
GETTING NEW RESIDENTS TO THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI

How to attract people and can marketing have an effect on it?



Bachelor's thesis

Degree Programme in International Business

Valkeakoski 20.11.2012

Emilia Eskelinen

Valkeakoski
Degree programme in International Business
Global Marketing

Author	Emilia Eskelinen	Year 2012
Subject of Bachelor's thesis	Getting new residents to the city of Valkeakoski	

ABSTRACT

This thesis is commissioned by the city of Valkeakoski, and the aim of it is to find out how the city of Valkeakoski could better attract its target markets through marketing activities.

The objectives of this Bachelor's thesis are (1) to introduce theory concerning place marketing, marketing activities overall for example advertising, and the customer's decision making process; (2) to conduct a research in order to find out the current situation of the city of Valkeakoski; (3) to analyse the data from the survey in order to find out what kind of challenges and problems the city of Valkeakoski has at the moment with its marketing, and what are the current strengths; (4) to give recommendations, which are based on the survey conducted and the theory introduced.

Place marketing means marketing a place instead of a good or service. The basic tools however are relatively similar with the so-called original marketing of products. That is why also advertising is one part of the theory in this Bachelor's thesis. Since one of aims of place marketing is to get people purchase, also customer's decision-making process is examined in order to be able to create as valid recommendations as possible. The study conducted for this thesis is a questionnaire to which the respondents answered in a form of an interview. Based on the results of the study and theory different answers to the research question 'How to attract people and can marketing have an effect on it?' were found. The answers are in form of recommendations.

The information was collected as desk research and field research. The materials collected via desk research are mainly books and e-journals for the theory, and the field research was used when conducting the survey.

Keywords place marketing, advertising, customer's decision making process

Pages 42 p. + appendices 6 p.

Valkeakoski
Degree programme in International Business
Global Marketing

Tekijä	Emilia Eskelinen	Vuosi 2012
Työn nimi	Getting new residents to the city of Valkeakoski	

TIIVISTELMÄ

Työn toimeksiantajana oli Valkeakosken kaupunki, ja työn tarkoituksena oli selvittää miten kaupunki voisi paremmin vetää ihmisiä puoleensa, ja millä tavoin markkinoinnilla voidaan asiaan vaikuttaa.

Selvityksen tavoitteina oli (1) esitellä teoriaa paikkamarkkinoinnista, mainonnasta sekä asiakkaan päätöksentekoprosessista, (2) toteuttaa kysely jotta kaupungin nykyinen tilanne saadaan selvitettyä, (3) analysoida kyselyn tulokset, jotta tiedetään, mitkä kaupungin markkinoinnin vahvuudet ja heikkoudet vastaajien mielestä ovat ja (4) tehdä ehdotuksia markkinoinnin parantamiseksi.

Paikkamarkkinointi on paikan markkinointia tuotteen tai palvelun sijasta. Työvälineet markkinointiin ovat kuitenkin hyvin samanlaiset verrattuna perinteiseen tuotteen markkinointiin, minkä takia esimerkiksi mainonta on yksi osa teoriaa. Koska yksi paikkamarkkinoinnin tavoitteista on saada ihmiset ostamaan, teoriassa on myös käsitelty asiakkaan päätöksentekoprosessia.

Tiedot kerättiin kirjallisista lähteistä teoriaosuuteen, ja kyselyn vastaukset on kerätty kenttätutkimuksen avulla.

Teorioiden tarkoituksena oli tukea johtopäätöksiä jotka tehtiin kyselyn vastausten perusteella, jotta markkinoinnin parantamisehdotukset olisivat mahdollisimman päteviä ja paikkansapitäviä. Kysely toteutettiin haastatteluna, jotta saataisiin mahdollisimman tarkat vastaukset. Teorian ja vastausten perusteella tutkimuskysymykseen 'Miten vetää ihmisiä puoleensa, ja voiko markkinoinnilla vaikuttaa siihen?' on saatu useampia vastauksia, jotka esitellään raportissa.

Avainsanat paikkamarkkinointi, mainonta, asiakkaan päätöksentekoprosessi

Sivut 42 s. + liitteet 6 s.

CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.1	Background information of the thesis	1
1.2	The commissioning company: the city of Valkeakoski	2
1.2.1	History of the city of Valkeakoski.....	2
1.2.2	General information about the city of Valkeakoski	3
1.2.3	Valkeakoski in numbers	4
1.3	Purpose and objectives for the thesis	6
1.4	Research methods.....	6
2	MARKETING AND MARKETING OF PLACES	8
2.1	Marketing of places.....	8
2.2	Customer's decision making	10
2.3	Advertising	11
2.4	Case Valkeakoski	13
3	ATTRACTING NEW RESIDENTS TO VALKEAKOSKI.....	15
3.1	Basic data of the respondents; age, gender, and family relations	15
3.2	Previous home town, and previous and current way of living.....	16
3.3	The amount of months as residents in the city of Valkeakoski.....	17
3.4	The respondents' previous knowledge of the city of Valkeakoski	17
3.4.1	Previous knowledge: concrete facts	17
3.4.2	Sources of information for the previous knowledge	18
3.5	Sources of information when planning the move.....	18
3.6	Reasons for moving to Valkeakoski	19
3.7	The weight of different reasons when planning the move	19
3.8	The mental image of the respondents concerning the city of Valkeakoski.....	20
3.8.1	Before the moving decision.....	20
3.8.2	Currently.....	21
3.9	Comparison between the previous and current image of the city of Valkeakoski	21
3.10	Other alternatives when choosing a new hometown.....	22
3.11	Reasons for choosing Valkeakoski over the other alternatives.....	23
3.12	Where and how market the city of Valkeakoski?	23
3.13	Plans for changing the hometown within two years	24
3.14	The best factors concerning living in Valkeakoski	24
3.15	The best factors concerning the marketing conducted by the city of Valkeakoski	25
3.16	How the respondents would market the city of Valkeakoski.....	26
3.17	The most important issue when trying to attract new residents to Valkeakoski	26
3.18	Issues to improve in the city of Valkeakoski	27
4	CURRENT STRENGTHS AND PROBLEMS.....	28
4.1	Strengths and issues to turn into strenghts	28
4.2	Problems and challenges	33
5	RECOMMENDATIONS	35

6 CONCLUSION	39
SOURCES	41

Appendix 1 QUESTIONNAIRE IN FINNISH	
Appendix 2 QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH	

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information of the thesis

At the beginning of 2012, there were 336 municipalities in Finland (Kunnat.net). Some of them call themselves with a name “city”, the rest call themselves with a name “municipality”. Valkeakoski is a municipality that is called the city of Valkeakoski.

According to the websites Kunnat.net, the average size of a municipality was 16,075 inhabitants in the year 2011. On the contrary, the average size was only approximately 11,500 inhabitants in the year 2000. This statistics can be partly explained with the mergers, along with for example population growth and immigration. The median size of a municipality in Finland is 5,839 inhabitants. This means that half of the municipalities have less than 5,839 inhabitants and half have more than that. (Kunnat.net.)

In Finland during 2011 there were 281,500 individuals who moved from one municipality to another. This indicates a growth of approximately 11,000 individuals. (Kunnat.net.) When looking at figures concerning overall outcome of migration (immigration, emigration, and migration within the country combined), the ranking of the city of Valkeakoski in the year 2011 was 18th in the immigration surplus with 229 individuals. (Kuntaliitto n.d.)

In the local newspaper (Population is growing. Valkeakosken Sanomat 9. 2012, 5) there was a small info article saying that the population of the city of Valkeakoski keeps on growing. In the end of August 2012 there were 21 168 residents in the city of Valkeakoski, which means a growth of 146 inhabitants since the beginning of the fiscal year, and during the past 12 months the growth has been 267 inhabitants. According to the article, the main reason for the growth is migration, but also birthrate is increasing.

The statistics show that more and more people are moving from one municipality to another. The reason for some might be that one’s position is shifted to another city thus forcing the worker to move to the other city. However, not all of the individuals in these migration statistics move due to external reasons; some are voluntarily searching for a new hometown. These individuals moving by their own choice are potential new residents to the rest of the municipalities, and in order for a city to be the most attractive choice for moving, place marketing needs to be conducted.

The reason for choosing this subject to write about was because the population of the city of Valkeakoski has recently been growing, and finding out the reasons behind those moves could help the city in its marketing in order to keep the city growing also in the future.

1.2 The commissioning company: the city of Valkeakoski

The location of Valkeakoski can be seen from the picture below.



(http://www.valkeakoski.fi/portal/suomi/asuminen_ja_ymparisto/)

1.2.1 History of the city of Valkeakoski

Currently, Valkeakoski is a city to which the area of Sääksmäki belongs. However, the situation has not always been so. Originally, in the middle-ages, the area was called the centre of Sääksmäki and the Häme region, and many villages and areas belonged to the Great Sääksmäki – also the town of Valkeakoski. The Great Sääksmäki was situated well location wise, because of the waterways which are good in the area.

Due to the surrounding waterways, there were rapids in the area of Valkeakoski. Therefore, also mills were built. Grain was brought to Valkeakoski from all over the area of Häme, which caused the town of Valkeakoski to develop into so called ‘Village of Mills’. Later on, when industry developed, this Village of Mills turned into a modern town – a city of its own.

The industry in Valkeakoski was and still is mainly paper industry. The previous grain mills were no longer in use when the paper industry took the possession of those. The growing paper industry also resulted in people moving from the countryside closer to the mills thus creating the start of the city of Valkeakoski.

In 1963 Valkeakoski officially became a city, when it had been a borough since the year 1923. In 1973 Sääksmäki was joined to the city of Valkeakoski. (Rydman 1997, 6–14.)

1.2.2 General information about the city of Valkeakoski

Valkeakoski is a city of approximately 21 100 inhabitants. The city is located in Finland, in Southern-Pirkanmaa, with a 145-km-distance to Helsinki and a 35-km-distance to Tampere. Nature is close in Valkeakoski, and the city is surrounded with waterways. The surface area of the city was at the end of year 2011 372 square kilometres, out of which 100 square kilometres was water. This means that in Valkeakoski there were 77 persons living in one square kilometre at the end of year 2011. (Valkeakoski.fi.)

For housing, there are plenty of options in the city. In addition to plots on which a house can be built, there are detached houses, row houses and apartments for sale, and for rent. There are also several blocks of houses, which are built recently, meant for the senior citizens. Having the elderly moving away from their detached houses leaves those for sale to the families willing to buy their own house. (Valkeakoski.fi.)

The plots are well-sized in Valkeakoski; the average size is approximately 1200 square meters. The prices of apartments are also relatively low. Compared to for example Tampere, the prices are approximately one third lower in Valkeakoski. The available plots are also situated throughout the whole city; the building opportunities vary from the closeness of the centre to the tranquillity of the countryside. (Valkeakoski.fi.) The variety of the plots' locations allows people to live in the same city even though their preferences concerning neighbourhood are different.

The biggest industry in Valkeakoski has been manufacturing (almost 50% of the GDP), and the city is well-known from its paper industry. At the same time, the manufacturing industry has been the biggest employer. However, manufacturing all over Finland has had a lot of layoffs, and currently the small and medium sized enterprises have become the ones employing new staff members. In spring 2012 agriculture and forestry employed 2% of the population in Valkeakoski, industry 48%, construction 5%, business and commerce 13%, and services employed 32%. (Valkeakoski.fi.)

Valkeakoski offers its citizens the basic services, which are statutory. Examples of these are healthcare, and education and culture. (Suomi.fi) The city of Valkeakoski has its own hospital, in addition to the health care centre. The health care centre provides emergency duty on weekdays from 8 am to 4 pm, and after that the emergency duty continues, also during weekends, in the premises of the hospital.

The education the city of Valkeakoski provides is from early childhood education to upper secondary school or vocational school. In Valkeakoski it is possible to put children either to municipal or private daycares and kindergartens. There are several primary schools in Valkeakoski, all around the city. There are also two secondary schools, and one vocational school. The upper secondary school has a relatively new and modern building, and in its premises, there is also working a so called upper sec-

ondary school for adults. In the city of Valkeakoski, there is also a polytechnic; HAMK University of Applied Sciences has one of its units there.

In Valkeakoski there is also cultural education. An example of this is Youth Art School gives basic studies of art, which is for children and adolescents between 6 and 18 years. It is a school, which takes 12 years in its entirety, if it is started from the first grade at the age of 6, and the hobby is continued to the final year. Another example is Music School, which offers basic studies in different instruments and different levels of musical education. There is also the Adult Education Centre with a large variety of different courses for adults and younger ones, for example handicraft courses. (Valkeakoski.fi.)

In addition to the above-mentioned hobbies, there are plenty of other possibilities for hobbies and free-time activities in Valkeakoski. There are several possibilities to do sports, starting from the outdoor pathways and public parks to sports clubs and gyms to join. In Valkeakoski there is also an indoor ice rink called Wareena, and a small ski centre called Korkeakangas. Examples of cultural activities are the Valkeakoski Theatre and Voipaala Art Centre. The Football Museum of Finland is also located in Valkeakoski, and there is a library and music library, and a movie theatre in the city.

1.2.3 Valkeakoski in numbers

At the end of August there were 21,168 residents in Valkeakoski. The table below shows how the population has changed in the city of Valkeakoski from the end of year 1995 to the end of year 2011. It can be seen from the table that at the end of year 1995 the number of residents was the same than in August fiscal year. After 1995, the number of inhabitants started to decrease until year 2007. During those 12 years there was only one year when the change in population was positive; apart from that, every year there was a negative change. In 2007 there was no change in the population, and since that year the change has been and also currently is positive.

Table 1 The change in the population in the city of Valkeakoski

Year	Population	Change	Change %
	31.12.		
1995	21 168	-82	-0,4
1996	20 968	-200	-0,9
1997	20 785	-183	-0,9
1998	20 731	-54	-0,3
1999	20 626	-105	-0,5
2000	20 493	-133	-0,6
2001	20 424	-69	-0,3
2002	20 419	-5	0,0
2003	20 474	+55	+0,3
2004	20 472	-2	0,0
2005	20 408	-64	-0,3
2006	20 394	-14	-0,1
2007	20 394	0	0
2008	20 542	+148	+0,7
2009	20 631	+89	+0,4
2010	20 844	+213	+1,0
2011	21 022	+178	+0,8

(http://www.valkeakoski.fi/portal/suomi/kuntainfo_ja_hallinto/tilastot_ja_julkaisut/)

At the end of year 2011 30.8% of the citizens living in Valkeakoski were between 18 and 44 years old. This was the biggest age group. Second biggest was people between ages 45 and 64, with 28.4%. At the end of year 2011, only 19.6% of the residents were under 18 years old. This means that the residents living in Valkeakoski are mainly adults, and the number of children is thus relatively low. From the table 2 can be seen the age structure of the city of Valkeakoski.

Table 2 The age distribution of population in the city of Valkeakoski

**The age distribution of
population
31.12.2011**

Age group	Amount	%
0 - 6	1 599	7,6
7 - 17	2 521	12,0
18 - 44	6 479	30,8
45 - 64	5 976	28,4
65 -	4 447	21,2
Total	21 022	100,0

(http://www.valkeakoski.fi/portal/suomi/kuntainfo_ja_hallinto/tilastot_ja_julkaisut/)

1.3 Purpose and objectives for the thesis

The main purpose of this thesis was to find out on what basis people, and especially families choose Valkeakoski as their home town, and can marketing have an effect on the moving decision.

The objectives of this Bachelor's thesis were firstly to introduce relevant theory concerning the subject. In this thesis, it is mostly concerning place marketing, but also marketing activities overall for example advertising, and the customer's decision making process. Secondly, the objective number 2 was to conduct a research in order to find out the current situation of the city of Valkeakoski. The third objective for this thesis was to analyse the data from the survey in order to find out what kind of challenges and problems the city of Valkeakoski has at the moment with its marketing, and what are the current strengths. Finally, the fourth objective was to give recommendations, which are based on the survey conducted and the theory introduced.

1.4 Research methods

For collecting the information for this Bachelor's thesis the author used two main research methods; field research and desk research.

Desk research was used for the theory part, and overall theoretical information sources were mainly found from books and pdf-files. Usually the theory used should not be older than approximately ten years. However, the theory concerning marketing overall, and in this case especially place marketing has not really changed during the years. Some minor changes might have occurred, and for example the social media as a marketing communication method has definitely added new points of view to the theory, but the main ideas are still the same. For that reason, the author decided to use also somewhat older sources.

The research method concerning the field research was questionnaires conducted in the form of an interview. The commissioning company, the city of Valkeakoski, suggested that instead of sending a plain questionnaire to possible respondents it would be better to conduct the survey as an interview. The reason for this procedure was that the commissioning company was eagerly aiming at getting as detailed answers as possible. Therefore, the author called to people herself, in order to get the most out of the respondents since by just sending a questionnaire the author could not have asked for more details, but by an interview it was possible to do so.

The commissioning company wanted to get detailed answers, mainly to question ‘why’ – one of the most important questions. For example, statistics can answer many ‘how’-type of questions, such as ‘How many individuals have moved to the city of Valkeakoski during the past 12 months?’ However, statistics cannot answer to the question ‘Why those individuals choose Valkeakoski as their new home town?’, and those types of questions were emphasized in the study for this Bachelor’s thesis. Especially questions to which the respondents answer by a number; if for example municipal services receive a number 1 which is the lowest possible to give, the result tells nothing more than that the respondent is unhappy with the issue. If these kinds of situations would occur in the interview, the author could ask the respondent to specify why just number 1.

The questionnaire developed for this Bachelor’s thesis includes both open questions and questions with scales from 1 to 5, and it can be found from the appendixes both in Finnish and in English.

2 MARKETING AND MARKETING OF PLACES

Rainisto (2003, 11) directly quotes Kotler, Hamlin, Rein and Haider in a following way in his doctoral dissertations: “Place marketing means designing a place to satisfy the needs of its target markets. It succeeds when citizens and businesses are pleased with their community, and the expectations of visitors and investors are met.”

Zimmerbauer (2007, 31) presents the vision of Topi Antti Äikäs, that cities, municipalities and other regions such as sub regions and counties are being more and more active in developing their images.

Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993, 9) mention that the vast development in technology and communication has given people and businesses a chance to choose a location based on for example the lowest costs possible.

There is no longer a need for a company to be situated in a big city where the customers are close, if the business is such that every operation may be handled electronically, for example through mobile phones and e-mails. In case of such a situation, it is highly possible that a company would look for a location where for example the rents are low, which usually means having to leave town centers.

Because people and businesses have become more and more mobile, places such as cities, regions, and countries have faced a need for marketing themselves. Therefore, different kinds of advertising campaigns and marketing strategies are used in order to increase the awareness of a location. The different marketing methods are also aiming at creating a favorable image of that location, and preferably resulting into a situation where people would pay a visit to that location – or even move there permanently. (Keller 2008, 25.)

2.1 Marketing of places

Kavaratzis (2004, 59–60) presents the idea of Ashworth and Voogd that place marketing was able to exist by “solving the difficulties of transferring marketing knowledge from its initial field of industrial goods and services to places” (Kavaratzis 2004, 59). According to Ashworth and Voogd the development of marketing in non-profit organizations, the development of social marketing and the development of image marketing led to a new way of thinking when conducting marketing practices.

The concept presented by Kotler and Levy concerning the development of non-profit marketing has led to a situation where marketing does not necessarily aim at gaining financial profit. Kotler and Zaltman’s concept of social marketing aims at gaining social good with the help of marketing activities. (Kavaratzis 2004, 60.) The idea presented by Ashwood and Voogd concerning image marketing is just what the name itself says – marketing an image instead of a good (Kavaratzis 2004, 60).

Kotler et al. (1993, 35–36) name six different types of images a place can have: positive image, weak image, negative image, mixed image, contradictory image, and overly attractive image.

Positive image is an image that does not really need to be changed – it already is good. Even though a place would have a positive image, it does not mean that there is nothing wrong there. However, those possible problems and disadvantages are such that they do not affect too much the image people have from that certain place. (Kotler et al. 1993, 35.)

Weak image means that the place is not well-known. Usually for example, smaller cities are not that well-known compared to bigger ones. For example Helsinki is probably much widely known than Valkeakoski. Another reason for having a weak image is lack of advertising (Kotler et al. 1993, 35). Even though a place has assets for creating a positive image, if it does not advertise those assets, people will not know they exist.

Negative image can be caused by for example bad statistics; murder rate, problems with drugs. Places that have a negative image are the ones that most eagerly want to change their image for better. In case a place finds a way to improve it and advertises that attractive issue, it needs to make sure the reality changes too – the image will not change for better if the place does not change also. (Kotler et al. 1993, 35.)

Mixed image is common among places; they have both positive and negative issues in their image (Kotler et al. 1993, 35). For example, a city can be well-known from its warm climate, beautiful beaches, and inexpensive tourist resorts. At the same time, that city is also well-known from thieves, and scams made to tourists.

Contradictory image means that different people think differently of that certain place; some have a positive image of that place, some stick to a negative one (Kotler et al. 1993, 36). As an example, Valkeakoski is place that in a way has a contradictory image. For a long time, the paper factories caused undesirable scent to the air, which created a negative image. The image was so strong, that even though those factories causing the smell are not working anymore, some people still remember it. However, some people obviously have more positive image of the city, since Valkeakoski is gaining an immigration surplus.

Overly attractive image is when a place attracts more people than what it wants to get. Kotler et al. (1993, 36) give an example of an American city which tried to limit the growth of the city by “refusing to extend water and sewer lines to proposed new developments”.

Whenever doing marketing, a target market needs to be set. There should always be a specific group of people to whom the marketing campaign is primarily targeted. The group may be wide or narrow, and the people might be known or unknown, but somehow a group needs to be defined – and place marketing is no exception to this.

According to Kotler et al. (1993, 23) there are four broad target markets a place can try to attract:

1. visitors
2. residents and workers
3. business and industry
4. export markets

Visitors consist of two different markets; business visitors and non-business visitors. Business visitors, according to the name of the target market, are visiting a place for business purposes such as buying or selling or attending a meeting. The market of non-business visitors includes two types of groups: tourists and travelers. Tourists are visiting a place for the place itself, and travelers visit a place due to family and/or friends living there. (Kotler et al. 1993, 23.)

A current trend in Finland is municipal mergers. In the beginning of year 2011 there were six mergers that involved 12 municipalities and about 18 300 individuals, so the total amount of municipalities decreased by six. In the beginning of year 2009 the amount of municipalities decreased with a total amount of 67. (Kunnat.net.) One reason for these mergers is the aim of unifying the services, which cuts down the costs.

An example of a municipal merger can be found next to the border of the city of Valkeakoski. According to the websites of the city of Akaa, in the beginning of year 2007 the city of Toijala and the municipality of Viiala merged, and created the city of Akaa. Later on, in the beginning of year 2011 also the municipality of Kylmäkoski joined the merger.

Municipal mergers also have an effect on place marketing. For example, the city of Valkeakoski is currently advertising itself with a slogan called 'Mansikkapaikka' (this will be further dealt with later on in this chapter, in the part 2.4 Case Valkeakoski). If the situation would change so that Valkeakoski would merge with some other municipalities, the way of marketing probably ought to be changed.

Let us imagine that the city of Valkeakoski should merge with the city of Akaa so that all of the big area would be called by the name of Valkeakoski. The current marketing slogan and the competitive advantages should be re-checked, since the city itself would have changed drastically. Another situation could be that the merger would occur in a way that there would no longer be a city called Valkeakoski, only the city of Akaa. In that case, the city of Valkeakoski would perhaps be forced to abandon all of the marketing related to 'Mansikkapaikka', since that is not the marketing strategy of the city of Akaa.

2.2 Customer's decision making

"Understanding how customers reach buying decisions and what factors influence them is never precise or complete" (Ruskin-Brown 2006, 41.) However, Ruskin-Brown (2006, 41) mentions that there are some issues

that are known to have an influence on customer's buying decision. Those issues are customers' needs and their personal characteristics, other people, environmental factors, and the marketing activities of suppliers.

Vallius (2011, 9) presents in her master's thesis the vision of Korkiasaari and Söderling about decision making concerning moving. According to Korkiasaari and Söderling the decision to move is an individual's own decision, but it can be made based on collective reasons; if for example friends or family members are going to move, an individual may also start to think of moving. Therefore the moving decision is a complex entity consisting of different issues, of which some might be subconscious (Vallius 2011, 9).

According to Kotler et al. (1993, 48–49) there are four categories a buyer uses as information sources when making decisions concerning places. These are (1) personal sources such as family and friends, (2) commercial sources such as advertisements, (3) public sources such as mass-media, and (4) experiential sources meaning actually visiting the place. Commercial sources are the ones that usually give the most information to the buyer, but the personal sources are the most trusted ones.

It can be seen that there are no certain rules or ways customers make their decisions. Even though there are some guidelines, not all aspects can be discussed with a certainty, because of the issues that are affecting the decision making subconsciously. One of the objectives of this Bachelor's thesis was to find out whether marketing can have an effect on getting new residents to the city of Valkeakoski. Therefore the questionnaire had questions concerning the reasons for moving. However, for example marketing is an issue that might affect subconsciously, so it may have been difficult for the respondents to evaluate the weight of it in their own decision-making.

2.3 Advertising

“Advertising is only one of the many and varied elements of the promotional mix available to business. The job of promotion is to ‘move the customer along the buying process’ toward the promoter rather than the competition.” (Ruskin-Brown 2006, 29–30.)

Advertising is a good way of communicating brand information, if the target group's members can only be described for example by demographic means such as gender or age. In case the target group consists of certain members and a contact list is available, advertising is not the best way to reach the customers. (Tybout, Calder & Kotler 2010, 210.)

When a city, in this case the city of Valkeakoski, is trying to attract new residents, advertising may and ought to be used for the communication. Advertising via different media reaches a lot of people and among those people the new inhabitants most likely are. It is also important for the advertiser to know what the target market is (=to whom the advertisement is

primarily targeted to) in order to make the advertisement as effective as possible.

For the advertising there needs to be an effective strategy planned; “To accomplish this task, it is necessary to understand how consumers use advertising information to make decisions. In some situations, brand judgments are based on consumers’ thoughts about information presented in advertising, as well as how this information relates to what the consumer already knows about the brand and its competitors.” (Tybout et al. 2010, 211–212.)

The current advertising of the city of Valkeakoski relates to Mansikkapaikka. As mentioned in the quotation, people may judge a brand not only based on an advertisement, but also by its resemblance to the already existing knowledge concerning that brand. This means that even though an advertisement of Mansikkapaikka looks good and attractive, but if the viewer’s previous information of the brand Mansikkapaikka is bad, the viewer does not automatically think positive from the brand.

Ruskin-Brown (2006, 16–17) lists ten key factors for marketing effectiveness. These are environmental sensitivity, tight customer focus, balance portfolio, customer orientation, commitment to innovation and improvement, recognition of need for organizational adaptation, understanding your competitive advantage, clear, realistic product line strategic objectives, ‘tight-loose’ control systems, and long-term orientation. Many of these issues should also be taken into account when marketing a place, especially the following:

Environmental sensitivity. This is an issue that is really important for the marketing to be effective, since the markets usually tend to change. The way of marketing needs to change with, and according to the changing environment, so that the marketing is always “up-to-date”, thus as effective as possible; once a good plan might not be a good one anymore, if the environment has changed too much.

Tight customer focus. As already mentioned in the chapter, knowing one’s target group is very important when conducting a marketing strategy. When a company knows how their target customers are, where they are and how to reach them, and what they are like, using that knowledge in marketing increases the effectiveness. It is also more efficient to try to reach just the target group instead of trying to reach every possible person.

Competitive advantage. Ruskin-Brown (2006, 17) points out, that it is not enough to be equal with one’s competitors, one must be better than the others, a leader of some sort. And that is what competitive advantage means, having an issue that makes one competitive compared to the competitors – having something or being something the others do not have or they are not.

Long-term orientation. Especially when marketing a city, the actions taken should be long-term oriented instead of just short-term oriented.

Even though it is good for a city to get new residents also ‘now’ and not just ‘sometime in the future’, in order for the city to grow and keep growing, the flow of the new inhabitants should be continuous – not happening only now.

In the study, the author asked from the respondents their previous knowledge of the city of Valkeakoski, the image of the city before the moving decision and also the current image, and also there were questions concerning the marketing and advertising, and the competitive advantage. These issues are dealt with later on in chapters 3 and 4.

2.4 Case Valkeakoski

Currently the city of Valkeakoski is doing marketing with a slogan called ‘Mansikkapaikka’, which is directly translated ‘Strawberry place’.

Vallius (2011, 22) writes in her master’s thesis a result from a study conducted by Reijo, which indicates that Valkeakoski was losing much more residents than gaining new ones during years 1975-1990. Also the table 1 shows that the situation concerning population was no better when coming close to the so called Millennium. The management of the city along with the marketing manager (Mr. Pauli Kiuru, worked as a marketing manager 2000-2003) knew something had to be done in order to change the migration deficit into migration surplus.

The idea for Mansikkapaikka came from a graphic artist from Toijala of Akaa, Mr. Harri Salminen. He introduced a few alternatives to the management of the city of Valkeakoski. Based on those propositions the picture portraying a strawberry was selected; even though a strawberry does not really relate to the city of Valkeakoski, it awakes feelings.

In autumn 2000, a decision was made that the city would start its marketing under the slogan Mansikkapaikka. Marketing material was ordered and made, and from 2001 the systematic marketing begun.

In 2003 Mr. Pauli Kiuru conducted a campaign that was targeted to people living in Hervanta, Tampere. The campaign was very visible and in a way aggressive too, which led to articles at least in the newspaper Aamulehti, and also letters to the editor were written from the subject; the slogan and the city were relatively widely recognized.

In the beginning of 21st century an area in Valkeakoski called Juusonranta was turned into plots for building. The management of the city thought that those plots would take a long time to go, but the reality was different; in the mid-2000s there were few plots to sell.

During that time, the idea of applying the Housing Fair to the city of Valkeakoski came. It was seen as an investment to marketing; the city would be even more widely known, and the city would result in with more plots and new residents. The aim was to get people to visit the city, and one objective was to get the negative images (for example the smell from

paper factories) disappear. After three years the Housing Fair was successfully held in Valkeakoski, in year 2009. (Ahonen, interview 29.11.2012.)

Whenever a person moves to Valkeakoski, there is a welcoming letter sent to that household. The letter includes for example the brochure of the city of Valkeakoski, and information concerning for example current events, the theatre, and sports clubs in Valkeakeakoski.

During the autumn 2012 the marketing actions of Valkeakoski has and will be conducted

- in fairs (Housing Fair in Tampere, Asta Fair, Travelling Fair)
- through direct advertising in events and also via e-mails, letters, and phone calls
- in newspapers and other printed forms
- in social media
- through sponsorships

(Ahonen, e-mail 1.11.2012)

3 ATTRACTING NEW RESIDENTS TO VALKEAKOSKI

“The place seller must learn which other places are likely to remain in the buyer’s choice set so that the competition is identified and appeals can be planned. The place seller should ask place buyers how they first heard about the chosen place, what information later influenced the buyers, and the relative influence of the different information sources. With this information, the place seller can more effectively prepare and distribute information to the target market in the future.” (Kotler et al. 1993, 49–51.)

As mentioned in the introduction, the questionnaire for this thesis was conducted as an interview by phone. The author tried to contact 36 possible respondents, and out of those 36, 17 were interested in answering the questions. Thus, the response rate is 47.2%.

3.1 Basic data of the respondents; age, gender, and family relations

The average age within the respondents was 34.8 years, when the ages varied between 25 years and 51 years. From the figure 1 can be seen the age distribution of the respondents.

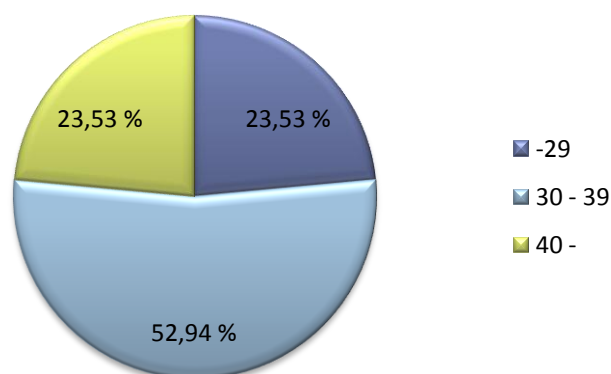


Figure 1 Age distribution of the respondents

Out of the 17 respondents, nine were women and eight were men. This is a good situation regarding the outcome of the study, since both genders were represented almost equally.

Since the commissioning organisation, the city of Valkeakoski, is eager to attract especially families and have them move to the city, the main idea was to contact families living in Valkeakoski and get their answers for the Bachelor’s thesis study. Out of the 17 respondents, 14 had children, and at least one of the children in a family was under 15 years. Only three respondents did not have children living in the same household with them. Two of those three were living as a couple, and one was single. The 14 respondents with families consisted of both parents, and 50% had only one child and 50% had more than one child. The number of children varied between one to five children. From the figure 2 can be seen the number of

children in the respondents' families. The number on top of the bulk demonstrates the number of families; how many families have that certain number of children.

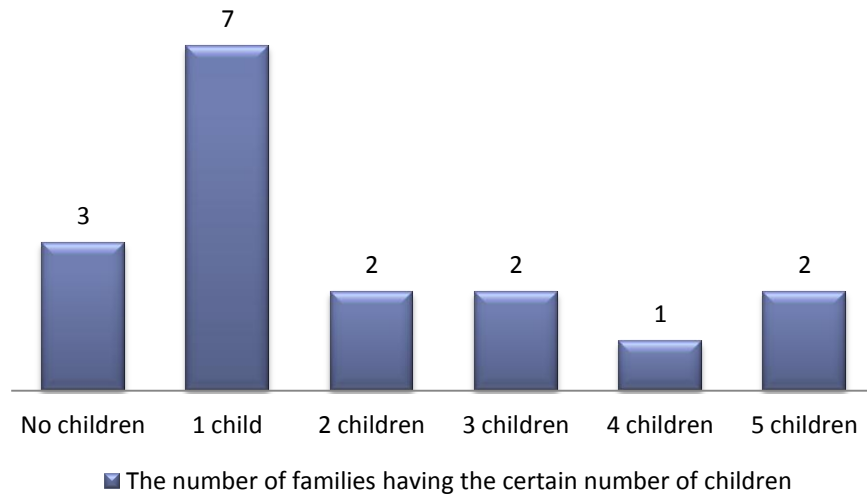


Figure 2 The number of children per family

3.2 Previous home town, and previous and current way of living

The amount of respondents who moved from Tampere to Valkeakoski was 47%. Other previous hometowns were Pirkkala, Ylöjärvi, Lempäälä, Kotka, Hämeenkyrö, Nokia, Kempele, Hyvinkää, and Pälkäne.

In the previous hometowns 41.2% of the respondents lived in a rental apartment or house. 35.3% lived in an apartment, which they owned and 23.5% lived in a house they owned. This is illustrated in the figure 3.

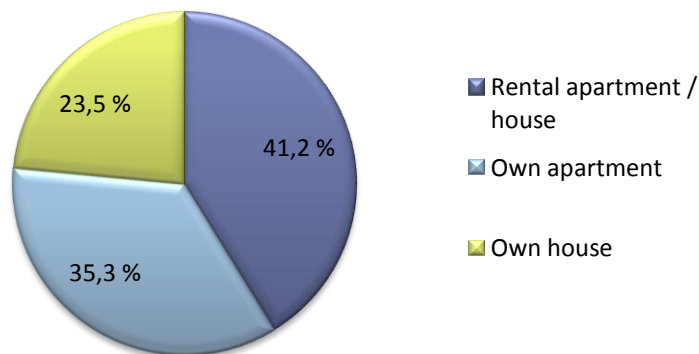


Figure 3 The previous way of living

Currently 82.4% of all of the respondents live in a house they own. Out of the respondents 17.6% live in a rental apartment. The current situation is illustrated in the figure 4.

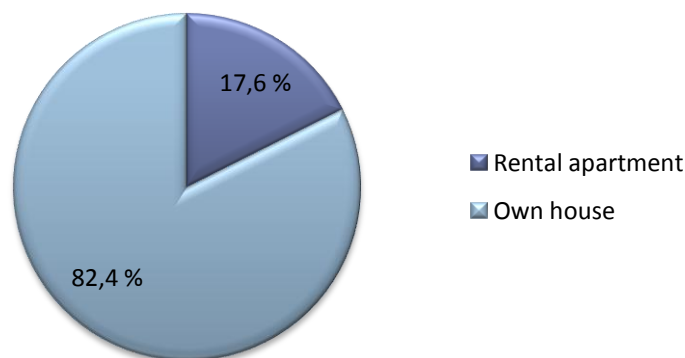


Figure 4 The current way of living

3.3 The amount of months as residents in the city of Valkeakoski

The commissioning organisation wanted to get answers from people who are relatively new inhabitants in Valkeakoski. Therefore, 58.8% of the respondents have lived in Valkeakoski one year or less, and 41.2% have lived in the city over one year. All in all, the respondents had been living in Valkeakoski at the time of the study between 9 and 18 months. One of the respondents had been living in Valkeakoski already previously, but the respondent estimated that they were away from the city approximately from 7 to 10 years.

3.4 The respondents' previous knowledge of the city of Valkeakoski

Question number eight was about the respondents' previous knowledge concerning the city Valkeakoski. The author asked the respondents to evaluate how well they knew the city before they moved. The scale was from 1 to 5, where 1 was very poorly and 5 was very well. The average answer came out to be 2.2, so the knowledge was not that good.

The author also wanted to examine whether the previous knowledge had any relation to what the previous hometown was. There was not, however, any reasonable relation between the previous home town and the knowledge concerning the city of Valkeakoski.

3.4.1 Previous knowledge: concrete facts

After the overall grade concerning how well the respondents knew the city of Valkeakoski, the author asked what concrete facts the respondents knew about the city. The respondents mentioned the paper factories, the football club Haka and the marketing slogan 'Mansikkapaikka'. People also knew different places in the city, such as the public swimming pool, children's playground called Seikkailupuisto and the beach of Apia. The

respondents also mentioned their knowledge on some of the services for example the shops in the centre, the hospital and the public transport concerning busses. Another issue that was mentioned was the Housing Fair the city hosted in 2009. Some of the respondents had also visited the city of Valkeakoski previously.

3.4.2 Sources of information for the previous knowledge

The next question concerned the source of the information – from where had the respondents received their knowledge concerning the city of Valkeakoski. Most of the respondents had either visited the city or they have relatives or friends living in Valkeakoski, or they have a position in a company located in Valkeakoski. Also television, newspapers and news were mentioned as sources of information.

3.5 Sources of information when planning the move

Out of the respondents 88.2% mentioned Internet as their source of information when planning the move. Most of them only answered “Internet”, but some mentioned special pages, such as the websites of the city of Valkeakoski and also different websites that list properties that are on sale. The amount of respondents who used their friends and family members as a source of information, especially concerning the city of Valkeakoski and not just as an overall source of information for the planning of the move was 29.4%.

After the open question concerning the information sources, the author asked the respondents to evaluate given sources of information on the basis of how important they were. The evaluation was asked to be on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was not at all important and 5 was very important.

The average answers were as follows (figure 5): newspapers got an average number of 2, magazines 1.2, radio 1.1, television 1.5, and the Housing Fair got 2.4. Family and friends’ recommendations received an average number of 3.2, outdoor advertising 1.6, the websites of the city of Valkeakoski 3.6, social media 1.6, and personal experiences got number 3.2.

The most important source of information for the respondents was the websites of the city of Valkeakoski, with an average number of 3.6. Almost as important sources were the family members and friends’ recommendations, and personal experiences, both rated on average at 3.2. The two least important sources were radio, and magazines with average numbers of only 1.1 and 1.2.

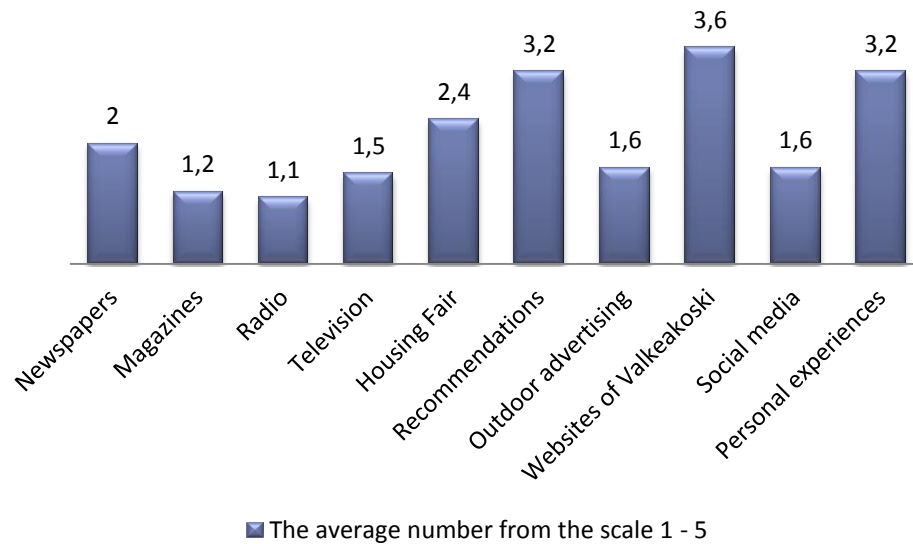


Figure 5 The importance of the given alternatives shown as an average number

3.6 Reasons for moving to Valkeakoski

The author asked the respondents an open question concerning the reasons for moving to Valkeakoski. Out of the respondents 64.7% mentioned issues about properties; prices of the plots, finding a decent house or just overall price level, and 52.9% of the respondents mentioned the location and/or traffic communication.

One reason that was mentioned was having a position in Valkeakoski. Having husband/wife, family and/or friends living in the city was a relatively common reason. Also services were mentioned as a reason.

3.7 The weight of different reasons when planning the move

After the open question concerning the reasons for moving, the author asked the respondents to evaluate given reasons on the basis of how important they were. The evaluation was asked to be on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was not at all important and 5 was very important.

The average answers were as follows: the availability of positions got an average number of 1.8, which means that the respondents did not consider it as an important reason. Opportunities for studying received number 2.6, a safe growing environment for the children got number 3.5 and good opportunities for hobbies 3.9.

Municipal services received an average number of 3.4 and commercial services received number 3.5. Cosy living environment was rated 4.4, traffic communications 3.9, location 3.9 and the image of the municipality 3.2.

In the decision making process the respondents considered the recommendations of family members and friends to be 3.3 on average. The active

marketing of the municipality received an average number of 2.6 and the price level got number 4.2.

From the figure 6 can be seen that the respondents put the most value on cosy living environment. The average number on that certain alternative is 4.4 on the scale of 1–5. This means that the cosy living environment was almost very important factor for the respondents when planning the move. The second most important factor for the respondents was price level, with an average number of 4.2. This can also be seen in the open questions, where 64.7% of the respondents mentioned issues related to housing and its price level.

Clearly the least important factor for the respondents when making the decision to move was the availability of positions. The second least important factor is shared between two of the alternatives - opportunities for studying, and the active marketing of the municipality – both with an average of 2.6.

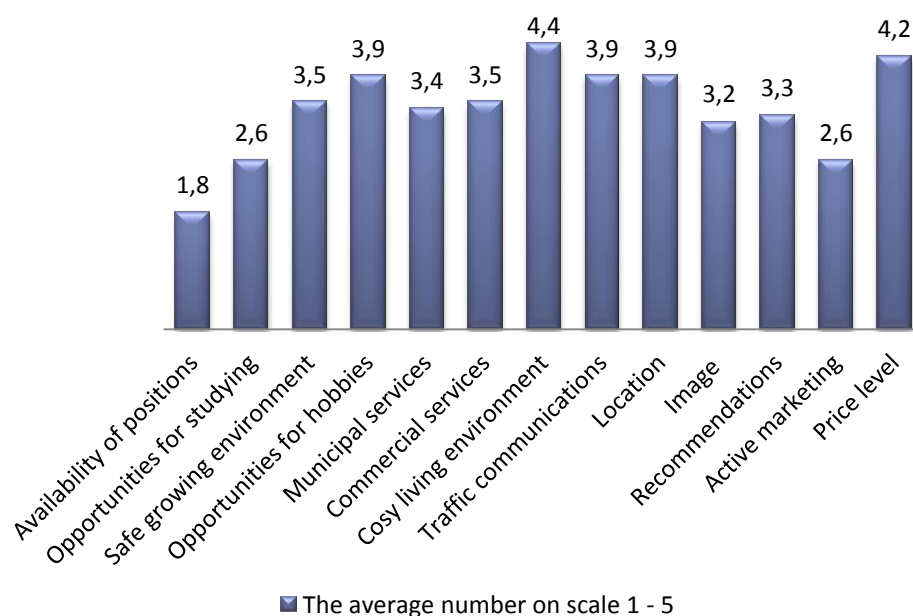


Figure 6 The importance of the given alternatives shown as an average number

3.8 The mental image of the respondents concerning the city of Valkeakoski

3.8.1 Before the moving decision

The author asked the respondents to evaluate given factors on the basis of how good an image they used to have concerning those factors. The evaluation was asked to be on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very bad mental image and 5 was very good mental image.

The average answers were as follows: the availability of positions got an average number of 2.3. Opportunities for studying received number 3.4, and a safe growing environment for the children got number 4.1. Also good opportunities for hobbies received an average number of 4.1.

Both municipal services and commercial services received an average number of 3.4. Cosy living environment was rated 4.1, traffic communications 3.8, also location received 3.8 and the image of the municipality got number 3.3.

The recommendations of family members and friends received an average number of 3.4, and the active marketing of the municipality received an average number of 3.0.

3.8.2 Currently

After receiving the answers concerning the time before the moving decision, the author asked the respondents to evaluate given factors on the basis of how good an image they currently had concerning those factors. The evaluation was again asked to be on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very bad mental image and 5 was very good mental image.

The average answers were as follows: the availability of positions got an average number of 2.4. Opportunities for studying received number 3.7, and a safe growing environment for the children got number 4.1. Good opportunities for hobbies received an average number of 4.4.

Municipal services received an average number of 3.5, and commercial services received an average number of 3.4. Cosy living environment was rated 4.4, traffic communications 3.8, location received 4.1 and the image of the municipality got number 3.6. The active marketing of the municipality received an average number of 3.1.

3.9 Comparison between the previous and current image of the city of Valkeakoski

From the figure 6 can be seen mental images the respondents previously had had and currently had. With every given alternative the respondents' current mental images on average have either stayed the same or changed for better in comparison to the previous mental images. The biggest changes have been in opportunities for studying, good opportunities for hobbies, cosy living environment, location, and the image of the municipality; all of these were judged 0.3 better on average in the scale of 1 to 5. 'Recommendations by friends and family members' is the only alternative that was not asked to be evaluated currently, since it is assumed that no recommendations are given after the respondents have moved to the city of Valkeakoski.

The respondents had the best mental images on safe growing environment for the children, good opportunities for hobbies, and cosy living environment. Currently the best mental images were with good opportunities for hobbies and cosy living environment.

The worst mental images were on availability of positions, and the image of that has not really changed in the minds of the respondents. Also the active marketing of the municipality was a factor giving a relatively bad mental image for the respondents. In some cases the respondents gave also open answers for the alternatives. Reasons for giving a low number to for example the active marketing of the municipality were said to be for example the fact that the respondent had not seen any marketing, the fact that the respondent felt the amount of marketing had decreased, and that the marketing slogan gives a too different picture of the situation of the city than what it actually is.

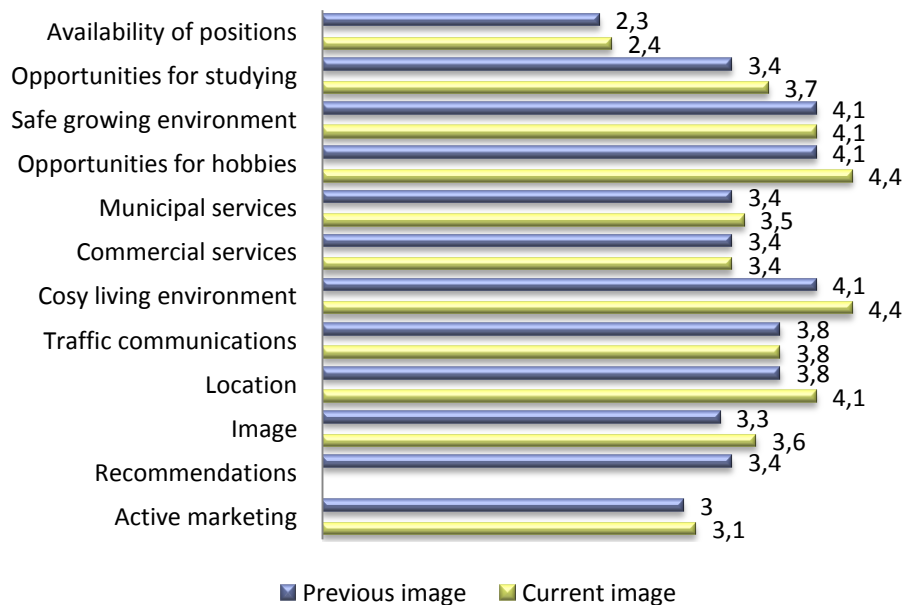


Figure 7 The previous and current average mental images compared, evaluated on scale 1 – 5

3.10 Other alternatives when choosing a new hometown

The respondents mentioned the following municipalities as their other alternatives: Tampere, Lempäälä, Kangasala, Akaa, Vesilahti, Ylöjärvi, Hämeenkyrö, Viiala, Toijala, Pirkkala, Orivesi and Hämeenlinna. Also some more generalized answers such as ‘the municipalities around Tampere’ and ‘the municipalities southern from Tampere’ were mentioned.

The amount of respondents who mentioned Lempäälä as one of their alternatives was 41.2%, when 35.3% answered Tampere to the same question.

The most commonly mentioned reason for having the municipalities in question as alternatives had something to do with location; the amount of respondents who mentioned location or location-related issues was 70.6%. Examples of location-related issues are location in relation to the city were the respondent has a position, and the respondent's willingness to stay in a certain area for example Pirkanmaa.

3.11 Reasons for choosing Valkeakoski over the other alternatives

A relatively often mentioned reason for choosing Valkeakoski instead of some other city had something to do with housing. The sizes and prices of the plots/apartments were for example reasons for many of the respondents.

Some of the answers listed:

- good plots (size and price)
- services are close
- distances
- more inexpensive apartments
- bigger and more lively municipality than the previous hometown
- more possibilities for hobbies
- more inexpensive plots
- good schools and services
- hospital
- the most suitable house was found from Valkeakoski
- good offering on plots
- studying opportunities
- prices of the plots is a big factor

3.12 Where and how market the city of Valkeakoski?

The respondents' answers to the question concerning the marketing communication tool in which they would want see marketing of the city of Valkeakoski and how varied a lot, but there were also similar answers. Mainly the answers were to the part 'where' and not so many on 'how'. Below there are some of the main points from answers in a listed form.

- Television
- Billboards
- Different kind of events such as Housing Fair
- Concerts in Hotel Waltikka
- Articles in papers
- Marketing by real experiences, not so much by just the image
- Overall advertising concerning Valkeakoski
- Internet for example Google
- Internet could be the place to meet most of the possible buyers

- Mika Kallio in television
- Websites called etuovi.com
- Advertising big plots at reasonable prices, the paths for outdoor activity, and Liikennepuisto and Seikkailupuisto for the children

Some of the respondents also felt that there is no need to market more. Some of the reasons for these kinds of answers are listed below.

- The day-care system does not work, and there already is too much children compared to the amount of places
- Stands in other fairs (than Housing Fair) are useless
- The marketing of the city can be quite well seen in papers, that is enough marketing
- There is marketing in the Internet and also in billboards, therefore no hopes for future marketing
- No wishes for marketing the city more, since the city of Valkeakoski is already marketing itself quite actively

3.13 Plans for changing the hometown within two years

To the question ‘Are you about to change your hometown within the next two years?’ no-one answered ‘yes’, whereas 88.2% of the respondents answered that they are not going to change their hometown within the next two years. One respondent answered most likely not, and one respondent did not know.

3.14 The best factors concerning living in Valkeakoski

The author asked the respondents issues that they consider the best concerning living in Valkeakoski. Many respondents mentioned factors related to nature and environment, other issues are listed below.

- Good traffic communications especially to the nearest cities
- The living environment is cosy and peaceful
- Services are close, accessible, and good
- Beautiful nature and the environment
- The centre has a nice “small town feeling”, and the overall size of the town is small
- Distances inside the city
- People are around the same age in the respondent’s neighbourhood
- Services are more inexpensive than for example in Tampere and perhaps even better
- New neighbourhood where there is a lot of families with children
- Good studying opportunities for the youngsters
- Hospital and the emergency duty
- It is easy to run errands
- Own peace and quiet, there is no hustle and bustle like in bigger cities
- A distant place which still is close to everything
- Nice small countryside school

- The opportunities for sporty hobbies, also opportunities for outdoor hobbies
- Friends and family living in the city
- Location
- There is no crowding in Valkeakoski
- Good-sized city
- The stores are relatively peaceful
- “This is a nice place to live in”

3.15 The best factors concerning the marketing conducted by the city of Valkeakoski

The author also had a question concerning issues the respondents liked the most in the marketing conducted by the city of Valkeakoski.

The main points from the respondents’ answers are listed below.

- The overall existence of marketing is the best factor
- Mansikkapaikka, even though the slogan confuses a little bit since there are no strawberries growing in the city of Valkeakoski
- Housing Fair was good to have
- The slogan is compelling, and it is also in television
- The slogan communicates tempting issues concerning the city of Valkeakoski, so the marketing is successful in that way
- The advertising of the waterways
- Different events in the city
- The “feeling of summer”
- The advertising in billboards has been really visible
- The websites of the city of Valkeakoski are good
- The positivity (giving a positive image of the city)
- Pictures of children or families are good
- Motorcycles (because of Mika Kallio)
- Advertising of the plots
- The current advertisements are catchy

Some of the respondents had also something negative to say about the marketing of the city of Valkeakoski:

- No other marketing had been seen except ‘Mansikkapaikka’
- The Housing Fair was the only marketing that has been seen
- The city needs to keep up with the promises ‘Mansikkapaikka’ markets; for example, the more inhabitants, the more places there need to be in day-cares and schools
- No attention given to the marketing, since even though it has been seen it, it has not had any impact on the respondent’s decisions
- The lakes could be emphasized more
- Only Mansikkapaikka comes into mind when thinking about the marketing, but it still is not “special” to respondent
- Does the real situation meet with the picture the marketing gives?
- Mansikkapaikka feels foreign to the respondent, since it gives a picture of the city as a rural municipality with strawberries, even though the city is not like that

3.16 How the respondents would market the city of Valkeakoski

The author asked the respondents to name different issues they consider worth of mentioning when marketing the city of Valkeakoski. Some of the factors pointed out are similar to the ones pointed out with question “What are the best factors concerning living in Valkeakoski?” Main points from the answers are listed below.

- The traffic communications between Tampere and Hämeenlinna
- The inexpensiveness of the plots and properties, and the availability of them
- The living environment is beautiful, cosy and peaceful
- Services are close and functioning
- For students the city could market the high school, vocational school, and HAMK University of Applied Sciences, also the campus is worth advertising, and mentioning that the city has a proper centre even though the city is relatively small
- For the working people the city could advertise good and bigger plots, and the image as a peaceful and safe small town
- The lakes offer opportunities for fishing and boating
- A place like this close to a big city
- The emergency duty of the hospital
- It is easy to run errands in Valkeakoski
- Lakes and the canal allow connections rather far from the city
- The outdoor pathways
- The possibilities for hobbies are really versatile both for children and adults
- Beautiful nature with lakes and waterways
- Good location
- “Rural town”, so a small city with good services
- The block of houses for senior citizens which are in the middle of everything
- Health care system is working
- Getting more stores by the new shopping mall which means that the supply will get bigger

3.17 The most important issue when trying to attract new residents to Valkeakoski

After the question concerning how the respondents would market the city of Valkeakoski, the author asked the respondents to name what they think is the most important issue the city of Valkeakoski could use in order to awake interest in the minds of possible new residents. Some of the respondents mentioned even more than one issue, and the main points from all of the answers are listed below.

- By adding more to the ‘basic needs’ such as day-care
- Distance from Tampere
- The living environment is cosy, peaceful
- Services are close
- The prices of the plots and properties
- The plot supply is outstanding, and the plots are relatively big

- “Come to familiarize”
- Investing in events where the potential customers are, such as Asta-fair, and ‘building fairs’ in Helsinki metropolitan area, and having versatile presenters in those fairs
- A city of a good size, which also means that it is faster to run errands than in a big city
- Possibilities for hobbies
- Paths for outdoor activities
- Naturalness
- Good for children
- If day-care and schooling related issues would be vastly improved, those could be really good incentives, for example with a phrase “we are currently building”
- Safe environment for growing and living
- No ‘big hustle’ like in bigger cities
- Living expenses are affordable

3.18 Issues to improve in the city of Valkeakoski

Finally, the author asked the respondents whether they have any suggestions for improvements in the city of Valkeakoski. Below are the answers in a listed form.

- The day-care system
- Safe school ways
- Services for youngsters, especially for the ones who have experienced social exclusion
- Investing in creating new positions, so for example having training and entrepreneurship
- Two lanes to both directions in the way from Valkeakoski to Tampere, before the motorway
- Lightning that covers the whole road from Valkeakoski to Ideapark
- Cycle paths and footpaths to Lintula
- Making the neighbourhood of Lintula safe as quickly as possible, and placing recycling places there (paper, metal, glass, cardboard)
- The services of the health-care centre do not work
- Organising versatile free-time activities for the youngsters
- There could be more shops and stores in the city, also in order to get more competition
- Better services for families with children
- Based on the local newspaper, the health-care system ought to be improved
- Doctor’s services are bad for both children and adults
- A corner store to Kärjenniemi
- Schools
- Nursing of the elderly

4 CURRENT STRENGTHS AND PROBLEMS

In this chapter the current situation (which came out in the chapter 3) is analysed; what are the strengths the city and its marketing have, and the possible problems or challenges that have occurred in the results of the study.

4.1 Strengths and issues to turn into strenghts

When the author asked what kind of previous knowledge the respondents had from Valkeakoski, issues that were mentioned by more than one respondent were the paper factories, football club Haka, and the marketing slogan Mansikkapaikka. Firstly, it is strength that people mentioned Mansikkapaikka, since naturally the city of Valkeakoski wants to be known by its marketing slogan. Secondly, to the author it seems natural that the paper factories were mentioned, since the city has a long history in paper industry. However, people tend to connect the smell that came from the paper factories to the city of Valkeakoski, which can be seen as a problem – especially now, when those kind of scents are history. The challenge therefore is; how the city could remove the mental image of the smell from the fact that paper industry is a part of the city of Valkeakoski. Finally, it is also not surprising to the author that the football club Haka was mentioned; the club also has a long history, and it has been successful in the national level. Until now, Haka has been strength to the city of Valkeakoski. However, just recently the club came last in the main league, thus being forced to play the next season in a league lower to the main one. The question now is that how the situation of Haka will affect the image of the city of Valkeakoski, and its marketing.

To the open question, concerning information sources when planning the move 88.2% of the respondents answered Internet. As already mentioned in the Results of the study –chapter, some of the respondents specified their answer by mentioning the websites of the city of Valkeakoski, and for example different websites where the properties on sale can be found. The respondents also rated the websites of Valkeakoski as the most important source of information from the given alternatives with an average number 3.6/5. This result indicates that websites of the city are important because the possible new residents are likely to go and check them. In case people have two nearly similar alternatives, but the other city has bad websites while the other has good ones, the decision might depend solely on that; if there is plenty of information available, and it is easily accessible, it gives a good impression of that certain city. One respondent even mentioned that the websites need to look good and be up to date. However, another respondent said that the websites are good and the author's opinion is the same; there is plenty of information available in the websites, and those are clear and well structured – also the English version is rather informative. So, the websites are strength to the city of Valkeakoski.

The same question (respondents' information sources when planning the move) received another rather often mentioned issue; 29.4% of the respondents used family and friends as a source of information, especially

for the information concerning Valkeakoski. The respondents also rated family and friends the second most important source of information (along with personal experiences) with an average number of 3.2/5. As also mentioned in the theory, Kotler et al (1993, 48–49) discuss that in the decision making process the buyer uses personal sources such as family and friends as the most trusted sources. When the fact is such that personal sources are the most trusted ones and the study shows that almost one third of the respondents used those sources, the information the families and friends give should be positive if the city wants to get new residents. Thus, this situation could be seen as a possible problem; the local newspaper is filled with negative letters to the editor. Another issue mentioned in the theory was the quote from Kotler, Hamlin, Rein and Haider “It (place marketing) succeeds when citizens and businesses are pleased with their community” (Rainisto 2003, 11). If the citizens are not pleased with their own city, there might be a chance that they do not recommend their home town to their relatives and friends.

Housing-related issues such as prices and plots were mentioned by 64.7% of the respondents as a reason for choosing Valkeakoski over other alternatives as a new hometown. This can be seen as strength to the city of Valkeakoski, since the situation with properties and the prices of them is good, and the respondents also mentioned that several times. However, the challenge for the city and especially for the marketing department is how to differentiate Valkeakoski from its competitors – municipalities that are close to Valkeakoski, where the esteemed nature is also close and the price level is somewhat similar.

Location and/or traffic communications were mentioned by 52.9% of the respondents as a reason to move to Valkeakoski. The location is strength to the city, since it is relatively close to three big cities: Tampere, Hämeenlinna and the capital Helsinki. Naturally, location for a city is something that cannot really be changed, so it will stay as strength. On the contrary, traffic communications is an issue that can change. Currently it can also be seen as strength; when asking the previous and current mental image of the respondents concerning traffic communications, both received an average number 3.8 out of 5. Many respondents also mentioned that the traffic communications are good in the open questions. And the real situation is like that; there is a local bus operating to the closest municipalities, and also Express Bus has a few stops in the city. Only one missing is train, but even that is rather close; the nearest station is in Toijala, approximately 20 minutes drive from Valkeakoski. The challenge with traffic communications is that it can change from currently being strength into being a problem, if for example the demand for bus shifts decreases thus forcing the local firm to cut down the shifts. Also if the Express Bus stops driving through the city of Valkeakoski and only drives the motorway between Tampere and Hämeenlinna, the quality of traffic communications would decrease drastically.

As already mentioned in the results of the study, cosy living environment was the most important reason for the respondents when planning the move, with an average number 4.4/5. The second most important issue

was price level (4.2/5). The price level is definitely strength for the city of Valkeakoski, since so many respondents mentioned the inexpensiveness of for example the plots. The least important issue for the respondents was availability of positions with an average number 1.8/5. Many of the respondents explained this even without asking; either they were working somewhere near Valkeakoski and they were travelling to work from Valkeakoski, or they already had a position in Valkeakoski, or their previous position was transferred to the city of Valkeakoski. It can be seen from the overall results that since the majority of the respondents had a family and a majority of them were currently living in a house they own, these types of new residents do not choose their hometown on the basis of open positions.

The second least important factors for the respondents when planning the move were opportunities for studying and the active marketing of the municipality, both with an average number 2.6/5. It is an interesting fact that even though the majority of the respondents had children, they did not put much weight on studying opportunities when they were planning the move. Perhaps a reason for this is the overall level of education in Finland; municipalities tend to have at least a kindergarten, primary school and secondary school, and in many cases also upper secondary school and a vocational school. Therefore the studying opportunities might not have a big role in the decision making process. Another interesting fact is the active marketing of the municipality, and the estimated importance of it. The challenge for the city of Valkeakoski is to know where the line between the actual lack of importance and the subconscious effect of the marketing.

To the same question concerning the importance of different reasons when planning the move, the respondents rated three issues with the same average number 3.9/5. These issues were good opportunities for hobbies, traffic communications, and location. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the location is strength for Valkeakoski, and traffic communications is, unless there will be some major changes. Also the opportunities for hobbies are good in Valkeakoski – the city even uses them as a competitive advantage in its marketing – so those are strength too for the city of Valkeakoski. However, the challenge is how to ‘upgrade’ the importance of the good opportunities for hobbies in the minds of the buyers in a way that they would choose Valkeakoski over the other municipalities that have similar living environment and prices which Valkeakoski has.

In order to find out the mental images (previous and current) the author asked the respondents to evaluate given factors on a scale of 1 – 5, where 1 was very bad mental image and 5 was very good mental image. The respondents previously had the best mental images on average concerning safe growing environment, good opportunities for hobbies, and cosy living environment. All of them received 4.1/5. The worst mental images were with the availability of open positions (2.3/5), active marketing of the municipality (3/5), and the image of the municipality (3.3/5). From these results can be seen that one important challenge for the city in the future is to change the mental image of those people who are not residents of the city of Valkeakoski; even though the average number 3.3 indicates that the

respondents' mental images were closer to 'very good mental image' instead of 'very bad mental image', there is still room for improvement.

The next question was almost similar: what the respondent's mental image of given factors was currently. On average, the best mental images were with good opportunities for hobbies, and cosy living environment. Both received an average number 4.4/5, which is rather close to the maximum 'very good mental image'. The worst mental images currently were with availability of positions (2.4/5) and the active marketing of the municipality (3.1/5). As can be seen from the results, the previous and current mental images changed only on average by 0.1 concerning the availability of positions, and the active marketing of the municipality, so the images stayed almost the same even after moving to Valkeakoski.

The biggest change (0.3) in previous and current mental images were with opportunities for studying, good opportunities for hobbies, cosy living environment, location, and the image of the municipality. Regardless what the kind of previous mental images the respondents had, they evaluated all of the above mentioned issues 0.3 better currently. Thus could be said, that those issues are strengths to the city of Valkeakoski, since the expectations of the respondents had been met and even exceeded. All in all it could be said that the city of Valkeakoski has been worth its promises; in all of the cases the current mental image was the same or even better than the previous image and no mental image was currently worse than what it previously used to be.

When asking the respondents to evaluate their mental images by numbers, the author also told the respondents that they were allowed to specify their answers verbally. That was also the hope of the commissioning company; it is far better to know *why* the respondent gave a certain number, than having just the number. The specified issues are listed below.

Previous images:

Good opportunities for hobbies

- number 5 because they are better than average

Municipal services

- number 2 because there are no private speech therapists, and it is difficult get doctoral services
- number 2 because the schools are old and nothing is 'repaired', and one cannot say a positive word of the services of the health care centre

Commercial services

- number 2 because the amount of shops has decreased because of Ideapark
- number 2 because many entrepreneurs have stopped their business which results in perishing centre

The image of the municipality

- number 2 because of the smell

Recommendations of family and friends

- number 2 because they do not really know anything about Valkeakoski

The active marketing of the municipality

- number 1 because the slogan Mansikkapaikka creates a different kind of picture than what the reality is: queues to day-care, schools suffer from mold, the quality of 'senior care' is not good

Current images:

Availability of positions

- number 1 because the respondent was currently unemployed

Opportunities for studying

- number 2 after secondary school

Safe growing environment for the children

- number 3 because of for example the bad boardwalks close to newly built houses
- number 5 because of what the respondent had read from newspapers, for example that families with children are moving to the city

Municipal services

- number 3 because the day-care system did not work, the respondent's family had to wait for a place in day-care

Commercial services

- number 4 because there could be more stores in the city, and the respondent is waiting for the new Citymarket
- number 2 because the respondent hopes for more shops, for example clothing stores, and hopes the Citymarket improves the situation

Traffic communications

- number 2 because the respondent's opinion is that the bus-system does not work
- number 2 because the local bus does not operate any shifts to the Lintula neighbourhood

The active marketing of the municipality

- number 3 because the respondent felt marketing has decreased, perhaps because the Housing Fair is over

From the respondents' comments it is rather easy to see, that they wanted to let the author know why they evaluated a certain alternative 'badly' in their opinion (except the issues that received number 5). However, it is an interesting fact that the image of commercial services was currently evaluated verbally similarly, but the numbers given were rather different; 2 and 4. Especially these answers show that the evaluations are always subjective; the strength of the study conducted for this Bachelor's thesis is the

fact that there are also open questions, which may sometimes tell more to the conducting person/company than just plain numbers.

Visitors are a group filled with potential new residents. As mentioned in the theory part, visitors may be either business visitors or non-business visitors. According to the results of the study, many of the new residents of the city of Valkeakoski had visited the city before the moving decision; some of them were or are currently working in the city, the others had visited their friends and or family members. Another issue mentioned in the theory, in the 'Case Valkeakoski' –part was that the city used the Housing Fair as a way to market itself; one of the aims was to get people actually visit the city.

In the study there was a question concerning the respondents' reasons to choose Valkeakoski over the other alternatives. The issues are also listed in the chapter 3, but the reasons were dealing with plots and their prices, location, services, and opportunities for hobbies. Since these were the reasons to choose the city of Valkeakoski, it could be said that those issues are also strengths to the city.

Other issues that could be seen as strengths to the city are the best factors concerning living in Valkeakoski, named by the respondents. According to the study, these issues include for example traffic communications, peaceful and cosy living environment, beautiful nature, good services, and the feeling of a small city.

4.2 Problems and challenges

However, there are also challenges, which can be seen from the open question concerning things to improve in the city of Valkeakoski. For example, the day-care system and schools overall were issues that concerned some of the respondents. They for example mentioned that they had to wait for an open position in order to have their child into kindergarten. Also the local newspaper is filled with both articles and letters to the editor related to issues concerning schools and the day-care system. The situation is that the schools in Valkeakoski are not in the best possible condition, and that they are over-crowded.

One factor that was mentioned as an issue to improve was the situation of Lintula. Different issues were mentioned concerning that certain neighbourhood. For example, one answer was to have better cycle paths and footpaths to the area. This is an issue that has also received visibility in the local newspaper. Another one, a bit more specific was to have recycling places to the neighbourhood. Since Lintula is the area where the Housing Fair was in 2009, it has spread enormously during the past three years. The traffic in the area has definitely increased, so making the neighbourhood safe as quickly as possible (which was also one answer by a respondent) is a problem, which the city needs to change for the better.

Another concern was youngsters. Some of the respondents wished to have for example more free-time activities and other services for the adoles-

cents. The challenge for the city therefore is, how to invest in these kinds of services, especially now when the economical situation in the whole world is in a sort of a crisis.

One rather often mentioned matter was the health care system. Some said that overall it ought to be improved, one said that it is difficult to see a doctor, and one answer concerned the senior citizens. However, one respondent said that there is nothing wrong with the health care system, and did not understand why people are being so negative about it.

It can be seen that the city of Valkeakoski has got issues to improve, but there are also several matters that are strengths. Even though the price level is similar to the somewhat smaller neighbouring municipalities and the living environment and closeness of the nature is alike, the city of Valkeakoski is a lively small town, which can offer for example a big variety in different opportunities for hobbies. The question therefore is how to use these competitive advantages in order to attract the possible buyers, and how to spread the information effectively through marketing.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The research question of this Bachelor's thesis is 'How to attract people and can marketing have an effect on it?' The recommendations below are a combination of the issues mentioned in the theory and the results from the study conducted by the author.

As mentioned in the theory, Rainisto (2003, 11) directly quotes Kotler, Hamlin, Rein and Haider in a following way in his doctoral dissertations: "Place marketing means designing a place to satisfy the needs of its target markets." As also mentioned in the theory, a company must know its target market before conducting any marketing activities; it is just a waste of resources if the target segment is not well defined and the marketing is not constructed to fit that certain segment. When the city of Valkeakoski wants to attract possible new residents, especially families, based on the survey could be said that advertising open positions is not the way to do it. The respondents evaluated to the highest importance cosy living environment and price level, so those are the two most valued factors in the minds of the possible buyers (if they are in a somewhat similar situation in life as the respondents were). On the basis of the answers, the city should put most emphasis on those two factors in its marketing.

The next most important factors were good opportunities for studying, traffic communications, and location. To the author's mind, these are the issues; the competitive advantages the city could use in order to distinguish itself from its competitor cities.

As mentioned in the theory, according to Kotler et al. (1993, 48–49), there are four categories a buyer uses as information sources. Out of these the commercial sources are the ones usually giving the most information to the buyer, whereas personal sources are the most trusted ones. When asking the importance of given sources of information, the media which got the highest number on average was the websites of Valkeakoski (3.6/5), and the send most important source was newspaper (2/5). Internet was a relatively often-mentioned issue to the open question concerning where and how market the city of Valkeakoski. Also a couple of respondents answered 'articles in papers' to the. However, also television and billboards were mentioned in the same open question, while those were rated rather low in the importance of given sources –question; television received an average number of 1.5/5 and outdoor advertising got 1.6/5. Yet, on the basis of the whole study could be said, that the media for advertising the city of Valkeakoski could be Internet, newspapers, outdoor advertising, and television. Currently the city is already advertising in Internet (for example the websites of the city), in newspapers and other printed forms, and using outdoor advertising.

Based on the theory, personal sources such as family and friends are the most trusted ones sources of information, and according to the study after the websites of Valkeakoski, the second most important sources of information were family and friends' recommendations and personal experiences (both received an average number 3.2/5). Thus could be said, that

one aim for the city of Valkeakoski should be keeping the current residents pleased with their home town, so that those people would also in a way market the city to their acquaintances.

Vallius (2011, 18) discusses in her master's thesis that some of the main reasons for moving are receiving a position, and issues related to family relations and housing, and gives an example of a change of an apartment due to the family life cycle. Vallius also mentions that many of the recent moves within Finland have been short distance moves in the labor market sector. The reasons for those moves have not been in work; usually they have been in housing. This can be seen also from the results of the study, since there were answers such as "the previous house was too small for us". There were also respondents who mentioned that the reason for moving was because of a position. The respondents were considering some other cities also, so the city of Valkeakoski probably wasn't the obvious choice. The study shows that 41.2% of the respondents had Lempäälä as an alternative for a new hometown, and 35.3% were considering also Tampere. Location-related issues were mentioned by 70.6% of the respondents as reasons for having certain other alternatives for their new hometown. Location also was a rather important (3.9/5) issue when making the decision to move, and the respondents' mental images were good concerning location, both previously (3.8/5) and currently (4.1/5). Therefore it could be suggested, that the city of Valkeakoski puts weight on location in its marketing, since it is esteemed high in the minds of the respondents'.

To the question concerning reasons to move to Valkeakoski, 64.7% of the respondents mentioned factors dealing with properties; the prices of the plots or a house they wanted to purchase. In many different occasions the respondents mentioned the supply of plots, the sizes of plots, and the prices of the plots, which give one answer to the research question; one way to attract the possible new residents is the plots the city is offering, since those were clearly one big issue for the respondents.

Before the respondents moved to Valkeakoski, the best mental images they had (from given alternatives) on average were concerning safe growing environment, good opportunities for hobbies, and cosy living environment. All of them received 4.1/5. From these the mental images of the respondents changed most with good opportunities for hobbies, and cosy living environment (current average number 4.4/5). Thus all of these could be ways to attract the possible buyers, especially the two last mentioned ones. Other mental images that changed to most after the respondents had moved to Valkeakoski were with opportunities for studying, location, and the image of the municipality. Out of these, the image of the municipality was one of the alternatives that had the worst mental image previously (3.3/5). The result of the study shows that the respondents used to have a worse picture of the city than what they currently thought about it; the challenge is to change it.

One way for changing the image of the possible new residents is to actually get them visit the city. Based on the open questions of the survey, one

way to do that could be organizing different events in Valkeakoski, for example concerts in Hotel Waltikka. On the other hand, there are already many different events organized in Valkeakoski currently, and for example the summer theatre is a way to attract people also from out of town.

In the study many answered that what they like about the city of Valkeakoski are the waterways and that the nature is close. Therefore one way for trying to attract new residents could be tourism during summertime, when the beauty of the nature is really visible. In the author's opinion it is also important that the city of Valkeakoski preserves the nature in the townscape and not for example fill the centre with blocks of houses thus destroying the currently existing nature. Since the nature and waterways were also repeatedly mentioned by the respondents, those are other issues to be emphasized in the marketing, which the city of Valkeakoski should also conduct in the future, for they are already mentioned in the marketing material.

For people it is important that the image the marketing gives corresponds to the actual image; some of the respondents actually mentioned that the marketing material is good, and the slogan is good, but the reality must be what the marketing material says it is. One comment (already mentioned in the chapter 3) from a respondent concerning the marketing of the city of Valkeakoski was that "the city needs to keep up with the promises 'Mansikkapaikka' markets; for example, the more inhabitants, the more places there need to be in day-cares and schools". Another answer was that the respondent would not market the city more, since the day-care system is not working properly, and there are not enough places compared to the amount of children in the city going to a kindergarten. In the theory there was a quotation from Kotler et al. (1993, 36–37): "While a catchy phrase might capture attention, it can't do the whole job of image marketing. A place's image must be valid and communicated in many ways through several channels if it is to succeed and take root." Thus it can be said, that groundwork has to be in a proper condition in order to attract people; figuratively, the buyers will not believe a picture of a beautiful strawberry if they know the actual strawberry is rotten.

The respondents answered also a question how they would market the city of Valkeakoski. The answers included for example everything related to plots, the traffic communications, functioning services and especially the emergency duty in the hospital, peaceful and safe living environment, the Campus, nature, waterways, versatile possibilities for hobbies no matter the age, and the size of the town. Since these are the respondents' opinions and the respondents used to be in the target market of the city of Valkeakoski, all of the above-mentioned issues are worth advertising for.

Another open question was concerning the most important issues to the respondents' minds when trying to attract new residents to Valkeakoski. As also mentioned in the previous chapter, some of the answers were very similar to the previous question (how market the city of Valkeakoski), such as what the living environment is like, the level of services, and the sizes and prices of the plots. One answer was "adding more to the 'basic

needs' such as day-care". As already discussed in this Bachelor's thesis, those basic needs ought to be managed properly in order to have satisfied citizens. One example of a negative situation happened just recently. The new place where senior citizens are taken care of opened when everything was not yet finished. They were lacking different kinds of everyday items, and the workforce was too small compared to the inhabitants. This resulted into a situation where the employees apologized in the local newspaper, and finally the bad news spread even to the tabloids. These kinds of articles definitely are not building the image of a town where it is a joy to live in.

One issue that was mentioned was the city's distance from Tampere, but this is already used in the marketing activities of the city of Valkeakoski. However, the location and traffic communications were mentioned by several respondents, so those are issues worth advertising.

As mentioned often in this Bachelor's Thesis, the most valued factor from the given alternatives was the cosy living environment; some of the respondents also mentioned it in the open questions. However, to the author's mind advertising with words 'cosy living environment' is a bit bland; there is nothing special about it, and many cities could advertise themselves with the same words, especially since the word cosy may mean different things to different people. That is why issues named by the respondents such as Valkeakoski being a peaceful city, and that Valkeakoski is a good sized city with a nice small-town feeling could be more appealing to the possible buyers.

The final question for the respondents was whether there is anything to improve there in Valkeakoski. Mostly those issues related to educational and social services. Day-care system and schools ought to be improved, as well as health care system and the nursing of the elderly. Even though the respondents did not evaluate opportunities for studying as an important factor, those matters were brought up in the open questions. And even though the situation is such that it is not the first criterion to base one's decision on, it probably would not do anything negative if the city could advertise for example with sentences such as 'new schools' and 'no queues for kindergartens'.

6 CONCLUSION

This Bachelor's thesis has pointed out that conducting place marketing as an important issue in the current world. Since people are being more mobile, the cities need to be able to market themselves in order to survive; if no-one is moving to a municipality but everyone is moving away, the municipality will eventually disappear.

In the author's point of view, one big part of place marketing is all kind of advertising and promotion. In order to get visibility people need to recognize one's existence, and that can be done through advertising. For example billboards close to highways and other outdoor advertising are likely to be noticed by the people on the roads. An advertisement in a newspaper can affect subconsciously. Direct advertising for example in different fairs reaches people who most likely are in a right state of mind; if a person is thinking of building a house and therefore visits a fair related to that subject, an attractive stand with enthusiastic presenters might be enough for that person to choose the location for their future house.

According to both the theory and the results of the study, customers are all individuals, which means that different issues affect their decision making process differently depending on their personal characteristics. However, from the answers can be seen that the group of respondents had an likeness in backgrounds (most of them were families, and had bought or built a house to Valkeakoski), and some of their answers were similar to the others'. Also the theory supports this finding; it has been studied that there are certain issues that people tend to base their decisions on.

As the theory shows, there are different kinds of ways to conduct place marketing, but there are certain guidelines. The actions that ought to be taken depend on the current situation of the municipality and for example the aims of it. Based on what kind of image the place has and wants to have, and who are its target market(s), the marketing strategy can be developed.

In order to find out the current situation of the city of Valkeakoski, the author conducted a survey. Some of the results were rather surprising, such as the fact that the respondents put the most weigh on cosy living environment, and some of the answers were relatively foreseeable, such as how important factor price level was in the respondents' decision making processes. Due to the nature of questionnaire conducted as an interview, the author was able to have also discussions with the respondents. Therefore some answers were more thoroughly explained, and perhaps also more specific answers were given to the open questions. The answers to the open questions gave a lot of information of what the respondents used to think of the city of Valkeakoski and what their thoughts currently were of it along with thought of the city's marketing activities. Also many suggestions for improvement were given.

In the previous chapter, the author's recommendations based on the theory and the results of the study were listed. However, it is not just about im-

proving issues there where there is room for improvement. It is also about maintaining the ones that are working already. For example, the websites of the city of Valkeakoski are already good, but it is important to keep those up-to-date also in the future. This was even an issue mentioned by a respondent. In the author's point of view it also gives a good image of the city when it can be seen the date of updating. If the updating has occurred relatively recent (at least during the fiscal year), it gives an impression that the city is active and is willing to invest in informing people of the current issues going on in the city. That is what the city of Valkeakoski wants to let people know. Valkeakoski is not just a place to sleep in, but it is a lively small town.

There were also many different matters mentioned by the respondents that are liked in the city of Valkeakoski. Those issues are such that could be taken into account when planning the future marketing, but they are also matters that need care-taking. In order to have satisfied citizens also in the future, the city needs to preserve the issues that were mentioned as the best factors concerning living in Valkeakoski.

Even though the respondents answered that the active marketing of the municipality is not an important issue in their decision making process, many of the respondents had seen it and had opinions about it. Not all of the answers were positive, but those kinds of answers were also given. For example, many liked the feeling 'Mansikkapaikka' conveys, and the way of marketing the city with pictures of children and/or families was mentioned as a positive factor.

All in all could be said, that the city of Valkeakoski is already conducting good and versatile marketing activities, since after the launch of the slogan Mansikkapaikka the immigration has had a surplus. Thus, the answer to the research question is that marketing can have an effect on attracting the possible new residents. The answer to the part of the question 'how to attract people' depends on the target market, but based on the study could be said that if people do choose their new home town based on the location of the municipality, the price level of the municipality, and most importantly they need to feel that the living environment is enjoyable.

SOURCES

- Ahonen, P. Marketing manager. The city of Valkeakoski. Interview 29.11.2012
- Ahonen, Petri. Sent 1.11.2012. VS: Valkeakosken markkinoinnin historiasta. [e-mail message]. Recipient Emilia Eskelinen. Viewed 1.11.2012.
- Websites of the city of Akaa. Accessed 27.9.2012.
http://www.aka.fi/kaupunki_ja_hallinto/esittely/
- Kavaratzis, M. 2004. Place Branding Vol. 1, 58–73, pdf-file. Accessed 29.10.2012
http://www.imagian.fi/kuvat/from_city_marketing_to_city_branding-_kavaratzis_2004.pdf
- Keller, K. 2008. Strategic Brand Management: Building, Measuring, and Managing Brand Equity. 3rd edition. Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education, Inc.
- Kotler, P., Haider, D., & Rein, I. 1993. Marketing Places: Attracting Investment, Industry, and Tourism to Cities, States, and Nations. New York: The Free Press. Last accessed 4.11.2012
http://www.google.fi/books?hl=en&lr=&id=NwNodC2cXEwC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=marketing+places+kotler&ots=FBPNqNlnHR&sig=6R8hDETmwtMt2sMqjA7vAv5vuSM&redir_esc=y
- Kunnat.net. Accessed 25.9.2012 and 26.9.2012.
<http://www.kunnat.net/fi/tietopankit/tilastot/aluejaot/Sivut/Kartta.aspx>
Translation: Emilia Eskelinen
- Kuntaliitto. n.d. Kokonaismuuttovoitto / -tappio kunnittain 2011, pdf-file. Accessed 26.9.2012 Translation: Emilia Eskelinen
<http://www.kunnat.net/fi/tietopankit/tilastot/vaestotietoja/muuttoliike/Documents/Muuttoliike%202011.pdf>
- Rainisto, S. 2003. Success Factors of Place Marketing: A Study of Place Marketing Practices in Northern Europe and the United States. Institute of Strategy and International Business, doctoral dissertations. Helsinki University of Technology, pdf-file. Accessed 9.10.2012
<http://lib.tkk.fi/Diss/2003/isbn9512266849/isbn9512266849.pdf>
- Ruskin-Brown, I. 2006. Mastering Marketing. London: Thorogood Publishing.
- Rydman, K. 1997. In Heini Kuusela-Opas (ed.) Valkeakoski – pääosassa elämä. Forssa: Painotalo Auranen Oy, 6–14.
- Suomi.fi. Last accessed 5.11.2012
http://www.suomi.fi/suomifi/english/state_and_municipalities/municipalities_and_local_government/index.html

Tybout, A., Calder, B. & Kotler, P. 2010. Kellog on Marketing. 2nd edition. Hoboken: Wiley.

Population is growing. Valkeakosken Sanomat 24.9.2012, 5.
Translation: Emilia Eskelinen

Valkeakoski.fi. Last accessed 4.11.2012
http://www.valkeakoski.fi/portal/suomi/kuntainfo_ja_hallinto/
Translation: Emilia Eskelinen

Vallius, A. 2011. Markkinoinnilla muuttovoittokunnaksi? University of Tampere, pdf-file. Accessed 27.9.2012. Translation: Emilia Eskelinen
<http://tutkielmat.uta.fi/pdf/gradu05157.pdf>

Zimmerbauer, K. 2007. Imago ja kuntarakenteen muutos: Seinäjoen ja Peräseinäjoen kuntaliitoksen vaikutus alueellisen imagon kehittämiseen, pdf-file. Accessed 25.9.2012 and 26.9.2012.
http://www.ays.fi/aluejaymparisto/pdf/aluejaymp_2007_2_s31-42.pdf
Translation: Emilia Eskelinen

QUESTIONNAIRE IN FINNISH

1. IKÄ
2. SUKUPUOLI
3. PERHE (perheen koko ja alle 15 v lasten lukumäärä)
4. MISTÄ KUNNASTA OLETTE MUUTTANUT VALKEAKOSKELLE?
5. MIKÄ ASUINMUOTONNE OLI EDELLISESSÄ KUNNASSA?
 - omakotitalo
 - kerrostalo-osake / rivitalo /paritalo
 - vuokra-asunto
6. MIKÄ ON ASUINMUOTONNE TÄLLÄ HETKELLÄ?
7. KUINKA KAUAN OLETTE ASUNUT VALKEAKOSKELLA?
8. KUINKA HYVIN TUNSIITTE VALKEAKOSKEN ENNEN TÄNNE MUUTTOA? ARVIOIKAA ASTEIKOLLA 1-5 (1 = ERITTÄIN HUONOSTI ... 5 = ERITTÄIN HYVIN)
9. MITÄ (KONKREETTISESTI) TIESITTE VALKEAKOSKESTA ENNEN TÄNNE MUUTTOA?
10. MISTÄ TIETOLÄHTEESTÄ OLITTE SAANUT KYSEESSÄOLEVAT TIEDOT?
11. MISTÄ TIETOLÄHTEISTÄ HAITTE/SAITTE TIETOA KUN ALOITTE SUUNNITELLA MUUTTOA?
12. KUINKA TÄRKEITÄ TIETOLÄHTEITÄ OLIVAT SEURAAVAT - ASTEIKOLLA 1-5 (1 = EI LAINKAAN ... 5 = ERITTÄIN TÄRKEITÄ)?
 - sanomalehdet 1 2 3 4 5
 - aikakauslehdet 1 2 3 4 5
 - radio 1 2 3 4 5
 - tv 1 2 3 4 5
 - asuntomessut 1 2 3 4 5
 - sukulaisten/ystävien suositukset 1 2 3 4 5
 - ulkomainonta 1 2 3 4 5
 - kaupungin nettisivut 1 2 3 4 5
 - sosiaalinen media 1 2 3 4 5
 - omat kokemukset 1 2 3 4 5
13. MIKSI MUUTITTE VALKEAKOSKELLE?

JA KUINKA TÄRKEITÄ OLIVAT SEURAAVAT SEIKAT PÄÄTÖSTÄ TEHDESSÄNNE ASTEIKOLLA 1-5 (1 = EI LAINKAAN ... 5 = ERITTÄIN TÄRKEITÄ)?
 - työpaikkojen saatavuus (kaupungissa) 1 2 3 4 5
 - opiskelumahdollisuudet 1 2 3 4 5
 - turvallinen kasvuympäristö lapsille 1 2 3 4 5
 - hyvät harrastusmahdollisuudet 1 2 3 4 5
 - kunnalliset palvelut 1 2 3 4 5

- kaupalliset palvelut 1 2 3 4 5
- viihtyisä asuinympäristö 1 2 3 4 5
- liikenneyhteydet 1 2 3 4 5
- sijainti 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnan imago 1 2 3 4 5
- sukulaisten/ystävien suositukset 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnan aktiivinen markkinointi 1 2 3 4 5
- hintataso

14. MINKÄLAINEN MIELIKUVA TEILLÄ OLI VALKEAKOSKESTA ENNEN MUUTTOPÄÄTÖSTÄNNE? ARVIOIKAA ASTEIKOLLA 1-5 (1 = ERITTÄIN HUONO ... 5 = ERITTÄIN HYVÄ)

- työpaikkojen saatavuus 1 2 3 4 5
- opiskelumahdollisuudet 1 2 3 4 5
- turvallinen kasvuympäristö lapsille 1 2 3 4 5
- hyvät harrastusmahdollisuudet 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnalliset palvelut 1 2 3 4 5
- kaupalliset palvelut 1 2 3 4 5
- viihtyisä asuinympäristö 1 2 3 4 5
- liikenneyhteydet 1 2 3 4 5
- sijainti 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnan imago 1 2 3 4 5
- sukulaisten/ystävien suositukset 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnan aktiivinen markkinointi 1 2 3 4 5

15. MINKÄLAINEN MIELIKUVA TEILLÄ ON VALKEAKOSKESTA TÄLLÄ HETKELLÄ? ARVIOIKAA ASTEIKOLLA 1-5 (1 = ERITTÄIN HUONO ... 5 = ERITTÄIN HYVÄ)

- työpaikkojen saatavuus 1 2 3 4 5
- opiskelumahdollisuudet 1 2 3 4 5
- turvallinen kasvuympäristö lapsille 1 2 3 4 5
- hyvät harrastusmahdollisuudet 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnalliset palvelut 1 2 3 4 5
- kaupalliset palvelut 1 2 3 4 5
- viihtyisä asuinympäristö 1 2 3 4 5
- liikenneyhteydet 1 2 3 4 5
- sijainti 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnan imago 1 2 3 4 5
- kunnan aktiivinen markkinointi 1 2 3 4 5

16. MITÄ MUITA KUNTIA OLI HARKINNASSA, MIKSI JUURI KYSEISET KUNNAT?

17. MIKSI VALITSITTE VALKEAKOSKEN, MITKÄ ASIAT OLIVAT TÄÄLLÄ PAREMMIN/HUONOMMIN KUIN MUISSA KUNNISSA?

18. MISSÄ VIESTINTÄKANAVASSA/VÄLINEESSÄ TOIVOISITTE KAUPUNKIA MAINOSTETTAVAN ENEMMÄN, JA MILLÄ TAVALLA?
19. OLETTEKO AIKEISSA VAIHTAA KOTIKUNTAA (jos olette, miksi) SEURAAVIEN KAHDEN VUODEN AIKANA?
 - Kyllä (miksi?)
 - Ei
 - En osaa sanoa
20. ”MIKÄ ON PARASTA VALKEAKOSKELLA ASUMISESSA?”
21. ”MIKÄ ON PARASTA VALKEAKOSKEN MARKKINOINNISSA?”
22. MITEN TE MARKKINOISITTE VALKEAKOSKEA, MISTÄ ASIOISTA KERTOISITTE?
23. MIKÄ ON MIELESTÄNNE SE TÄRKEIN ASIA/SEIKKA, JOLLA VALKEAKOSKI VOISI HERÄTTÄÄ MUUTTOA HARKITSEVAN MIELENKIINNON?
24. MITÄ PARANNETTAVAA KAUPUNGISSA MIELESTÄNNE ON?

QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH

1. AGE
2. GENDER
3. FAMILY (the size of the family and the number of children below 15 years)
4. FROM WHICH MUNICIPALITY DID YOU MOVE TO THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI?
5. HOW DID YOU LIVE IN THE PREVIOUS MUNICIPALITY?
 - own house
 - own apartment
 - rental apartment / house
6. HOW DO YOU LIVE CURRENTLY?
7. HOW LONG HAVE YOU LIVED IN VALKEAKOSKI?
8. HOW WELL DID YOU KNOW THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI BEFORE MOVING HERE? PLEASE ESTIMATE ON SCALE 1-5 (1 = VERY POORLY ... 5 = VERY WELL)
9. WHAT CONCRETE ISSUES DID YOU KNOW OF VALKEAKOSKI BEFORE MOVING HERE?
10. FROM WHICH INFORMATION SOURCE HAD YOU RECEIVED THOSE ISSUES?
11. WHICH SOURCES OF INFORMATION DID YOU USE WHEN PLANNING THE MOVE?
12. HOW IMPORTANT SOURCES OF INFORMATION WERE THE FOLLOWING – ON A SCALE 1-5 (1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT ... 5 = VERY IMPORTANT)?
 - newspapers 1 2 3 4 5
 - other magazines 1 2 3 4 5
 - radio 1 2 3 4 5
 - television 1 2 3 4 5
 - the Housing Fair 1 2 3 4 5
 - family and friend's recommendations 1 2 3 4 5
 - outdoor advertising 1 2 3 4 5
 - websites of Valkeakoski 1 2 3 4 5
 - social media 1 2 3 4 5
 - personal experiences 1 2 3 4 5
13. WHY DID YOU MOVE TO VALKEAKOSKI?

AND HOW IMPORTANT WERE THE FOLLOWING FACTORS WHEN MAKING THE DECISION ON A SCALE 1-5 (1 = NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT ... 5 = VERY IMPORTANT)?
 - availability of positions 1 2 3 4 5
 - opportunities for studying 1 2 3 4 5
 - safe growing environment for the children 1 2 3 4 5

- good opportunities for hobbies 1 2 3 4 5
- municipal services 1 2 3 4 5
- commercial services 1 2 3 4 5
- cosy living environmetn 1 2 3 4 5
- traffic communications 1 2 3 4 5
- location 1 2 3 4 5
- the image of the municipality 1 2 3 4 5
- recommendations of family and friends 1 2 3 4 5
- active marketing of the municipality 1 2 3 4 5
- price level 1 2 3 4 5

14. WHAT KIND OF MENTAL IMAGE DID YOU HAVE OF THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI BEFORE THE DECISION TO MOVE? PLEASE EVALUATE ON A SCALE 1-5 (1 = VERY BAD MENTAL IMAGE ... 5 = VERY GOOD MENTAL IMAGE)

- availability of positions 1 2 3 4 5
- opportunities for studying 1 2 3 4 5
- safe growing environment for the children 1 2 3 4 5
- good opportunities for hobbies 1 2 3 4 5
- municipal services 1 2 3 4 5
- commercial services 1 2 3 4 5
- cosy living environmetn 1 2 3 4 5
- traffic communications 1 2 3 4 5
- location 1 2 3 4 5
- the image of the municipality 1 2 3 4 5
- recommendations of family and friends 1 2 3 4 5
- active marketing of the municipality 1 2 3 4 5

15. WHAT KIND OF MENTAL IMAGE DO YOU CURRENTLY HAVE OF THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI? PLEASE EVALUATE ON A SCALE 1-5 (1 = VERY BAD MENTAL IMAGE ... 5 = VERY GOOD MENTAL IMAGE)

- availability of positions 1 2 3 4 5
- opportunities for studying 1 2 3 4 5
- safe growing environment for the children 1 2 3 4 5
- good opportunities for hobbies 1 2 3 4 5
- municipal services 1 2 3 4 5
- commercial services 1 2 3 4 5
- cosy living environmetn 1 2 3 4 5
- traffic communications 1 2 3 4 5
- location 1 2 3 4 5
- the image of the municipality 1 2 3 4 5
- active marketing of the municipality 1 2 3 4 5

16. WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES DID YOU CONSIDER FOR A NEW HOME TOWN, AND WHY THOSE SPECIFIC MUNICIPALITIES?
17. WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI, WHICH ISSUES ARE BETTER/WORSE HERE THAN IN THE OTHER MUNICIPALITIES?
18. IN WHICH MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS TOOL WOULD YOU WANT TO SEE MORE ADVERTISING OF THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI, AND IN WHAT WAY?
19. ARE YOU ABOUT TO CHANGE YOUR HOME TOWN (if you are, why) DURING THE COMING TWO YEARS?
 - Yes (why?)
 - No
 - I cannot say
20. "WHAT IS THE BEST FACTOR CONCERNING LIVING IN VALKEAKOSKI?"
21. "WHAT IS THE BEST FACTOR IN THE MARKETING OF THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI?"
22. HOW WOULD YOU MARKET THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI, WHICH ISSUES WOULD YOU TELL ABOUT?
23. WHAT IN YOUR MIND IS THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE WHEN TRYING TO ATTRACT A PERSON THINKING OF MOVING?
24. WHAT ISSUES DO YOU THINK OUGHT TO BE IMPROVED IN THE CITY OF VALKEAKOSKI?