



EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING CHANNELS

CASE: Samira Group Ltd.

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**Bachelor's Thesis
March 2009**

School of Business Administration



JYVÄSKYLÄ UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

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|--|--|---------------------|
| Author(s) KESKITALO, Eija RISKU, Jenni | Type of Publication Bachelor's Thesis | |
| | Pages 103 | Language English |
| | Confidential Until _____ | |
| Title EVALUATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF MARKETING CHANNELS CASE: Samira Group Ltd. | | |
| Degree Programme Degree Programme in International Business | | |
| Tutor(s) SAUKKONEN, Juha | | |
| Assigned by Samira Group Ltd. | | |
| Abstract <p>The thesis was conducted for Samira Group Ltd. The company is a constructor of Kelo Log Cabins in Finland. The purpose was to identify effective marketing channels for Samira: suggesting what channels to use, and how and where to direct them. Research problems were tackled by examining the company's target customer market, and how to effectively allocate the advertising and promotion efforts of the company in a context of a small/medium-sized business. The research includes a customer survey, a company management interview and several secondary sources of information. In addition, the economic situation of the current macroenvironment was discussed for its direct/ indirect effects.</p> <p>The results describe that the customer segments are divided by using geographical segmentation and customer characteristics, including subsegments of age, profession, purpose of purchase and Finnish and foreign customers. The marketing channels involve personal selling and promotion, printed media and E-marketing, and outdoor and local advertising. The company should execute the marketing channels independently, as well as use intermediaries and outsourcing. The so-called global financial crisis has given rise to uncertainty in the market, creating instability in the company's operating environment. This should be acknowledged in the marketing decisions.</p> <p>The results are tailored for the needs of the assigning company. To some extent, the results discussed can be applied for purposes e.g. in marketing of an SME company in construction industry, or for a short description of the current economical indicators.</p> | | |
| Keywords marketing channels, construction, customer segmenting, holiday housing | | |
| Miscellaneous | | |

| | | |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| Tekijä(t) KESKITALO, Eija RISKU, Jenni | Julkaisun laji Opinnäytetyö | |
| | Sivumäärä 103 | Julkaisun kieli Englanti |
| | Luottamuksellisuus Salainen _____ saakka | |
| Työn nimi MARKKINOINTIKANAVIEN ARVIOIMINEN JA KEHITTÄMINEN CASE: Samira Group Ltd. | | |
| Koulutusohjelma Degree Programme in International Business | | |
| Työn ohjaaja(t) SAUKKONEN, Juha | | |
| Toimeksiantaja(t) Samira Group Oy | | |
| <p>Tiivistelmä</p> <p>Opinnäytetyön tilaaja on Samira Group Oy, keloloma-asuntojen rakentaja Suomessa. Opinnäytetyö suunnitteli ja kohdensi yrityksen markkinointia, tutkimalla ja määrittämällä Samiran markkinointikanavia ja asiakaskuntaa. Ydinongelmana oli (1) yrityksen tehokkaiden markkinointikanavien tunnistaminen ja nimeäminen, sekä (2) kuinka ohjata yrityksen markkinointikanavia. Ohjaamiseen liittyi vahvasti yrityksen nykyisen ja potentiaalisen asiakaskunnan segmentointi: mille ryhmille markkinointi suunnataan. Lisäksi huomioitiin opinnäytetyön tekemisen hetkellä vallitseva maailmanlaajuinen talouskriisi ja sen mahdolliset vaikutukset.</p> <p>Työ toteutettiin ”case study” – menetelmällä ja tietoa tuotettiin asiakaskyselyllä, yritysjohton haastattelulla sekä muita ulkoisia lähteitä käyttäen. Tutkimusmetodissa yhdistettiin kvalitatiivista ja kvantitatiivista ajattelua kattavien tuloksien saamiseksi, joten tulokset perustuvat jäseneltävään tilastotietoon (asiakaskysely) kuin myös yrityksen kokemuksiin, aikaisempaan tietoon markkinakanavista sekä eri markkinoinnin ja taloustieteen alan eksperttien raportteihin ja julkaisuihin. Tutkimustulokset jakavat asiakkaat maantieteellisen sijainnin ja asiakaspiirteiden mukaan. Segmenttejä ovat ikä, ammatti, hankinnan tarkoitus sekä kotimaiset ja ulkomaiset asiakkaat. Kanavia ovat henkilökohtainen myynti/promootio, printtimedia, verkkomainonta, ulkoilmamainonta ja paikallinen mainonta. Yrityksen tulisi suunnitella ja toteuttaa mainontaa itsenäisesti sekä välillä, kuten ulkoisten toimijoiden kautta. Talouskriisi on synnyttänyt yleistä epävarmuutta markkinoille, mikä vaikuttaa yrityksen toimintaympäristöön. Tämä tulee tiedostaa markkinointia suunniteltaessa.</p> <p>Markkinoinnin ja asiakassegmentoinnin tulokset on räätälöity Samira Groupin käyttöön. Tuloksia voi osittain käyttää ko. alalla toimivan pk-yrityksen markkinoinnissa, tai viittauksena talouden tilaan.</p> | | |
| Avainsanat (asiasanat) markkinointikanavat, mainostaminen, markkinointi, loma-asuntorakentaminen, segmentointi | | |
| Muut tiedot | | |

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1 INTRODUCTION

" Facilius per partes in cognitionem totius adducimur. ~ We are more easily led part by part to an understanding of the whole."

Seneca

The present research is conducted for Samira Group Ltd., and the primary function of the thesis is to assist in the company's marketing decisions. The thesis concerns two main research problems. The first problem is to identify effective marketing channels for Samira; suggesting what channels to use, and how and where to direct them. The second research problem is attached to the first research problem in the sense of where to direct the marketing channels. The allocation of the marketing channels is defined by the examination of the company's target customer market, which is the second research problem. The challenge faced by the company's marketing is how to effectively allocate the advertising and promotion efforts of the company, and in a context of a small/medium-sized business. The ultimate goal of the company's marketing is to generate sales and create awareness for the company.

The research method was to plan and execute a research, combining elements of both customer –and promotion and advertising research. This was executed as a case study; to survey the company's customers, interview the company management (stakeholders), and identify and discuss the marketing channel options.

Supporting research questions, drawn from the research problems, include the definition of Samira's target customers, the future of the company's marketing decisions/sales promotion, and describing the operational environment

and future challenges for the company. Future challenges include and emphasize the company's operating environment; the current economical situation, nationally as well as globally. The thesis identifies and describes the various steps involved in effort to answer the research questions, as well as targets on providing profitable standpoints for the future marketing decisions that serve the overall company goals.

Special emphasis has been placed upon the current economical situation when drawing conclusions for the future marketing decisions of the company. At the time of the research, Finland's construction industry as well as the national and global community encounter a new economical situation; a global financial crisis. The researchers have experienced the situation as essential to discuss, while making suggestions to the company's marketing decisions and its marketing channels. In order to effectively allocate marketing channels, the channels should be able to serve to the company's benefit; in providing new customers, spreading awareness, and including cost advantages in the process. In addition, it is important to recognize the economic environment of the company, and understand exterior influences that affect the customer base (e.g. the demand) and hence the company's future.

Initial situation, involving the researchers, attempts to provide two different viewpoints to the research. The experience and knowledge of the industry and the company by Ms.Keskitalo, who is employed by Samira Group. Ms.Risku has her background in coordinating investment and business projects in international surroundings. The conclusions should be able to project the view points of both, a customer and a company, an investor and a seller, to suggest effective marketing decisions that examine the research problem through two initial standpoints.

2 COMPANY BACKGROUND

Samira Group Ltd. is a small/medium size company operating mainly in the Finnish market. It has, however, also sales agents in UK and some international sales activity. The company's main business is construction, marketing and sales of holiday homes. The company background –section describes the company more thoroughly; its main products and services, target customers, competitors, and operating industry.

2.1 Company Description

Samira Group Ltd. is the market leader and the biggest Kelo Log housing developer in the holiday home sector in Lapland, Finland. In addition to the construction and selling of Kelo Log cabins, the company also builds apartment hotels. Samira Group Ltd. was founded in 1998 as Construction Company Samira Ltd., however due to internalisation and generation change the name was later altered into Samira Group Ltd, with the view to better reach and serve a greater public outside of Finland.

The company started their activities in the City of Oulu, where the company headquarters are still located. The company sales office has been in Ylläs since December 2008. In the beginning Samira had total control of the sales activities for selling its properties. Until today the majority of Samira's property has still been sold by the company independently. However in addition Samira now employs a few local real-estate agents in Levi and Ylläs to sell Samira's cabins and apartments in these regions. The company's intension is to commend their real-estate property more accessible for a bigger public, as well as to make the company name more widely known to its potential customers.

In the course of 11 years, Samira has constructed over 500 cabins and apartments in locations that remain close to cross-country, snowmobile and hiking trails. Properties are within walking distance from hotels and local supermarkets. In addition to the actual cabins and apartments, the company is able to arrange also other services such as interior design packages. Outsourced subletting and property management services (e.g. key service, cleaning, launderette) are available nearby the holiday home locations.

The main areas of current construction project developments are the ski resorts in Levi and Ylläs, however the company has been active in these areas for almost a decade. First development project for a non-ski resort was completed in June, 2008. This took place in a summer destination of Kalajoki Hiikkasärkät, which is located approximately 150 kilometres south from the City of Oulu.

2.1.1 Products and Services

The company mainly constructs bigger housing projects in central and popular resort areas (majority of them being ski resorts). These projects are usually formed as Housing Corporations. Often cabins and apartments are sold in the off-plan stage where clients see the design for the cabin or apartment, and make the decision according to the pre-set plans. The client makes a purchase into the Housing Corporation and hence becomes a share holder, as each cabin and apartment represent a named amount of shares in the Housing Corporation. Even in the projects where the pre-set plan has already been made, the clients can decide whether to decorate the property using a standard furniture pack provided by the constructor, or change the fittings according to a form prepared by the constructor. The form is prepared to bring ease into the decision making process through stating fixed costs or permitting to

change everything. In the latter case the client will make the necessary arrangements concerning furniture delivery etc and provide as specified fitting details to the carpenters, who will be in charge of the installation of these changes. Occasionally Samira makes plans for bigger cabins, at the minimum of three bedrooms with approximately 90 square metres, to meet the demand of individual clients or companies looking for a bit more luxurious option.

If clients have more specified requirements concerning a cabin in a view of the more luxurious option, Samira will prepare a plan according to the clients' wishes and budget scale. The budget is decided by the client for these additional requirements. In this case the project is usually bigger in comparison to a regular one, which consists of a one- or two- bedroom cabin. The cabin(s) can be built on the land owned by the client, or with a special request submitted to the company, on a land that is owned by the Samira Group.

The company has realized through its sales experiences the growing demand for smaller, one or two bedroom cabins and apartments. The main reason for the smaller cabins is the extra income the owner will receive by renting out their cabin or apartment. The demand exists for accommodation; ski resorts Levi and Ylläs are known to attract foreign and national tourism. In Ylläs, for example, the current customer base comprises of people living in Finland, however the future survival and growth of Ylläs is seen in international approach and identifying new potential customer groups for tourism in Ylläs (Nordic Marketing GmbH, August 2007, *Ylläs Development Plan until the Year 2020*). Through local rental agents they will receive good rental yields without taking any risks of having the cabins or apartments damaged when the rental has happened through another company. The experiences of the company's customers have shown that bigger, deluxe cabins do not rent out as well as the standard size cabins and apartments for 2 to 6 people.

2.1.2 Target customers

The company has two main potential target customer groups: the customers purchasing holiday homes for their personal use (for leisure), and financial investors who are in seek for financial gains (for business). These two groups will be further examined in the research to evaluate the customer segments and target market. Samira is operating in the holiday home sector. According to the company's experience, the target customer is usually a person who has already acquired his own house and is ready to invest in holiday property.

The biggest interest to buy a holiday home alights from people who have visited the resort for many years but have not invested in a holiday home/a share of one. Today, as the ski-resorts in Finnish Lapland attract an increasing amount of overseas tourists, there is also a pure financial value for the real-estate properties through rental possibilities and resale of the real-estate, to name a few. This evolvement has ignited increasing interest from potential investors acquiring real-estate in the look for financial gains.

2.1.3 Structure of a Housing Corporate (Samira)

With a Housing Corporation type of structure, the constructor is able to offer the buyers a pre-arranged Housing Corporation mortgage option on each development. This signifies that the buyer is not forced to find initial financing for the full amount of the project and to buy the entire property instantly. Instead, the customer will be provided the option to acquire a low marginal mortgage. If the owner decides to sell the cabin or the apartment before he has made all the mortgage repayments, the total mortgage is transferred to the new buyer of the project. A Housing Corporation structure is very familiar to Finnish buyers, and especially for foreigners it makes the case of owning

property overseas royally easy, as individual owners do not have to come to the location to, for example, take care of snow clearance, waste disposal, and security.

2.1.4 Current Marketing Efforts

In a small company such as the Samira Group Ltd, the whole administration participates in the decision making process of the advertising efforts by reflecting the past, and at the same time considering the recent developments and possibilities of Internet marketing. The marketing manager is in charge of looking into new ways of advertising and searching for alternative and more effective marketing channels, and presenting them to the rest of the personnel in the administration. The CEO and the Board of Directors of Samira obtain the final decision making power when it comes to marketing, as no actual marketing budget is available.

The work position of a marketing manager is only three years old. Previously the office manager was in charge of the marketing and advertising, among other tasks and of areas of responsibility. Unfortunately this arrangement designated to that advertising did not receive much attention until an actual marketing manager was hired in 2006. After a while the company name was changed into Samira Group Ltd and the whole advertising material experienced dramatic changes with new colour scheme, logo, and exact graphic and typographic guide which is followed to the last detail. The graphic and typographic guide of Samira can be found from the appendices of the thesis (Appendix 7. Samira Group Ltd. Typographic guide and Appendix 8. Samira Group Ltd. The graphic guide). The reason behind this decision was to create as consistent a company image as possible.

Samira is enticing to keep its advertising financially sensible to correspond the capabilities of an SME -company, and adequate enough to reach the goals of the marketing efforts – creating sales and attracting customers. Majority of the advertising activities are executed within Finland. Samira is, however, looking for an international customer base as well hence directing the marketing channels also in international context is possible. The main marketing channels at the moment are Internet advertising (e.g. functional web pages and *Google*) and having a strong company presence in the heart of the action. A sales office in Ylläs and advertising in the ski-resort's media are making sure no one leaves the resort without having noticed Samira's logo.

Company Advertising & Promotion:

- Printed advertising (mainly in local news papers and magazines)
- Billboards located in Samira's construction sites (Ylläs, Levi and Kalajoki)
- Online internet advertising (search engines such as *Google* and online publications in ski-resorts' websites)
- Company displays, on average one per year, in industry related exhibitions

Other Marketing Channels:

- Company sales office in Ylläs
- Sales agents (company uses commission based hiring for motivational purposes)

- Customer and company –networks (word of mouth information)

2.2 Industry review

Finnish population is in many contexts described as nation strongly rooted together with nature. It is common in Finnish culture to have a need for a recess from work or from busy urban life, in a search for a getaway near nature. For example Wikipedia, an internationally well-known free online encyclopaedia, mentions cottage life as one of the most traditional activities characterised by the Finnish culture, being emotionally connected to the countryside and nature. (Wikipedia. An article of Finland. Referred to on 20.2.2009)

It is no wonder the construction for holiday homes and cottages is common in Finland. An estimation of ca 478 000 summer cottages existed in Finland in the year 2007, according to Statistics Finland (Statistics Finland. Kesämökit. 21.5.2008). Holiday homes within imminence of ski-resorts have been popular means of accommodation arrangements. Estimation is that a tendency could exist to e.g. rent a cabin for more than two people because the cabins/apartments are rented according to fix cost per property, instead of per person. This would mean that if there are several people in a cabin, it will come cheaper. In addition, people might like the freedom of a cabin/property compared to a hotel room on a holiday.

2.2.1 Competition Scenario

Firstly, to describe the competition more thoroughly, it needs to be recognized that competition can comprise of multiple factors. According to Michael Porter's five forces model, the state of competition depends upon five factors: market competitors, suppliers, buyers, substitutes and new entrants (Porter,

M.E., 1998. Competitive Advantage: Creating and Sustaining Superior Advantage). The **main forces to create competition for Samira Group are its market competitors and substitutes**, which are explained below.

Substitutes or additional complement products and services can be provided by other companies, business and natural sources. Substitutes do not mean competitors, however refer to additional other services that eat up the market from Samira's main business: construction and selling of Kelo cabins. These substitutes can be e.g. hotel accommodation inside the ski-resorts, rental services for cabins inside the region, or buying a cabin/apartment in Spain instead of enjoying a ski-holiday in the winter.

Finnish culture is classified emotionally connected to countryside and nature, which creates an overall demand for travelling for leisure among Finns. The purchase of a holiday home can be considered to fulfil the certain need to return to nature. This is where Samira's business idea is located, in the construction and sales of holiday homes. Two distinct characteristics are classified, looking at Samira's target customers: the target customer of Samira usually makes the purchase through motives of "personal leisure" or by "future/current investment purposes". The overall demand drives the target customer's decisions as well, as they purchase real-estate to fulfil their need for a getaway, or to make profits.

Market competitors comprise of companies in the holiday home sector, especially the companies involved in construction and selling of holiday homes such as cabins and apartments. The biggest nationwide competitors for Samira Group are construction companies. They either sell off-plan properties for leisure and investment purposes, such as the competitor YIT, or holiday housing companies. The competitors are more concentrated on planning and developing wide selection of semi-detached or detached log cabins, for example

Kontio, Honka and PolarHouse. Even though Samira is a small player compared to the companies mentioned above, it is the far biggest builder in Äkäslompolo village in Ylläs, measured in building volume. After building in the area for the past 11 years, there are 20 completed developments in Äkäslompolo. There are a few relatively small kelo log developers in the area. What differentiates Samira from the market competitors are the facts that Samira provides its clients the complete solution with land on central areas of the resorts, and the fully customer-fitted cabins. Thus the client is not required to acquire a land plot prior to the actual construction project, nor do they need a car to get around the resorts after purchasing Samira built property. The main challenges are the diminishing free land area in central areas of the resorts, and the building restrictions of the municipalities of the ski resorts (Levi and Ylläs). Samira along with other companies has already experienced this in Levi ski resort. Even though Samira owns over 10 hectares of land in the centre of the resort, the municipality of Kittilä wishes to cut back some construction in the area and does not permit the building in short notice.

In addition, as Samira is a small-medium sized enterprise, it should keep itself flexible and faster in its actions than a multimillion organization such as YIT, the biggest competitor of Samira. This is a competitive advantage, and the company can more effectively and faster adapt itself to the customers' needs.

2.2.2 Construction Company's Customer Responsibility

As for buying property in Finland, the buyer is legally protected by the Act of Housing Transactions (Consumer Agency, Helsinki, Finland). The Samira Group is bound by the RS- system, hence all documents such as "Bill of Sale" are prepared by Suomen Rakennusteollisuus (translation: Finnish Construction Industry). When a construction project is completed and the cabins or

apartments are handed over to their rightful owners, the constructor's responsibility continues. After one year from the completion the constructor is required to have one- year- guarantee repairs after which the chairman of the Board of the Directors of the Housing Corporation will inspect the repair work.

In Finland the property buyer is protected by the RS-system which in short signifies the following: the constructor must set a monetary guarantee at the beginning of a construction development project to guarantee the completion of the project, as well as to guarantee the potential repair work taking place subsequent to the completion of the construction project. In the event of a constructor e.g. experiencing financial problems, the Act of Housing Transactions –clause protects the rights of the buyer.

“ ...act applies to the sale of housing shares or any other interest in a corporation conferring the right of possession to a residential apartment, to protection of the legal and financial status of buyers of housing shares at the construction stage, and to certain other legal relationships involved in the production and sale of the housing...”

(Finlex, No. 843 HOUSING TRANSACTIONS ACT, September 23, 1994).

3 PROJECT PLAN AND PROCESS

The research problems include the examination of the current marketing channels, segmenting current focus groups, and drawing suggestions to the promotion and advertising methods utilized to generate sales and awareness among the target customers. In the process of creating solutions to the given research problems, both customer market- and promotion -based market research methods were examined and exploited. The research objectives below

are drawn from the two research methods to determine the required information:

- To find the most suitable methods for promotion and advertising
- To decide the media to use in reaching the target customer base
- To discuss the effectiveness of personal selling as a marketing channel
- To define more accurately the target market and customer market segments
- To find/locate trends in the market to forecast the future market approaches
- To analyse and determine customer characteristics and motivations

The means of examining and drawing conclusions to the marketing channels are to define the customer market and the promotion and advertising of the company. Firstly, improvements in segmentation of the company's target customer group are suggested in order to steer the marketing channels in the right direction. The second research object is to define how to improve the effectiveness in marketing channels and to find out what new channels have not been used or remain unrecognised by the company.

Tony Proctor specifies six different divisions of marketing research. These are customer market research, promotion research, marketing environment-, product-, sales-and distribution research (Proctor, Tony. Essentials of Marketing Research). The separation analysis of the six divisions will clarify the research process in determining what research questions are usually involved, and what problems and decisions can be classified inside the divisions. Hence,

for marketing channels' research purposes the content (main questions) included in each division will provide a certain category of information that needs to be gathered, in order to reach the research goals which are determined in the promotion and customer research divisions.

Elements from two divisions, customer research and promotion research, were applied to reach the research objectives. Customer research typically provides information on particular market and market segment sizes, trends in the market e.g. for forecasting purposes, brand shares, customer characteristics and motivations, and competitors' brand shares. Advertising and promotion research concentrates on the most suitable methods for promotion, copy and campaign material, media selection and the effectiveness of the communications in achieving objectives. (Proctor, Tony. 2003. Essentials of Marketing Research; Divisions of marketing research, p.10).

An analysis was made for choosing the elements to use and to correspond to the needs of the particular research problem. Customer research elements were taken to form an information base for marketing channel decisions, to produce facts for defining the company's target market and to improve customer segmenting through customer characteristics and motivations. The first phase includes specifying the customer segments, and to improve company marketing by directing the marketing channels towards their rightful targets. Elements from promotion research were selected to examine the most suitable methods for promotion and advertising, which media to use etc after determining the target market. **Two essential research questions will be answered: where and how to direct the company's marketing channels.**

3.1 Description of the Project Plan and Process

Confronting the research problem; a necessity is to gather and assess relevant research information. Collecting data is necessary to provide the input to the research, to measure performance as in this case the current marketing channels, and to assist in formulating alternative courses of action in a decision-making process (Berenson, Levine and Krehbiel. 2006. Basic Business Statistics. Prentice Hall). Last but not least the data collection is needed for the identification of new directions or patterns for the company's marketing. FIGURE 1. represents the backbone of the present research process. This particular research process was designed from the research process theory, introduced by Philip Hollins from Harper Adams University College (Adapted from Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2003, Ch.4, Deciding on the research approach & choosing a research strategy).

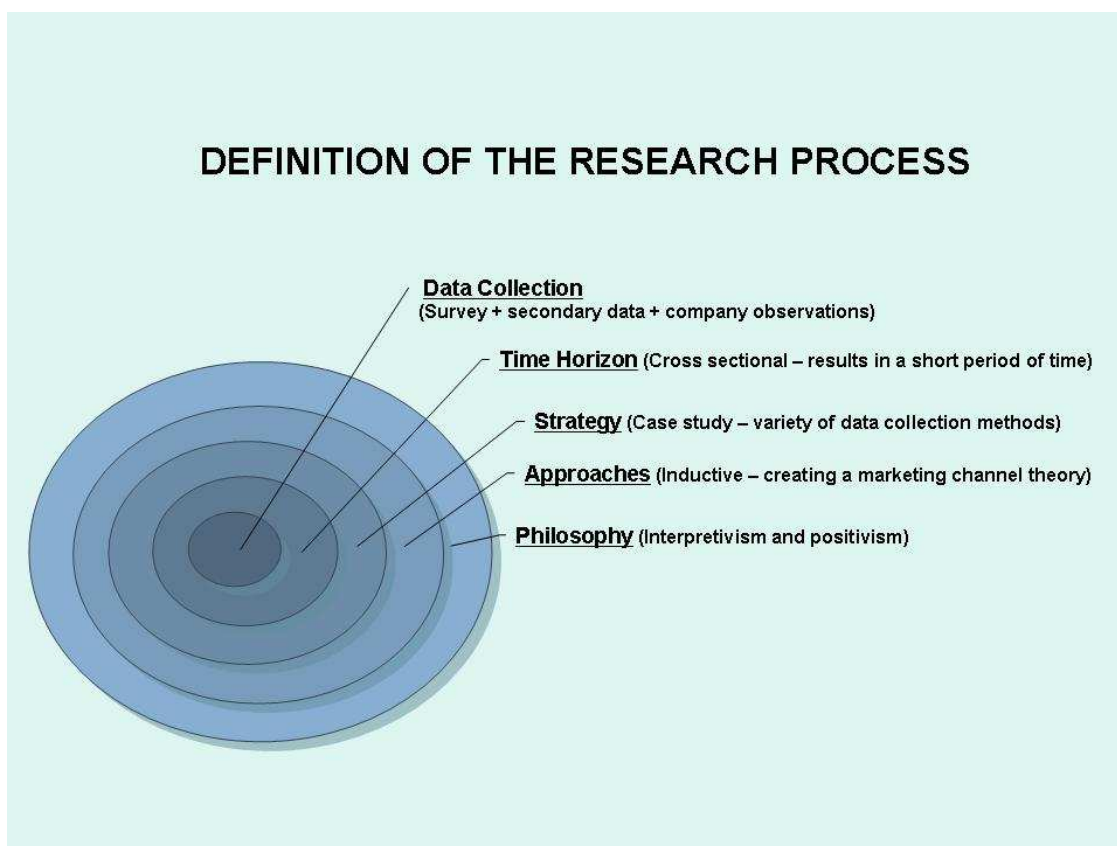


FIGURE 1. The thesis research process

In the research process, both qualitative and quantitative approaches were combined to gain in-depth understanding in and to produce generalisations for the company's marketing objectives. The following section will explain the main concepts and methods used in the research process and how they were applied in practice.

The concepts to be included in a market research project are used in detailing and organizing of the research proposal and process. The areas included and explained in the present research project and market plan are as follows: research reasons and objectives, method / analysis for the research, data collection, and, analysis and its interpretation. In the final stage essential information and results are reported, as well as conclusions are presented to the company management. (Tony Proctor, Essentials of Marketing Research, Pearson Education, 2003.)

The main **research philosophies**, emphasized by Philip Hollins, are positivism and interpretivism. These philosophies can also be referred to as quantitative vs. qualitative research approach, which will be explained more thoroughly in the data collection. In his notes Hollins explains positivism as a philosophy that gives a research an experimental and observational nature, that contributes in identifying relationships and provide structured and measurable observations. An example can be results that have statistical relevance. Positivism in the marketing channels context describes "how" customer segments can be classified by pointing out statistical relationships and significant variables from the data. Positivism deals with the quantitative research approach.

Interpretivism is looking for answers to the questions "why", e.g. to understand why different marketing channels are perceived differently by the focus groups, or to answer the questions of why marketing channels should be di-

rected according to certain decided principles. Interpretivism is a more humanistic and interactive approach, compared to positivism. It can define the exceptions why laws or rules are not always relevant, and is used when wished to discover details of a situation, and where various explanations and/or exploration are usually required. (Philip Hollins, *The Research Process, Research methods*) Interpretivism deals with the qualitative research approach.

Another research philosophy or paradigm named **realism** is mentioned by Buber, Garner and Richards. It is described as a philosophy characterized as a case-based research, suitable especially for marketing management research. Realism builds theories from the complex reality of marketing management, and usually results as a picture at the end of the research. The picture may be imperfect yet an improvement on the blurry sketch that existed at the starting point. For example, whether a marketing tactic is useful, will depend on the context of a situation and no hard scientific relationship can be classified as the only solution model, as e.g. in positivism. The present thesis is in many respects a case research, and uses thus the principles of the realism paradigm. (Buber, Gadner and Richards, *Applying Qualitative Methods to Marketing Management Research*, 2004, *Scientific Paradigms and Research in Marketing*, Ch.3.) Realism may answer questions “why” and “how”, and combines person’s perception together with literate information and social science. The researches perceive the concept of realism is attained by utilizing and combining the philosophies of interpretivism and positivism.

The research emphasizes interpretivism and positivism philosophies to adopt a dual position for the research. Combining two different research philosophies is appropriate as “...a variety of research philosophies and positions can be adopted depending upon the circumstances prevailing and the nature of the topic or research problem.” (Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug, *Quali-*

tative Marketing Research, Sage Publications 2001, p. 4). For research in marketing management decision making and business problems/issues, the book *Qualitative Marketing Research* by Carson, Gilmore, Perry and Gronhaug, advocates that instead of taking an extreme position to either a scientific or artistic approach, the combination of them could be taken. Also when speaking of philosophies, traditionally positivism is based on empirical testing to justify a theory, whereas interpretivism involves personal and interpretive processes in understanding and making sense of a phenomenon in certain specific contexts. Herein, the researchers see that the appropriate research philosophy should contain and consist of parts from both empirical and interpretive/perceived knowledge. Statistical and mathematical methods are applied in the survey part of the research. Non-quantitative means, allowing feelings and reason to govern the decision making and conclusions, consist of e.g. the company experiences and observations. Hence, the research philosophy is constructed from both interpretivism and positivism.

Positivism research philosophy creates a base for providing observational and quantitative data, in defining customer target market and in providing more detailed segmenting for the company. A survey was conducted to the company's clients, and facts were collected concerning the customer's location, characteristics (e.g. age distribution, the reason for real-estate purchase: leisure or financial motives) and other combining factors to help determine the appropriate segments. Positivism will look for relationships defining the customer base, whereas interpretivism will provide broader measurements to introduce details of the segmenting situation, answering the question "why" segments should be formed accordingly.

Customer segmenting attempts to categorize the company's customers inside certain, determined groups. Market segmentation, according to a definition of Philip Kotler et. al., is to divide a market into distinct groups of buyers with

different needs, characteristics or behaviour (Kotler, P., Principles of Marketing, Ch.10: Segmentation and Positioning, p.391). The marketing efforts can be then directed to these separate groups of buyers; the customer segments. This function is referred as target marketing, which is emphasised when directing the company's marketing channels.

The inductive research approach looks at many variables and issues. It is able to describe the new situation concerning the examination of the marketing channels. There is only a little previous information in the company concerning the research problem. An understanding of the overall situation is needed.

The deductive approach is considered too quantitative and experimental for the needs of the present study. It does not serve the attempt to create a marketing channel theory for determining the marketing channels, and how and where to direct them. The deductive approach would have been too much concentrated on deciding on a theory; abandoning or approving one; a previous theory of the situation should exist at least in some extent. The deductive approach would be more applicable to test a certain marketing channel theory. However the current research problem is to provide information for the decision making, and to create a practical marketing channel theory for the company. The research requires that the theory concentrates on solving practical problems and is for the use of the company. It does not seek to break new grounds in creating a new overall marketing channel theory for external purposes.

The time horizon represents the life-span of the research project, and hence is an essential part of the research strategy formulation. It can determine in what period of time the results should be attained or a development project should conclude. There exists classifications of short-time and long-time research projects, described by Phillip Hollins as either cross sectional or longitudinal. A

longitudinal time horizon is for projects that do not aim for results within a short period of time. It usually studies a certain variable over a period of time. Projects may last even for 10 or 20 years, and they often use secondary data sources, for example statistics. A cross sectional time horizon aims at short-time research. It can be a response to a certain need, represented by the recent situation. For the present study the time horizon is short and cross sectional.

Case study can be considered as a practical part of research, defining the actual strategy that mentions the information to be gathered, and the data collection methods. A case study allows a variety of data collection methods. The particular case study involves a customer survey, the assessment of the company's independent observations and a company management interview, previous researches and articles from external sources e.g. in describing over-all marketing channels and the company operating environment. Other research strategies might be for example experiment, action and ethnographic research, to mention a few. These would have either been too narrow in their variety of providing practical tools to utilize in the research process, or otherwise would not have served the research purpose as well as a case study.

The next section concentrates on data collection in the research, and includes concepts such as qualitative/quantitative research, and sources of information.

3.2 Data Collection

Data sources are classified as being either primary sources or secondary sources (Berenson, Levine and Krehbiel, Basic Business Statistics, 2004, p.6). In primary sources, the one collecting the data is usually the one to utilize it in the research. Primary source in the present research is to provide new information, and the means of obtaining it are tailor-made; a customer survey for

Samira. The survey is a primary information source. A secondary source includes data, garnered by an organization or individual, to be used by another organization or an individual. An example of a secondary source is national statistics created by governmental authorities, or reports from different bureaus e.g. consumer price index, and economical information etc.

The research data and results are comprised of the two information types, **primary information** and **secondary information**. The information gathered from Samira by the past experiences and observations of the company, management feedback, and survey results taken directly from company's customers, is primary information. Statistics, public business reports, previous studies of marketing channels etc utilized in the process to answer the research problem, are secondary information as the information is created by a source for other purposes than for which it is used for in the present study.

Primary information is needed to provide the necessary input to the research and decision making. It is tailored to the company's exact needs and it is based on the data from the company's own customers. Hence, the survey is a medium for gathering primary information for management of marketing channels. Additional means are interview of the company management; and personal observations from the company's perspective by Eija Keskitalo who as a researcher is also the current marketing director in the company; and adding up the company management opinions. The collection of primary information is valuable as well as a necessity for a market survey and for what this particular thesis is investigating. The primary information will produce an up-to-date background for the information received and is essential in order to create and construct a background of the perceived knowledge to support business decisions.

Secondary sources support the positivism research philosophy in the sense of including and using an external observer. The secondary sources can be utilized to draw generalizations, and to make decisions based on secure objective knowledge of previous, e.g. nationwide researches. In addition, experts' opinions and reports from different fields of business provide justified facts for the decision making process. Secondary sources in the research make a distinction between scientific and personally experienced knowledge, to justify the "real world" information that has been externally studied in a wider scale. As there exist variable previous researches; from the fields of marketing, construction industry, Finnish and international business environments etc., the research prefers to utilize these secondary sources rather than researching these independently as primary information. This would be waste of resources; people, time and money.

In efforts to observe the historical as well as the current situation, and to acquire and use various sources and types of information, **a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches is utilized in the data collection.** Qualitative approach is used to examine attitudes, customers' opinions and motivations to be able to direct the marketing channels in an effective manner. Qualitative approach is needed for further, in-depth information. Interpretivism research philosophy can be stated as leaning towards qualitative approach, whereas positivism to the quantitative approach.

Terms qualitative and quantitative can provide a sense of overall direction to a study, or provide description of the type of data being used. It is not compulsory to have a congruence between the two. A combination can be utilized. However, there exists characteristics to distinguish the qualitative and quantitative approaches:

- the type of data used (textual or numeric, structured or unstructured)

- the logic employed (inductive or deductive)
- the type of investigation (exploratory or confirmatory)
- the method of analysis (interpretive or statistical)
- the approach to explanation (variance or process theory)
- and the presumed underlying paradigm/philosophy (positivist, interpretive, rationalistic)

(Buber, Gardner & Richards. Applying Qualitative Methods to Marketing Management Research; Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches, Ch.9, p.142)

Quantitative approach will provide the researchers more structured, categorical data for, e.g., defining the target customer market and its characteristics through statistics drawn directly from the real world: the company's current customers. Quantitative approach is executed in the research through a survey which attempts to provide data from customers' professional status, age and gender distribution, domestic and international customer base, quantity and nature of customer's housing purchases from the company etc.

Qualitative approach is utilized to serve the interpretivism philosophy, e.g. to provide details and people's perspectives to the categorical, statistical data. Quantitative approach in data collection will follow the philosophy of positivism. It can determine a statistical and more easily measurable variables on categorical information to the research, and as such serve as a backbone to the customer target market evaluation.

The information is divided into three sources: a customer survey, the company's individual observations/interpretations, and the secondary data sources of external reports and researches. The triangular nature of the data examines the research problem through various means and from different viewpoints, which are explained in more detail in the coming section.

3.2.1 Survey (Primary Information)

The first source of the primary information is the survey. A questionnaire was designed and sent to Samira's current customers to provide the necessary primary data; dividing the target customers in more detail, and improving Samira's customer profiles, thus identifying experiences and opinions for creating a basis for customer segmentation.

The marketing channels are preferred to reach the company's target customers, who are described here as the actual research population. The sample is the portion of the population selected for the analysis. The statistical sample shall provide information to estimate the characteristics of the entire population, rather than taking a complete census of the whole population. (Berenson, Levine & Krehbiel, Basic Business Statistics, 9th/e., p.11)

The survey was conducted as a questionnaire mixing both quantitative and qualitative questions. The sample included both Finnish and foreign clients who have acquired a Samira built property in the past. The researchers chose to examine the clients who bought after year 2000 because of the relevancy and the validity of the research. As the main research goal was to establish the most effective marketing channel and the target customer segment for Samira.

To receive as accurate information as possible concerning the marketing channel influence on them, the sensible choice was to pick the people who might still remember which advertising effort helped them to locate Samira

and eventually lead to the purchase. The survey was compiled of two questionnaire forms, one intended for the Finnish clients prepared in Finnish and the other prepared in English for Samira's foreign clients. Even though the researchers' study language at International Business Degree Programme is English, it was not possible to expect Samira's client base to understand English thus it was decided to have separate forms in both languages. The questionnaire forms are attached to the appendices of the thesis (Appendix 2. Questionnaire in Finnish, and Appendix 4. Questionnaire in English).

The survey was carried out by sending the questionnaires to the clients by e-mail. The researchers sent the questionnaire to 140 people and received 56 answers of which one had to be rejected because only less than a half of questions were answered. This gave us the sample of 55 clients, standing for respond rate of approximately 39%.

The quantitative questions were analysed with the help of SPSS statistical analysis programme (questions 1 – 11). The final open question was analysed using qualitative method. The researchers decided to have the alternative *other* on many of the questions in order to broaden the answer range as there might be an alternative not thought of.

The following factors are included in the survey design and its execution:

1. Mode of response - a questionnaire sent to the customers by email, including a cover letter to explain the purpose of the survey and an appeal for response
2. Identifying research category – the survey should provide data from the current customers to be able to work as a base for further customer segmenting

3. Question formulation - research questions include categorical, numeric and open questions to gather various types of data to meet the objective of the research category
4. Collecting the data - customers send the survey back through email, and the data is encoded to the SPSS® program ¹ for further examination of the data variables

Sampling of the research population was executed by utilizing a probability sample. A probability sample is characterized as a sample that is chosen regarding the probability of occurrence (Berenson, Levine and Krehbiel). The sample, which in this case is the company's current customers, should reflect the company's target customer group. A survey was sent to all the company's customers by email. The purpose of this was to reach the majority of the current customer population, hence to have a wider sample and more reliable results. The effort was towards having a positive effect on the validity of the research, as researchers do not exclude customers by any predefined method from the sample, but rather try to reach the entire customer base. In the survey, the chosen sample should be claimed as a valid reflection of the research population.

However in practice a random selection of a sample occurs, as only a certain percentage of the research population will receive or answer the survey. This can be explained for example through changes in people's email addresses, personal factors (not wanting to answer a survey, lack of time) and so forth. It is important to achieve a research sample that can reflect the research population frame. The population frame of the research represents the company's

¹ SPSS® is a registered trademark of SPSS®, Inc., headquartered in 2009 at 233 S. Wacker Drive, 11th floor, Chicago, IL 60606-6307 USA

customer base, and the customer base reflects the target customer group, and as such, customer segments. The sample is taken from the population frame, and thus it is important the frame is in accordance with items comprising the population. (Berenson, Levine and Krehbiel, Basic Business Statistics; Types of Survey Sampling Methods). The decision was made to send the questionnaire to the customers starting from year 2000 and onwards.

Questions investigating the marketing channels; looking at the reliability of the research results, if a person is asked an opinion of what marketing channel(s) reached him concerning Samira and its products, if the sale has done a long time ago, e.g. in time-span of two or more years, people may not remember or will give wrong information which will have a negative impact on the survey's reliability. The questions concerning the preferable marketing channels were ultimately abandoned from the survey as inaccurate. It may be hard to define only one marketing channel, and also as people do not in many occasions remember exactly how the information of Samira Ltd. has reached them the opinions of customers do not bring reliable data for deciding the company's market channel effectiveness. This will be decided after the target customer base is determined, and the current marketing channels (both means and directions) are compared with the target customer base.

3.2.2 Management interview and Experiences of the Company

The second source of primary information for the research is the interview of the company management, concerning the company's current situation as well as the company's goals in the near and overall future. The interviews create the base for how the marketing channels should be allocated, and for what they should achieve. In addition, the researchers are to ask and mention other various observations made inside the company, e.g. whether they have hap-

pened on a daily basis, or observations from employees who have received additional information, e.g. through customer feedback.

The fully organized and planned execution is done only concerning the company management interview. Concerning the information of the different experiences; the researchers did not see a need for organizing a separate research for collecting the information by using a survey, as these issues are handled in the company on a day-to-day basis during normal working hours. Samira is a small company, and information moves more freely inside the company's different areas of activity. It is more interrelated. The fact that one of the researchers is involved in company marketing as well as in sales and discussing with the customers, observations and experiences provide additional viewpoints, interpretations and perceivable facts regarding the direction of the marketing channels.

3.2.3 Secondary Data Sources

The secondary data sources include information from different industry and business experts, from former studies and from additional external and prior research from, for example, the different marketing channels. The information includes the pros and cons of the marketing channels, related to the effectiveness of the various marketing channels and to their context. These secondary sources represent and form generalizations and a theoretical framework. Obtaining external reviews and reports from other research material will serve as a backbone and reliable source for drawing the so called "big picture" and the skeleton for the marketing channels of the company. These sources are utilized to answer the question "what" the marketing channels are, to name characteristics of the channels, and to provide former research data to describe the functionalities of the marketing channels, and the contexts of the marketing channels. Additionally, as making conclusions of the research results, one aim

is to have a closer look on the company's operating environment. Secondary sources are utilized for describing the particular environment, and to provide reliable information and points of views of the experts, as well as governmental or organizational information collected by the industry and business experts with years of experience, or having significant professional connections to the research topic.

4 RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The primary and the secondary information sources are used to assess and draw conclusions to the research questions. The customer survey and company observations provide the basis for drawing conclusions concerning the customer segments; to whom to direct the marketing channels. This is the source of the primary information. The secondary information will provide the tools to present and discuss the various marketing channel options. The solutions to the marketing channels were finally decided by looking at both the customer segments and company's future goals and aspirations (the management interview). The solutions are presented and discussed in the conclusions section of the thesis.

Firstly, the primary information that was gathered during the research is presented and analysed by the following section (4.1.). Second part will concentrate on the secondary information, and describe and discuss the marketing channel options (4.2.). Finally, from these two parts, the marketing channel solutions were drawn to conclude the research.

4.1 Target Market and Customer Segments

4.1.1 Survey Results

As previously described in the research process, a questionnaire was sent to customers in order to execute the survey. The questionnaire results are presented and discussed below. The individual questions of the survey are shown below, and their results function as a base for describing the customer sample.

Question 1: Age

The age distribution is quite clear: the sample is comprised of people older than 31 years of age. The biggest age groups are 41-50, and 51-60 year olds. This was not a surprise for the researchers. It is reasonable that there are no respondents under the age of 31, at least by looking at the Samira's customer profile stated in the company's background. The percentages are shown in the TABLE 1.

TABLE 1. The age distribution of the sample in percentages.

| | |
|-------|-------|
| 20-30 | 0% |
| 31-40 | 9,1% |
| 41-50 | 27,3% |
| 51-60 | 41,8% |
| 61-70 | 20% |
| 71-80 | 1,8% |
| N=55 | |

The far biggest age group was 51 to 60 year-olds with 41.8%. This may indicate that at that stage of age people have already acquired a family car, a house, and possibly children have left the house. People might start to think about their future, and possibly they have some extra money and more leisure time to use - especially thinking further; towards retirement. The second biggest age group, by 27.3% of the respondents, is the 41 to 50 year-olds. Typically this group can be considered as having prospering careers, and/or more leisure time. 20% of the respondents are between 61 to 70 years of age, meaning that people may think about where they spend time as they are on pension, and thus to acquire property when on pension.

According to the age results of this survey, the foreign clients may have a stronger tendency of buying property as younger than Finns. The reason behind this statement is that from 9.1% of the age group of 31 to 40 year-olds, the youngest level in the age distribution, the majority of the group were foreigners (non-Finnish nationality). Only one person, counting for 1.8% of the respondents, represented the age group of 71 to 80 year-olds.

Question 2: Gender

The gender distribution was clearly in favour of men with 71% of the respondents adding up to only 29% of respondent being women. The results refer on the TABLE 2., shown below. The given result might be explained by the fact that mostly the names of the male gender show up and is mentioned first on the Bills of Sale, when a couple buys the property together. The name of the man will show up first as the owner. Thus, even though the property is jointly owned by the woman and the man, the man of the house might have ended up answering the questionnaire as well.

TABLE 2. The gender distribution of the sample.

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Male | 71% |
| Female | 29% |
| N=55 | |

Question 3: Profession

Having a question in the survey concerning the clients' profession, the researchers wanted to find out the distribution of different levels of occupation (of Samira's clients) at the time property was bought. The reason for this was that the question could assist in to whom to direct the marketing channels.

Referring to CHART 1, where N = 55: most of the respondents informed to be managers or entrepreneurs. Looking at the answers from marketing channels' point of view, this might help to define the customer profile of Samira.

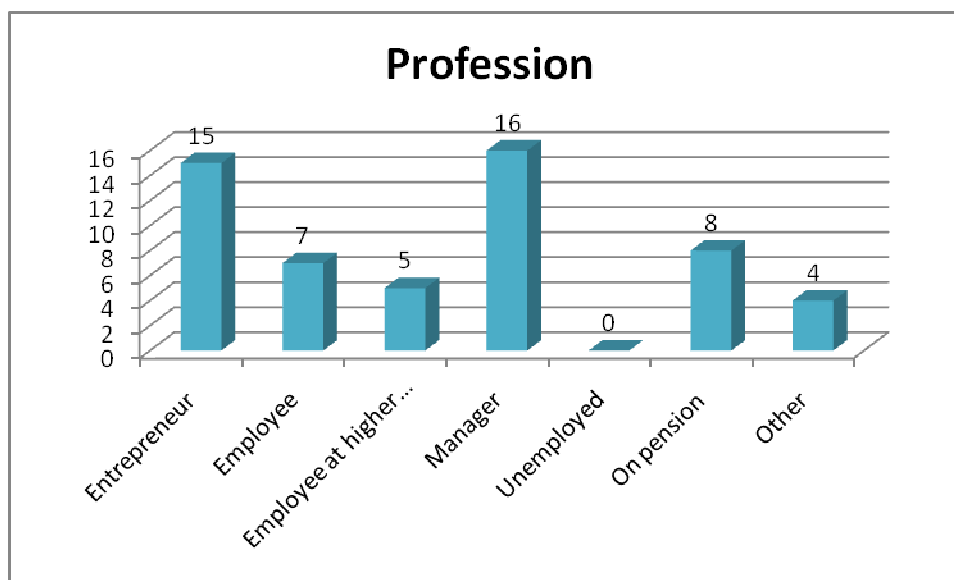


CHART 1. Distribution of the respondents' profession (the level of employment).

CHART 1. can be used to describe that no matter what type of occupation one holds, it is possible to have a holiday home. The biggest group is the managers with 16 out of 55 respondents, standing for 29.1%. The second most common profession is entrepreneurs with 15 out of 55 respondents, that together with the managers accumulates to 27.3% of the respondents. Pensioners were the third biggest group with 14.5% share and employees right behind them with 12.7%. Thus the pensioners and employees together form the second biggest group on professions in the sample, after managers and entrepreneurs. Employees at the higher positions were the second smallest group with 5 out of 55 respondents, standing for 9.1%. Group marked as *other* was left open, if the respondent could not see him or herself to fit inside the predetermined categories. Additional answers in this category consisted of teachers, company share holders and one person who was working on social and health care field. This category of open options for profession market as 4 out of 55 respondents to hold these positions, standing for 7.3%.

Question 4: City/Country

To be able to segment Samira's clients geographically, the researchers wanted to know find out the geographical distribution of the Finnish respondents in Finland. The foreign clients' geographical location was not considered as necessary to show in detail, as the sample of non-Finnish respondents was only 14 people, most of them in UK (this is previous information of the company concerning its customers' locations). The company's Finnish and English clients come from various locations of their country. CHART 2., where N=55, illustrates the geographical distribution of the Finnish respondents living in Finland. The researchers divided the locations of the respondents inside the certain provinces of Finland, to better understand the "bigger picture".

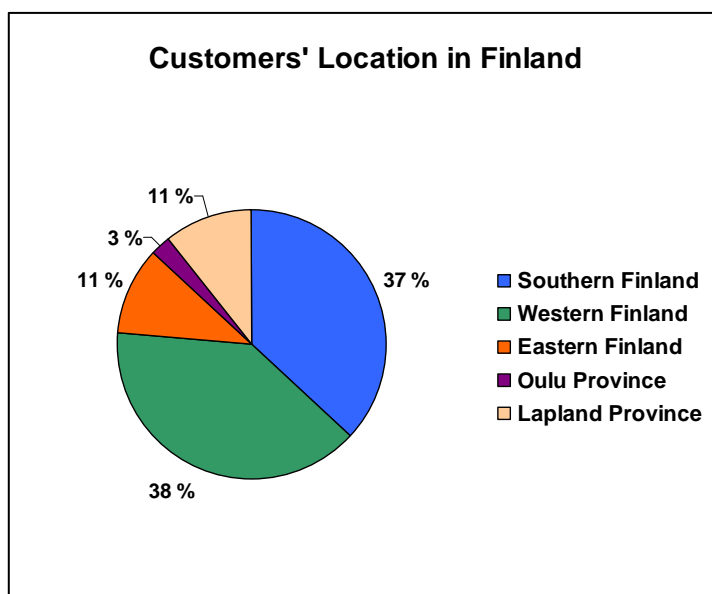


CHART 2. Description of the geographical locations of the sample respondents

CHART 2. can be used to describe that most of the majority of the respondents can be found from Southern and Western Finland. The statistics alone cannot determine whether the most interest in investing in a holiday home, or most of Finnish potential clients, can be found from these two provinces. However, this is one point of view to consider. 37% of the respondents were from Southern Finland, and 38% of the respondents were from Western Finland. The Geographically speaking, the province of Southern Finland is relatively small compared to e.g. that of Western Finland. In the Province of Southern Finland, including Greater Helsinki Area, the density of population is the biggest compared to the rest of Finland. The population density in Southern Finland is 70 persons per square kilometer (State Provincial Office of Southern Finland). The percentages in the CHART 2. show that both from Eastern Finland and Lapland there were 11% of the respondents, and if counted together, 22% of the respondents. The least amount of the respondents, 3%, come from the Oulu Province.

Question 5: Which marketing channel has the most influence in you?

The researchers wanted to find out what Samira's clients think is the most important advertising channel for them, and what channel reaches this particular sample. As CHART 3. indicates, there exists variation between respondents' answers. The most influential marketing channel for this particular customer sample seems to be the magazine/newspaper advertisement, with 52.7 per cent share of the respondents (29 out of 55 answers). The internet search engine (e.g. Google) scored the second highest share of respondents, 13 out of 55, standing for 23.6%. Suggestion from a friend/colleague came in third with 9.1 per cent share, signifying that 5 people out of the full 55 respondents are relying on acquaintance's referral. The alternative category for *other* marketing channels (such as Internet portals (e.g. etuovi.com), brochures, and Internet in general) with television advertisement both received the fourth place with 5.5 per cent share counting for 3 respondents out of 55. The two lowest scores, with the percentage of 1.8 standing for 1 respondent both, are the banner on a web page and construction site boards.

What could be drawn into conclusion from this question is that people do not pay much attention on what type of advertising has the most influence in them. Marketing mediums used can be sometimes subconscious, or sometimes people simply do not remember or recognize how they have found a certain product, company or service. In our daily lives we encounter and are influenced by multiple marketing messages, through various types of media. It can be hard to a person to distinguish what typically is the media that influences him or her the most. There are various researches as well as definitions of the certain marketing mediums that are used, however to define what is the most effective channel or medium to use, can be in many occasions attached to the target market (is the market either a niche or a mass market), the customer characteristics and company's experiences.

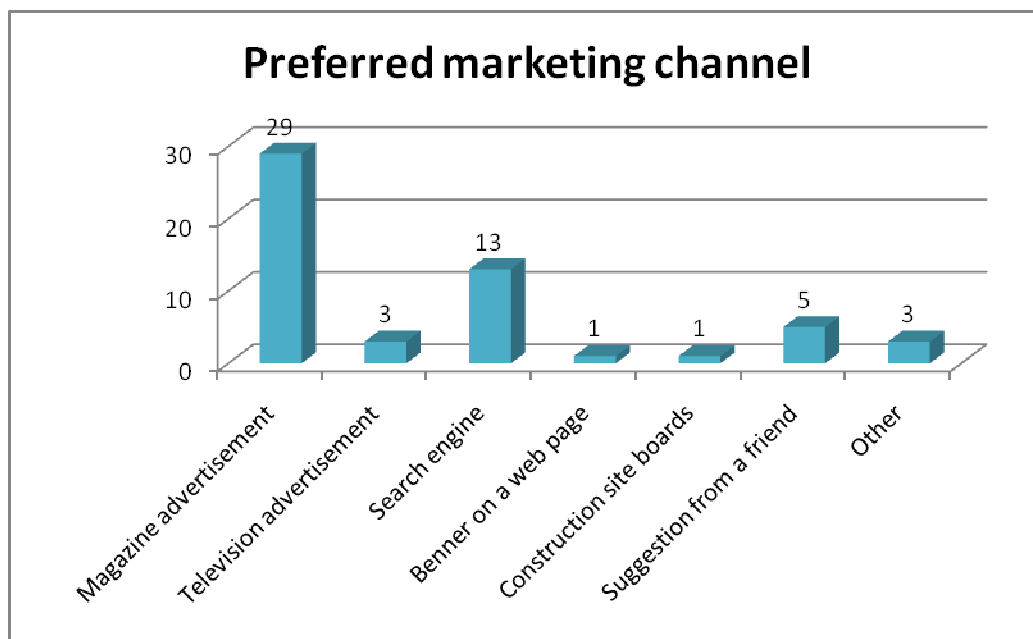


CHART 3. What marketing channel has most influence (according to the respondent).

The greatest surprise was to find the television advertising to provide such low figures. Television advertising, according to a description of Philip Kotler et.al. (Principles of Marketing, 2005), and also previous researchers and common beliefs, is that television advertisement should be a great tool for reaching and impacting masses. One common belief is that when companies advertise on television, they are recognized more after the television campaign, compared to the time before the television advertising campaign. Finnish MTV3 television channel market itself to business marketers (in autumn 2008/spring 2009) in its television advertisements, giving examples of companies that had increased their market recognition through advertising in MTV3 television channel. This is one example. There is possibility that people are not aware how much television has influence in them, almost operating unconsciously on the target market. Also it might be worth considering the fact that many people followed the same trend with their answer on the next question concerning how they found Samira Group. Thus the respondents might have had difficulties to separate the two questions apart from each other, even

though the results are not exactly identical. In conclusion, the researchers feel they cannot rely on the given results of the particular question. At least in drawing concrete conclusions on choosing the marketing channels based on the answers given in the survey.

Question 6: Through which marketing channel did you find Samira?

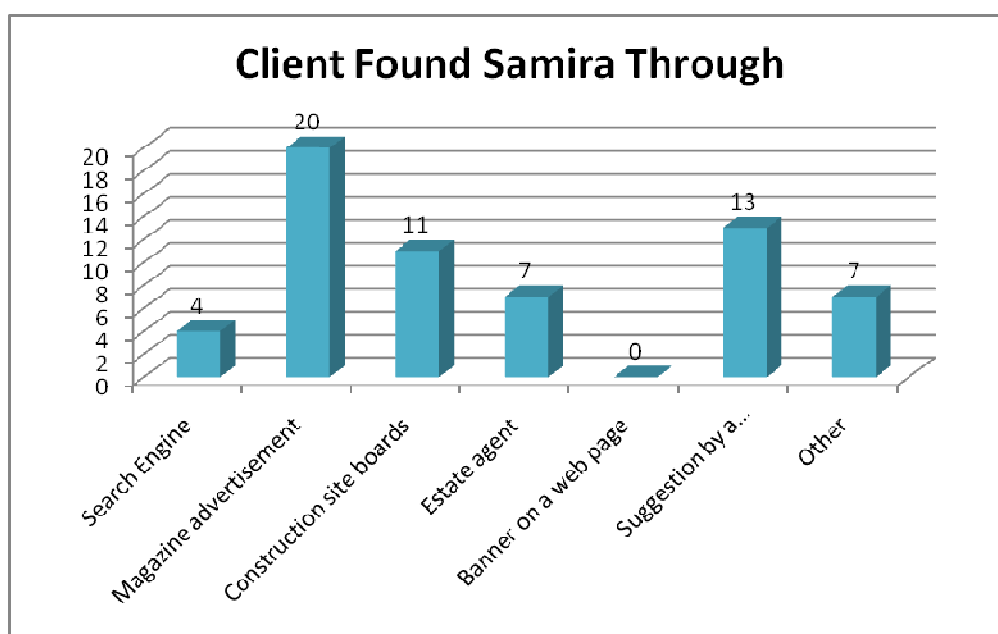


CHART 4. Distribution of the marketing channels that the respondents experienced they found Samira through.

Next step was to enquire which channel was the one how the clients came across Samira Group Ltd. CHART 4 illustrates the results from the sample, where $N = 55$. Again magazine/newspaper advertisement took the highest place with 20 respondents standing for 36.4% of the total sample. When it comes to such big investment as a holiday home, suggestions from people one knows are taken into consideration. This graph does indicate this with 13 out of 55 (23.6%) respondents turn to a friend for advice. One of the most important advertising channels for Samira is the word-of-mouth when people who are content with their purchase give a good reference to people they know. As

mentioned previously, Samira wishes to be present at the resorts where it builds and it is quite clear that it is worthwhile putting some effort to the construction site boards. 11 persons standing for 20% of the sample have found Samira by taking contact details from a construction site board, possibly taking a look at the web page after or a directly contacted the office by phone or e-mail. 7 persons out of 55 (12.7%) had found Samira by using an estate agent. Most of these clients were foreign and first had had a contact with the British estate agent who had either brought the client to Finland to familiarize them with properties available and in most case these clients chose to invest in Samira built property. Search engines seem to be functional marketing channels when out of 55 respondents, 7.3% have found Samira through some search engine, either through sponsored advertisement on *Google* or an actual search through which they came across Samira's own web page. 7 out of 55 respondents (12.7%) selected the option *other* because they had seen an advertisement on a brochure or had familiarized themselves with Samira through their work.

Question 7: Type of ownerships

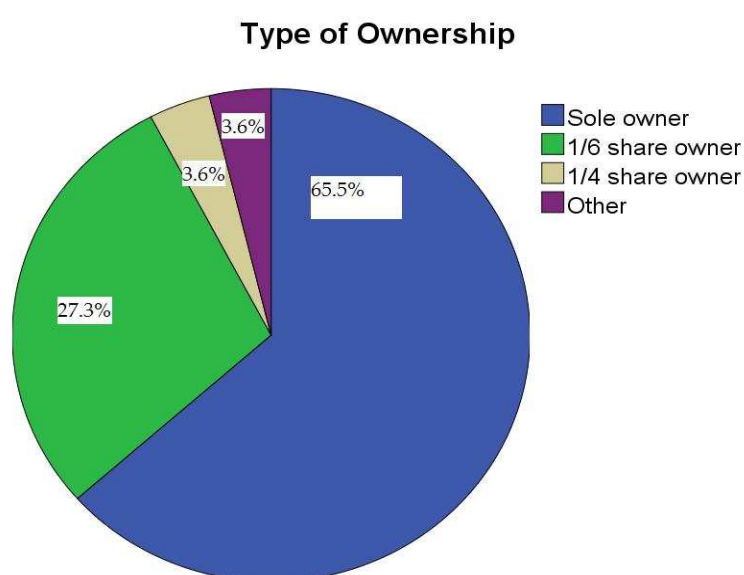


CHART 5. Description of the types of ownerships with the sample

Seventh question on the questionnaire was about the type of ownership of the respondent. N = 55. Because the Finnish clients have the option to buy a whole property or 1/6 share of a cabin or 1/4 share of an apartment (fractional ownership model) we wanted to establish the distribution between the respondents and this way also to receive the percentage of the current clientele of Samira, whether they prefer fractional ownership model or sole ownership. The difference between one sixth share owner and one fourth share owner is the fact that then Samira built *cabins* are only sold either for sole owners or divided in six shares (1/6) and the *apartments* are only sold either for sole owners or divided in four shares (1/4). For foreign clients there is just the option of sole ownership because of the impossibility of having either mixed nationalities in one cabin/apartment or having one cabin/apartment jointly owned by a group of foreigners. Samira has made a conscious decision by not offering the option to its foreign clients. This chart represents that 65.5 % of the respondents were the sole owners of their Samira built property. 27.3% of the respondents had the fractional ownership of 1/6 and 3.6% of the respondents own 1/4 shares. By having *other* alternative on the questionnaire we established that there were 3.6% of the respondents with different type of ownership share, they said that they own one half of a cabin, or one third of the cabin/apartment having acquired their property as a group of their own.

Question 8: Please specify the year you purchased Samira built property?

TABLE 3. In what years the respondents had purchased Samira built property.

| 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2002 | 2003 | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|------|
| 1.8% | 0% | 0% | 5.5% | 1.8% | 3.6% | 5.5% | 9.1% | 32.7% | 20% | 20% |

N=55

At the beginning of this analysis we explained that we only selected in this survey Samira's clients who had bought their property after the year 2000. The reason there was a client answering the questionnaire who had bought property in 1998 is because he had bought multiple properties from Samira and in 1998 he has purchased his first one and the next ones in the 2000s.

The respond rate of more recent clients is visible. 32.7% of the respondents had bought their property in 2006. Clients bought in years 2007 and 2008 had the same respond rate of 20%. The reason there were only 9.1% of respondents buying in 2005 might be because Samira did not have that much to sell on that year compared to the following years. In many cases cabins/apartments in different developments were sold 1.5 – 2 years before completion which explains the difference between 2005 and 2006. Before the year 2005 bought the trend of the respond rate is declining, respondents who had bought either their first or only property in 2004 participated in the survey with 5.5% respond rate. 3.6% of the respondents had bought in 2003 and only 1.8% in 2002. Unfortunately none of the respondents had actually bought in 2000 which means that the buyers either did not wish to participate or the questionnaire had gone missing or did not reach the recipient. 5.5% of the respondents had bought in 2001.

Question 9: Which development was this?

This question was asked for curiosity, to find out whether the client had bought in Levi, Ylläs or Kalajoki. Instead of naming all the developments the respondents had bought from, we decided to divide the answers in areas; Levi, Ylläs and Kalajoki.

TABLE 4. The three main resort areas where respondents had bought Samira built property.

| Ylläs | Levi | Kalajoki |
|-------|-------|----------|
| 83.6% | 12.7% | 3.6% |
| N=55 | | |

Majority of the respondents had bought in Ylläs with 83.6%. Levi came in second with 12.7% of the respondents but the reason behind this might be that Samira has not been able to build anything in Levi for years even though the plans have been made for multiple developments. There is just one Samira development in Kalajoki thus only 3.6% of the respondents had bought in Kalajoki.

Question 10: Have you bought multiple properties from Samira?

TABLE 5. Distribution of respondents having / not having multiple properties.

| | |
|------|-------|
| No | 76.4% |
| Yes | 23.6% |
| N=55 | |

The distribution between having bought multiple properties and not having bought multiple properties from Samira is significant but not that surprising. What is surprising is that actually 23.6% of the respondents had bought two or more properties from Samira. 76.4% said they had settled for one share/property acquired from Samira. We also wanted to know if they had, in fact, acquired more than one share/property from Samira, hence how many is *multiple*, as we were aware that Samira does have clients who had bought

more than two properties. The highest figure that came from a respondent was eight properties. There were answers with mostly two but among the respondents with multiple properties also three and four properties came up more than once.

Question 11: The purpose of purchase

TABLE 6. Distribution concerning the purpose of purchase within the respondents.

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Leisure | 38.2% |
| Investment | 9.1% |
| Leisure & Investment | 49.1% |
| Other | 3.6% |
| N=55 | |

The distribution in this question was quite clearly beneficial for option “Both, leisure and investment” with 49.1% and “leisure only” with 38.2% of the respondents. Respondents who had acquired their property solely for investment use scored 9.1% and option *other* received two answers with 3.6% of the respondents. In this case both two answers came from small company owners and they mentioned employees’ holiday use as their main purpose for the purchase of the property.

Question 12: What factor(s) influenced in your buying decision?

The final question was an open-ended question where we asked about the reasons behind the purchase decision. With this question we wanted to estab-

lish the circumstances which influenced on the purchase hence giving Samira Group an insight to the situation the client is in when the decision is made. On this question N=54 where one respondent had left the question empty.

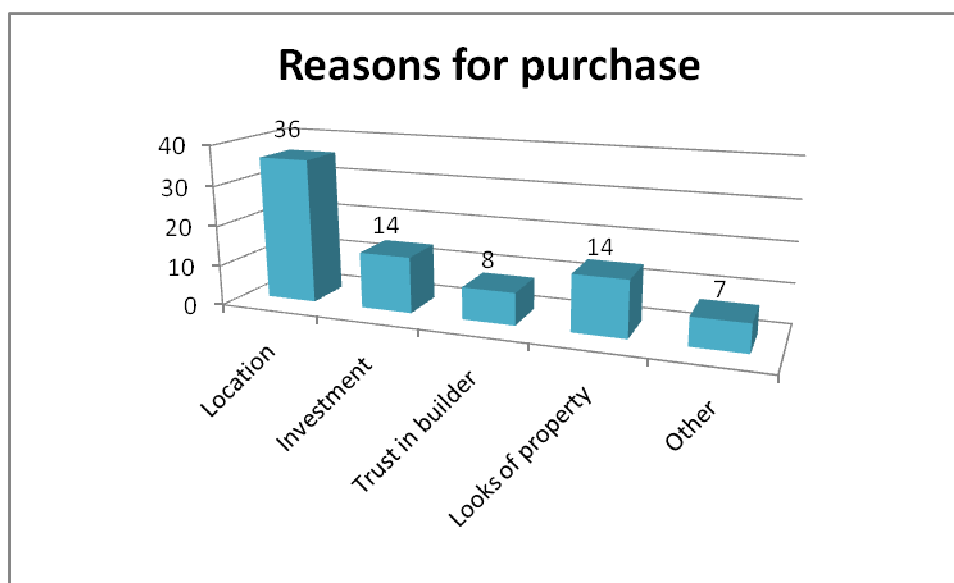


CHART 6. Distribution of the factors influencing the respondents' buying decision. In counts.

The reason we chose to have the results put into a chart form as well was because quite a few clients had the same type of justification behind their purchase decision. Same client might have said "location" and "investment" as their factors influencing in the purchase decision but this is why we wanted to have the question as an open-ended one thus the client is able to freely express their decision. Below this chapter there is the summary of the results. The detailed answers can be found right after the summary.

Most of the respondents were most interested in the area, either loving the area, visiting the area repeatedly thus finally buying a holiday home of their own would be important, considering that investing in the area is a sensible thing to do etc. There was no difference between Levi, Ylläs or Kalajoki when it comes to location. Among all respondents from all locations, there were

people who considered that particular area to be amazing and unique. What we mean by *location* both the location of Samira cabins/apartments on the area and the area as a location are mentioned. Here are a few quotes from the clients who answered the final question;

“Quality, value for money, uniqueness of location.”

“Kelo log design, good quality building, beautiful and quiet location.”

“Style and quality of build. Position of cabins. Rental potential.”

“I liked the apartments with saunas in a magical, lovely place at a reasonable price. Visit before buying and having someone there showing me around. Future bookings for that year, good place to start investment.”

“I love Lapland.”

All the answers above were from Samira’s foreign clients who had answered in English but the Finnish clients obviously answered in Finnish thus when translating their answers in to English there might be a need to change the sentence a bit but trying to have the meaning of sentence as congruent as possible with the original. Quite a few Finnish clients also considered that the price/quality ratio was suitable. Additionally to investment possibility and the love for the location, a couple of other matters that brought both Finnish and foreign clients together were the trust in the builder and the quality of the build. One client said that both the location of the cabin and the exceptional layout of the cabin compared to so-called Samira standard (1- and 2-bedroom cabins) were the most influential factors. One had had previous experiences from Samira built cabins and the fact that at this person’s home town/area there was not enough snow thus came to Lapland. Other person complemented on the development as a package; the prospect of development of Ylläs area, nature, the quality of Samira’s construction, easiness of Housing Corporation and the trust in the builder added with suitable life situation of the buyer lead to the purchase.

The matters separating the three areas, Levi, Ylläs and Kalajoki concerning the answers given was investment point of view. The people who had bought in Levi were most interested in buying property for an investment, and many of them had actually purchased a few properties at the same time, possibly even from the same development. At the beginning of 2000s when Samira was building in Levi, the area already had plenty of interest from the investors, the same did not occur in Ylläs, and definitely not in the same scale. There are respondents who bought in Ylläs and mentioned one of their main factors the rental potential of the property and investment but these clients are either mainly foreign or the investment point of view is just an additional factor in the collection of many. In Kalajoki only the surroundings and the spectacular scenery were the decisive factors, either of the clients who bought in Kalajoki mentioned anything about having it as an investment.

People who did not quite fall into any of the categories mentioned above were the ones we marked as *other* on the chart. There was a person who mentioned having a daydream of owning property one day and on that one day one happened to have some extra money to invest thus found Samira and rest is history. Another one decided to buy because friends were buying and was able to join their group. Third mentioned following the example one's brother and sister had given by buying property from Samira. One client thanked the staff at Samira always being there for the client for an advice and providing excellent after-sales support. A couple of clients mentioned the additional leisure time on commencing pension leading to a purchase of own property.

Comparing the means: Independent Samples T-test

The Independent Sample's T-test is a needed, if wanting to prove a statistical relationship or lack of a relationship between determined groups in the sample, drawn from the sample data. T-test for the mean difference in related

samples can be used to determine whether there is a significant population mean difference (Krehbiel et.al., 2004, Business Statistics. *Comparing two related samples: Tests for the mean difference*, p.355)

Through the T-test results, the statistical relationships and the lack of relationships between different variables and groups. The T-test attempts to prove if there is a quantitative and statistical relationships or differences in the survey data. Survey data is one part of the primary information gathered, and which will be used as a base to describe and determine the company's customer segments.

The level of significance of $\alpha = 0.05$ is used. This indicates that if the P-value of the T-test is 0.05 or below, the given result is statistically significant by a probability of 95 percent or above ($1.00 - 0.05 = 0.95$). If Sig.(2-tailed) is <0.05 , the results can be stated as nearly having statistical significance, marked with one star (*). If the Sig.(2-tailed) is <0.01 , the result is statistically significant, marked with two stars (**). If Sig.(2-tailed) is <0.001 , the results has a high statistical significance, marked with three stars (***). The P-value of the T-test: if the Sig.(2-tailed) figure of the compared means is greater than 0.05, the risk of being wrong is significant. Thus, if the P-value is greater than α , there is no significant *statistical* relationship in the results. If the P-value is less than 0.05, there is a statistical significance in the results. The test is done by using the SPSS® programme.

Number of the total sample respondents is 55 ($N = 55$). In the different set of questions, the N might change as the results are gathered by comparing the means of different sample groups and their variables, therefore dividing the groups. The following section describes the results of the T-test.

1. Respondent's age distribution vs. the market channel that reached the respondent to find Samira:

Comparing age groups of 41-50, and 51-60 years. These two are the biggest age groups in the sample age distribution.

Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.001***. The results is of high statistical significance. N = 36.

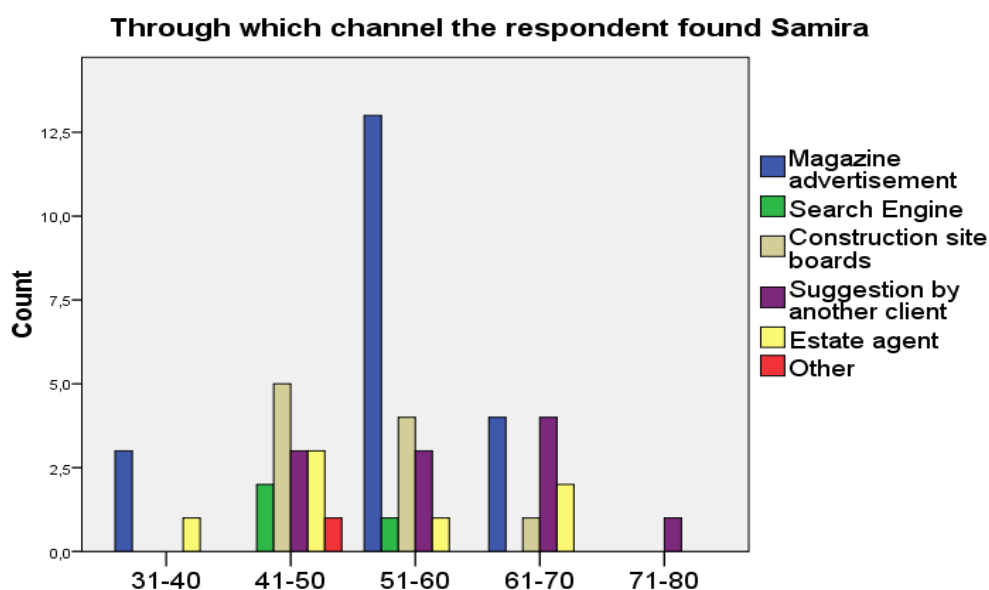


CHART 7. Through which channel the respondent experienced to have found Samira.

There is a difference between the two age group's opinions. The mean of respondents between 41-50 years of age is 4.57, and the mean of the respondents between 51-60 years of age is 2.36. The difference of the means (4.57 - 2.36) is 2.21, which is a significant result. Standard deviation is higher among the 51-60 years of age.

2. Respondent either not owning or owning multiple properties (more than one) vs. what is the respondent's motive of purchase:

Comparing the group of respondents that own multiple real-estate properties, and the group that owns only one property. The question asked from the respondents concerned the purpose of purchase. The results would be used to describe the target market, and figure out whether there is a difference between buying multiple apartments and the buying motives. T-test did not provide proof for a statistical difference between the two sample groups, as the Sig. (2-tailed) was higher than 0.05. N = 55.

Comparing respondents' purpose of purchase and number of properties they own

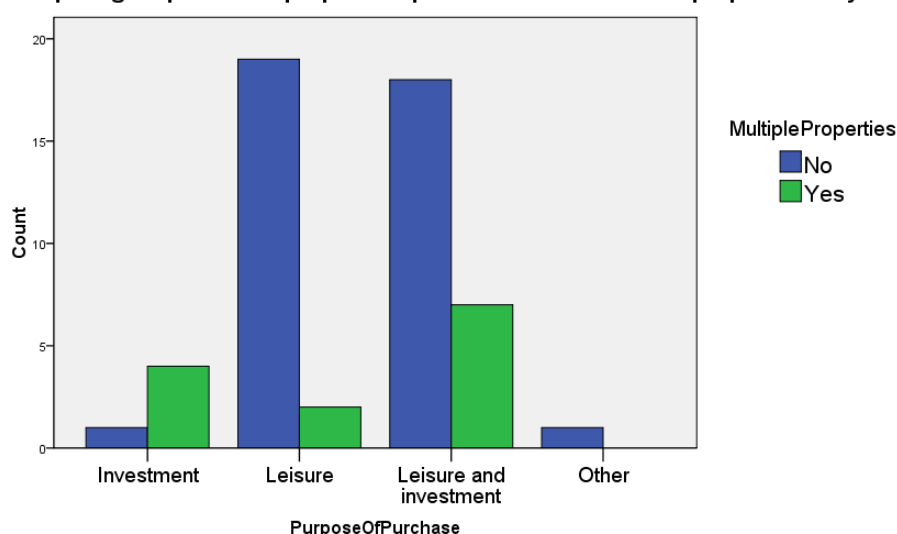


CHART 8. Purpose of purchase of Samira built property and the number of properties they own

3. Respondent Nationality vs. What market channel reached the customer to find Samira?

Sig. (2-tailed) is 0.085, and thus greater than 0.05. N = 42

No statistically significant result. Test cannot prove a difference between the customers' nationalities and their answers on through which marketing channel they found Samira. However, the distribution of the respondents differs;

there are more Finnish respondents than respondents from other nationalities. This may also affect on the results.

4.1.2 Company Management Interview

The researchers wanted to have an in-depth interview with the CEO of Samira Group Ltd, Mr. Sami Nauha, in order to fully understand the management's point of view for the current situation of the company, and the future visions and challenges concerning marketing, advertising and the competition in Finland. Due to the current global economical situation, which is further discussed in the section of company's operating environment, the researchers expected the downturn of the economy to influence in the answers. Even though the answers given by Mr. Nauha in the interview reflect the current situation, the "tone" of the answers is quite positive and emphasizes future expectations. The underneath chapter provides a summary of the interview. The actual interview was conducted through face-to-face meeting with CEO of the Samira Group, and the language of the interview was Finnish. Nevertheless, the researchers have tried to avoid adding their own opinions and views to the summary. The full interview with detailed answers can be found from the appendices of the thesis (Appendix 7, Management Interview).

The future vision of the Samira Group is to continue its **growth** after Finland's economic recession. The company has no intention to throw in the towel, even though the sales of the past winter season have not come close to the last year's winter season, and to what it was last year at this time. The management's plan is to continue the construction projects in Finnish Lapland but also to create more **brand awareness** among possible buyers. This should increase the knowledge of the holiday homes' quality, and the type of construction Samira is locally known for. Brand awareness is increased by keeping the appearance of Samira unique anywhere the company wishes to be seen. Also

the concentration in special type of building, e.g. log and kelo log cabins might be a possibility in the process for branding. In the future Samira might also widen its range of operations to include house construction as well. The intention is to find the **niche market** for the company. Thus the big players in competition, such as YIT Construction, cannot fulfil the market by not taking advantage of the lower building volume areas.

A niche can be determined as a narrowly defined group of customers that is comprised of detailed customer subsegment(s), drawn from the company's main customer segments. Niche marketing attempts to adapt the company's offerings to match the needs of one or more subsegments, where there is often also fewer competition. (Philip Kotler et. al., Principles of Marketing, Ch.10, Segmentation and Positioning, p.393)

During the current recession, the company's main thing is to **keep the operations profitable**. Once the so-called recession will be defeated and economical upturn starts, the goal is to recover fast from the current setting of fewer sales and lower volume of construction. At the moment the situation with available land plots seem excellent. Therefore there will be ground to cover, literally, for years to come but the future with new areas of development will cause a challenge. Without exclusive building sites, there is no room for new construction.

One question to be answered was the **competition** situation. Who does Mr. Nauha see as Samira's biggest competitor and how does Samira differentiate itself from them. The answer was quite predictable: "YIT Construction", Mr. Nauha answered without a blink of an eye. Mr. Sami Nauha does not seem to think others can be considered as rivals, as what it comes to the YIT, a multi-million Euro company listed on Helsinki stock exchange. Within the field of kelo log development there is no real competition when it is such a niche market, which is mainly concentrated in Northern Finland. There are other small players, as mentioned earlier in the thesis however none of them are

rivals for Samira when they fulfil the needs of a smaller group. These small players provide one cabin projects at the time, targeting their products to a whole different customer segment. When asked about the possibility of e.g. PolarHouse, Kontio Product, or Honka Construction whether those companies are causing some sort of a competition for Samira, Mr. Nauha replies that it is possible they are somewhat after the same customer group but as those companies are not specialized in kelo log construction, do not present a clear threat or competitive environment.

The **differentiation policy** with Samira is to be the family business with flexibility and personality. The intention is to provide a face behind the company instead of a cold, impersonal multinational corporation.

One of the most important matters considering the present study was to find out the marketing concept of Samira, and the plans of marketing and advertising (marketing channels) during this time of the recession. As mentioned earlier, Samira does not have a marketing budget according which to the company makes marketing decisions. Instead, having the whole company to take part in the decisions. Usually the decisions reflect the past decisions that have worked, and which decisions haven't, are not repeated. Mr. Nauha says that instead of deciding on a budget, the marketing efforts have followed the trend of demand. **When there is plenty of demand, the company invests more in marketing and advertising.** In order to save some money, e.g. during the recession, the spending on advertising will be cut off slightly. Now that people are extremely cautious when it comes to money and investing, no marketing effort will pay off.

The British and the Russians are still the main international target market for Samira. The company is looking actively for different types of marketing channels from different countries alongside Finland. The company still intends to sell and market the developments mainly itself. The future challenge

with marketing is to find the marketing channel, with reasonable costs, to guarantee that every single tourist in the ski resorts of Levi and Ylläs become acquainted with the company and its products.

Last but certainly not the least, the researchers wished to find out whether Samira thinks that less is more considering marketing channels. It all depends on the size of the target market. In Russia and the United Kingdom more channels are required. What is most important is that the selected channels are of good quality instead of having a few rather poor ones, and having the sales spread out into too many intermediaries. "There is one excellent example of a well working channels operating as cooperation partner with Samira, Ylläs Real Estate Agency, which has proved to be invaluable during the time of recession and keeping the sales going, notwithstanding of the current economical situation", adds Mr. Sami Nauha with content.

Concerning the marketing efforts, Samira will probably continue on the road laid before hence make sure the web pages function well, are informative to the client and are updated frequently. The local advertising is essential, to be present wherever the company is building.

Summary

Currently, the company has its main customer base in Finland. The company is willing to expand in the international markets (of e.g. UK and Russia). This fact helps to determine, that the customer service and marketing should concentrate on two distinct groups: the Finnish clients, and the potential customers in the international market. The current customers, according to the research sample, are usually between 41 to 61 years of age, mostly looking for a holiday home through leisure purposes, or a combination of both leisure and investment purposes. The Finnish customers are mostly located nearby the holiday resorts (local customer base), or in Western and Southern provinces of Finland. No clear clusters could be seen in the sample, to locate the customers

in certain cities or towns, but rather they seem to be scattered (looking at the detailed answers for the customer location, in question number.

The customer segments, drawn from the results on the primary data, are differentiated by using two categories: the customer's geographical location, and customer characteristics. The company management currently emphasizes the serving of the niche market(s), which is also a major consideration in the customer segmenting, and thus the company's marketing channel design. As previously mentioned, the niche markets have detailed and unique characteristics. The survey does not provide necessary data for further definition of the niche market; the customers' underlying values, subconscious attitudes, and opinions to provide further details to the niche market. This is an issue that could be researched more in detail by additional, in-depth / qualitative research.

4.2 Marketing Channels

The Samira Group is an SME company, which means it will have to allocate its marketing resources effectively and be able to manage various parts and operations of its business with a certain, small number of staff and limited resources. The company's marketing does not have a pre-determined budget, and there has not been a decisive plan for which marketing channels the company should emphasize, and what is the marketing approach. This section will explain the set and nature of the marketing channels, and approaches the company could use in directing these channels.

In order to define the marketing channel design decisions, at least four issues needs to be discussed. According to Philip Kotler, to reach a maximum effectiveness in the marketing channels, designing a **channel system** calls for:

1. Analysis of the customer service needs (Samira's customer segments)
2. Defining the channel objectives and constraints (company goals and future aspirations as objectives, operating environment as constraints)
3. Identifying the major channel alternatives (direct and indirect)
4. Evaluating those alternatives (conclusions of the present study).

The present study concentrates on the marketing and promotion aspect of the marketing channel management, instead of distribution. The channels involve activities of e.g. advertising, promotion, personal selling and publicity. In describing the marketing channel options and its structure, secondary sources are used. The researchers emphasize definitions described by Philip Kotler et.al. in Principles of Marketing, 2005, the 4th European Edition.

Marketing channels can comprise of the combination of upstream and downstream activities. **Upstream activities** comprises of the members of e.g. in the outsourced service providers; Samira Group's partners, sales agents and other parties that provide additional services or parts of the product. These activities are put together with the Samira's main product, holiday homes, which will finally form the actual product that reaches the customer. **Downstream activities** are e.g. the company's marketing channels that look towards the customer, e.g. the actual advertising and promotion to reach the customer. In the present study, the marketing channels do not refer on just the distribution channels, yet all the participants operating together with the company that are either directly in contact with the customer, or influence in reaching the customer through promotion and advertising.

Marketing channels of the Samira Group are either direct or indirect, the latter defined as using an intermediary to reach the target customer. Samira itself is

a manufacturer of the product of holiday homes. As it handles the sales activities independently, this is described as a **direct marketing channel approach**. The **indirect approach** is to use an intermediary, e.g. the company's sales representatives (real-estate agents) or a sales branch, between the Samira Group and the target customer. Each layer of marketing intermediaries that performs some of the work in bringing the ownership closer to the final buyer (the customer) is a **channel level** (Kotler, P. et. al., Principles of Marketing, Ch.20: Managing marketing channels). Kotler defines four channel levels, whereas the channel one is the direct-marketing channel. The other three channels are indirect-marketing channels containing one or more intermediaries. Additionally, all these indirect channels are connected by several types of **flows and transactions** provided by the intermediaries. The flows include e.g. the physical flow, the flow of ownership, the payment flow, the information flow and the promotion flow. Transactions that Samira could use through intermediaries are e.g.

- *Information* (gathering and distributing marketing research and intelligence information needed for planning the product exchange)
- *Promotion* (persuasive communications concerning the Samira's products to reach the customer)
- *Contact* (finding and communicating with potential customers)
- *Matching* (fitting the product for the customer's needs)
- *Negotiation* (agreeing on price and other elements of the product to reach an agreement with the customer)
- *Financing* (to allow the customer to be able to actually purchase a holiday home).

Going back to the fact that Samira is an SME company with limited resources, it might be a good starting point to try and find out one, or maximum two, intermediaries to an indirect channel level. These intermediaries are able to provide specified transactions on behalf of the Samira Group. The channels are easier to manage, however, when these do not comprise of too numerous and separate parties. The communications, as well as inducements, towards the intermediaries are more effectively managed to help the intermediaries perform their tasks better. This would also indicate that there are only few key players between the company and the customer. Implementation and control of the marketing channels, and its various tasks, is thus easier to manage. As the Samira Group does not want or cannot perform all the activities independently, both indirect and direct marketing channel levels are needed. By having external partnering networks to promote, advertise and to sell the holiday homes to potential customers, it is more realistic that the company can reach wider range of customers both internationally and nationally. Internationally, also the cultural and language differences are issues of a great concern, and it is useful for the company to have a locally established partner or an agent.

It is to decide, *who* are the intermediaries Samira should cooperate with, *what* transactions they should perform, and *how* these could be managed so that the company's target customers could be reached, and the company's products would be effectively marketed.

Marketing media

The company has various options to choose as mediums in marketing channels. Direct marketing is directly trying to reach and influence the customer, which is the approach the research emphasizes. Indirect marketing could be e.g. using information circulation in the customer and company networks. The

indirect marketing mediums are not the main focus of the present study in deciding the alternatives to the company's marketing channels.

To note, direct and indirect *marketing* and direct and indirect marketing *channels* refer to two separate issues. In direct marketing, by using the direct marketing channel referred as the channel level one, the company could execute the marketing activities in the channels independently. Utilizing channel level two, Samira would use an intermediary, such as a sales agent, between the customer and the company. Still using direct marketing to reach the customer. As previously explained, the researchers encourage both channel one and channel two approach. One important medium of direct marketing is personal selling, which is emphasized for the channel two approach, using intermediaries such as sales agents.

Direct marketing

The marketing mediums discussed below are mediums of direct marketing, using a certain media. The mediums for directing marketing channels for Samira include various options, for example:

- *Newspapers/magazines*, which were emphasized e.g. by the current customer sample
- *Television*, advantages being that it reached a big number of potential customers, however is very expensive to use
- *Radio*, usually a low cost media, downsides being a fragmented and random audience and low attention (messages maybe hard to remember or to pay attention to)

- *Direct* mail, which can directly reach the target customer through the rightful selection of recipients but has a relatively high cost of exposure
- *Telephone* marketing, which can be an effective tool, however can annoy the consumers that object telemarketing (getting many junk calls)
- *Outdoor*, having a low costs structure and can be a good medium if enjoying a good positional selection (location)
- *Internet*, e.g. advertising through search engines, one of the newest forms of marketing (e-marketing)

Channel one alternatives include the transactions that Samira would perform independently to reach the customer. This direct marketing channel should at least partially include the information, promotion, matching, contact and financing activities. The company should market itself to the customer through a set of different marketing mediums, stated above. The company's staff, for example the marketing and sales people, would do the necessary planning and preparation. In order to use the resources effectively and keep the current cost level down, most of the planning and designing of the marketing material could be prepared by the staff.

Outsourced services and mediums could be used to execute the marketing. Looking at the company's aspirations to look for and serve the niche market(s), mediums of television and radio are not recommended, as they attempt to reach a bigger audience. Telephone marketing in wider aspect would need an increase in human resources to make the calls, as well as a customer information base big enough to have contact information available. This is not a direction the company should be heading into, as it might be costly, and difficult to arrange independently.

Direct mail is not that much encouraged, as it is expensive, and detailed definition of the potential customers' location is needed. On the other hand, indirect promotion on the basis of e.g. brochures and leaflets could be done, e.g. by contacting the ski resorts and distributing them in that location to the resort visitors. Passive distribution, meaning get the company's brochures and other material on a display, not to directly and physically distribute them.

Outdoor advertising the company is already utilizing in the ski-resorts' locations, through low-cost construction site boards for the advertising.

Printed media

Magazines and newspapers were recognized by the survey sample as the most identified medium through which the sample discovered Samira. Magazines and newspapers can be a good medium, as there is a wide selection of magazines and newspapers to use in different areas, e.g. construction, investment, leisure, and local newspapers. It is also cost-effective. The problem might be that these mediums might not always reach the all or majority of the targeted customers, for number of natural causes. Not all receiving the paper will read it, or do not pay attention on the advertisements. There is also many types of written media around us daily, so this needs to be taken into consideration. Concerning the international markets and written media, as one option, it is to mention the in-flight magazines. During the flights, many flight operators distribute magazines and newspapers, and e.g. having advertisements in these magazines could serve as one portal to reach variety of potential customers abroad. The problem with this is also, are these the customers the company wants to attract, and whether they will pay attention to the advertisement.

Personal selling and promotion

Personal selling is the most effective tool in certain stages of the buying process, especially in building up buyers preferences, convictions and actions (Kotler, P. Principles of Marketing, p. 742). Personal selling is needs longer-term commitment from the marketer, and is in many cases the company's most expensive promotion tool. This would be the case, if Samira would hire its own independent sales force for the domestic and international markets. Thus, additional channel members are needed for the company's marketing channels, in order to use the personal selling and promotion as a marketing tool.

The options whom the Samira Group could choose as its marketing channel members in advertising and promotion are e.g. sales representatives, sales consultants, field representatives, marketing representatives and intermediaries, real-estate agents and brokers (nationally and internationally). Especially, when reaching out to international markets such as Russia and UK in customer contacts and advertising. The cultural and linguistic knowledge plays an important part in engaging transactions, which can be justified by having a local sales support.

Other intermediaries for different functions include financial institutions, e.g. banks, real-estate agencies and also the ski-resorts. They also obtain the power to reach the customer, as well as to influence on the customer's decisions.

E-marketing - Online commercial activity

In the past decade there has been an explosion of online commercial activity. Even within the current state of Finnish national economy, many online businesses seem to be flourishing. As an example is a Nordic online travel agency, *Travellink.com*, that has developed itself by offering wide range of traveling

and hotel/flight booking services. It has developed itself to offer services for both businesses and for consumers. It has been a convenient method for normal consumers as well as e.g. company secretaries, to arrange their travels online: it is fast, cheap and effective to use. (Broström, N. 16.2.2009. *Matkatoimistolta hurjat myyntiluvut*. Kauppalehti.fi. Referred to on February 28, 2009.)

Offering online solutions and information sources to the company's customers may have a major influence on the company's customer accessibility to the products, and thus also work as a marketing tool by itself. For example, the company webpages can allow the company to provide digital goods and services, information, or introductions of the product. Many types of online marketing channels exist in business-to-business, business-to-consumer, consumer-to-business and consumer-to-consumer e-marketing. (Hollensen, S. 2004. Global Marketing, Ch.14, *Global e-Marketing*) Physical products and thus holiday homes can be marketed online by publishing advertisements on different websites, or using search engines (e.g. Google). Whenever a person is looking for information, companies, links or other through a search engine, it will display the company name, advertisement, website or all these, when certain predetermined words have been used. In this case, for example "holiday home", "cabin", "Finland" though a combination of these or by other method.

E-marketing can also be a powerful tool enabling for international transactions and sales. Online marketing for Samira could indicate advertising in the company and/or the product on one or several web pages, or in the form of advertisements, or by search engines. Already in the year 2003, search engines were quickly becoming the first destination for online shoppers (Distinctionia, 2003. Online publication. Quoting Jason Levin from Nielsen/NetRatings). It is easier for the potential customer to see the products, and receive information of the locations and other relating factors of the potential sale, although the first contact may happen through e.g. a sales person.

Summary

The main marketing media to consider to apply in the marketing channels are E-marketing, personal selling and promotion, and printed media (magazine and newspaper advertising). The television, radio and telemarketing are do not qualify, looking at the company's aspiration to reach a certain customer group rather than a mass consumer market. In addition, the company has limited resources, both financial and human resources. This has its affect on the cost structure for the decided marketing channels, as well as the nature of the marketing media. The approach to utilize in different marketing channel media are direct and indirect. Direct channel approach attempts to reach the customer directly, without middlemen or intermediaries other than the marketing media used to execute the marketing efforts. The direction is from the company to the customer. Indirect channel involves external parties, e.g. real-estate sales agents or agencies, to work between the company and the customer. The discussion and analysis of the results provide additional ideas and details to the conclusions, and is a discussion of the company's marketing channels' situation. Conclusions of the research will shortly describe and determine the main decisions in the marketing channels, based on the following discussion.

4.3 Discussion and analysis of the results

According to the survey previously presented in the thesis, three apparent characteristics rose to represent the sample clientele of Samira; age, profession and the purpose of purchase. The gender of the respondents is not to be considered when it comes to discussing about the customer segments because the survey did not provide reliable information on the gender distribution compared to the actual client base of Samira.

With the results provided by the survey within the current clientele of Samira Group and by reflecting the matters brought up by Mr. Sami Nauha, the CEO of the company, no drastic measures are taken in the discussion where to direct the future marketing efforts and which channels to emphasize. As discussed by Mr. Nauha, as the company intends to attract the niche segments, the survey results do not provide sufficient information for recognizing this segment, hence another research with more information in detail is required. The target market and the customer segments, however, were and could be drawn from the survey results.

Logically commencing from age question, the biggest group age-wise in the survey sample were the 41 to 50 year-olds and the 51 to 60 year-olds. This states and confirms Samira's estimations (the company observations) that the customer target market's characteristics could include

- people with possibly prospering careers
- having thoughts towards e.g. the forthcoming retirement
- having paid off the loan for the family home and the car
- quite probably have savings and interest towards possible investment.

According to the survey sample; entrepreneurs and people holding managerial positions in companies are the biggest profession groups in Samira's customers. They can have the capacity and possibility to invest in luxury products such as Samira built property. They can see the investment point of view in the purchase, when they have the necessary resources: money. They also look into the option of investing in leisure; owning property in the preferred area also operates as a perfect getaway from the otherwise hectic lifestyle.

Since the rise in private and individual investment in the area, the value of the property has increased exponentially, e.g. in Levi, and the interest in invest-

ment has commenced a rise. The resort have seen this as an opportunity for promotion as well. The owners of small cabins have constructed these in and near the center of the resorts. This has paid off, according to the value of the land compared to previous and current value. The *grinders* who turned the area into something different from what it was before, could have gained back the money invested; by a thousand fold or more. Grinder stand for constructors, such as the Samira Group, who perform as the founder of Housing Corporation, acquire the required land, plans and necessary permits as well as holds the power in the Housing Corporation during construction period, when the shares of the Housing Corporation is sold to investors (Nordius-magazine. Latola, M. 2003. *Vastuu rakentajavirheistä*. Nordius newspaper 2/2003).

This attracted the investors to Levi in the first place; investing in a holiday resort is like catching two birds with one stone: having a long term investment, that can also be used for their own leisure. Little by little the ski resort of Ylläs commenced gaining the same type of investment value Levi had held for years.

Close to 50 per cent of the survey respondents who had invested in Samira built property, were motivated by combination of leisure and investment. This trend has been visible to Samira, and it has previously influenced in e.g. the selling technique of the company. Especially when it comes to foreign clients.

The geographical segmentation of Samira's clients resolved with the help of the sample survey. The company mainly operates in the national market in Finland. It has gained some foothold in the British market, thanks to growing interest of British tour operators, and increasing amount of charter flights to Lapland. Samira has a sales agent in UK, who also introduced the idea of foreign investment to the company.

The survey sample presents that the biggest areas of interest and demand, among Finnish customers, is in the Provinces of Southern and Western Finland. Designing a massive marketing campaign to reach the right people on those areas might be close to impossible, when taking a closer look at the areas. Provinces are large in size, and the respondents are scattered all around the Provinces. A possibility for Samira would be to continue advertising on national print media, e.g. in previously mentioned online magazine *Kauppalähti*. Cost effective internet marketing media is to have the company web pages informative, and frequently updated. It provides an advantage for using the *Google* search engine optimization. This could prove to be invaluable in attracting people, and in the intention of increasing the brand awareness.

Outdoor marketing is the most important place of local visibility for the company. The area of construction, with local advertising and the recognition (also emphasized by Mr. Nauha), could be strengthened by advertising to the people who visit the resorts, e.g. Ylläs. The local presence would operate as a stepping stone on the road to brand recognition and awareness, and lead to the advertising volume.

Despite the fact Samira has gained a great deal of experience from serving foreign clients, mainly British, the obstacle of finding the client through direct marketing channel approach is not easy. Especially, to assure the client of the reliability of the constructor from whom the client does not have previous information of. People tend to believe in their countrymen, who share the same culture and language. The person/intermediary selling to the foreign clients should be local, to improve interaction. The low cost Internet marketing is an effective tool also in selling to foreigners when people look to invest in overseas. Using the Google optimization tool and having the web page in multiple languages will the interaction between the customer and the company. Media such as printing is usually more expensive, especially when publishing adver-

tisements in a well-known real estate magazine. One reliable and effective way to influence the target market is to appear on well respected real estate publication, in the form of an article. It would not be a paid, pre-designed advertisement. Instead, it could be a story or an illustration of a company selling real-estate property in the winter wonderland, the Finnish Lapland. Also known as the land of the Santa Claus. A real-life article might enjoy more credibility, and be more informative than a normal advertisement. According to the CEO of Samira Group Ltd., a possibility is to outsource some of the company's sales operations in the future. Thus, one suggestion for the marketing channels is to have external sales agents in United Kingdom and Russia, working as a local sales force.

Samira Group should utilize both direct and indirect marketing channels; channel level one and two. Direct approach meaning from the company to the customer, and indirect to use a partner or an agent to reach the customer. Next, the researchers are looking into the possibilities of direct marketing means from Samira's point of view.

Electric marketing consist of the company web page and Google optimization campaign. These tools are low cost. The web pages are maintained by the company, and the information should keep up to date. It can be applied nationally and internationally, hence the company has everything to gain and not that much to lose when the functional web pages are in place. Other mediums for e-marketing is e.g. the popular *Facebook* phenomenon. It could reach big amount of people, however this type of marketing would not work for Samira, according to the customer characteristics. The age distribution is typically a lot younger in the Facebook Internet community, than the company's customer segment describes.

Print media is the type of marketing channel that could reach many people who belong to the customer segment. When reflecting the biggest age groups

of the survey, 41 to 50 and 51 to 60 year-olds, it is very believable a person in older age is used to see the printed media as more common to use, than e.g. perceived by the younger generation. The biggest profession groups in the survey results were entrepreneurs and people holding managerial positions. Internet should be familiar to them in how to search for information, no matter if it is for the opening hours of a restaurant, or for a real estate property to invest in. In consideration to those to whom the internet might not be familiar; Samira should use printed media in addition to the E-marketing. Local newspapers at Levi and Ylläs, especially during the peak season, could reach many visitors as well as locals in the resort areas. The local news are in usually delivered to every cabin in the area. Samira is currently having an advertisement on every issue of *Kuukkeli* – the Ylläs area local newspaper. *Kuukkeli* is the main local printed media of Ylläs. The advertisement could be designed as slightly bigger, and allocated during the resorts' peak seasons in the winter.

Television advertising ,in national television channels for example, as effective as it claimed to be by using both image and sound, is far too expensive marketing channel for a small/medium size company as Samira. First to come up with the idea for a functional advertisement, then to have it produced after which there are still the costs of the display of the advertisement. The researchers do not see the radio marketing as the type of channel to advertise Samira and its products. Radio advertising alone probably would not prove to be efficient without further brand building. This would need a greater marketing campaign for support.

However, referring to the local visibility in Ylläs: one way of utilizing the television for advertising does exist. Local visibility would be gained by having a short TV spot-advertisement at the local K-Market, which is the heart of the ski-center by far. This is the grocery store where everyone goes to during their visit in Ylläs, no matter which side of the fell-area the people are staying. A

small village shop turned into one of the biggest K-Markets in Finland, attracts people to shop with their wide selection of goods. The resorts' services are located either in the same building or in the "shopping centre" next door, which indicates that many of the resort visitors would visit the place. K-Market has multiple, 42-inch-plasma-screen televisions around the shop, which could run Samira's advertisement many times a day. The cost structure is higher than in E-marketing and printed media, and it would require production of a television advertisement that could be run. On the other hand, the visibility would be greater, and influence positively on the branding of the company.

Telemarketing, standing for telephone promotion and selling, would be too time-consuming task for a small company like Samira to perform. At least to be executed by Samira independently. With limited human resources, it is not effective to try and reach the potential customers through phone calls, and Samira does not have a client information base to make the calls. Telemarketing is not seen by the researchers to be an effective use of resources for the company's marketing channels.

The indirect marketing channels, using an intermediary, are emphasized by the researchers in reaching target customers in personal selling and promotion. Going back a couple of years, the company did all the selling in Finland individually. There was just one agent helping with the sales and promotion to the British clients. Samira wanted to be accessible for the bigger public, and as the amount of properties for sale increased, a helping hand was required. Samira commenced making agreements with real estate agents/agencies. This has been a positive experience for the company. The researchers recommend to increase the use of the local real estate agents. For example, Opkk (the real estate agency of OP- bank) operates nationally but if the property is located in Lapland, it is usually sold by the Northern Finland Opkk instead of Helsinki

Opkk. Nevertheless they share all the national real estates in Opkk group. The client looking for properties does not pay attention to the office location that is selling the property, before the actual contacting stage. A local agent is needed to start the contacts with the potential clients.

Real estate agents in Finland tend to do the entire selling process by themselves, from the initial contact until the signing of the Bill of Sale. They provide the clients with paperwork on behalf of e.g. Samira. In case they need further information, the agents turn to the constructor. Other than that, the construction company does not step into the picture until the signing of the papers, if there is not a specific request from the client. All promotion, selling and marketing efforts is done by the agents individually. They decide which projects or construction companies to advertise to their clients.

The company's visibility in the ski centers could be improved. The advertising in the ski-centers' slopes would give the volume required for brand acknowledgement. This matter is to be discussed in the future, thinking of having a bigger advertisement or more exposure than just having one advertisement somewhere in the slopes. The purpose should be to slightly increase the marketing for the rest of the winter season in the resorts of Levi and Ylläs, whilst there are still people visiting the resorts. Nothing experimental has been yet tried out. After the winter season ends in Ylläs and Levi, it is time to focus on the marketing of Kalajoki, the summer resort by the sea shore. Due to tight resources and the economical downturn Samira is to look at more carefully where to invest in marketing means, and how to make the most of it. The next chapter, 5.2, the operating environment of Samira and the financial crisis will be discussed more in detail.

5 CONCLUSION

The previous sections of the research concentrated on the identifying and discussing the research process and its results. Now, the conclusions are drawn from this previous information into a summary of concrete solutions for the Samira Group's marketing channel decisions. Finally, an overview on the current economical situation is discussed as it affects on the conclusions of the marketing channels.

In this conclusion the researchers are concentrating on reflecting the research problems presented in the introduction. Firstly, the customer segment of the Samira Group Ltd. was examined. The results were provided by the customer sample survey, and Samira 11 years of experience from the industry was reflected on the survey results. Second, the marketing channels (e.g. media) were identified; the channels to emphasize, according to the customer segments, and goals set by the company management. Additionally, certain marketing channels were neglected. The current economical situation was reflected towards Samira's marketing efforts; to adapt to the situation of uncertainty, currently existing in the market.

Samira Group's clientele can now be divided into two different categories of customer segmentation; geographical segmentation, and customer characteristics. The customer characteristics include subsegments of age (41 to 61 years of age), profession (managers, entrepreneurs, pensioners and other) and the purpose of purchase (leisure and investment). The geographical segments include Finnish and foreign customers. Finnish customers are divided according to three subsegments: the local customers near the ski-resorts, and customers in Western and Southern parts of Finland. Foreign customers represent mainly UK and Russia.

The marketing channels are involved in the means direct marketing: personal selling and promotion, printed media (Finnish market) and E-marketing (Finnish and international market), and outdoor and local advertising (including various mediums for marketing). The marketing channel approaches are described as channel level one and channel level two approaches. Level one is the direct marketing channel, planned and executed independently by the company in order to reach the customer. Level two is indirect marketing channel, having (one, or maximum two) intermediaries to function between the company and the customer. Level one marketing channels operate in the areas of advertising and promotion, mostly, and is directed to local customers near the resorts. The mediums used are personal selling by the company sales department in Ylläs, printed advertisements, and e-marketing through *Google* and using the company's website as a "passive" information and marketing source for the customers. The sales office in Ylläs would work as a "hub" for the national marketing channels in Finland. In Western and Southern parts of Finland, the personal selling through the channel two should be used. Thus involving the sales agents and agencies for reaching the customers. Printed advertisements should involve local newspapers and magazines connected to the resorts, and a consideration are internationally visible magazines, for example in-flight magazines in the routes of e.g. Finland – UK and Finland – Russia (for example St.Petersburg), and local printed media in UK and Russia. The latter could be arranged through the sales agents or agencies, present in the local market. Other additional marketing channels, such as the company's presence in various industry or leisure fairs would be recommended, however these are occasional, rather than continuous marketing efforts.

The details of the marketing channels, including the content and context of the different marketing channels would be further decided by the company. These involve the design of the advertisement material, the delivered messages shown in the advertisements etc.

Currently, due to the economic situation also affecting on the Samira Group and its operating environment, the researchers do not encourage to take drastic measures in increasing the current marketing budget. Instead, the suggested marketing channel arrangements should take place as the company sees it is time to execute these suggestions, and thus adapt as such to the improving market situation and demand.

The applied research approach in executing the research was the case study approach. Researchers agree to mention, that this was the best option in undertaking this research project. Case study allows to involve areas of quantitative research, qualitative research, and observations and experiences. These areas are gathering, analysing and formulating the research results. Using the case study approach enables the researchers to investigate the research questions from different viewpoints, using several sources. It will provide a broader picture of the actual research problem.

The results of the thesis are for the use of Samira Group Ltd., and are explained from the Samira Group's perspective, emphasizing to maximize the company advantage in the results. Thus the results may or may not qualify for other parties to use, or for an overall marketing channel planning. The description of the economical environment is, however, looking at the global and Finnish economic macro-environment. This is easily adaptable for other decision making, besides the marketing aspect.

In order to clarify some of the issues sculpturing the current economic situation in the national and global market, the economic environment is discussed as the final words of the thesis.

6 ECONOMIC (MACRO) ENVIRONMENT

“ The company and all other actors operate in a larger macroenvironment of forces that shape opportunities and pose threats to the company”

Philip Kotler et. al.

The recent substantial declines in the capital markets and recession in the general national and global economy (occurring at the time of the present study) will also affect the company's operating environment. The changing economic environment forces the company to face a new situation in the market place, and in this section refers to the macroenvironment of the company. Philip Kotler et. al. define six most influential forces in the company's macroenvironment. These are demographic, economic-, natural-, technological-, political- and cultural- forces (Philip Kotler et. al., Principles of Marketing, Pearson Education Ltd, 2005, Ch.3, The marketing environment, p.91). Due to the major transformations in the current economical situation, the present discussion concentrates in describing the economic forces. The following issues are viewed as important considerations for the Samira Group, and they comprise of assumptions which may affect the company's opportunities and threats, creating potential reflections on the company's marketing.

At the time of the writing, the current global as well as national economy faces a strong downturn. Finland is now officially announced to experience a recession, on 27th of February 2009, by Statistics Finland: “If recession is defined as a decline in output lasting for at least six successive months, Finland's economy can be considered as being in recession” (Statistics Finland, Press Release 27.2.2009. *Gross domestic product in decline, Finland is in recession*). It also stated that private consumption fell 1.2 percent in October-December, while investment was down 2.1 percent. Earlier in the same week (week 9), Finnish Finance Minister Jyrki Katainen said the economy could shrink by up to 4.4 per-

cent in the year 2009. This is a figure much worse than a January forecast of around 2.0 percent.

Recession has negative financial affects on the majority of the general public, and thus also the overall demand for products and services. The investments are down as well, which means this will probably hit negatively at the demand for holiday homes if the current economy will continue to develop negatively for a longer period of time. The Bank of Finland predicts that Finland is facing a sustained recession lasting about a year and a half (Helsingin Sanomat, International Edition – Business and Finance. December 10, 2008. *Bank of Finland: Recovery not expected to begin before 2010*). If the recovery will take longer than that, the effects on the company and its housing demand might be much worse in time. One aspect to consider in the company's marketing, for example, is if there is a need to change e.g. the management of the marketing channels in a more cost effective manner. Also the overall pricing might be affected. It may be required to take new approaches in the promotion and advertising to attract customers, and see how the previously mentioned niche target markets are affected by the economic situation.

The looming global financial crisis hit the “real economy” in the second half of the year 2008, resulting a banking crisis and creating substantial job losses. Every day we receive more and more news about the current economical situation. Some try to brighten the gloomy atmosphere of financial crisis, others are not nearly as positive and every day we learn more about company lay-offs and terminations. News have incredible influence in people, and people as consumers become very cautious trying to save up for the “rainy day.” “Finland's recession, which started with exports, has spread to services and retail sales. It will show in the jobless rate in the next few months” said Anssi Rantala, chief economist at the OP Bank Group Central Cooperative, a unit of

the OP-Pohjola Group in Helsinki (Bloomberg. Calrstrom, J. February 27, 2009. *Nordic Countries Plunge Into Recession as Export Markets Fail*).

According to Finnish Property Monthly publication, on Finnish real estate market the flats in older apartment buildings and terraced houses have experienced a drop in prices in the last quarter of 2008. The decline was ca. 3.8% in the whole country; 3.5 % in the Greater Helsinki area and 4% in elsewhere in Finland. These figures were compared to the figures of the third quarter of 2008 (Finnish Property Monthly, January 2009 by Institute of Real Estate Economics).

According to Koillissanomat in Finnish ski resort Ruka; the holiday property markets were somewhat overheated for years 2007 and 2008 the demand for holiday homes has calmed down slightly but the basic demand still exists. Buyers have time and they no longer are in a hurry to buy property but instead like to take their time and see how the market and the prices develop. The location is still one of the main priorities when thinking about buying holiday property. (Koillissanomat, Salminen, S. February 21, 2009. *Asuntokauppa palailee Kuusamossa normaaliksi syksyn epävarmuuden jälkeen*). Cabins/apartments in central locations are far more attractive than the property a few kilometers away from the center of the resort. The price of the property counts, of course. Especially now that people expect the sellers to sell their properties with great discount and consider the holiday property market to be in so-called buyers' market stage, indicating that the buyers, instead of the sellers, hold the power in the market. This might be true when it comes to big, overpriced property slightly outside the resort center. Nevertheless, it seems as the sellers are not eager to lower their prices when it comes to smaller one and two bedroom cabins/apartments. The market for holiday property has slowed down but the serious buyers are still looking for property to invest in.

Hence, the holiday property market does follow the trends of real estate market maybe more accurately than anticipated.

The real estate industry is in trouble. During the last years of economic boom, when people started to increase their wealth e.g. through investments in the lucrative stock markets and increasing salary level, more and more investments and purchases were made. In order for people to finance these new investments, loans were taken to boost the enhancing lifestyle. This has been the situation especially in the housing market, globally speaking, and effected the global economy though e.g. creating economic bubbles in the form of e.g. housing bubbles.

Definition for the term housing bubble:

"A real estate bubble or property bubble (or housing bubble for residential markets) is a type of economic bubble that occurs periodically in local or global real estate markets. It is characterized by rapid increases in valuations of real property such as housing until they reach unsustainable levels relative to incomes and other economic elements."

(Wikipedia, Online Encyclopaedia.)

Cumulating for the past decade, this is what happened also in the USA. The US housing bubble started to show signs of bursting at the end of 2005. According to Bloomberg, people started hearing about risks of a house price bubble, easy credit and loans to borrowers that really don't qualify. In the last couple of months of the year 2005, things were starting to turn for the worse (Bloomberg. Yoon, A. *U.S. Housing Bubble Bursts in U.S. Mortgage Bond Market*. December 6, 2005). During the years more and more mortgages were taken by the public, as banks were encouraging this by favouring to finance mortgages. Many times with a higher risk. The price level in the US real-estate market

was gradually increasing. It can be seen to experience its peak between the years 2005-2006, measured from the end of December, 2000. (Daily Kos. Jerome Guillet aka Jerome a Paris. *When did the financial crisis really start?*, graph on US House Prices. February 12, 2009)

There has been a worldwide increase in the house prices, especially. It is now widely believed to have caused the occurring, global economic bubbles, which started to burst in 2007 and in 2008. It hit in the real economy in the second half of the year 2008, creating turbulence and volatility in the market.

“Around the world stock markets have fallen, large financial institutions have collapsed or been bought out, and governments in even the wealthiest nations have had to come up with rescue packages to bail out their financial systems.

For example, banks with little confidence to lend may lend with higher interest rates. People may find their mortgages harder to pay, or remortgaging could become expensive. For any recent home buyers, the value of their homes are likely to fall in value leaving them in negative equity. In the wider economy, many sectors may find the credit crunch and higher costs of borrowing will lead to job cuts. As people will cut back on consumption to try and weather this economic storm, yet other businesses will struggle to survive leading to further fears of job losses.”

(Global Issues –website. Anup Shah: Global Financial Crisis 2008)

It is widely discussed by many business analysts that the collapse of the US financial market has been maybe the greatest trigger to cause the current global financial crisis. Firstly, there has been vast numbers of mortgages, which many of the people can't afford. A trend in the financial markets, especially in the US, has been in encouraging people to take up loans which the banks have been willing to lend (due to the boom in the economy). Properties

have diminished, and are still forecasted by many analysts to keep on diminishing, in value. This can be described as a sub-prime market situation. Many of the mortgages people had taken from the bank were turned into different financial securities by the banks, to be sold forth in the global market place to gain profits to the bank. As investors would buy these securities (in form of debt obligations) from the bank, they would gain profits (from the people having mortgage contracts with the banks). The banks on the other hand would gain greater and faster profits by selling the securities to the investors, instead of just waiting for the long-term interests from its mortgage clients.

Through selling complex financial instruments in the global market place, this also increased the financial inter-relation in the world economy. Risky home loans were originated and then became an asset-backed security. These securities formed a part of a collateralized debt obligation (CDO) that was rated and sold to the investors. After the USA's financial collapse, mainly due to the bad situation in its housing market, it affected the complex financial instruments, thus also the global financial system, and the world economy. (International Monetary Fund. Dodd, R. and Mills, P. Outbreak: U.S. Subprime Contagion.).

All over the globe property value has been decreasing. For example in the holiday destinations of Spain, the property prices have come down approximately 12.6 % from January 2008 to January 2009 according to Euroresidentes web page. The estimation is that the property prices will fall by 20% by the end of 2009. Reasons behind the decrease are the fall of the number of house sales together with the surplus properties on the market. At the end of 2008 there were 930,000 surplus properties. Tinsa (Tasaciones Inmobiliarias S.A. translation: Real Estate Appraisals Ltd) estimates there will be 1.5 million surplus properties at the end of 2009. Also there is a new housing stock entering onto the already mature market with pace of approximately 45,000 flats/apartments per month when the sales pace of new houses is only 20,000

per month which does not help the situation in Spain (Euroresidentes, Buying Property in Spain. 2009. *Estimated drop in Spanish property in 2009.*).

In Moscow where property prices kept on climbing up until late November, 2008 the economical situation has had an incredible influence. The property prices were over inflated compared to those of Europe, property selling for \$ 6,000 per square metre in central Moscow, rising by ca. 50% from previous year according to BusinessWeek newspaper. At the same time the ruble, currency of Russia, has continued its decline compared to U.S. dollar and euro. The property prices in Moscow were approximately five times the European average and the cost of a 100 square metre apartment is 155 times the income of typical Russian. Now the developers are forced to sell their properties with discounts ranging between 25 % and 40% (BusinessWeek. Bush, J. *Real Estate Crunch Comes to Russia*. December 9, 2008.).

One more consideration is the falling exchange rate of the Euro currency. On the 17th of February, the Euro (against USD) was at its weakest in 10 weeks, as worries towards the economical downturn of euro zone got worse (Kauppalehti online, www.kauppalehti.fi, referred to on 17.2.2009). If interests are cut, the Euro exchange rate is likely to fall. There is a risk that ECB will decrease its interest rate in their next meeting in March, 2009 (Deutsche Welle, www.dw-world.de, *ECB Maintains Current Interest Rates But Hints at Future Cuts*, 5.2.2009). The consideration for the Samira Group is to understand how this could affect on its international market demand. As the falling interest rates can affect the demand for the holiday homes; if the investments made outside of Finland are becoming cheaper due to the changes in currency, as well as how the real-estate investments are likely to increase/decrease in value in the eyes of the foreign investors in the future.

Summary

The economic (macro)environment can have a considerable affect on the company's operations and overall demand of its products. The current economical situation has been stated as a global financial crisis, and Finland is also declared to be either in a severe downturn, or as Statistics Finland announced; in recession. The situation creates a great amount of uncertainty to the financial markets, which in turn reflects on the different industries and companies directly, or indirectly in a certain period of time. This also includes construction and real-estate industry, and Samira Group Ltd. The management needs to take the environment into consideration when making decisions in the company operations, which in this case has indicated a careful cost-structure for the near future. Thus, all the potential marketing channel operations will be implemented according on how the situation develops.

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APPENDIX 1. Cover letter for questionnaire for Finnish clients

Arvoisa osakkeenomistaja,

Tarvitsisimme apua, allekirjoittanut sekä parini Jenni Risku, teiltä Samira Group Oy:n asiakkaina tehdessämme opinnäytetyötäni Samira Group Oy:lle markkinointikanavista ja niiden tehokkuudesta. Toivoisin, että voisitte käyttää 5 minuuttia antaaksenne vastaukset kyselyyn ja samalla auttaen minua ja pariani opinnäytetyössämme ja Samiraa tulevien markkinointiponnistelujen kanssa.

Toivoisimme pikaista vastausta kyselyymme, koska aikataulumme on aika tiukka valmistumisen suhteen, joten jos mitenkään mahdollista, voisitteko ystävällisesti palauttaa täytetyn kyselyn sähköpostitse minulle **sunnuntaihin, 8.2.2009 mennessä?**

Ohjeet:

Kysymyksillä 1 – 4 haluaisimme tietää hieman teistä vastaajana saadaksemme pohjaa Samiran asiakaskuntaan.

Kysymykset 5 ja 6; merkatkaa yksi paras vaihtoehto

Kysymykset 7 – 11 koskevat omistamaanne Samiran rakentamaa huoneistoja/huoneistoja

Kysymys 12 on avoin kysymys, jossa teillä on mahdollisuus kuvailla syitä hankintaan.

Kuten huomaatte, kyselyt ovat täysin nimettömiä ja kyselylomakkeita ei luovuteta kolmannelle osapuolelle.

Olisin erittäin kiitollinen vastauksistanne!

Ystävällisin terveisin,

Eija Keskitalo

APPENDIX 2. Cover letter for the questionnaire for foreign clients in English

Dear share holder,

Please find a research questionnaire attached. Me, and my thesis partner Ms. Jenni Risku would require your help as the share holder of Samira built property. We are writing a thesis concerning the effectiveness of marketing channels hence if you could please take 5 minutes of your time and complete the questionnaire form, it would help us to graduate and Samira Group in its future marketing efforts.

As the intention to graduate is next month we wish you could take few minutes of your time and complete the questionnaire and return it to me by this **Sunday 8th February, 2009** by e-mail it would be greatly appreciated.

Instructions:

In questions 1 – 4 we would like to know something about your as the share holder to be able to segment the clientele of Samira Group

Questions 5 and 6; please select one most suitable option

In questions 7 – 10 we would like you to receive some details about your Samira built property/properties

Question 11 is an open question on which you have the opportunity to give us some details behind the purchase decision.

As you may see, no name is required and I am alone handling the papers and do not hand them over to a third party at any point.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me!

Many thanks,

Eija Keskitalo

APPENDIX 3. Questionnaire in Finnish

Asiakaskyselylomake

1) Ikä

1. 20 – 30
2. 31 – 40
3. 41 – 50
4. 51 – 60
5. 61 – 70
6. 71 – 80

2) Sukupuoli

1. Nainen
2. Mies

3) Ammattiryhmä (silloin kun Samiran rakentama kohde hankittu)

1. Yrittäjä
2. Toimihenkilö
3. Ylempi toimihenkilö
4. Johtavassa asemassa työskentelevä henkilö
5. Työtön
6. Eläkeläinen
7. Muu, mikä? _____

4) Asuinpaikkakunta

5) Mikä markkinointikanava tavoittaa teidät parhaiten?

1. Lehtimainos
2. Televisiomainos
3. Hakukone (esim. Google) mainos/haku
4. Internet banneri
5. Tienvarsimainos
6. Työmaataulut
7. Ystävän/tuttavan suosittelu
8. Muu mikä? _____

6) Millä markkinointikanavalla Samira tavoitti teidät?

1. Lehtimainos
2. Hakukone (esim. Google) mainos/haku
3. Internet banneri
4. Työmaataulu
5. Toisen asiakkaan suosittelemana

6. Kiinteistövälittäjän kautta
 7. Muu, mikä?
-

7) Millainen omistusosuus teillä on Samiran rakentamassa kohteessa?

1. Kokonaisen huoneiston omistajuus
 2. 1/6 osaomistajuus
 3. 1/4 osaomistajuus
 4. Muu, mikä?
-

8) Samiran rakentaman kohteen hankkimisvuosi (ei kohteen valmistumisvuosi)?

9) Mikä kohde oli kyseessä? _____

10) Oletteko hankkineet useampia Samiran rakentamien kiinteistöjen huoneistoja/osuuksia?

1. En
2. Kyllä, kuinka monta? _____

11) Oletteko hankkinut loma-asuntonne

1. Sijoituskäyttöön
2. Omaan käyttöön
3. Sekä omaan käyttöön että sijoitukseksi
4. Muusta syystä, mikä? _____

12) Mikä sai teidät tekemään ostopäätöksen tuolloin?

Kaikki vastaukset käsitellään luottamuksellisesti ja nimettöminä. Vastauslomakkeita ei luovuteta kolmannelle osapuolelle.

APPENDIX 4. Questionnaire in English

Questionnaire

1) **Age**

1. 20 – 30
2. 31 – 40
3. 41 – 50
4. 51 – 60
5. 61 – 70
6. 71 – 80

2) **Gender**

1. Female
2. Male

3) **Profession (at the time Samira built property acquired)**

1. Entrepreneur
2. Employee
3. Employee at higher position
4. Manager
5. Unemployed
6. On pension
7. Other, what? _____

4) **City** _____

5) **Which marketing channel has the most influence on you?**

1. Magazine advertising
2. Television advertising
3. Search Engine (e.g. Google) search/advertisement
4. Banner on a web page
5. Highway advertising
6. Construction site boards
7. Suggestion by a friend/colleague etc
8. Other, what? _____

6) **Through which marketing channel did you find Samira?**

1. Magazine advertising
2. Search engine (e.g. Google) advertisement/search
3. Banner on a web page
4. Construction site boards

5. Suggestion by a friend/colleague etc
 6. Estate agent
 7. Other, what?
-

7) Please specify the year you purchased Samira built property (year of the purchase not the year of completion of the property)? _____

8) Which development was this?

9) Have you purchased multiple properties from Samira?

1. No
2. Yes, how many? _____

10) Did you acquire your property for

1. Leisure use
2. Investment only
3. Both, investment and leisure
4. Other reason, what? _____

11) What factor(s) influenced on your buying decision?

All answers are handled anonymously and no answer sheets are handed over to a third party.

APPENDIX 5. Detailed answers for the open questions of the questionnaire

Finnish clients:

- Hinta/laatusuhde + keskeinen sijainti (palvelut lähellä)
- Monen vuoden haave. Sattumalta vähän ylimääräistä
- Vastaavien aiemmin rakennettujen kohteiden ulkonäkö ja laatu
- Aikaisemmat kokemukset Samiran mökeistä, kotipuolen heikot lumiolosuhteet
- Löytyi hyvä ryhmä, johon sattui pääsemään mukaan
- Pitkän pohdinnan ja etsinnän jälkeen löytyi sopiva, hyvä sijainti erittäin tärkeä
- Vapaa-ajan lisääntyminen eläkkeelle jäämisen vuoksi
- Hyvä porukka, kohteen hyvä sijainti
- Olen monen vuoden ajan käynyt Ylläksellä, "pakkosäästämistä" kiinteistöön sijoittamalla
- Olen ollut töissä Kalajoella ja kiinnostaa nauttia Kalajoen kesästä
- Lapin vetovoima/Kelomökit/sijainti
- Poikkeuksellinen pohjaratkaisu verrattuna Samira "standardiin", kohteen sijainti
- Alue kiinnosti
- Pienellä pääomalla kiinni "omaan" mökkiin, sijainti hyvä julkisia kulkuneuvoja ajatellen (juna, linja-auto)
- Äkäslompolossa yrityksellä oli 7 viikko-osaketta, joita vaikea hallita työntekijöiden lomakäytössä. Ne myytiin pois ja ostettiin kokonainen Samiralta
- Etsittiin sopivaa 1/6 osaomistushuoneistoa joko Leviltä tai Ylläkseltä, juuri silloin sopiva kohde myynnissä Ylläksellä. Kohteen sijainti hyvä

ja hinta siedettävä. Ostopäätöstä kiirehti hintojen nousu vuoden vaihteessa (2008).

- Kauppiaana lomaviikot oli tiedossa, arvonnousun mahdollisuus huoneistoilla
- Olen lomaillut paljon pohjoisessa
- Huoneiston malli miellytti, tutustuesssa kohteeseen tarkemmin, kaikki tuntui sopivalta. Hyvä sijainti, Ylläs kiinnosti, KOy:n helppous, luottamus rakentajaan
- Mielenkiintoisia sijoituskohteina, sijainti, aikanaan vaikuttivat hyviltä sijoituskohteilta
- Sijainti, ostotapahtuman helppous, luottamus rakentajaan
- ALV- palautusmahdollisuus, vuokraus mahdollisuus
- Sijoituksena loistava hotellin vuokrasopimuksen takia
- Sijainti, mahdollinen sijoitus
- Eläkepäiviä varten, aikanaan omaan käyttöön, sijoituksena tuottamaan
- Paikka, tontin sijainti
- Veljen ja sisaren esimerkki (Teerentie I)
- Kohde kokonaisuudessaan; Ylläksen kehitysnäkymät ja ympäristö.
Samiran tuotteen laatuvaikutelma ja sopiva elämäntilanne
- Hyvä kohde myös sijoitusmielessä
- Sijainti ja laadukas kelorakentaminen. Hinta laatusuhde kohdallaan
- Hyvä sijainti, hyvä pohjaratkaisu, laadukas työ
- Kohteen ainutlaatuinen sijainti
- Kohteen hyvä sijainti ja mahdollisuus ostaa ¼
- Kohteen loistava sijainti johti nopeaan ostopäätökseen. Ennen Samiran kohteen osuuksien hankkimista yksi osaomistus oli jo hallinnassa. Yksi viikko kerrallaan oli liian vähän erityisesti eläkepäiviä silmällä pitäen, joten nyt on kolme viikkoa putkeen kerran huoneistoa vaihtamalla

- Toisen hankkeen kariutuminen, jonka jälkeen tutustuminen Samiran nettisivuihin
- Monen vuoden Lapissa lomailun jälkeen tuntui järkevältä
- Kohteen hyvä sijainti sekä hankinnan helppous

Foreign clients:

- Quality, value for money, uniqueness of location
- Country, climate, people. At the time property cost was competitive for a ski resort
- Kelo log design, good quality building, beautiful and quiet location
- I love Lapland
- Investment value rising, euro investment in Ylläs to improve facilities
- Style and quality of build. Position of cabins. Rental potential
- I liked the apartments with saunas in a magical, lovely place at a reasonable price, visit before buying and having someone there showing me around. Future bookings for that year, good place to start investment
- Trend of reducing snow in the Alps giving the expectation of increasing numbers coming to Finland, liking the area and the quality of the cabins
- Combination of business value and looks
- Location, management service offered, All in- package
- Impressed with other properties built by Samira and ease with which all the paperwork was completed
- Financial return. The country and facilities around the development
- Cost, quality, confidence and trust in builder
- Good quality construction and excellent after sales support, and reliable and trustworthy builder. Staff always available for an advice when needed.

- Location and price
- Price of kelo log cabin, location, market potential, tourism and rental potential, great get away for the children in the magical land of Santa Claus
- Location, initial advice from the office, the package as a whole.

APPENDIX 6. Management interview

Sami Nauha, voisitko kuvailla mitä voisivat olla Samiran tavoitteet/tulevaisuuden visiot?

Tavoitteena on taantumun jälkeen jatkaa kasvu-uralla. Tarkoitus on jatkaa Suomen Lapissa myös tulevaisuudessa, mutta erottua kilpailijoista entistä enemmän omana tuotemerkinä, jossa ostaja tietää jo ostaessa minkälaista laatua on ostamassa ja minkälaisia huoneistoja tuotevalikoima käsittää. On myös mahdollista, että toimintaa tullaan laajentamaan asuntorakentamiseen.

Tarkoitus on säilyä "notkeana" pk-yrityksenä, jossa hyödynnetään suurten rakentajien jättämät aukot, kuten hieman pienemmät rakennusoikeusalueet. Esimerkiksi YIT ei aloita rakentamista uudelle alueelle, ellei se käsitä vähintään 10.000 k-m². Juuri tämän alapuolelle jäävät alueet Samira tulee tulevaisuudessa hyödyntämään mahdollisimman tehokkaasti.

Tavoite on, että jo parin vuoden sisällä olisimme takaisin vuoden takaisissa luvuissa.

Mainitsit tuotemerkin tunnettavuuden kasvattamisen, miten yrityksen on tarkoitus kasvattaa brändin (tuotemerkin) tunnettavuutta?

- *Erotautumalla muista muun muassa yritysvärien avulla*
- *Olemalla joustava asiakasta kohtaan muun muassa erikoisvaatimuksissa, kuten maksuaikatulujen muutoksissa*
- *Palvelemalla henkilökohtaisesti ja antamalla mahdollisuuden sopia asiat suoraan vaikka ylimmän johdon kanssa (ei muuten onnistu YIT:llä)*
- *Erikoistua nimenomaan kelo- ja hirsirakentajaksi, mutta tehdä silti muutakin*
- *Bränditietoisuutta kasvatetaan jonkin verran markkinoimalla, mutta tärkein tulee toivottavasti olemaan ihmisten mouth-to-mouth -viestintä sekä lehdistö ja muu media.*

Yrityksen tulevaisuuden haasteet? Miksi koet mainitut seikat haasteellisina?

Taantuman aikana kassanhallinta ja toiminnan pitäminen tuloksellisena sekä toiminnan volyymin palauttaminen ennalleen.

Muuten suurin tulevaisuuden haaste tulee olemaan jatkuva tonttimaan hankinta.

Tilanne näyttää nyt todella hyvältä pariksi vuodeksi, mutta sen jälkeisestä ajasta ei ole vielä tietoa. Ilman hyviä rakennusmaita uudisrakentaminen käy mahdottomaksi. Tämä on siis siksi tulevaisuudessa erityisen suuri haaste, koska yhtiön hallituksen puheenjohtaja on eläköitymässä ja hän on hoitanut tämän puolen 35 vuotta täysin yksin.

Kilpailijat, onko niitä? Voisitko nimetä muutaman. Millä tavalla Samira erottuu kilpailijoista?

YIT. Muuta ei juuri tule mieleen. Keloloma-asuntorakentamisessa ei taida olla ollenkaan merkittävää tai mainitsemisen arvoista kilpailijaa.

Miten erotutaan? Toivottavasti siten, että meitä pidetään henkilökohtaisempana ja joustavampana rakennusliikkeenä, kuin muita alueen rakentajia. Pyrkimys on, että yrityksellä on "kasvot" kylmän ja mauttoman pörssiyhtiön imagon tilalla. Se, että ostaja voi toimia suoraan yhtiön omistajien kanssa on toivottavasti hyvä asia.

Voiko mielestäsi esim. PolarHousea, Kontio Tuottetta sekä Honka Rakennusta laskea Samiran kilpailijoiksi?

Varmasti kilpailua on jonkin verran, mutta tekevät pienempiä projekteja hirrestä, eivätkä suuria alueita kelosta. Siksi hieman erilainen toiminta-ajatus. Mutta tietysti he vievät varmasti meiltä monta asiakasta vuodesta ja me toivottavasti viemme heiltä. Eli ovat kilpailijoitamme.

Seuraavaksi kyselisin markkinointiin panostuksesta. Voisitko kertoa noin suurpiirteisen markkinointibudjetin Samiralle, esimerkiksi liikevaihtoon verrattuna?

Markkinointibudjettia ei ole vielä koskaan tehty (11 vuoteen!). Budjettia on ohjannut enemmän kysyntä. Kun markkinat ovat käyneet kuumina, olemme markkinoineet ja panostaneet kaikkeen enemmän. Näin taantumien aikana "luukut" laitetaan osittain kiinni säästöjen aikaansaamiseksi. Kun ihmiset eivät uskalla käyttää rahaa, niin siihen ei auta juurikaan minkäänlaiset markkinointitempaukset.

Minne markkinointia suunnataan jatkossa? Onko suunnitelmissa mainostaa ulkomailla? Mitkä alueet kiinnostavat markkinointimielessä?

Tarkoitus markkinoida lisää Briteille ja Venäläisille, mutta nyt odotamme, että markkinoille tulee viimein positiivisia signaaleja ennekuin alamme jälleen "tuhlaamaan". Toivottavasti 12-18 kk päästä pääsemme jälleen törsäämään.

Markkinointikanavat; pidetäänkö myynti ja markkinointi lähes yksinomaan Samiralla vai onko aikeissa ulkoistaa toimintaa? Onko mahdollista lisätä ulkomaisten toimijoiden määrää?

Suuntaus on ollut se, että haemme aktiivisesti yhteistyökumppaneita jokaisesta mahdollisesta maasta. Myös Suomesta. Pääosa myynnistä on kuitenkin tarkoitus pitää vielä itsellä. Haasteena onkin löytää kanava, jonka kautta Samira saadaan jokaisen turistin tietoon, joita vain Ylläkselle ja Leville sattuu tulemaan. Ja tietysti tämän pitäisi tapahtua kohtuullisin kustannuksin.

Samiran näkemys markkinointikanavien lukumäärästä. Onko parempi keskittää mainostaminen yhdestä kolmeen eri kanavaan vai pitäisikö markkinoida mahdollisimman monella keinolla? Miksi?

A: Riippuu paljonko ko. kanava on halukas panostamaan yhteistyöhön. Myös markkina-alueen suuruus on tärkeä. Esimerkiksi Venäjällä ja Briteissä tarvitaan useampaa

kuin yhtä kanavaa. Ylärajaa on hankala asettaa, mutta mieluummin toimii muutaman hyvän kanssa, kuin hajauttaa myyntiä liikaa. Hyvänä esimerkkinä Ylläksen Kiinteistövälitys LKV, joka on myynyt jopa taantuman aikana suhteellisen hyvin.

Entä mainonnan keinot; onko parempi keskittyä kehittämään nykyisiä kanavia (toimiva nettisivu, Google optimointi, paikallismainonta; Ylläs, Levi, Kalajoki sekä työmaataulut) vai lähteä hakemaan uusia tuulia joukkoviestinnästä, joka tavoittaa massoja?

Mainitsit itse tärkeimmät. Tarkoitus on keskittää markkinointia, eikä huseerata joka puolella koko ajan. Tärkeimpänä tulee kuitenkin säilymään paikallinen näkyvyys siellä missä rakennetaan. Ihanne olisi, että joka ikinen turisti tietäisi kotiin lähtiessään, että Samira on se joka siellä rakentaa...

Eli, mieluummin mainostaa parissa esitteessä vaikka koko sivuisena kuin levittää joka puolelle pikkukeltapunailmoituksia...

APPENDIX 7. Levi Construction site board

**RAKENNAMAIE TÄLLE ALUEELLE (10 ha)
HIRSI- SEKÄ KELOLOMA-ASUNTOJA**

We are building log and kelo log cabins on this area (10 hectares)

KOHTETA MYÖS YLLÄKSELLÄ! CHECK OUT OUR YLLÄS PROPERTIES!

KYSY LISÄÄ!
Samira Group Oy
**PLEASE CONTACT OUR OFFICE
FOR MORE DETAILS!**
Samira Group Ltd

www.samira.fi | **info@samira.fi**

+358 (0) 8 311 7685
+358 (0)40 522 6189

APPENDIX 8. Samira Group Ltd. Typographic guide



Samira Group Oy:n typografinen ohjeistus

Kirjasinlaji: Syntax LT Std
 Kirjasinleikkaukset: Roman
 Italic
 Bold
 Black
 Ultra Black

Syntax LT Std Roman
Syntax LT Std Italic
Syntax LT Std Bold
Syntax LT Std Black
Syntax LT Std Ultra Black

Ladonnan ohjeistus:

Samira Group est

Sectet, quat. Ut ei doloboreet, quatle Molentat ummolor erillao reraestrud modit illametue delese delenim exeros niam ea consed modolore erat exerat praesequis nibh ei diam. Cum nisl dionums andrem volorero et, se magnit lum nostrud tatetum vent amcon utpat nulpot nos dolortie magna conummy nislis diplis ea accum quis ea aut lobore corperos nullan utpat. Re velit nullaorem zzrusdpls enlsim quatio esequissim num atum zzrlure min venit estrud eum amet, quipsusci eugiamelit dolum.

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Otsikot Syntax LT Std Bold,
 30-60 pt, välistys
 (tracking): -30 ems

Leipis Syntax LT Std Roman,
 rinväli 125% kirjasinkoosta,
 esim. oheinen palsta:
 kirjasin 12 pt, rinväli 15 pt

Väliotsikot
 Syntax LT Std Bold,
 16-24 pt, välistys
 (tracking): -20 ems

Kappaleen
 ensirivin sisennys
 palstan leveydestä riippuen
 6-8 mm

APPENDIX 9. Samira Group Ltd. Graphic guide



Yrityksen tunnusvärit:



Merkkiosan väri:

CMYK: 30c 100m 30y 0k
 RGB: 156r 0g 101b
 HEX: 990066
 PMS: 234



Logotekstin väri:

CMYK: 33c 6m 0y 71k
 RGB: 89r 109g 126b
 HEX: 596d7e
 PMS: 5405



Tehosteväri "Lime":

CMYK: 15c 0m 100y 0k
 RGB: 230r 224g 0b
 HEX: e6e000
 PMS: 380



Taustaväri "Vaalea Lime":

CMYK: 7c 0m 25y 0k
 RGB: 243r 245g 209b
 HEX: ebf0c0
 PMS: 372



Taustaväri "Vaalea harmaa":

CMYK: 2c 0m 0y 5k
 RGB: 244r 246g 247b
 HEX: f4f6f7
 PMS: 545

HUOM!

Logotekstin väriä tulisi käyttää vain otsikkoteksteissä (yli 24 p). Leipäteksteissä ja muissa pienemmissä teksteissä vain mustaa tai negateksteissä valkoista, koska CMYK-värierottelu huonontaa pienen teksti laatua ja näkyvyyttä.