencers are being used by companies. A few years back you were considered an influencer with tens of thousands of followers but nowadays businesses may use people with under a thousand followers to promote and talk about their product to a niche set of people (Kurio 2019).

Social media videos, especially short videos are becoming important part of social media marketing. As previously said, video platform TikTok has gained huge amounts of users lately and Instagram has added Instagram TV to showcase video content. It's been said that in Facebook videos the actual message should become clear within the first three seconds of the video and Facebook Insights even provide a statistic "3-second video views" for marketers. The popularity of video content can also be seen by the popularity of Snapchat (Kurio 2019).

Overall trend in social media and life itself is sustainability, responsibility and green values. Simone Lehikoinen claims in her blog (2020) that healthy lifestyle, origin of products and the manufacturing process are genuinely interesting for consumers and this can be seen in the consumption of social

media content. These should be guiding your social media use as a business as well as an individual (Lehikoinen 2020).

3   MARKETING IN SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is about sharing, engaging and relationships in communities and networks which means it is reasonable to assume that marketing in social media should also embrace these characteristics (Charlesworth 2018, 262). Marketing in social media is this day and considered an important part of ones' digital marketing plan. Most important parts of social media marketing are creating content and interaction. Content marketing in a nutshell is an approach to marketing which involves creating, distributing, curating and amplifying interesting, relevant and useful content to target audience to create conversation about the content (Kotler 2016, 121). Content marketing is so large a subject, it won't be covered in this thesis, but a proper content marketing would be the right path for Parasta Palvelua –competition.

3.1   SOSTAC-model

Marketing in social media should be planned properly as any form of marketing should. There are many marketing tools of which can be applied on marketing in social media, such as the 4P and 7P - marketing mix, AIDA model or the SOSTAC-model. SOSTAC is a model for digital marketing developed by PR Smith which is utilizable for various occurrences. SOSTAC consists of six segments (Suojanen 2018):

1. **Situation analysis**

At the beginning of planning it's important to understand the current position. Things to analyze include:
- Customers
- Competition
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Trends
- Other essential information.

2. **Objectives**

After being up to date with current situation you define objectives so you know where the marketing should lead. The objectives should be SMART:

Specific
Measurable
Actionable

Relevant

Time-related

In our case a SMART –objective could be to reach a hundred customer service businesses and get them to join the competition within 4 months, using Facebook's and Instagram's messengers.

3. Strategy

Marketing strategy answers to a question "how do we get to the objective?"
Strategy is probably the hardest part and requires more than a few moments to think about. Two parts that are important to get correct is the **target audience** and the **position**.

4. **Tactics**

The details of the strategy, for example tools and channels. Tactics could include e.g.:

SEO (Search engine optimization)
Social media and the content there
Google AdWords
Instagram Direct, which was one important tool for us and allowed us to reach a lot of the target group efficiently.

5. Actions

The details of the tactics and the steps of how to execute them. For us this included for example a ready written text to use for engaging the target audience.

6. Control

The follow up and measuring of the results. Some important metrics are brought up later in this thesis. This helps to develop the actions for future and that is very important.
(Suojanen 2018).

3.2   Guideline for image-based social media

There are several social media channels e.g. Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn and it's important to choose the correct one for your organization. Facebook is the most popular social media marketing channel for business purposes. For Parasta Palvelua, the channels were Facebook and Instagram.

Instagram and Facebook can both be considered image-based social media and the marketing should be too. Alan Charlesworth provides a generic guide in his book (2018, 286) for effective image-based social media marketing, most of which apply to most of the platforms available:

- Some brands or organizations are, and some are not suited for picture-related promotion. Retailers, restaurants and gyms for example have plenty of pictorial content; an insurance company or funeral service company might not.
- The content you produce must be planned e.g. seasonally or by the ongoing trend or event.
- Have a balanced schedule. Users in social media may be overwhelmed or turned off by a lack of activity – or too much of activity.
- High-quality, compelling and clear images are vital.
- Use hashtags – They will help guide users on their pages onto your content. Hashtags will be talked about on chapter 3.5 and there you can see what hashtags were used on Parasta Palvelua – project.
- Feature fans and collaborative parties. Tag other users to your content and use other peoples who have tagged you in the content on your page.
- Create separate content for different channels and consider if the goals should be different too. (Charlesworth 2018, 286).

3.3   Metrics and analytics

To develop your marketing, it's essential to measure and analyze the results of marketing. Measuring marketing especially in social media is easy to begin as various platforms offer business users analysis tools but discovering the key performance indicators (KPI) may be difficult. Some classical metrics of sales and marketing are Return On Investment (ROI), Return On Marketing Investment (ROMI) and Return On Ad Spend (ROAS) (Pyyhtiä etc. 2017, 18-20).

In the world of many brands A new set of metrics could be used to measure brand awareness and how it converts to actual purchases. Phil Kotler introduces PAR (Purchase Action Ratio) and BAR (Brand Advocacy Ratio) in his book Marketing 4.0 (2016, 74). The use of these metrics is easy to demonstrate with an example scenario. Let's take it that there's a population of a hundred people of which 90 have recalled a brand. Of that 90, only 27 end up making a purchase and 18 recommend it. Therefore, PAR for this brand would be 27/90 or 0,3 and BAR 18/90 or 0,2. Here you can see that even though the brand is highly recognized (90/100) the conversion of those to actual sales is poor (Kotler 2016, 74).

ROI and ROMI may be used for various types of measurement but for social media and specifically organic (not paid) marketing has several different metrics. These include reach, clicks, views and engagements. Reach indicates the number of accounts your message has reached, and it takes into count every glance at it. The thing that differentiates social media from other media forms is the possibility to interact with the customers immediately and usually publicly. The marketers can keep

up with the absolute number of engagements (likes, comments, shares) in real-time and this often interests the admins of social media sites. A good indicator for a successful social media post is the engagement rate. It's calculated by comparing the total reach of the post to the number of engagements (Pyyhtiä etc. 2017, 185).

Even though metrics and analytics walk hand to hand, it's good to know that they aren't the same thing. As metrics or indicators are standardized measurements of certain thing, analytics is the way you use these metrics. Analytics seeks patterns in the data gathered from the metrics in the hope of utilizing them in the future (Charlesworth 2018, 303-304). Your goal may be to create models for effective marketing and therefore analytics may be referred to as modelling or forecasting. One observation that was made during Parasta Palvelua –project was that the content posted during lunchtime or so reached a larger crowd than in the evening, which was quite the controversy of what we thought.

3.3.1 Essential metrics

As said earlier, it's important to measure your marketing and choose the correct key performance indicators. Some of the most essential metrics of organic visibility:

Reach - How many individual users were reached.
Click - All click generated by a post. Includes for example opening a photo to full screen or opening a hyperlink.
Engagement - Users interaction with the page or a publication. Typically includes likes, comments and shares.
Video views - How many play throughs has the video had on total.
3-second views - How many people has viewed the video for atleast 3 seconds. Typical metric for Facebook video posts. It is said that a video should tell all the essential information in the first 3 seconds.
Followers/page likes - Perhaps the most traditional metric in social media, and other metrics should be compared keeping the number of followers in mind.
(Pyyhtiä etc. 2017, 187.)

Parasta Palvelua didn't use nearly any money on marketing, but if we did, the essential metrics may have been different. Views and reach are obviously important also in paid content, but here's a few metrics for promoted visibility:

Cost per Click (CPC) - Each click has a price and you get the CPC by dividing the amount spent with the number of clicks.
Cost per Mille (CPM) - The price you have paid for a thousand views of the post.
Click-through Rate (CTR) - The number of link clicks compared to the ones who have seen the post.
(Leväinen, s.a.)

Facebook and Instagram provide marketers their platforms' own analytic tools which gives insights on your followers' demographics etc. so you can target your content for the right audience. Examples of these insights are shown at the end of next chapter together with some concrete results.

The marketing of Parasta Palvelua -competition happened via Facebook and Instagram. As Instagram is under the ownership of Facebook Inc. the accounts on both sites are linked, which makes it easy to use them in sync. Facebook and Instagram were enough for our case and e.g. Twitter or Snapchat were not even considered.

Visually, the posts in Parasta Palvelua -pages included the triangle shapes, which are commonly used by the Chamber of Commerce's and the color pink. Also, the logos of collaborating companies, Savonia UAS, Savon Sanomat and the City of Kuopio had to be included in graphic designs, and their graphic instructions had to be followed. For example, the used font had to be PT Sans. The main color to be used is royal blue and there are 8 other added colors (image 2) to make campaign-like content easier to create. Transparency and percentages could be modified as long as the color was featured in 100% as well (Chamber of commerce's' s.a.). As you can see in the examples below, pink and its transparent versions were utilized.
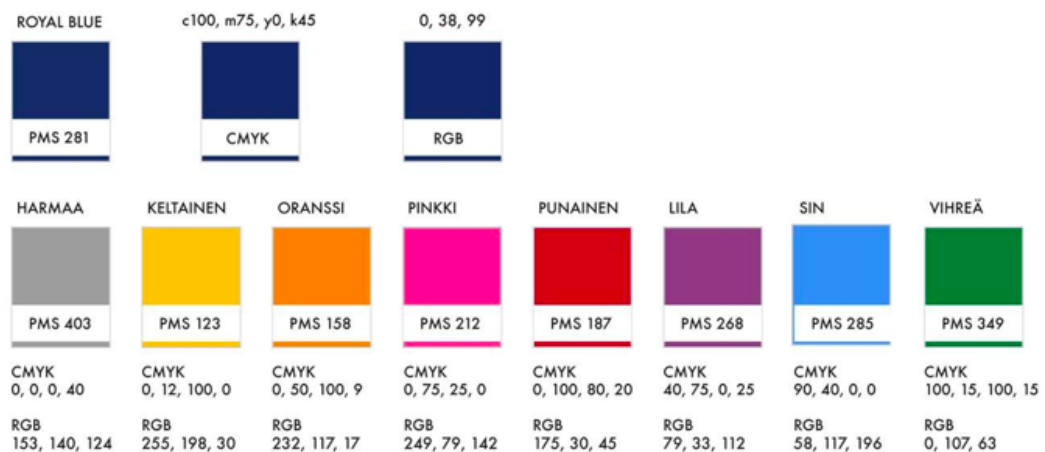
Image 2. Chamber of Commerce, colors.

Graphic content was primarily designed with Canva application. Canva is a website/application for designing graphic content such as social media posts, logos and posters. Canva has thousands of templates which can help you on your designs. Digizer blog has gathered a few tips to creating great Canva designs:

1. Choose the right dimensions. Different platforms support different photo dimensions, for example Instagram is known to mostly support square images and Facebook usually prefers rectangular images. Canva makes it easy to choose correct size for different occasions for example Instagram stories or Facebook ads.
2. Choose and edit photo. As said, Canva provides you with great number of templates and images to use from or you can choose your own.
3. Use graphics. You can use a lot of different graphics for example shapes, lines and stickers. Those might have a big impact on the content.
4. Text and fonts. As said the font in Parasta Palvelua had to be PT Sans but with bolding part of the text and having contrast in the colors and background you can make the design look better (image

3 and 4). Also, it's good to remember that Facebook only allows 20% of the picture to contain text, so be aware.

(Digizer 2019).

Image 3. & 4. Example of Parasta Palvelua –post.

It was planned that the social media channels would be updated at least twice a week. Mostly it went accordingly, and the frequency of post was standard. Now and in the future the planning is the key to a proper implementation. We found it that a good strategy was to plan two weeks ahead and execute a week ahead. That way you'll always have posts ready to be posted and at the same time your creating content for next week and planning the one after that.

The content created should be made so that it's easy for the participating companies to share. This gives value to the companies which are participants in the contest as well as much more visibility to our pages. In Facebook, posts that were clear and included a direct link to voting form were the ones that were shared the most. Always react to users who share your content by at least liking and preferably with a comment. The content should be, as Philip Kotler says in his book (2019, 85) "searchable" and "shareable".

It was first planned to create content both in Finnish and in English, but after a few posts, we decided to use only Finnish. The most important notices were of course also in English, for example where we announced the voting to have started. As Kuopio area has a lot of foreigners, international content should be considered and planned.

An important part of each post was the use of hashtags. Using hashtags allows people to find similar content and let us categorize our content. Hashtags.org is a website where you can find anything on hashtags: definitions, how-to articles and more. In there, Vanessa Doctor (2014) tells a few tips on what to remember when using hashtags. First of all, for the hashtag to work you must know that you can't have any words or letters before the "#" -sign. Hashtag will also be dysfunctional if it begins with numbers and in case there's any punctuation in the middle it will end it. Also, using spaces will result in breaking the hashtags. Examples of mistakes are e.g.

#it'ssummer (apostrophe in the middle), it's#summer (letters directly in front of the sign). For example, Christiano Ronaldo who plays by the number 7 cannot use #7, but he has had to adapt his brand to use #CR7. Only numbers, letters and underscore can be used. The hashtags we used in Parasta Palvelua 2019 –posts were constantly the same and it really helped us to be distinguished in the crowd. It's important to be consistent.

Parasta Palvelua –hashtags: #parastapalvelua #parastapalvelua2019 #kuopiochamber #savoniaamk #visitkuopio #pohjoissavo #visitiisalmi #visitvarkaus (Parasta palvelua 2019).

4.1   Results

Parasta Palvelua 2019 had about 200 page likes on Facebook when we started, and Instagram had to be created from the beginning. At the end, Parasta Palvelua Facebook page has 322 page likes and the new Instagram, which will be used in the future as well has 282 followers. These should be observed when looking into results of the posts. Only few posts were promoted (paid) and the rest were organic.

Generally, the posts reached around a thousand people organically. It was clear, that the posts which generated comments or shares reached out a much larger group. For example, one post, which reach went up to 28 000 people organically had 18 comments and 39 shares (image 5). That post alone got nearly 400 link clicks to the voting form, which was the goal in the marketing. Also noticeable was, that videos in general got more reactions than just pictures.
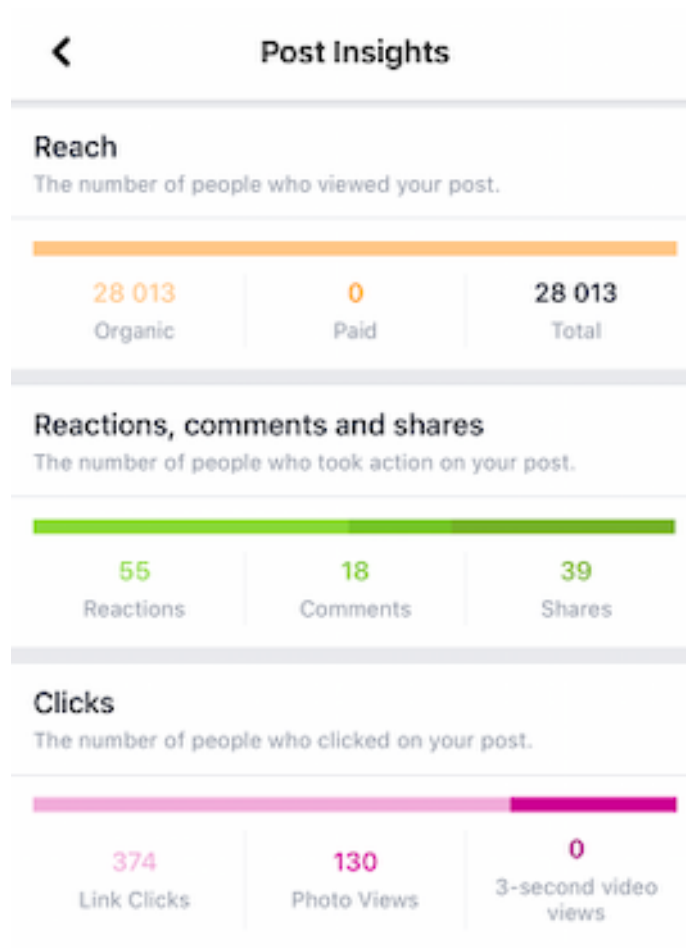
Image 5 Post Insights, Facebook

Here's an example of paid advertising on Facebook (Image 6). You can choose any amount you are willing to use to promote the post and since this was a test run of a sort, so here was only used 6,00 EUR. The price is determined by the length of the promotion and the size of the audience. You can choose for example that the promotion lasts for 6 days and it is shown to 22 to 42-year-old people in the Kuopio area. In the future, promoted content in social media would be great and it would reach much more people. It'd be important to have a clear budget for promoted social media. Fifty or a hundred euros would be more than enough, since even a 10€ promotion gives great advantage in visibility. Parasta Palvelua 2019 didn't have any budget for promoted content so we tested it with our own money.
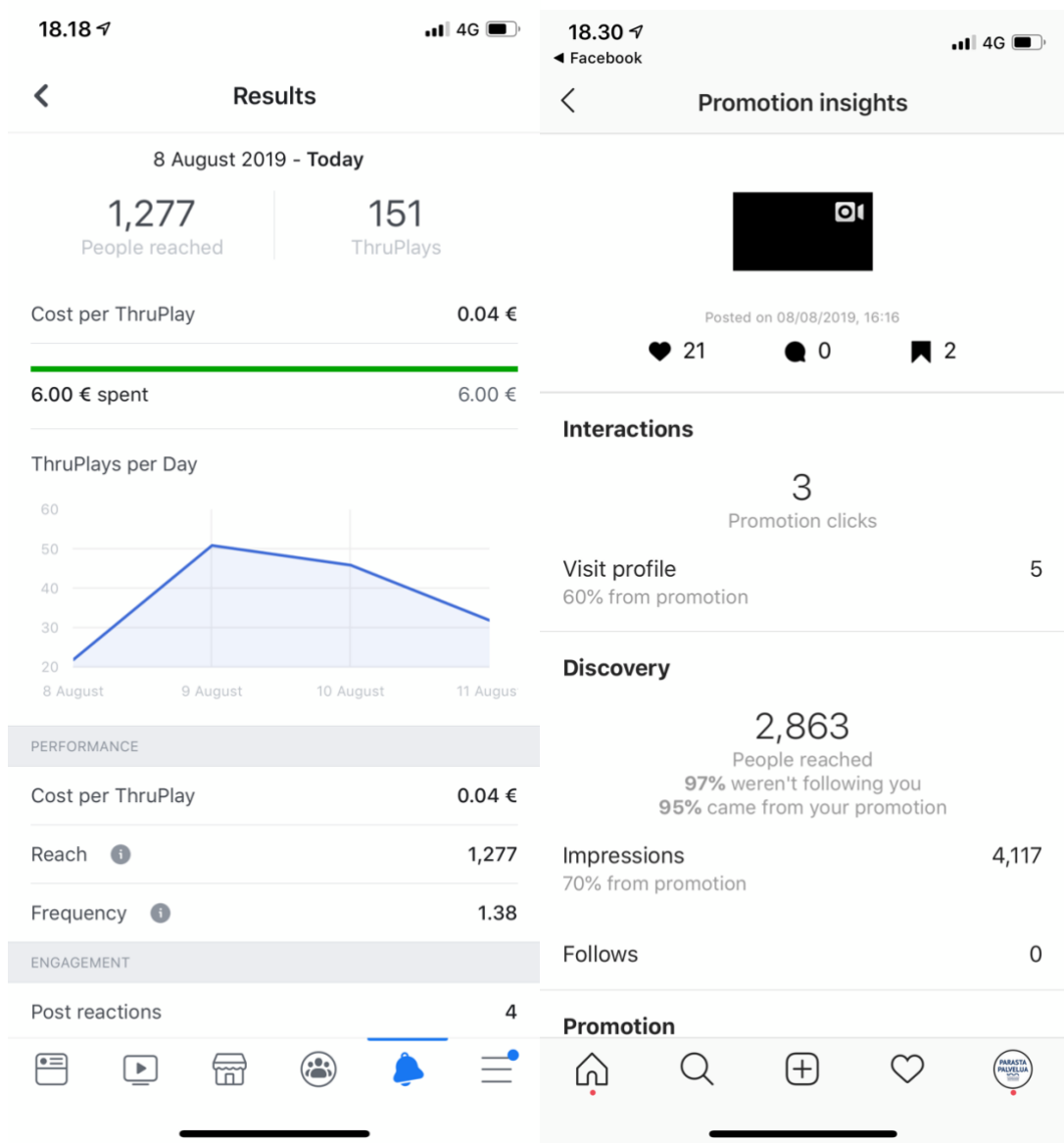
Image 6 & 7 Promotion Insights Facebook/Instagram

Nowadays social media marketing is an essential part of customer service and the content you provide is something your customers may get a glance at the first time hearing from you. So, social media channels are a part of your customer service, but customer service is such a multi-dimensional matter and the Parasta Palvelua –competition is all about customer service, the next chapter will encapsulate the essence of customer service.

5   CUSTOMER SERVICE

Big part of our thesis is customer service. The competition, Parasta Palvelua, is mostly about customer service. People vote for the best service companies and they get nominated. At the end, there is one company that gets the Parasta Palvelua -title. In this section we go through some theory of customer service and then service in Savo. Also, we discuss service from our perspective during the competition.

Customer service is something that customer can get when they need advice provided for a company's product or service. Company's employees are the face of the service. They will need patience, product knowledge and tenacity. That is how they can provide the answers and assistance a customer needs, whenever they need. How the employees act and assist during the service, will deliver the customers the image about the company and how they recognize it (HelpScout, 2019).

Going together with customer service, is customer experience (=CX). CX is a bigger view rather than just service. It refers to the broader customer journey across the organization and involves all the aspects that the company offers, including customer-facing service, how customer uses the product or service, what feeling they get from just walking into the company and how the they face the staff in the company.

The biggest difference between these, is that customer experience involves the whole customer journey that includes customer service. Customer service is only limited to the interactions when customer is seeking advice or assistance on a product or service. Customer service can be given many ways, through a phone, e-mail or any social media platform. All of these are important and give the image of the company to the consumer. They all are also part of customer experience. As said before, customer experience covers the whole service from the beginning to the end, and still at home.

Both of those are important pieces to an organizations' success. There is no clear and definite line between customer service and CX. Customers think about the whole picture when choosing a product or service (Chronicles, 2019).

	Customer Service	Customer Experience
Who	Department	Everyone
What	Subjective	Experiential
Where	A point of contact	Everywhere
When	Single point in time	Sum of all interactions
Why	Problem oriented	Feeling oriented
How	Reactionary	Proactive/Intuitive

Table 2. The Difference Between Customer Service and the Customer Experience (2016)

As can be seen in this table (TABLE 2) the differences between customer service and customer experience are not necessarily large. Experience is just the bigger picture of customer service and all the things that run in the company.

5.1 Human resource management in customer service

History with the human resource management goes back to 1960s. Human resource management (also known as HR), is the governance of and organization's employees. They take care that there is good platform for working, they create strategies that towards employee's behaviour with company. If HR sections is not in the right place, then it effects straight to employees that effects to customer service. If customer service is not good and satisfying to customers, it effects straight to companys outcome. HR is responsible for the hiring process in the company.

Mostly the person who is responsible with HR is doing it side with some other job. Here is some tasks that HR people do (mc.ai, 2020):

- Dealing with job recruitment, selection, and promoting
- Developing and overseeing worker advantages and wellness programs
- Developing, promoting, and enforcing personnel rules
- Selling worker career improvement and task training
- Presenting orientation packages for brand spanking new hires
- Imparting steering regarding disciplinary movements
- Serving as a number one touch for work-website online accidents or accidents

Image 8. Human Resources (Mc.ai, 2020)

Every employee must have the customer service mentality. This means, that every customer that walks in or deals online, must have the best service, and feel like he is treated well with dignity and respect. HR people are mostly chargeable with this because they are involved the hiring process (Smallbusiness).

Every area (Image 8) must be in shape that the organization can run properly and produce good service. That is why human resources are in big part of companies and their customer service. When there are right people working, there is right tone in customer service.

5.2 Customer point path

What does the customer point path mean? It is the journey that customer makes in the company for example shopping or going to holiday in a hotel for a weekend. It means, that customer point path picture customers experience in the company. It is one way to illustrate and view the customers experience. Getting the bigger picture is not that easy. People want more and their needs are even more individual. Because of that, the point on the customers path grow and it is harder to get the bigger picture.

Customer journey map is a visual view of customer experience that summarizes it. It helps to understand what are the customers goals, needs and expectations. How customers experience the service in the company and its brand. What kind of feelings customers have during the journey and if there are any holes, that makes customer leave the company. So basically, customer journey visualizes their journey in the company from the interested to buying to even recommend the company.

This journey can be happening in the store or online. It can happen in a grocery store, hotel or even in an airline. When any company is doing this, it can help if there are any problems. This journey can help to find the problems or bring your strengths out. It is important that everyone in the

company knows, how their customer journey goes. That is how the goal in the company is clear to everyone (Suhonen, 2019).

Reduced example of café's customer journey:

- Customer search for the company
- Makes decision to go that one place
- Go there
- Walks in the store
- Look for the coffees
- Makes decision
- Order a coffee (customer service)
- Pay for the coffee
- Enjoy it in the place
- Leaves and goes back home

This was plain example but shows how it goes. All the points are important. The way how the websites are designed is also something that makes the impression to customer. Going to a place, how easy it is, effects some people decisions to go there. If there are no busses going and there is no way the customer can take a car or walk etc., he does not go there. Walking to the store gives the feeling of the place, how you get welcomed in and how the service is. How the coffee tasted and when you leave, does anyone say goodbye to you. It is all the little things that makes the journey important.

5.3 "Savonian service"

We did an e-mail interview with Olavi Rytkönen, who is a specialist with "Savonian service", the type of service specific to the Savo region, and knows a lot about it. This chapter is based on the e-mail conversation we did with him. We got some good points about "Savonian service" and how it effects to other parts of Finland.

As in every part of Finland, there are parts, where you can get service that is tied to the locational culture and local people. In Eastern Finland in Savo, and especially Kuopio, where people are "savonian". When thinking of people and service in Savo, they might have heard that people are "lupsakoita" and that the service is "lupsakkaa". These words refer to being laid back and jovial. And what that "lupsakka" service means? It is not overdone or pretentious. It is real caring and interest in customers' needs and filling them quickly, but with a little twinkle in the eye.

As we talk about "Savonian" service it is important that you do not think generalization or stereotypes. Olavi Rytkönen says, that there is not the one and only way or mentality to service in Savo, there is variant as in the other parts in Finland and in the world. Of course, as said before, there is some features that people connect with people from Savo. From Rytkönen's personal view:

if the customer service is originally from Savo and customer is from there too, is chance to small talk bigger. Usually they talk about also about something else than just about the product and its payment terms. Sometimes they talk about the product's different features, for example about restaurants servings

The good terms about service in Savo its in social contacts, innocence, and relaxation. So "Savonian service" differs from other service in Finland at least in that it usually works for every customer and it is good. If you know how "Savonian service" is, you know how to react when you get it, maybe need a little bit humor. And if you go to Helsinki and see customer service from Savo, it is always a pleasure and nice surprise, says Olavi Rytkönen (Savolaista Palvelua 03-05-2020).

"Savonian service" in the stores in Kuopio area can be seen. For example, there is one coffee shop in Varkaus called Gaffer Café. There are two young women who run the place. They do their work with passion and love and it shows in their business. Customers goes there back because the service is good, easy-going and the place feels like livingroom. Entrepreneurs says that their service in professional but there is still a relaxed feel.

The winner of Parasta Palvelua 2019 competition was BikeTaxi. It is in Kuopio and they are offering taxi services with bikes. BikeTaxi is also good example how "Savonian service" shows. The people who rides the bikes are mostly young people and they do have the customer service mentality. It is good to see that young people can continue the tradition.

In the next chapter you can see the theses of Savonian service. Those open up how Kuopio Chamber of Commerce describes the topic.

5.4   "The theses of Savonian service"

Kuopio Chamber of Commerce has put together five Savo's theses, that picture Savo's customer service. These theses have been published on 2.11.2017. These are made, because the Chamber of Commerce wants to establish Savo's customer service as an attractive feature of the province. This is so that the people who move here, live here or travel here know the quality of the service associated with location. (Savolaisen palvelun teesit, Kuopio Chamber of commerce's 2019). The theses can be found in the following section, freely translated from Finnish.

1.   GENUINELY RELAXED

In the region of Savo, it is not customary to be pretentious or pompous. When meeting someone, it is permitted to be oneself and let one's personality shine – this goes for both the customer and the customer servicer.

2.   THROUGH HUMOUR AND "SAVONIAN DIPLOMACY"

"The listerner is accountable", is a popular phrase in this region. The customer maybe be left surprised, but always in a good way. A large group of customer service professionals can be found in Savo, equipped with a large smile and a sparkle in the eye, day-in and day-out. The Savo region offers service unrivaled even in the toughest of situations. Our goal is a mutual win-win situation, that carries out into to the future.

3. SPARING NO PROFESSIAL SKILLS

Once in a while, customers can have tricky issues, and so be it. It makes work more interesting. When it comes to the best Savonian service, no efforts will be spared when finding the customer a desired solution.

4. A SWIFT LACK OF URGENCY

Even though being in a hurry is part of everyday life, in doesn't have to be projected on to customers. Things are taken care of swiftly but never rushed.

5. TOLERANT COMMUNITY SPIRIT

One does not need to be from Savo to offer the best Savonian service. We welcome passionate service professionals from all over Finland and the world to gladly join our team. Being a Savonian is filled with tolerant togetherness, making it easy to join in.

Companies in Kuopio, and everywhere in Finland, can take perspective from these theses. If you do not know anything about service in Savo, you can read these and get the idea. When you finally someday visit in Savo, you know what to expect from customer service.

6 EVENT MANAGEMENT

Event management is also part of our thesis. We go through some theory and then explain how this effect to this competition.

Event management is expanding as a field of study and there is plenty of models and advice of textbooks. Event tourism is a related field. As a field of study and professional practice, there is a body of knowledge, competency standards and professional associations (Van Niekerk & Getz 2019, Introduciton).
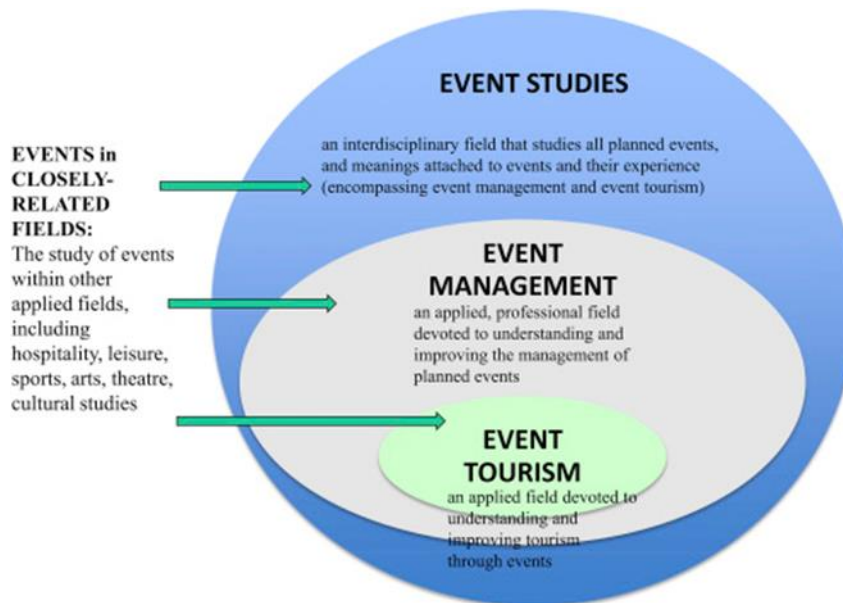

CHART 2. (ScienceDirect, 2015)

Event management involves many different areas, for example planning, organizing and execution of events. Because there are many kinds of events there is also many ways to organize it. There is been investigations, that event industry it is projected to grow at 30% per annum. Event management as a concept is regarded as one of the most intense or significant form of advertising or marketing. However, the event is planned in an organization it needs team play from all employees. Also there needs to be a person who runs the project (Climbinggoat, 2017).

6.1 Goal of the event

When it is time to think about the goal usually everything starts with the planning. That is the wrong way to go. First, it is important to think about the goal. What you want from the event and what is the purpose. The foundations must be in order before anything else happen (Evento 2016, p. 14).

Where do you get the goal then? You need to think about the target group, that is where you get the goal to reach. What you can bring and give to your target group and what they can get from it. Event must always offer something that the customer benefits form it. So, listen to your customer, that is how you get the right goal. There is so much competition around the world, so it needs to be perfectly planned (2016, p. 27).

6.2 Event management as a part of marketing

Marketing is a goal-oriented activity and its main point is relay organizations message to potential customers. Event marketing is activity that's idea is connect target group around its theme and idea to the event. It is functional entity. Usually event marketing is seen as strategically planned for long term (Vallo & Häyrinen 2014, p. 19).

Almost any kind of occasion can be seen as event marketing, if there is interactive communication with possible customers. As event marketing can be also read every event where the company promote their own business. It is important that event marketing and event are part of companys business idea and walks hand in hand with everything else. There must be well planned target group and goal for every individual event (2014, p. 20).

When talking about event marketing, there is few criteria that must be filled (2014, p.20):

- Pre-planned
- Goals and target group
- Experimentalism, experiential and interactivity

There are many strengths with event marketing and here is few of them (2014, p.21-22):

- Interactivity
- Control of spaces and messages
- Possibility to set a goal and get feedback
- Stand out from other companies with positive way
- Produce experiences
- Make a memory
- Utilization of the senses

As said before event marketing is more intense and personal than traditional marketing. The main strength with having an event part of marketing is that you can untilize senses. Customers memorizes it better and can have a different picture and remember it for a longer time. It is important to think how to make the event as memorable as possible (2014, p. 22).

Here are different ways how to utilize senses in events (2014, p. 22):

- Visual sense – colours, decoration
- Sense of hearing – background voices, music
- Sense of smell – smell of the place, food
- Sense of taste – service of food, treats and drinks
- Sense of feeling – product testing

6.3 Event process

What includes to event process: planning, implementation and aftermarket. There must be at least couple months planning before the actual event, the more the better. If the time is less than couple of months, there might be problems with space resevations and the quality of the event might suffer (2014, p. 161).

All the phases of the process are important and with them, the event gets the time that it needs to be done. Here we go through three phases that includes to event planning.

6.3.1 The planning phase

"Well planned is half done". This saying is something that agrees with event management. There must be a team, who knows how exactly the project manager wants the event to be and make it right. Planning is a thinking process. Project manager and the team must think the event through from the beginning to the very end. This is how to avoid every possible problems and memory lapses and other little things that might make the event not successful. This planning phase is the longest and most time-consuming part of event process (2014, p. 162).

Event brief is also one of important thing to have at the very beginning of planning. It is a document that can be used in the company. Event brief is a simplified answer for these questions (2014, p. 163-164):

- Why? = Goals
- Message
- Who?
- What?
- How?
- Contents of the event
- Hosts/Project manager/team members
- Atmosphere
- Budget

The content must be something, that speaks directly to your business idea and your possible attendees benefits the most of it. It is important to remember marketing when planning the event. Is important to use targeted marketing because it gives to most efforts to your event and it is engaged with your company. Also, social media is in big part with the planning phase. Your social media platforms must be in good shape that it gives the best content to your customers (Lawrence, 2018).

As the years go by, the security and people's safety are going to be bigger part of events, so it is part of the planning phase. Of course, there is going to be differences between small community event and mega events. Security is not the thing to leave halfway, it is almost the most important thing to guarantee peopels safety. Not only people's safety but it needs to take care of IT safety too. Sometimes the safety is a problem with events, but it needs to take bigger place when planning any kind of event (Backman, 2018).

6.3.2 The implementation phase

The time when all the hard work comes together. Everybody who works with the event must know their own roles. There are many little details that affects during the event. As said before, the planning phase is the most important in noticing what can go wrong during the event. Of course, it must be remembered that there is the element of surprise. Those might be good or bad, planned before or not. One of the important things is also guest's safety, that needs to be noticed with planning. When the planning is well done, the result with the event is good (2014, p. 168, 172, 184).

All the phases are important, but this is the most visible thing that customers sees. Implementation phase involves the construction of the actual project result. Can say that the project takes shape during this phase. As the start of this phase the ending is also important. It brings together the results and after that the afteramrketing takes place.

6.3.3 Aftermarketing

The aftermarketing is different depending what kind of event is in question. It can be a thank you - card or giveaway gift. The most common aftermarketing is collecting feedback. Feedback can be collected from guests, organizers, and event planners. It can be collected at the venue, handwriting style, by snail mail, by e-mail, by phone or on the internet. Why is it so important to have feedback? After you get it, you can make the next event even better and if there is something going wrong, there is always next time to make it right. You can hear the guests what they have to say (2014, p. 185, 188-191).

Make sure you tell after the event how it went and if there is a competition, post it to social media who won. It is important to thank everyone who were doing the event with you and remind to the possible upcoming event when it is (Lawrence, 2018).

7   SERVICE AND EVENT MANAGEMENT: CASE PARASTA PALVELUA 2019

7.1   Customer Service

How did we start searching these companies and what kind of companies we wanted? We contacted nearly every type of companies because we wanted this to be as wide as possible. Mostly companies who take part in this competition, are from the Kuopio area. There were also a few companies from Iisalmi and Varkaus, and areas near them. We asked big and small companies, there were no limitations on that, because we organized categories to put the same kind of companies in.

As every year, this year we needed to try to ask as many companies as we could to this competition. We started from last years companies and sent them an e-mail. Some of them answered back but some never did. Then we started to look for new companies, mostly through the "Parasta Palvelua" Instagram account.
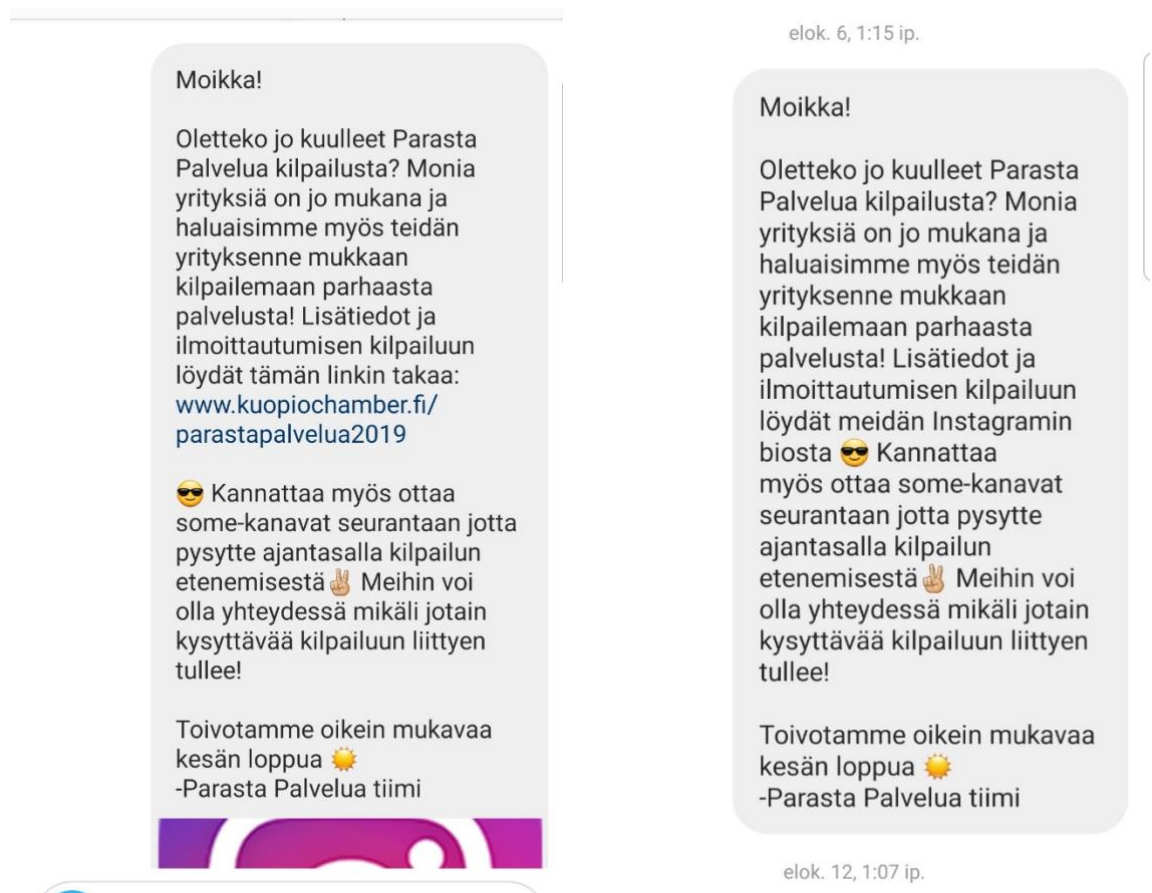

Image 9. & 10. (Parasta Palvelua Instagram account)

These are example messages that we sent to reach out the companies. Many of the companies we reach out liked our message or answered them. A relaxed theme in the formality of these messages was taken.

"Hei!

Parasta Palvelua 2019 ilmoittautuminen on auennut alkuviikosta! Yrityksenne kuuluu kilpailun ankkuriyrityksiin joten lähestymme teitä henkilökohtaisesti pyytäen ilmoittautumaan kilpailuun mukaan sekä jakamaan ilmoittautumislinkkiä viestinnässänne. Jaettavia postauksia löydätte kilpailun virallisesta Instagramista nimellä *parasta_palvelua* sekä kilpailun viralliselta Facebook sivulta joka löytyy nimellä **Parasta palvelua 2019.**

Tässä myös linkki ilmoittautumislomakkeeseen: https://www.webropolsurveys.com/Answer/SurveyParticipation.aspx?SDID=Fin1794351&SID=1994dfa8-4c65-4f69-a84c-90b6723a6d40&dy=426609825

Sekä linkki Kauppakamarin verkkosivujen alta löytyville kilpailusivuille, josta ilmoittautuminen löytyy myös : https://www.kuopiochamber.fi/fi/koulutus-tapahtumat/parastapalvelua2019

Kiitos osallistumisestanne ja panoksestanne kilpailuun jo etukäteen!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Parasta Palvelua 2019 -tiimi
Kuopion alueen kauppakamari & Savonia ammattikorkeakoulu"

Image 11 (Parasta Palvelua e-mail)

Here is example e-mail that we send (Image 11) to companies that were involved in the compeititon 2018. Most of them did not even answer to us, but few of them came to competition again. We found out that easier way to reach the companies was thourgh Instagram. We though it is because many companies get so many e-mails during the day so they might just ignore it. With our messages we got around 100 companies to join this year competition. Because the messaging was mostly in the summertime, it was quite hard to get many companies to join because people were on their summer breaks. We were happy to have the number we get, because it was the biggest number in the competition's history.

We tried to reach out companies that related to the theses of Savonian service. As we told in the chapter 5.3, there were companies in the competition that are very Savonian service kind of companies.

7.1.1 Service from our perspective

Customer service is also important from our perspective. The competition is organized to find the best customer service company from Savo, we as an organizer cannot forget service. It gives the picture about our organization.

As in these messages we sent to companies, we take familiar way to reach out the possible competitors. Knowing something about the culture of the companies, lets you know how to contact them. Some have younger entrepreneurs so in these cases the way you reach them, can be more relaxed. As we contact bigger companies, there must be a more professional tone. Also, we needed to reach out the places we wanted to organize the voting tour.

During the summer we got messages from competitors with different kinds of questions. We needed to remember how the right tone is to answer, because we represent our school and Kuopio's Chamber of Commerce. It is not that easy to just write something when you need to consider the tone of the message.

7.2   Event Management

Why there is this kinda event and competition, Parasta Palvelua? It is because customer service is important and especially service in Savo is something different and why not to bring it up with this kind of way?

This was the 6th time that Parasta Palvelua competition was organized. First time the main responsibility was on the students. The event concept was all there, but not really on the paper. We got the instructions and started planning how to run the competition this year with our teachers and employees from Kuopio's Chamber of Commerce. As an event, Parasta Palvelua is only running in Kuopio area and nearby, like Iisalmi and Varkaus.

First, we needed to use the planning phase, so we started planning the event how we do it. The most work was with contacting the companies. Also, we needed to keep the social media platforms active, that people and companies knew what was always going on.

We organized Parasta Palvelua -tour, where people could vote companies. We contacted different locations that we though would be good place to go. Contacting happened via e-mail. Those locations were Savonia Microkatu- and Opistotie campus, Matkus, Viihdekeskus Minna and Savo Volleys secondhand event at Kuopio-Halli. Our campuses were easy to go and reach out young people. Malls were good place to reach out families and older people, so we chose Matkus and Viihdekeskus Minna. Also, there was this secondhand event, organized by Savo Volley. We bought a stand place there and it was good place to reach out families. It was the only place we paid something. We put stands to those places, and we had computer or tablet, that people could vote the companies. The voting was on weeks 41, 42 and 43. We realised that most of the people voted at home and not in our stands. Of course, we wanted to take contact with people and let them know what all is about, but we did reach out only handful of people.

Image 12. & 13. (Own images)

These places (IMAGE 12 & 13) were on our Parasta Palvelua -tour. The first one is from our Microkatu -campus and the other one from Matkus. We also used QR-code that people could vote with their phones. As can seen in the images, we had candy at the stands, and it motivated to vote. At the stands it is important to remember that you represent not only you, but your organization that organizes the competition. As in this case we represented Kuopio's Chamber of Commerce and Savonia University Of Applied Sciences. These images bring together our case's implementation phase. When all the work comes together, and we implement the work done.

In this event after marketing is also important. Because the idea is to get this competition to be visible around the year, it is time to think how to make after marketing good. One idea is to keep the social media accounts active around the year.

For upcoming competitions, it is important to think, if this tour is necessary. Of corse we do want to be seen and people to know about the competition, but as we did the tour again, it did not reach as many people we thought. We did get our visibility online with different platfomrs like said before, Instagram and Facebook. The competition is more and more going online so it is important to think this tour again. Maybe to get new ideas to the tour and get more visibility with that. When the online marketing and visibility is in shape, like it is now, it is easier to focus to think about the tour stands.

Even though the planning and implementation might be hard sometimes, we were as happy to do uor best for the tour to succeed. As said above it did not reach as many people we would want, it

reaced out at least some people. There were prices to people who voted and that motivated to vote more. This quit different event to manage but when you do it propaply it is going to be good. Always is something to improve and learn something new every year. Most people did not even know what the competition was about, so that is also thing to improve that it gets more visibility.

Project management is also big part of this competition and it reflected to customer service and event management. In the next chapter we go through more about project management.

8 PROJECT MANAGEMENT

In this section of the thesis, theory of project management will be discussed and presented, to help understand the aspects of project management relevant to the Parasta Palvelua -competition. Key activities, goals and structures of a project will be inspected. Project management has a large theoretical base of knowledge and it is important to be mindfull that the topics covered are only the most important from a subjective point of view.

8.1 Definition of a project

A project is described as a "temporary endeavor undertaken to create a unique product, service or result". (PMBOK Guide, 2013, p. 3). Also to be noted, according to the PMBOK Guide (2013, p. 3): "The temporary nature of projects indicates that a project has a definite beginning and end. The end is reached when the project's objectives have been achieved or when the project is terminated because its objectives will not or cannot be met, or when the need for the project no longer exists."

According to Project Management (Kezner, 2017, p. 2) a project is defined by the features and activities that it consists of. A series of actions can be considered a project if it fulfills the following criteria:

- Has a specific objective, with a focus on the creation of business value, to be completed within certain specifications.
- Has defined start and end dates
- Has a funding limit if applicable
- Consumes human and non-human resources (ie. money, people, equipment
- Is multifunctional

PMBOK Guide (2013) and Project Management (Kezner, 2017) differ slightly in their definitions of a project in the sense that one definion states that the end result is always unique (PMBOK Guide, 2013, p. 3) and contrarily, the other one states that the outcome can be either unique or repetitive. (Project Management, 2017, p. 2)

Despite minor differences, when examining these two descriptions, the core requirements of a project are on display in both. The two defining features are that the project has a clear and specified objective towards which the project strives for. The second defining characteristic is that the project must have a beginning and ending, thus its existence is finite and limited to a specific amount of time.

Since limited time and a specific objective are formidable factors, the role of efficient management during a project heightens greatly and can be varied depending on the organizations existing procedures and the experience and expertize of the project group's individuals.

According to PMBOK (2013, p. 3): "Projects are undertaken at all organizational levels. A project can involve a single individual or multiple individuals, a single organizational unit or multiple organizational units from multiple organizations."

8.2   Definition of Project Management

PMBOK Guide (2013, p. 5) describes project management as the application of knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to project activities to meet the project requirements. Project Management consists of 47 grouped management processes, categorized into five Process Groups, which are the following:

- Initiating,
- Planning,
- Executing,
- Monitoring and Controlling, and
- Closing.

In project management, it is essential to take into consideration the afore mentioned criteria, requirements and characteristics that pose the framework and constraints for the project. Only when these requirements are met can the project truly be successful and closed. According to Project Management (Kezner, 2017, p. 3): "Successful project management can then be defined as achieving a continuous stream of project objectives within time, within cost, at the desired performance technology level, while utilizing the assigned resources effectively and efficiently, and having the results accepted by the customer and/ or stakeholders."

As stated in the PMBOK Guide (2013, p. 6), managing a project typically includes:

- Identifying requirements;
- Addressing the various needs, concerns, and expectations of the stakeholders in planning and executing the project;
- Setting up, maintaining, and carrying out communications among stakeholders that are active, effective and collaborative in nature;
- Maintaining stakeholders towards meeting project requirements and creating project deliverables;
- Balancing the competing project constraints such as scope, quality, schedule and budget.

Activities related to project management are nearly always scalable and applicable to both a very small project group as well as a large project group and organization. Furthermore, these activities are to be honed during the project to adapt to the changing factors surrounding the project, with the intention to clear obstacles that negatively affect the progress of the project. Adapting to changes also works towards increasing the chance of the project's outcome being successful. Encountering and clearing obstacles is one of the key operative areas of project management, regardless of the project's objective and the size of the project staff. Often times these obstacles can be external as well as internal, since human resources are consumed during the project and conflicts can arise in the staff.

8.2.1 Role of a project manager

The project manager is defined as the person assigned by the performing organization to lead the team that's is responsible for achieving the project objectives (PMBOK Guide, 2013, p. 17). The role of a project manager is to ensure that concrete objectives for the project are met alongside managing the people and day-to-day activities that the project requires to be successful. The role is everything but one-dimensional and can require a much different approach then more traditional and administrational management roles.

There are large misconceptions regarding the managerial role of a project related to decision-making, authority and expertise. Often times the project manager only manages mundane tasks related to the project and is not in a very strong authoritive position. The project manager extremely rarely makes single-handed decisions since often times the project group as a collective is more competent to make decisions related to the project. As stated in Project Management (Kezner, 2017, p. 9), the project manager's expertise may not necessarily be in any of the relevant knowledge areas of the project.

Furthermore, when considering entry-level project managers, certain competencies are considered when recruiting. "Each project is inherently different, thus possibly mandating a different set of competencies." (Kezner, 2017, p. 10). These skills and qualities are presented in the Talent Triangle (PMI, 2010) and include technical project management, leadership, and strategic and business management. Specifications inside these categories can vary, but this trio of skills is fundamental for any project manager.

IMAGE 14. The Talent Triangle (PMI, 2010)

8.3 Project Structure and Activities

Projects have several layers to them and the project manager has to be on top of them all. Inspected here are the key activities and structure related to managing a project and understading the work flow of a project better.Most notably, the different project phases and approaches to them can be found.

8.3.1 Organizational structures in projects

Organizations have multiple roles during a project's life-cycle that are entirely dependent on the nature of the project and the specific objectives and boundaries that are established. The project group in itself is an organization – arguably the most important organization for the project's success. Also, client organizations and host organizations are very common in projects as they are most often the recipient of the end product / business value created by the project.

The separating factor between the different types of organizations related to projects in most cases is the span of their existence. Permanent organizations such as companies and departments have existed and will continue to exist after the project but project groups and other related organizations are defined by their temporary and finite nature. A project organizations distinguishing feature is that it is a specialized group of experts gathered to fulfill the unique goals and needs of the project.

Characteristic	Permanent organization	Temporary organization
Agency for Change	High inertia for change	Better respond to change
	Management of routine	Management of Change
Agency to assign resources	Not always an effective way to assign resources	Effective way to manage resources
	No clear delineation between intra-firm and inter-firm transactions (for managing resources)	Project organization boundaries are clearly defined through *projects, programs,* and *portfolio* for successfully assigning and managing the resources
Managing uncertainty	A lack of sense of urgency to manage uncertainty	Managing uncertainty with a sense of urgency is a distinguishing feature
Time	Exists for eternity	Finite in nature. It begins when a *change* needs to be affected in the organization, and ceases when the objectives are accomplished
Task	Commissioned to perform routine tasks	Commissioned to execute non-repetitive or unique tasks
Team	Relation between the individual & team: Individuals entering the teams with their expectations, which may also be in conflict with the expectations of the other team members	Relation between the individual & team: Individuals entering the teams with their expectations, which may also be in conflict with the expectations of the other team members
	Little or no challenge to the legitimization of the team members	Relation between the individuals and the team environment: legitimization of team members can sometimes be challenging (Lundin & Soderholm, 1995)

Table 3. Permanent Organizations versus Temporary Organizations (Dwivedula, Bredillet, Müller, 2012, p. 44)

As can be seen from Table 3 (Dwivedula, Bredillet, Müller, 2012, p. 44) presented above, temporary organizations such as project organizations have a higher readiness to adapt to changes, often times due to a lower level of hierarchy and a smaller personel pool. This is essential for the vitality of the project since changes are nearly constant in project work. Thus, the projects success is largely based upon a functioning and well-managed organization. As previously discussed, the role of the project manager heavily influences the organizations culture and workflow, alongside the various other internal factors. Since project organizations are finite in nature, abnormal approaches related to management compared to more rigid, permanent organizations. One of these approaches is transformational project management leadership where organizational changes are being excecuted during the projects (Kezner, 2017, p. 163). This type of project management plays into the narrative of managing people, not solely producing the end deliverable and requires a different set of organizational management skills. Undergoing such and organizational change can, for example, be the result of the project entering a different phase, ie. planning vs. implementation.

8.3.2 Management Responsibilities and Functions in Project Management

There are key functions and management operations in project management that are integral for the success of the project. According to Project Management (Kezner, 2017, p. 145), the management responsibilities include:

- Planning
- Organizing
- Staffing
- Controlling
- Directing

Managing these functions through workers and prioritizing them according to the specifications of the project and its processes is up to the project manager and represents the duality of the project manager being a leader but also a workhorse paving the way for the group and their goals.

8.3.3 Project Life-Cycle and Phases

The project life cycle consists of the beginning, end, and the developmental phases in-between of a project. Since projects are temporary in nature, as previously discussed, they all have a beginning and an end but the phases of a project can be remarkably varied. There is no general consensus on what the life-cycle phases of a project are, mainly due to the very large fluctuation in the fundamental nature of projects (Kezner, 2017, p. 62). However, even though projects vary in size and complexity, a general life-cycle structure can be applied to all projects. These general phases include:

- Starting the project
- Organizing and preparing
- Carrying out the project work
- Closing the project

(PMBOK Guide, 2013, p. 39). Deeper and more intricate division of the phases must be done internally within the organizations related to the projects. The number of phases, their length and characteristics are completely dependent on the project's goals, resources and constraints. For example, the project groups size can affect wether or not phases can be executed simultaneously or are the phases sequential. A groups high responsiveness to change is valuable when dealing with the projects life-cycle. The phases are not always linear due to unforeseen external or internal factors and changes. Phases might switch places, other phases might me emphasized over one's that were previously more highly prioritized. High readiness to respond to changes might improve the projects outcome drastically since moving through phases is less of an issue.

According to the APM Body of Knowledge (APM, 2019), there are three main approaches for the life cycles: "**Linear (waterfall) life cycles** are sequenced into a set of distinct phases, from the development of the initial concept to the deployment of an ultimate outcome, output or benefits. This approach aims to be highly structured, predictable and stable. **Iterative (agile) life cycles** are composed of several iterations, which repeat one or more of the phases before proceeding to the next one. Iterative approaches can only proceed when user feedback is available to be used as the basis for initiating new cycles of development, refinement and improvement. **Hybrid life cycles** typically fuse together elements to create a new model or approach. For example, utilising iterative or agile methods for early requirements gathering, where the uncertainty is greatest, and following it up with incremental or sequential processes to formalise deployment."
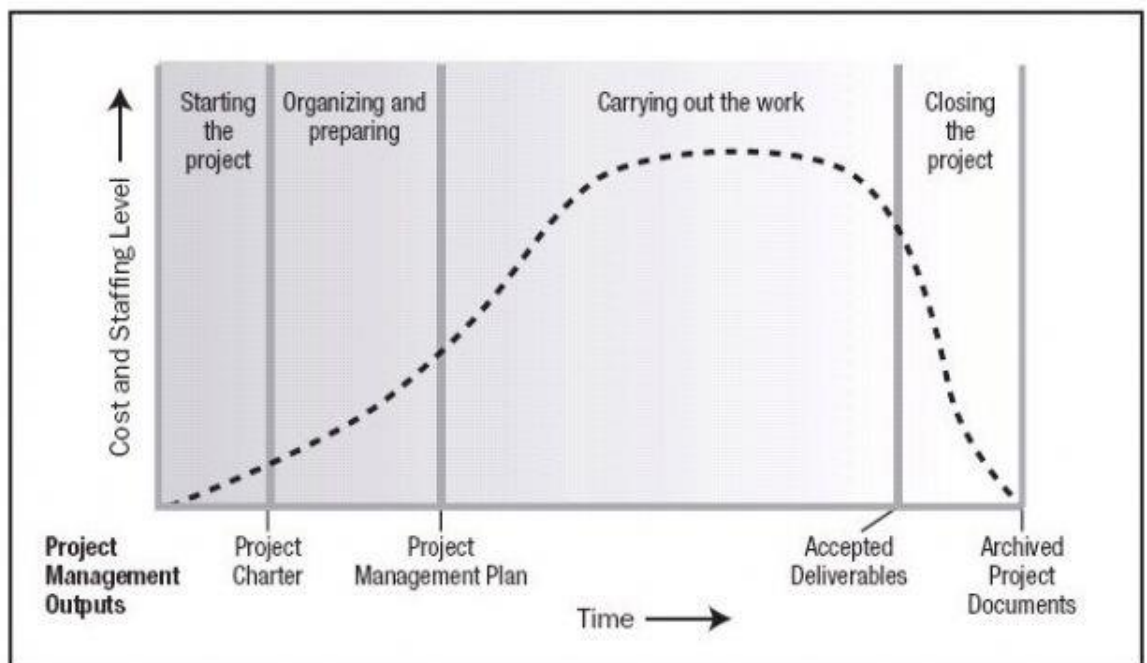

Figure 1. Typical Cost and Staffing Levels Across a Generic Project Life Cycle Structure (PMBOK Guide, 2013, p. 39)

As can be seen from the figure above (Figure 1.), the lengthiest and most expensive phase is quite obviously working phase. This comes as no surprise since required resources are put to work and

new staff may be introduced that were not present in planning. Often times in projects, the saying "It's more about about the journey rather than the destination" holds true. Even though the deliverable is the most important part when it comes to clients and stakeholders, from a project managers perspective, all parts are equally challenging and important. This being said, as stated in Project Management: Planning and Control (Lester, 2006, p. 38): "On some projects it may be convenient to appoint a different project manager at a change of a phase." If resources for this change are available and changing the manager is foreseen to provide benefits to the project, altering the organization like this is possible. These kinds of changes are more common in medium to large projects where staffing is done on a larger scale. More smaller scale project groups tend to stick with as few changes as possible and discuss assignments rather than roles.

8.3.4 Time Management in Projects

Time is arguably the most important and coveted asset in any project. It more or less defines every action inside the project. How it is performed, when, by whom and why. Time is in many cases at least a part of the answer to each of these questions in its own way as it limits our daily lives the most out of any other external factors. Luckily, time is constant and consistent and thus, can be managed in theory. In reality, due to the shifting landscape of the project management environment, losing control at some point is more the rule than the exception (Kezner, 2017, p. 168).

Schedules and deadlines are always present in project work and require almost constant attention when planning and carrying out stages of work during the project. In most projects, the project groups external factors such as the decisions of stakeholders and needs of clients determine the outliying schedules, for example the starting date, the half-way review and the end date. After these very general time constraints are imposed, time management begins in the true sense of the word.

Key factors in time management are consistency and communication. The dialogue between project workers and the manager needs to be ongoing in order for the right steps to be made in planning and implementation. This allows the manager to be up to date on the progress and be in control. Any unforeseen factors that might affect the schedule can then be reacted to as quickly as possible. The frequency of communication can be gauged inside the project group, depending on, for example working preferences and culture.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important	**Quadrant I** • Crisis • Pressing problems • Deadline driven projects	**Quadrant II** • Relationship building • Finding new opportunities • Long-term planning • Preventive activities • Personal growth • Recreation
Not Important	**Quadrant III** • Interruptions • Emails, calls, meetings • Popular activities • Proximate, pressing matters	**Quadrant IV** • Trivia, busy work • Time wasters • Some calls and emails • Pleasant activities

TABLE 4. Time Management Matrix (Covey, 2004)

One of the crucial areas in time management that tests the expertise of the project manager is estimating the duration and resources demanded by a certain activity. The manager has to be aware of what the activity/task includes in order to estimate the time and resources that need to be allocated towards completing this activity. Estimating the duration is important when planning the chain of activities and project phases since accurate time predictions can enhance the project's flow forward when the movement through phases is fluid and going as scheduled. However, schedules and estimates tend to break down very quickly in reality due to humane errors, lack of motivation and poor time management on individual levels. Flexibility is a virtue in project work. This requires the acceptance of momentarily losing control and the necessity of adapting the project plan.
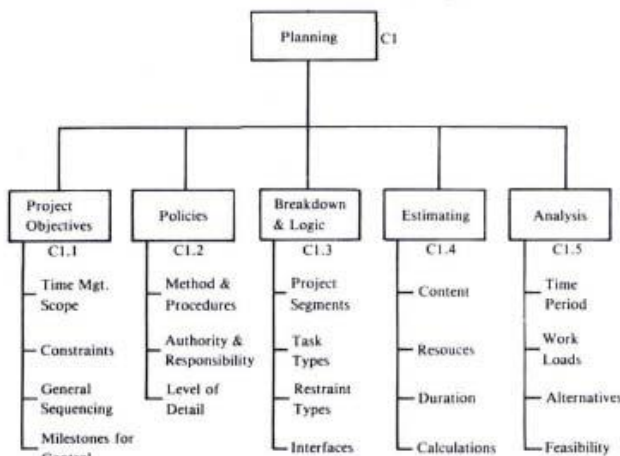
Time Management Function
Chart C1

CHART 3. Time Management Function (PMI, 2020)

Connected to project time management and scheduling is the concept of *dependency determination.* Since time management consists of handling activities, it is often necessary to define which activities have a dependent relationship between them.

According to Project Management Knowledge (Alby, 2020): "Dependencies are defined as relationships among tasks that determine the sequence in which project management activities need to be performed. These tasks may be multiple preceding tasks which mean that two tasks can be applicable at the same time. They are also characterized by different attributes like being discrete, mandatory, external and internal which are also considered as the four types of dependencies."

For the project manager to effectively manage time, characterizing the relationship of activities and arrangeing the order of them is important to the overall scheduling of the project. This needs to be done at an early stage in planning to identify key activities that might have the most dependencies to other activities or take more time than others, for example. "The process of dependency determination requires the project manager or the project management team to determine them so that they can assign tasks to the team members and also inform the stakeholders. Moreover, it is easier to arrange the task if the dependencies are all identified" (Alby, 2020).

8.4   Problem-solving in project management

Solving problems is one of the basic tasks of project management and one that every project manager has to deal with on a regular basis. Even if the risk of problems arising is mitigated by careful work in the planning phase, it is most often the things you don't think to plan for that end up as problems in the way of the projects success. Problem solving is a project in itself since it requires the development and implementation of a solution. The output of work this requires is dependent on the majority and nature of the problem.

As McGevna states (2013): "Many problems are defined in terms of symptoms: the effects of some underlying cause. A root cause is a cause which must be eliminated or properly dealt with to prevent the reoccurrence of the problem. The root cause may not be something you can easily deduce from the symptoms. Rather you need to establish the facts, especially since there may be multiple root causes to be dealt with. Then you have to decide which to work on and what to do." This statements allows us to believe that there are four distinct phases in problem solving, which are the following:

- Finding the cause of the problem
- Deciding the course of action and developing a solution
- Implementing the solution / solving the problem
- Reviewing the problem and learning from it

With these phases in mind, there are many different methods and techniques for finding the cause and solution to a problem if they are not clearly obvious to the project team at the time of the problems occurrence.

8.4.1 Methods and techniques

One of the most common methods developed to portrait the process of problem solving is the Plan – Do – Check – Act -cycle also known as the PDCA -cycle. "The PDCA Cycle is a systematic series of steps for gaining valuable learning and knowledge for the continual improvement of a product or process." (Patel, Deshpande 2017) Like the name suggests, the PDCA -cycle contains four steps that can be repeated if necessary, hence the method being a cycle. The PDCA -cycle is a diverse and useful method due to the fact that it can also be applied to other aspects of a project, for example in terms of optimizing/developing project activities or quality assurance of the deliverables. The structure of the cycle allows for a clear order of action when being faced with a problem. The cycle of PDCA promotes the concept of continuous improvement and is very widely used for that reason, though it does require a certain level of uncertainty and the willingness to make changes possibly multiple times until the solution or improvement is found.
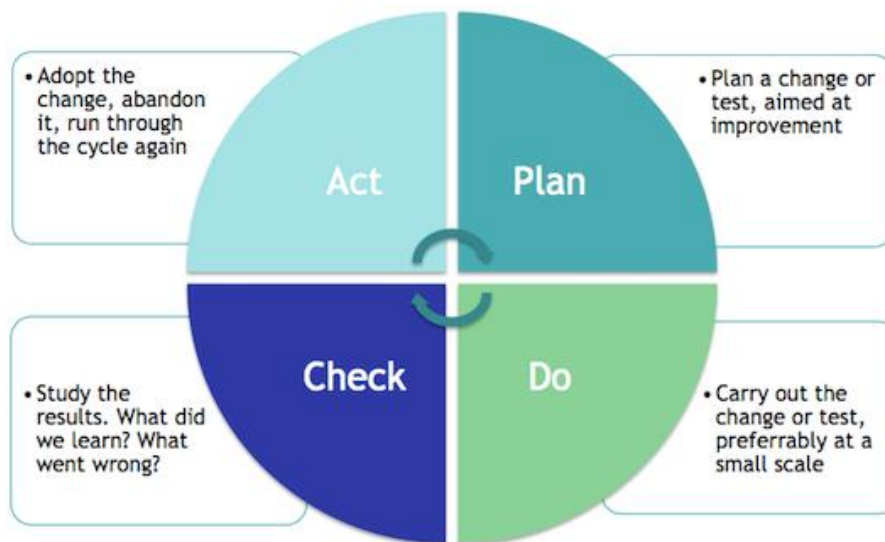
CHART 4. PDCA -cycle (ICT Institute 2017)

The phases of the PDCA -cycle are dependent on the results of the previous phase as they are the input based on which the next phase will be executed. When solving a project-related problem using PDCA, it is important to do thorough work in each of the phases in order to save time. A careless action in any of the phases might lead to the solution failing and thus resetting the cycle. That being said, analyzing the root-cause correctly is the most crucial part of problem-solving since it is extremely difficult to solve a problem that's cause is not properly understood or diagnosed incorrectly.

Most commonly, there are two ways of adressing and solving a problem. It is to be noted that these two are not mutually exclusive and can sometimes overlap in complementing eachother. The two approaches are:

- Addressing the root cause
- Addressing the symptoms of the problem

A practical example can be found from the medical field, that is applicable to business and project aspects as well. After proper research, if the cause of the symptoms is discovered and a known cure is developed and available, the problem is solved. If one of these two requirements are not filled, the secondary option is to address and medicate the symptoms. Problem-solving is very much a logical process and requires determination and tenacity from the project manager and workers alike. In the worst-case scenario, problems can cause serious issues to the progress of the project or even impose new constraints. Proper management and communication are emphasized during the times problems occur to conserve the relations inside of the project group. Problems can often create unwanted stress and tension that can be harmful to the project's continuance since the lower motivation, communication and increase uncertainty.

8.5 Organizational communication

Communication between the project team and the stakeholders is absolutely vital to the projects success and can have a large impact on the working style, motivation and scheduling of the project. The way communication is handled is usually dependent on the culture established either in the project organization or the stakeholder organization. As stated in PMBOK Guide (2013, p. 21): "Organizational communications have great influence on how projects are conducted. As a consequence, project managers in distant locations are able to more effectively communicate with all relevant stakeholders within the organizational structure to facilitate decision making". Since a significant part of working towards a project is often very independent, the meaning of communication is emphasized to keep everyone related to the project on the same page.

The importance of communication runs through every level of the project all the way from management to workers to shareholders. For example, workers must inform the manager about the progress so that the management can keep stakeholders informed. Vice versa, if stakeholders receive new information about new constraints or specifications related to the project, they are to inform the project group. Also, if working on a project that is seen by the public, such as the one discussed in this thesis, external communication and public relations are things to keep in mind.

To efficiently control these things, the project manager has to plan communications to prevent issues futher down the line. Even though lack of communication is often detrimental to the project,

too much communication can also disrupt the workflow and come of as micro-managing to the project workers. Micro-management can often feel frustrating especially during a project where per se, everyone related is experienced enough in the field to work independently. Therefore, keeping the levels of communication moderate is healthy for keeping the collective motivation up. According to Rajkumar (PMI, 2010): "There is no advantage of supplying stakeholders with information that isn't needed or desired, and the time spent creating and delivering such information is a waste of resources". The communication plan must state the appropriate methods, channels, requirements and even schedules related to communication. The project manager can also assign a communications manager depending on the need, scale and structure of the organization. Rajkumar (PMI, 2010) also states: "The communications plan may also include information and guidelines for project status meetings, team meetings, e-meetings, and even e-mail. Setting expectations for communications and meetings early in the project establishes guidelines for the project team and stakeholders".

Nowadays, as electronic meeting services such as Google Meet, Skype and Zoom have grown massively in popularity, meetings and other communication can be seemingly instantaneous. Communication can be done at a short notice and remote work is more and more common. As project work by its nature is often independent and progressive, tools for remote communication and team management provide huge benefits and can help react quickly to problematic situations. Every project team should be using contemporary, web-based communication tools to aid their work. Cloud-based services where documents and files related to the project can be stored and seen by the project team are also a great asset to improve work-related communication.
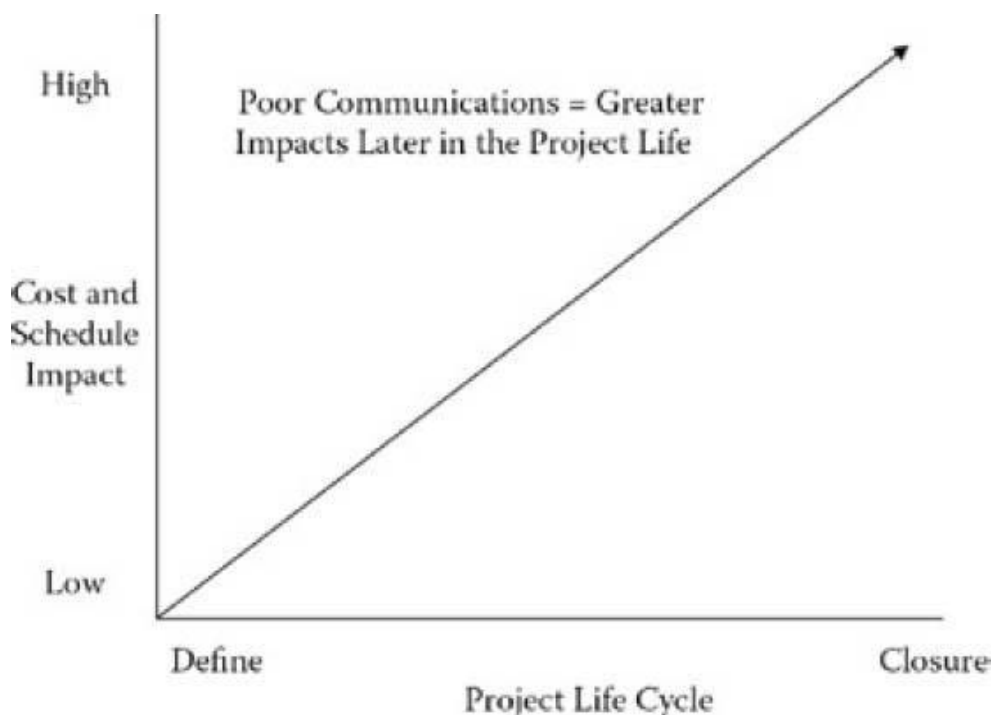

FIGURE 2. The price of poor communication (Rajkumar S. 2010)

When scrutinizing the figure above (FIGURE 2), it can be seen that the impact that poor communication has carries out and grows into later stages of the project, impacting not only

schedules but also costs. The figure very well demonstrates the impact that proper communication has even in the very early stages of the project. Therefore, the communication plan is one of the most important tools that the project manager has to establish as soon as possible. The effects of a well-implemented communication plan can go a long way in ironing out bumps in the project's course.

Wiley (2012, p. 317) describes the purpose of communication management as such: "Communications management is about keeping everybody in the loop. The communications planning process concerns defining the types of information you will deliver, who will receive it, the format for communicating it, and the timing of its release and distribution. It turns out that 90% of a project manager's job is spent on communication so it's important to make sure everybody gets the right message at the right time".

Even if a detailed communication plan is implemented, a large part of communications is still trust. Trust in the project team, stakeholders and other relevant parties for them to provide the proper information at the right time. Often time faults in communications can also be due to human error and mishaps such as forgetfulness, carelessness and poor time management. Human interaction is key since it is to be accepted that accidents happen, even to experts and professionals. Excluding plans, methods and official channels, it is important for the project manager to build and maintain social relationships with the team and focus on communication on a more human level. Depending on the nature, length and scale of the project, team bonding is a crucial part of communication often overlooked especially in large organisations. The project manager should exert efforts in building a project team that works as a socially functional unit.

9 PROJECT MANAGEMENT: CASE PARASTA PALVELUA 2019

In this section of the thesis, it will be discussed how to implement the theoretical side of project management to the Parasta Palvelua -competition and also demonstrated how it was implemented in the competition for the year 2019, our case year. Most of the materials presented in this section will be actual material produced for the project carried out by our project group and will help draw the framework of project management of the Parasta Palvelua -competition for the following years.

It is important to note that the objectives of the competition are likely to change from year to year and it is important to modify the implementation of the concept accordingly. The project manager has to be able to apply the knowledge he/she possesses and be bold enough to break the former concepts to allow for a shift in focus if the nature or objectives of the competition shift radically. There is no one right way to handle and carry out a project, but rather it is up for the project manager and the project team to utilize their skillsets and know-how to create a project workflow to suit that particular organization. That being said, this project management concept will provide a solid foundation to further build the competition on and guide to refer to on the most important things related to the project.

The Parasta Palvelua -project's management will be covered in project phases and activities related to those phases as well as covering the most important broader, independent topics such as communication, time management etc.

Later, when referring to the organizing parties of the competition or stakeholders, it is to be noticed that these parties include the Kuopio region Chamber of Commerce, Savonia University of Applied Sciences (= Savonia UAS), the city of Kuopio and the newspaper Savon Sanomat with the Chamber of Commerce and Savonia UAS being the main organizers.

9.1 Staffing and project phases for Parasta Palvelua

As the first topics of the implementation section, staffing (and role division) and project phases related to the competition will be inspected. All of the specific information regarding these topics is either primary data from the year 2019 or secondary data acquired from the prior years of the competition from official sources and organizing parties of the competition.

9.1.1 Staffing and role-division

The staffing and recruitment process for the project team of Parasta Palvelua has been very varied through the six years the annual competition has been organized. In many of the prior years, the Kuopio region Chamber of Commerce has provided the project team members or the person in charge from their own permanent staff.

The old staffing strategy was changed in 2019 when the responsibility of recruitment of the project team was handed over to Savonia UAS. The change was made to save the own staff resources of the Chamber of Commerce and also to further involve Savonia UAS in the project and to provide internship places for the students interested in project work. Three interns were selected for the project team from the students that applied in 2019. The number of interns selected can vary in the coming years depending on the amount of resources wanted to allocate to this project. This strategy will presumably be how the project team for Parasta Palvelua will be assembled for the foreseeable years of the competition.

When recruiting interns for the project, one key scope that the Chamber of Commerce as well as Savonia UAS had set for the project team, was for it to be multidisciplinary. In practice, this means that the aim was to have interns from different degree programs and to utilize their relevant skillset and differing aspects towards the project. In 2019, this objective was fulfilled and from experience, it can be said that a multidisciplinary project team is something to strive for in the upcoming years when starting the recruitment for the project. Having differing skillsets and knowledge bases can also make role division more clear and simplified.

Once recruitment has ended and the project team has met with eachother and the representatives of the organizing parties for the first time, role division is to be discussed. In the first meeting, constraints and objectives are established for the project. Based on these topics, role division should be decided upon the first meeting. In the Parasta Palvelua -case, the project team can divide the roles best suited for everyone internally, without much influence from the Chamber of Commerce.

In the Parasta Palvelua 2019 -project, the project team decided collectively to divide one key aspect of the project per team member. When inspecting the nature of the competition, it was decided that the key operations would be:

- Project Management
- Marketing and Communication
- Company Co-Operations

It was also decided that the collective tasks that would concern everybody on the project team would be:

- Company contacting
- Content creation for social media
- Developing and supporting marketing
- Carrying out practical arrangements

Depending on the size of the project team and the distinct objectives, more specific roles can be given to suit the needs. However, the division should always be clear and consice to minimize the amount of confusion and overlapping regarding the tasks. Some of this confusion is a part of the deal and will eventually happen, since overlapping work and filling in for a teammate is a natural part of the process when dealing with a new project. It is up to the project manager to stay on top of the teams' activities and to monitor that the workload is as evenly divided as possible. As the project goes on, variations can be made and new tasks can be given based on the need for new activities that have presented themselves when organizing the competition. Since the team is made up of interns, flexibility is recommended to ensure that everyone gets the most out of the internship.

9.1.2 Project phases and scheduling

Dividing the project into phases is relatively straight-forward when discussing the Parasta Palvelua - competition. It is a competition, after all. The project could roughly be divided in to four phases. These phases are:

1. Planning
2. Registration period
3. Voting period
4. Closing and announcing the winner

In the case of Parasta Palvelua, the phases were chronologically linear, one phase following the other with quite minimal overlapping. Since the total duration of the project was about 7 months, from May until November, a relatively equal allocation of time per phase was possible. To put it more plainly, phases were scheduled on a monthly basis. The scheduling was obviously done in the first of these phases, the planning phase. This phase is were the project manager has to be willing to put in extra time and effort in building the plans about everything related to the project wether it be about the team, schedules, working methods or communication. It is the foundation that all further operations will be built on and has to be given appropriate attention. The project manager has to asses in co-operation with the team who much time and resources each individual phase will consume. This has to be re-done annually at the start of the competition since the scale or objectives might have shifted since the previous year.
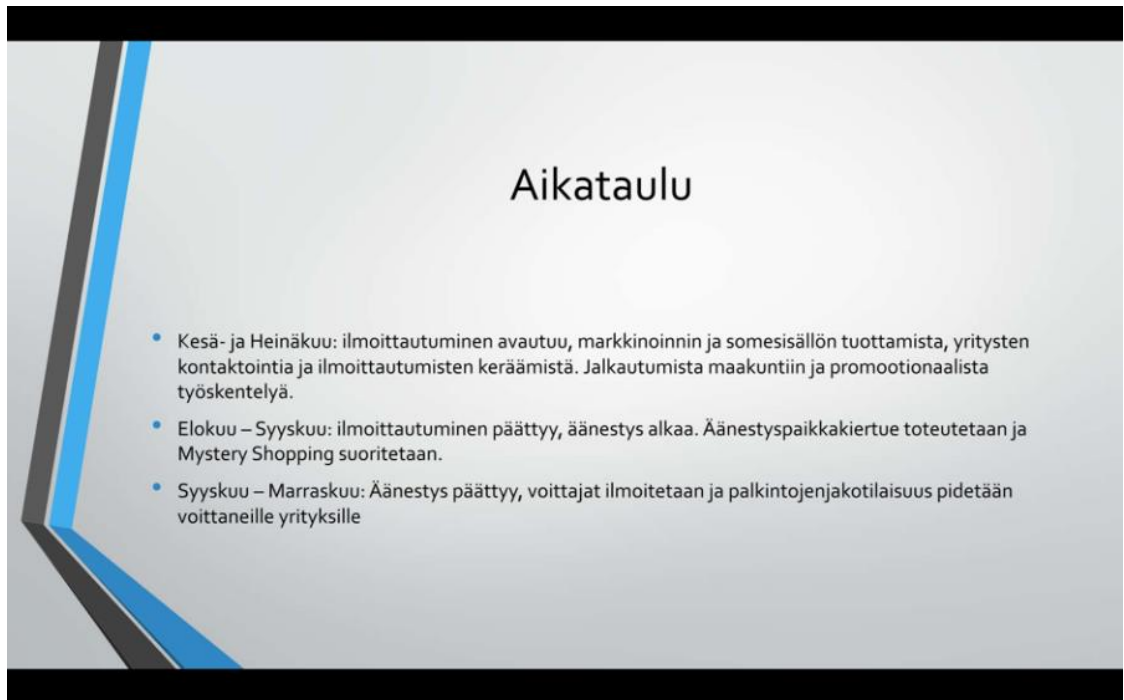
IMAGE 15. Description of the general schedule and activities presented to the Chamber of Commerce in May 2019 (Simola, Kettunen, Räsänen 2019)

The project phases involved in Parasta Palvelua were briefly listed above. All of the phases contained distinct tasks and objectives related to furthering the project. In the following list, the phases are elaborated and described more in detail.

- Planning (May - June): Beginning the project, having first meetings and establishing relations to the Chamber of Commerce and also the project team. General planning related to the upcoming phases and creating a concept for the competition to present at the next meeting with the chamber of commerce. Researching material from previous years of the competition, to determine what worked and what didn't. Pondering what to change, what to keep and what to lose from the projects of previous years. Reviewing the previous years is a very valuable asset to the project manager and essential in developing the competition from year to year. The most major preparation related to the next phase is designing and creating the registration form for companies and creating a marketing campaign for the registration with the aim of attracting companies to participate in the competition.

- Registration phase (June – September): This phase of the project may sometimes be referred to as "the quiet phase". Social media marketing is the main focus and task of the project group, to increase the number of competing companies. The registration form is usually published at the beginning of June so that the registration is open through the summer season. Preparations for entering the next phase should be started well in time before the end of the registration, preferably at the end of July or the beginning of August. Direct contancting companies is also suggested as well as remaining in touch with registered companies should they have any questions related to the competition process.

- Voting phase (September – October): Even though the actual voting is open for only three weeks, it can be said that the voting phase lasts for about a month with its preparations and activities. Tight communication with the representatives of the newspaper Savon Sanomat is crucial, since they arrange the actual voting and can track the number of votes and give information on the winning company. Intense marketing and company co-operation is kept up throughout this entire phase, enticing the companies to market at their physical locations and other channels. Delivering physical promotional materials for the participating companies is a tried-and-true method of increasing marketing. Furthermore, a tour of voting locations should be arranged. This tour can include for example the most popular malls in the northern-Savo region and can be done by the project team or with the help of other external, third parties. The tour is done to enable the people without internet access to vote and to gain visibility for the Parasta Palvelua -competition as a brand. From the project managers standpoint, this phase is the most demanding and far as time and task management is concerned. A lot of things are happening simultaneously in a short window of time (which is not uncommon during the project) that are extremely important to the competition's and the project's success.

- Closing phase and announcing the winners: The final phase of the project and simultaneously of the competition for the year. Announcing the winner in the training event organized by the Chamber of Commerce is the official ending to the competition. However, the project team needs to also compile written feedback for the participating companies and send them out. The project manager must see this through with the team as well as communicate with the organizing parties about a possible feedback meeting. This feedback meeting is useful and recommended as it allows the review of the project as a whole and already sets up the starting point for the project team next year.

As the project phases listed above form the more general timetable for the project, scheduling should be done at a more specific level throughout the competition. The project manager at unison with the team should discuss schedules especially when larger tasks critical to the projects progress are at hand. As previously discussed, the Parasta Palvelua -competition as a project is very independent in project work as far as working limitations and requirements set by the Chamber of Commerce are concerned. This heightens the emphasis of the project manager keeping up with the work of the project team. Furthermore, the self-regulation of the project team in regards of set schedules needs to be satisfactory. Many phases of the competition are visible publicly through media, so keeping up with announced deadlines is very necessary.

Practical arrangements for keeping up with the scheduling should be made and agreed upon internaly by the team. In 2019, a spreadsheet in Excel was used as an effective way of keeping everyone on the same page about upcoming tasks and their schedules. Having the sheet in a cloud-based service where the whole project team is able to modify and observe the document makes sharing information and tracking the progress simpler. Future project teams can be creative in terms

of the practical arrangements about scheduling but a similar method has been proven functional and is definitely recommended.

9.2   Project management communication in Parasta Palvelua

In this topic, communication specific to Parasta Palvelua will be discussed. The section has been divided into three parties most essential to Parasta Palvelua. All of the primary information about handling the communication in 2019 is directly from the project team.

9.2.1 With stakeholders and organizing parties

As was previously stated, the Parasta Palvelua -competition has in the previous years had four major organizing parties, with the main ones being the Kuopio region Chamber of Commerce and Savonia University of Applied Sciences. The supporting organizations have been the city of Kuopio and the newspaper Savon Sanomat. Every single one of these organizations are high-profile and highly influential in the northern Savo region where the competition is contrentrated in. Tight co-operation between the project team and these organizations can result in a great deal of publicity for the competition and can help to grow popularity.
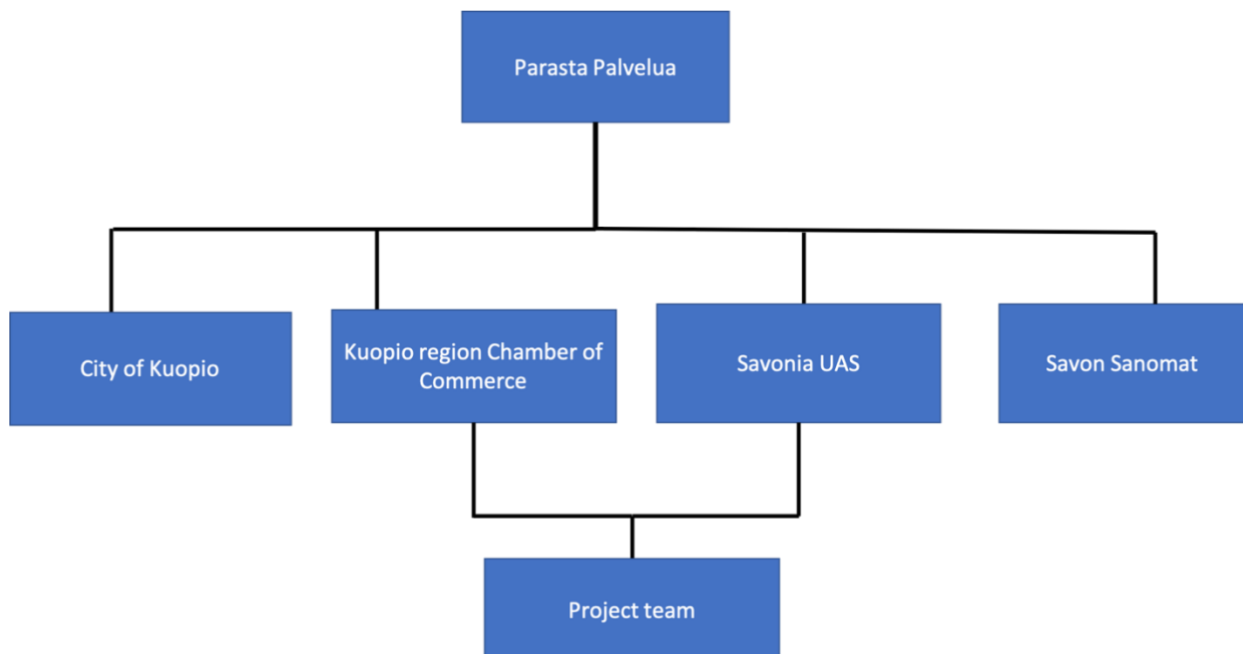

CHART 5. Organizational flow chart of the Parasta Palvelua stakeholders. (Simola, 2020)

In the role of the project manager, communicating and reporting to the so called stakeholders (that in the case of Parasta Palvelua, consist of the four organizations involved in the competition) are activities that one should become very accustomed with. Most of the reporting will be done to the Chamber of Commerce and Savonia UAS since that is where the co-operation is the most tightly knit. Larger scale reports done a few times throughout the project are done to all stakeholders and require more preparation. These report presentations are done mostly in the meetings of the service

committee of the chamber of commerce that are arranged four times a year. During these meetings, it is wise to network and be familiarized with the people that the project manager can later be in contact with.

The newspaper Savon Sanomat has an important impact in the marketing of the competition. In previous years including 2019, Savon Sanomat has made stories for the paper and the web page about the competition alongside the phases. A total of three stories were made, in addition to a few ads place in the paper, mostly during the voting phase. Savon Sanomat also creates the voting form and thus, project manager should be in contact with the paper to consult them about the necessary attributes that the voting form has to include. Agreeing on a contact person inside the organization is recommended at an early stage and usually a representative from the digital department has been stayed in contact with.

The city of Kuopio mostly provides assistance and boosts in marketing efforst for Parasta Palvelua. The chief of communications and marketing has previously been the person that project management has been in contact with.

In the planning phase of Parasta Palvelua when the team is compiling a project concept, a list of contact persons needs to be added. This list should be in access of everybody involved in the project and should include the name, position, e-mail and the phone number of the contact person, This will aid the efforts in communication greatly not only for management, but for the whole team. The preferred communication method to stakeholders, mainly the Chamber of Commerce is via e-mail but every so often a phone call might be in order. In this case, the call should be agreed upon previously by the project manager and the contact person since an unsolicited call might come off as distracting and unprofessional.

9.2.2 With the project team

Communication inside the project team can happen in many different ways and is less restricted. It is often multi-channel and different channels can be used to handle different things. That being said, there are a few criterias that the methods of communication and the mediums used should fill.

When talking about project work, the communication should have the possibility of being quite instantaneous so that reacting fast is an option. E-mail is hardly as fast as other modern communication platforms, so in 2019, the Parasta Palvelua -project team chose Whatsapp as the primary platform/mean of communication. In the Whatsapp group, all of the most important topics were discussed and the platform was with everybody at all times through a smartphone for fast reaction. Of course, this might pose some problems since not everybody wants to be reachable at all times. This is not, however, necessary and the team or ultimately the project manager can gauge how much communication is necessary. Though not being the most secure platform for communication, Whatsapp was the most handy and known by everyone.

As far as sharing, modifying, commenting and reviewing documents related to the competition were conserned, Microsoft Onedrive was the tool of choice. Onedrive and all the Microsoft Office applications are provided for students by Savonia UAS so it was a logical solution to utilize them. Everybody was already familiar with them and it made the workflow very smooth when handling documents. A collective cloud drive was made for the project where sub-folders were made if necessary to keep documents organized. Onedrive is recommended but similar platforms like Google Drive or Dropbox will work fine as well.

9.2.3 With participating companies

Even though this topic was briefly discussed in chapter 7, it is also relevant to project management. When observing different channels of communication from the project managers perspective, the following can be said;

Various different channels can be used to communicate with the participating companies and their representatives, depending on the context and the channel where the contact was initially established. The main tools used in the 2019 Parasta Palvelua project were e-mails, Facebook Messenger and the Instagram direct messages.

E-mails were the main channel of communication and arguably the most official out of the ones used. When sending official e-mails related to the competition, the same level of formality was applied as to messages for stakeholder reporting. All of the more formal messages that were sent to all of the participating companies were sent via e-mail, such as the registration confirmation, instructions for the competition and marketing, and the collected feedback from voters. Since the registration form was used to collect a contact person e-mail address from all of the companies, it was relatively easy to approach them through this channel. As stated previously, using e-mails depended a lot on the context. Some companies preferred a more direct messaging style through social media and others wanted the communication to stay more formal, mainly larger companies like banks and insurance companies.

Instagram messages and Facebook messenger were used for more informal messaging and were aimed more to smaller businesses. Mainly, communication with the companies was up to the company co-operation director, and as stated in chapter 7, the part of the mission of the project was to provide service support and answers for the participants. The appropriate channel should be used to respond and for that, the main responsibility lied on the shoulders of the company co-operation director. Although this was the case, the project manager can, with due reasoning provide oppinions and alter the contents and means of communication. The manager should also make sure the communication plan constructed in the beginning of the Parasta Palvelua -project is implemented as well as possible to help keep communication clear and efficient.

9.3 Creating a year-specific project plan/concept

The idea of creating a project plan/concept has been brushed over several times in the previous chapters and pages. As deemed previously, a good plan is essential and creating it is one of the project managers most important assignments. This plan/concept is one that should be re-done annually, at the beginning of each Parasta Palvelua -project for it to stay relevant and accurate.

Up next, generally competent instructions will follow on how to practically conceive this plan. Most likely, the plan will be presented to stakeholders of the Parasta Palvelua -project during the planning phase, before moving on in the cycle.

KUOPION ALUEEN KAUPPAKAMARI

Projektikonsepti

Parasta Palvelua 2019

Ville Simola, Okko Räsänen, Iiris Kettunen

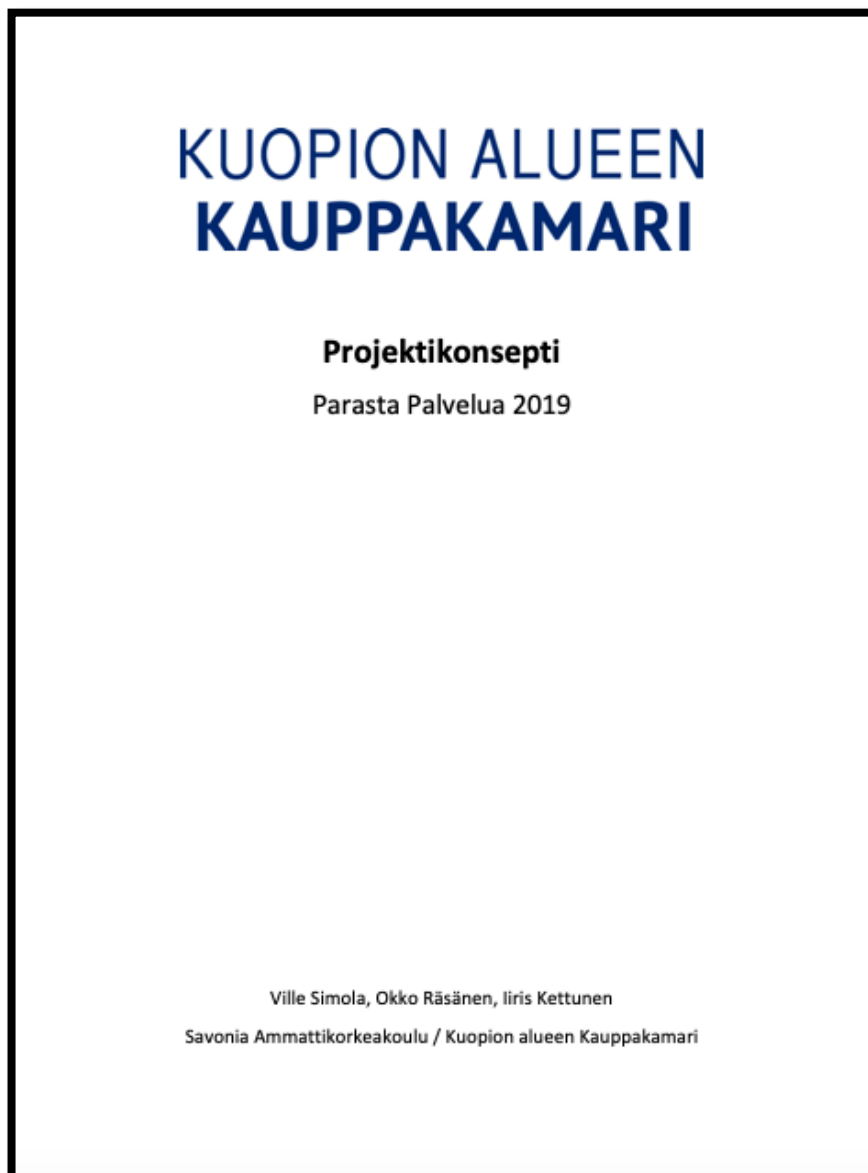Savonia Ammattikorkeakoulu / Kuopion alueen Kauppakamari

IMAGE 16. Example of the project plan cover page of Parasta Palvelua 2019 (Simola, Räsänen, Kettunen, 2019)

The project plan for Parasta Palvelua should cover **at least** the following topics and go somewhat in-depth:

- Contact information of the project team on the first page: Preferably name, phone number, e-mail address and title in the project organization

- General introduction: Introduce the stakeholder organizations, the Parasta Palvelua - brand and the objectives for the current year.

- Registration: Cover how and when companies can sign up to participate in the competition.

- Communication and social media: Introduce the channels that are going to be used for communication internally as well as externally. Brief elaboration on the type of social media content that will be published during the project. Adding the account names for the official social medias is also recommended.

- Marketing plan: Likely the most extensive section of the project plan. This section should cover all of the necessary information about marketing Parasta Palvelua, such as channels, budget, demographic and the visual theme. Should be meticulously written by both the marketing manager and the project manager in unison.

- Internationality: The plan should cover how to take into consideration people and companies with an international background. Establishing the languages in which marketing is conducted is a good start.

- Voting prizes: It has been customary in previous years to give voters the option to participate in a lottery as a motivation factor for voting. From where, what and how many prizes can be collected should be planned.

- Mystery Shopping: The plan and method of executing the "mystery shopping" should be included, if necessary.

- Major differences compared to last year's implementation: If there are major differences in the way the project is executed, it is beneficial to state them in the plan to avoid confusion and assumptions based on the policies of previous years.

- Company categories: Companies have been previously divided into categories depending on their field of business. As reference, the following categories were used in 2019;

  - Hotels and restaurants
  - Events and experiences
  - Banking, insurance and B2B -services
  - Wellness, health and beauty
  - Shops and stores

  The categories should be adapted year to year based on the participating companies.

- List of contacts: An extensive list of contacts should be prepared. It can include representatives of stakeholders, media or any other necessary parties. The aim is to provide a clear understanding of who and how to contact when the need arises.

When all of these sections are included into the project plan, a good base has been built. The project manager can then, using own judgement, add sections that are necessary or "nice-to-have" included.

10 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, a summary of the thesis process can be found, alongside some conclusions about the brand and concept of Parasta Palvelua. They are based on our subjective observations and opinions regarding this thesis and Parasta Palvelua 2019.

10.1 Summary of the thesis process

The process for this thesis started at spring 2019 when we did our internship with this project. Each of us acknowledged when applying for the internship that we would write a thesis based on the Parasta Palvelua –project. The internship was valuable for gathering data and information and it helped in the thesis process. We were able to write many parts in this thesis by our own experiences especially in the case –sections.

This thesis contained a few things that differentiates it from others – it was conducted in English and it was done multi-disciplinary, meaning there were three students from three different educational orientations. Writing in foreign language gave the thesis challenges of its own but overall, the language didn't bother too much. Writing in English also gave us the opportunity to reference many international sources. A decent number of sources were utilized in this thesis and internet sources like blogs and articles were used quite a bit. Especially in chapters 2 and 3 about social media, a lot of the most recent sources are only available online and that is why they were used actively.

As a result of having three writers working on this thesis, after some consideration, these three topics were chosen as they best represent the most crucial aspects of carrying out Parasta Palvelua as a project. Collectively we felt that if these were the things a project group focused on, then this project would be successful on some level for years to come.

Social media and marketing were one of the main parts of Parasta Palvelua and that is how we got most of the visibility, hence a proper portion of this thesis was about it. Chapters 2 and 3 first tells about theory about social media using different sources and chapter 4 tells how it was implemented in the project. The implementation could have been said in between the theoretical parts but to make the thesis more whole, it was better to place it at its own chapter. Theory of social media and marketing was written in a manner that is relevant to the event. Digital marketing consists of so many things it had to be narrowed down to the essentials.

Customer service was big part of the competition, because the whole competition is based on customer service. It was important to go through some theory of customer service and reflect on said theory in the case study part. There is so much theory of customer service, so it was quite hard to find the essential materials, but at the end it came together well. We also went through Savonian service, "Savolainen palvelu", and for that part we got a good interview from Olavi Rytkönen. He told about the service in Savo. Kuopio Chamber of Commerce have put together the theses of

Savonian service and we also put those in this thesis. Those are the base for this competition. In the case part of customer service, we told about how we reached out the companies. As we know, customer service is important in every company or organization. We also needed to think about our service during the competition because we represented our school and Kuopio's Chamber of Commerce.

Event management part was also a part of the thesis. What we can bring up here is to think, if the Parasta Palvelua -tour is necessary in the upcoming competitions. As said in the chapter we did reach out to people, but not as many we though. Most people did vote online. But the people who came to our stands liked them. It is important to get more visibility in the next years and emphasize the marketing more.

Project management is a huge part of any project and therefore could not be overlooked regarding Parasta Palvelua, despite the fact that it has some differences when comparing to more conventional projects with concrete deliverables. It was decided that for this guide, having a full theoretical framework and well as demonstrated implementation of project management would benefit the future project team largely.

The thesis process proceeded in bursts but overall, we are satisfied with the result and the deadlines were suitable for everyone. The things that affected the implementation of the thesis were the job situation of each of us which made it difficult at times to arrange meetings that suit everyone. Also, the ongoing Covid-19 situation affected in a way that for example libraries weren't accessible. It was sometimes hard to focus doing the thesis at home, but we did it together well and as we planned.

10.2 Conclusions

During our time working on the Parasta Palvelua -project, we have come to found that through the course of the previous years this competition has been organized, a solid foundation for starting the project annually can be identified. Since this was the first year that three interns worked on this project and the competition grew tremendously, it is implied that allocating similar or even more resources in the years to come would be beneficial in growing the brand of Parasta Palvelua. Also, due to the relatively heavy workload this project produces, especially contributed to its growth, it is wise to have at least three individuals working on the project. Recruiting these individuals from Savonia seems to be a very viable option to utilize in the future.

There are many processes about this competition that can be developed further to hone the project workflow and innovating new approaches every year is vital for Parasta Palvelua to stay relevant. These developments can be external as well as internal and should be bravely brought forward. Even though our thesis aims to provide a solid guide for getting a head start on the project, it is by no means perfect nor should it be treated as such. It simply lays the foundation for the most important processes and aids the upcoming project teams in their innovations. It would serve this

thesis to the highest degree to build improvements on top of the basis that we have written. In a general sense, leaving more written instructions and observations from previous years would be largely beneficial for Parasta Palvelua, since when we started, frankly, there was none. A concrete improvement would be to improve the documentation of this project every year and expand further on as resources potentially grow.

The project team of 2019, us, would be very happy to consult any future project teams in matters related to this thesis or Parasta Palvelua as a project. It is desired that this thesis would be used by the next group to learn and to continue on with the tone that was set for Parasta Palvelua 2019. Project work is filled with intricacies in every role that can only be mastered with experimentation. We encourage the next team to experiment and to innovate, to grow this great brand of friendly competition forward.

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