



MARKETING PLAN

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of the thesis was to create a marketing plan for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd for their new product launch. Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd has been organizing energetic skiing trips for young people with low budget since 1997 under the names Hupellus and TaivasHupellus. This winter Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd is launching a new branch, under the name Ski Unlimited. Ski Unlimited will be focusing on all-inclusive skiing trips to different locations in Switzerland. Ski Unlimited is now searching for active, skiing-loving customers between the ages of 30 to 65 who value quality and easiness. Now with a completely new target market and style of arranged tours, the authors have focused in the marketing plan for this new segment of customers. The aim of the marketing plan is to allure customers, gain visibility and to help to create a plausible brand for the Ski Unlimited.

The authors studied marketing and its different tools broadly. Those tools which were considered the best for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd and which would probably be effective for the desired customer segment were chosen. The selection of the marketing tools was based on the research of the company and the current market situation and on the analysis of these to be able to offer the suitable marketing solutions.

All of the actions and thoughts described in this marketing plan are made for the current situation. In the future it is important to keep in mind that the marketing environment keeps on changing and different actions might be needed in order to stay competitive in the market.

Keywords: marketing, marketing plan, services marketing, marketing mix.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the thesis was to create a marketing plan for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd for their new product launch. They can use it as it is, or pick ideas from it and use them in the best suitable way. Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd has been organizing energetic skiing trips for young people with low budget since 1997. This concept is called Hupellus. Later on they developed the concept to TaivasHupellus, which meant skiing and golf trips to people with little more age, money and appreciation for good quality, who still are energetic but have less time to spend. These two concepts have been running successfully, but without producing any significant profit to their creators. The brand is quite familiar to the target group by itself without any new marketing tools and effort.

Now the company is launching a new product for a totally new customer segment. The aim is to reach active, skiing-loving customers between the ages of 30 to 65. This time the aim is to gain some decent profit by offering quality skiing holidays for people who are willing to pay for it. This age segment is new for the company, so the same tools that worked with the students and young adults might not work anymore with this age group.

The objective of the authors was to create an innovative, yet credible marketing plan for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd, which would help the company to be successful in its product launch and later on in the future to continue efficient marketing. The marketing plan should be realistic; so that it takes into consideration the size of the company and the resources the company has in use and that the marketing plan would actually work for the desired segment. In order to be able to produce such a thing, the authors had to find the best possible marketing mix. To do that, they had to do a marketing analysis of the current situation in order to find the best possible marketing solutions for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd.

2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF MARKETING

2.1 Defining Marketing

Marketing is a concept given to those activities which occur at the interface between the organisation and its customers. It dates back to the original concept of a marketplace, where buyers and sellers would come together to conduct transactions for their mutual benefit. The aim of marketing is to ensure that customers will conduct exchanges with the marketer's organisation, rather than with the other 'stallholders'. To do this effectively, marketers must provide those customers with what they want to buy, at prices which represent value for money. Marketing is considered in the company as a management function, which also underlines and provides framework for all the activities in business. (Blythe 2008, 2; Kotler & Keller & Brady & Goodman & Hansen 2012, 7-10.)

Today, marketing should be understood in the sense of satisfying customer needs. When the marketer understands customer needs he can develop products that provide superior customer value. According to management guru Peter Drucker, "The aim of marketing is to make selling unnecessary." Selling and advertising are only part of a larger 'marketing mix' – a set of marketing tools that work together to satisfy customer needs and build customer relationships. When wider defined, marketing becomes a social and managerial process by which individuals and organisations obtain what they need and want through creating and exchanging value with others. It includes building relationships with customers that become profitable and valuable. "*Marketing is managing profitable customer values.*" (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 29.)

There are five core concepts within customer and marketplace relations. First is the *customer needs, wants and demands*. Needs can be physical, social or individual – all of them are a basic part of the human make up, not a creation of the marketers. Wants are formed by the human needs and shaped by cultural and individual factors. Wants become demands when backed up by buying power. Wants and demands define the products that add up to the most value and satisfaction. *Market offerings (products, services and experiences)* are combinations that fulfil customers' needs and wants. The

offerings can be products, services, experiences or information, and are not limited to physical products. Many of them are essentially intangible and do not result into ownership. Market offerings also include other entities such as persons, places, organisations, information and ideas. *Customer value and satisfaction* are formed by the expectations about the value that the product will bring and the satisfaction the market offerings will deliver. It is about finding the right balance when creating expectations for the product itself. When *exchanges and relationships* combine in satisfying needs and wants – it becomes marketing. Exchange is the act of obtaining a desired object from someone by offering something in return. Marketers want to build strong relationships by consistently delivering superior customer value. Last but not least, a *market* is a set of actual and potential buyers of a product. The buyers share a particular need or want that can be satisfied through exchange relationships. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 29; Kotler & Keller & Brady & Goodman & Hansen 2012, 7-10.)

2.2 Business to Business Marketing

Business-to-business, or B2B marketing, means the marketing and the trade between companies. The best way to understand this concept is to think the production chain from the raw material producers to the final product for the consumer. In most cases there are many B2B transactions before the final product is in the hands of the consumer. You can find many subcontractors or specialized companies that you need material from to get the final product done. Take a schoolbook for example. It does not just appear to the bookstores by accident. There are plenty of actions before that. This is a very much simplified version of it. You need wood to get the fibre to make paper in a factory. You need someone to write the book and someone who is willing to publish it, to buy the paper and turn it to a book. And then you need to sell it to a bookstore and someone to deliver it to there. Then it might be available for all of us to buy. So if you represent some part in the chain, it would be very useful for you to get other members in that chain to be aware of your product or service and to buy it. That is when B2B marketing steps into the picture.

So how does B2B marketing differ from consumer marketing? If you are in the middle of the chain, the biggest difference is that your product or service is really needed. In

business to consumer marketing you as a salesman are trying to convince the consumer that he/she needs the product you are trying to sell even though it might not be essential for a good, happy life, but in business-to-business it works another way around. Every part of the production chain is essential. In a schoolbook case, you really need the paper to be able to print something on it. To get the paper you need wood. You also need transportation to get the wood or the paper to the next part of the chain. If something is missing in that chain, the whole house of cards comes crashing down. Business-to-business marketing is therefore about meeting the needs of other businesses, though ultimately the demand for the products made by these businesses is usually driven by consumers.

More complex decision making unit

Compared to decision making of an individual customer, the process is usually more complex in business to business world. Whereas a household can and usually does the buying decision by itself, in business world there might be a lot of procedures, steps and participants before the decisions are made. For example you might have to convince first the secretary, then a board member or purchase director and then maybe the whole board of directors of the superiority of your product/service. It might take much more time and in addition, there might be changes in the company and its structure which may affect to the need of the product inside the company and the decisions already made. That is why you as a salesperson should always show a high level of expertise whenever you are dealing with a possible customer. Not just before closing the deal, but also in providing the technical and other back-up that the buyer will receive throughout the life of the purchase. That keeps the customers satisfied and keeps them buying from you.

B2B buyers are more rational than consumers

As an individual we might get emotional or vain and spend money for trademarks or products that we don't need. Business buyers are usually more rational and are trying to find the best possible product with the cheapest possible price. They might not need the trendiest trademark or coolest design and are not willing to pay extra to get those. They value good quality-price ratio, safe and sure delivery and good service and supply after the purchase.

B2B buyers are long-term buyers and personal relationships are very important

If your company is manufacturing a special product that is needed in other companies to help them to perform in their field of business, it is quite possible that if they are pleased with your product and service, they are willing to buy from you in the future as well. As the relationship between your companies continues, the more personal relationships get involved as well. First of all because you have been able to sell your product to them, which usually takes more patience and convincing than with a single consumer. Then all the service, backup and updates keep you connected. The salesman is also more willing to spend time with customers because there might be fewer customers in business to business markets than in the consumer markets, so he/she wants to take good care of the few he/she has.

B2B buyers are more demanding than consumers

As a conclusion: business-to-business buyers are usually more demanding than consumers. They have the responsibility to make the best possible decisions when purchasing on behalf of their company. They spend more time in searching and comparing products/services and therefore the quality you are offering should be absolutely right. They usually have the expertise to recognize a poor offer when they see one. They are often paying more than they would as a consumer and therefore expect more in return. But if you are offering a good product and take good care of your customer, they are willing to reward you with buying from you in the future as well. (Why is Business-to-Business Marketing Special? 2012.)

2.3 Services Marketing

Services marketing typically refers to business to consumer (B2C) and business to business (B2B) marketing. The American Marketing Association defines services as - "Activities, benefits and satisfactions which are offered for sale or are provided in connection with the sale of goods." (Introduction to Services Marketing 2012). Services in general do not normally take ownership of any of the physical elements involved.

Services marketing within tourism can be considered via four different factors; intangibility, heterogeneity, perishability and inseparability (Holloway 2004, 17). Intangibility means that the product can not be presented or inspected before the purchase. There is a risk that always exists for the consumer. In marketing of tourism services imagination plays a great deal in the process; one good example of marketing intangible tourism products is a video clip presenting pictures and recorded material of the destination, accommodation and personnel of a tour package. This gives the consumer an idea what he or she is most likely to receive for the value of money.

Heterogeneity in tourism service is complicated, meaning that though a product (for example a tour package) is standardised, every single unit is still different. There are so many different factors influencing a tour package, change in staff and variety in performance, unpredictable weather and cultural, social and other factors on-site. A good quality control may help in preventing huge differences in the product, but there are always factors that can not be standardised.

The third factor to be considered is perishability. The level of perishability is very high in tourism. If a service, for example a seat in a guided tour bus is not sold today, that specific product is lost forever. The free seat can not be saved and stored for tomorrow. Perishability can be controlled and minimized by pricing strategies, motivating the consumers to buy the products/services on low-demand.

The last factor, inseparability, means that every service is affected and shaped by the seller. For example, if the guide in the guided bus tour is good and meets our expectations, we are more likely to return or suggest the same tour to our friends. But if the tour guide does not meet our expectations, seems to lack information and is not presenting the different sights in an interesting way, we are likely to tell our friends to avoid those specific tours. This same pattern repeats in other tourism services, like the social skills of a receptionist or a waiter. Therefore it is crucial in services marketing to choose the staff members carefully, as they play a huge role in the general marketing of the services and products.

The service process itself can be divided into three different categories; *Before-sales service process*; These would include helpful staff, ready access to information and ensuring the availability of people to carry out the service. *During-sales service*

process; The actual provision of the service. *After-sales service process*; Courtesy calls, prompt attention to complaints and record-keeping for future encounters are useful processes. (Blythe 2008, 266.) All of the above mentioned processes are good ways to enforce customer loyalty and satisfaction when providing services.

“Market segmentation is a process that divides the entire market into groups that possess common or alike characteristics” (Pfister & Tierney 2009, 96). Segmentation is crucial, because your product or service is needed or wanted just by a small specific group of people. For example it is (usually) useless to market skateboards for the elderly and walkers for young, healthy legged people. Also usually if you are just starting up your business, you do not have loads of money to spend on the marketing, so you should choose wisely the marketing channels you are using to get the best possible results. So how to do the segmentation? Of course first you have to have a clear picture of what you are offering and in how broad scale to get the answer to the question of the potential customers. You should be able to answer quite accurately to the questions in relation to the segmentation criteria of figure 1 to be able to do the segmentation.

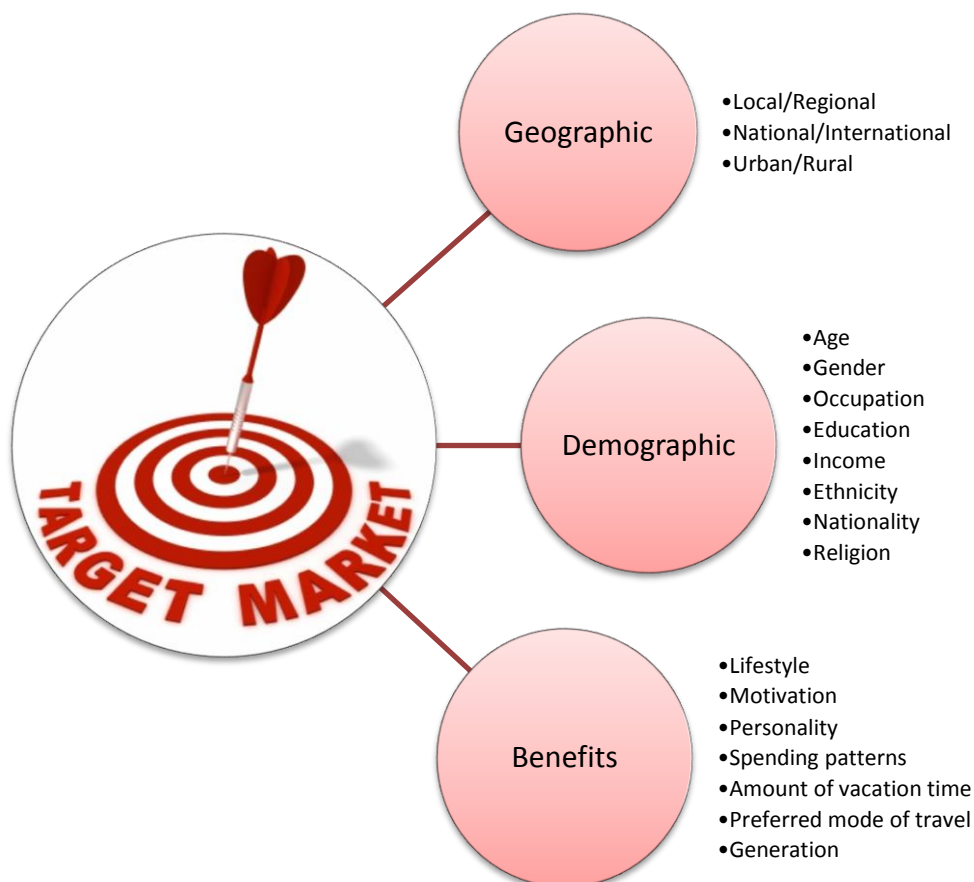


FIGURE 1. Segmentation of the target market

After you have been able to define your segments it is much easier for you to start thinking how to reach the people that were the result of your segmentation.

2.4 Marketing Mix

Marketing mix is a tool that is used when marketing products. It describes different choices organizations have to make in the process of bringing a product or a service to the market. The most common and most used way to define the marketing mix is the four P's:

- product (or a service)
- price
- place
- promotion (Kotler & Keller & Brady & Goodman & Hansen 2012, 31, 73-74, 973).



FIGURE 2. The Marketing Mix

Product (variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging, services) means the goods and services the company offers to the target market.

Price (list price, discounts, allowances, payment period, credit terms) is the amount of money customers must pay to obtain the product. In tourism, the price is often variable, and negotiable, with the consumer seeking to obtain the best value for money between range of competitive products on offer.

Place (channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transportation, logistics) includes company activities that make the product available to target customers. In tourism it is a controversial variable. Place generally refers to the place where the product can be inspected and purchased, but to the location of the services, too. Within tourism marketing theorists it is argued that place also refers to the destination of the tourist. In this thesis the authors refer to the destination of the tourists.

Promotion (advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations) means activities that communicate the merits of the product and persuade target customers to buy it.

An effective marketing programme blends all the marketing mix elements into an integrated marketing programme designed to achieve the company's marketing objectives by delivering value to customers (Kotler & Keller & Brady & Goodman & Hansen 2012, 31, 73-74). In the case of tourism the issue is quite complex, as the products that are actually delivered to the consumer will be composed of both tangible and intangible elements.

While the marketing of goods is still very often based on these four variables, in the case of services and particularly in tourism, some marketers have argued that further three or even four P's should be added. Those four would be people, process, physical evidence and productivity and quality, giving emphasis to the already existing P's. First tourism is a service product and employees are therefore an integral part. There are several persons combined in the success of a tourism package. The service delivery process means the variable service encounters between the tourist and representatives of the hotels and activity providers, particularly the 'critical incidents' which result to satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Physical evidence involves all of the cues received by the

tourists experiencing their flight, package or other services based on senses. Within tourism marketing these should be acknowledged and thought of.

2.5 Customer Relationship Management

“The customer experience used to end at the cash register. Today, that’s where it begins” (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 368).

Nowadays when the competition might be fierce between companies and they are trying to allure the same customer base, it has become more and more important not just to attract new customers, but to hold on the existing ones and keep them satisfied in order to make them come back to use your services.

According to Kotler & co, you can divide customer relationships into five different levels with customers who have purchased a company’s product, such as a car or a piece of equipment (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 387).

-Basic: The salesperson from a company sells a product but does not follow up in any way.

-Reactive: The salesperson from a company sells a product and encourages the customer to call whenever a problem occurs.

-Accountable: The salesperson phones to a customer soon after purchase to check if the product is meeting the expectations. He/she also asks tips and advice from the customer to improve the existing product and service.

-Proactive: The company keeps in touch with the customer from time to time about improved product use or helpful new products.

-Partnership: The company works continuously with the customer base to find ways to deliver better value.

Customer Relationship Management is very much connected with segmentation. In many businesses the customer base is limited. So a marketing unit should be able to

recognize its potential customers, target marketing to them and try to hold on to the existing customers by keeping in contact with them and giving them some loyalty bonuses. So a company should start collecting a database of its current customers to be able to market them afterwards. In that way a company can follow customers' purchases and offer something extra to keep them coming back, for example discounts, upgrades and gifts. It is also easy to send e-mail letters, flyers and vouchers to existing customers when you have kept record on them. (Pfister & Tierney 2009, 169.)

2.6 Marketing Plan

Marketing planning can be defined as the structured process of researching and analyzing the marketing situation; developing and documenting objectives, strategies and programs; and implementing, evaluating and controlling activities to achieve the objectives (Wood 2003, 3).

Marketing planning should be viewed as an adaptable, ongoing process rather than a rigid, annual event designed only to produce a written report. It summarizes what the marketer has learned about the marketplace and indicates how objectives are planned to be reached. It shows the mechanisms that will measure process toward the objectives and allows adjustments if actual actions/results are changed. It is important to note that when changes are made in one part of the marketing, changes may also be required in other parts of the plan as well.

“The business plan takes as both its starting point and its objective the business itself, the marketing plan starts with the customer and works its way round the business.” – Sir Georg Bull, Chairman of Sainsbury

The contents, length and format vary from organization to organization. A marketing plan generally covers a 1-year period, some may reach further into future. The optimal start of the making of a marketing plan is several months before the plans are taken into action. There are seven broad steps when developing a marketing plan:

1. *Analyze the current situation.*

To study the current location and the surrounding terrain before making decisions of direction, determine the overall environment. Detecting trends and changes outside the organization that can affect the marketing; analyzing customers, competitors, suppliers, distributors, partners and other key actors.

2. *Understand markets and customers.*

Analyzing the organizations' own markets and their customers, meaning that questions like 'who is buying and why' and 'what categories are in demand' are essential research questions.

3. *Establish segmentation, targeting and positioning.*

The organization needs to determine which segments should be targeted for the marketing activities. Targeting includes choosing whether market to one or several segments. Positioning is creating a competitive place for the brand or product in the mind of targeted customers.

4. *Determine objectives and direction.*

Goals are long-term performance targets, where objectives are shorter-term targets that support the achievement of goals. The objectives provide to the organization more momentum on the journey towards overall goals.

5. *Develop marketing strategies and programmes.*

Creating strategies and tactics that will take the organization down the path toward its destination, working with the basic marketing mix tools enhanced with service strategies.

6. *Track process and activities.*

The organization needs to create ways to determine effectiveness by identifying mechanisms and metrics to be used to measure progress towards objectives. This is done by using sales forecast, budgets, schedules, and other tools.

7. *Implement and control the plan.*

A marketing plan is useless without implementation. When controlling the implementation, the marketers should start with the set objectives and establish standards for measuring purposes. In case the different results are failing, corrective actions should be made. (Wood 2003, 4-12.)

3 ANALYSES

3.1 Macro Environment

The macro environment refers to all forces that are part of the larger society; it includes concepts such as demography, economy, natural forces, technology, politics and culture. It is not easily controlled as it consists of much larger influences from the broader global society, which impact the microenvironment.

Demography refers to studying human populations in terms of size, density, location, age, gender, race and occupation. The economic environment refers to the purchasing power of potential customers and the ways in which people spend their money. The natural resources refer to the different natural aspects that companies use as inputs and that affect their marketing activities. The concerns in this area are the increased pollution, shortages of raw materials and increased governmental intervention. In the specific case of the authors, the situation of the nature in the Alps and air pollution influence on snow conditions. The technological environment includes all developments from antibiotics and surgery to nuclear missiles and to automobiles and credit cards; in the specific case of the authors, especially the transportation technology and the developing payment methods. The political environment includes all laws, government agencies and groups that influence or limit other organizations and individuals within a society. When operating a business abroad it is especially important to be aware of the possible differences in laws and regulations. The cultural environment consists of institutions and basic values and beliefs of a group of people. In the tourism and travel business, this environment has a big influence on business. Cultural misunderstandings may create conflict situations in business and private life, all the cultural matters should be carefully taken care of. (Kotler & Armstrong 2008, 90,103-114; Blythe 2008, 22, 25, 30-35.)

Companies and their suppliers, marketing intermediaries, customers, competitors and publics all operate in a macro environment of forces and trends, increasingly global, which shape opportunities and pose threats. The forces are non-controllable, but they

differ in how they may affect a company. (Kotler & Keller & Brady & Goodman & Hansen 2012, 176.)

3.2 Market Analysis

To be able to create a plausible marketing plan, it is essential to analyse carefully the current situation from micro and macro environmental point of view. Micro environment is understood as the factors that have straight connection and influence to the company. These are for example customers, employees, suppliers, shareholders, media and competitors. Every company needs customers to exist. They should be in the centre of all actions. So a marketing plan should aim to attract and retain customers through products that meet their wants and needs and to provide excellent customer service.

Again the macro environment includes such things as demographic, economic, natural, technological, political, social, and cultural environments. A company is not able to influence the macro environmental factors, but these factors must be taken into account when planning effective marketing.

3.3 Analysis of Marketing Communications

When the product is ready and the price is set for it, the marketing focus switches to finding the best means to transfer the information to the customer. Knowledge about the product has to be passed to the target markets; and while consumers themselves often provide effective means of supporting sales through their word of mouth recommendations to others.

Travel and tourism products are by their nature intangible. Distribution is still an important marketing mix tool in the industry, which has first to create awareness of, interest in and desire for its products, then to explain how, when and where prospective customers can buy them.

There are many tangible elements of the product – brochures, itineraries, tickets and vouchers, insurance policies, for example – which have to be physically delivered. Distribution entails the selection and support of suitable channels to reach customers.

Television, magazines and other mass media remain very important, but their dominance is declining. Nowadays there are more specialized and highly targeted media to reach smaller customer segments, ranging from speciality magazines, cable television channels, video on demand (VOD), internet catalogs, e-mail, podcasts, cell phones and online social networks. The explosive developments in communications technology and changes in marketer and customer communication strategies have had a dramatic impact on marketing communications. Just as mass marketing once gave a rise to a new marketing communications model, the new digital media has given birth to a new marketing communications model. (Kotler & Armstrong 2010, 427-428; Holloway 2004, 191-193.)

3.4 Research Methods

To be able to find the best possible research methods, first thing to do is to find the correct, appropriate questions to which we are trying to find answers. In this case the answers to those questions should present useful marketing methods for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd to be used in the future marketing. In order to get those answers, the authors had to ask the following questions: What has Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd been doing so far in the field of marketing? What have the competitors been doing? Is there a possibility for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd to take a share of the markets? What would be the best possible solutions to be successful and reach the desired segments?

These questions lead the way towards qualitative methods. The authors needed specific information about Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd, its history, its present situation and its future plans. So the authors needed to interview the representatives of the company. The company itself was the primary data source. The authors also used secondary data sources to get the idea what the competitors have been doing and how do the market prospects look like. This secondary data was collected via internet, from example by using the competitors' web pages and the home page of Statistics Finland (www.stat.fi).

3.5 Research Process

The thesis can be divided into two different parts based on the theme, even though any clear separation has not been done. The first part, chapters 1-3, are about the general marketing theories, where the authors shortly describe the most common tools of marketing. The second part, chapters 4 to 6, are about the Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd, where the authors describe the current situation of the company and give some suggestions for future marketing that will hopefully give the company tools to be successful. The thesis ends to a conclusion in chapter seven.

4 SKI UNLIMITED OY LTD

Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd is a tour operator, founded 1997. Today the company is a part of the Sunborn group, which is known best as the owners of Naantalin Kylpylä. The company has been active for the past 15 years, taking over 15 000 customers skiing to Switzerland, France, Austria, Spain, Poland, Slovakia and the Northern countries. Ski Unlimited and TaivasHupellus have been branded for the first time under the name of the head company, while Hupellus remains as a trademark. The turnover of Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd in the year of 2011 was 493 000 €.

The first trip arranged by the founders, in 1996, had 35 participants from different education units. During this trip the name Hupellus came up as an adjective describing the feeling of the trip. In 1997 the name/trademark, Hupellus was registered and the first official trip of Hupellus was arranged, with 120 participants from all over Finland. The biggest trip arranged by Hupellus was in 2002 to Åre, Sweden, with 1400 participants. Nowadays the participants are more evenly divided within the five different ski trips of Hupellus; AlppiHupellus, ZakoHupellus weeks 8, 9 and 10 and MegaHupellus. In the season 2013 a fourth trip will be introduced; VappuHupellus.

Most of the customers in the past have been university students, young adults already in working life and also for the past couple of years skiers in their adulthood & families. Most of these trips have been arranged under the names Hupellus or TaivasHupellus. (<http://www.hupellus.net>, <http://www.taivashupellus.com>) In addition to skiing tours, Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd arranges retailed golf & surfing trips for groups and private customers to Portugal, Spain, Switzerland, Poland and the Northern countries.

Now the newest brand, Ski Unlimited, is segmented for 35-65 year olds, offering ski tours to Switzerland by air.

The owners of the company are passionate skiers and the business idea is simple: They want to offer good quality destinations, sunny downhills and all that in a reasonable price.

5 MARKETING PLAN

5.1 Executive Summary

In this chapter the authors focus on Ski Unlimited's current marketing, looking deeper into the company's PESTEL (Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal factors), competition and SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). The authors focus on possible marketing problems and solutions and have a separate focus on marketing communications in chapter six.

5.2 Current Marketing Situation

5.2.1 Market Environment

The PESTEL analysis comes from the words Political, Economical, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal. These issues are something that a company have very little power, if any, to affect on, but they still are crucial when evaluating the company's chances to be successful. The PESTEL-factors are even more important to analyze before launching a product in a new area or country in order to have a realistic understanding about the situation in the targeted area. Some concepts that worked in a certain area or country might not function somewhere else, because some or all of the PESTEL-factors are different.

In Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd's case the PESTEL analysis should be done for both, Finland and Switzerland. The authors' first thoughts of these countries were that they are very safe and well-developed, yet expensive countries to visit and to do business in. It might be thoughtless and dangerous for the business just to trust to the hunch, so the authors needed facts. In the latest Vision of humanity's global peace index, which ranks safety in the world countries pretty comprehensively from different angles, Finland was ranked to be 9th out of 158 countries and Switzerland was right behind in the place ten. So political and social situations in both countries are very stable and safe.

(<http://www.visionofhumanity.org> 2012)

A good way to evaluate the economical situation in both countries is to compare the GDP (Gross domestic product) per capita. It gives an idea of how much money does an individual from a certain country have to spend per year. Of course it is an average, so there might be huge differences between individuals, but it can tell something of the wealthy in the country. There are different organizations listing these, such as World Bank, International Monetary Fund and Central Intelligence Agency, and they give a small amount of different results, but quite the same anyway. According to CIA, Switzerland is on place 14 and Finland is on place 32.

(<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/2004rank.html/read> 02.11.2012). This tells that both countries are doing economically really well, although we have had the economical crisis going on in the world and especially in European Union. It also tells that Switzerland probably is a slightly more expensive country to visit than Finland, but the difference is not that big that Finns should avoid visiting Switzerland.

GDP gives also a picture of the technological situation in the country. In rich western countries the technology will not be a problem. There are some rankings for that too, for example Economic Intelligence Unit and IBM have listed the E-readiness or in other words the Information and Communications Technology of the world countries.

(<http://gpmgroup.info/2007/04/27/the-most-technologically-advanced-countries>. Read 02.11.2012) In this list Switzerland was number five and Finland was number ten.

Basically it means that technology will not be a problem when considering doing business in these countries. Also Switzerland has a reputation of a country where everything works, so for example transportation will not be a problem. There is also a direct flight connection from Helsinki to Zurich, which makes travelling fast and ecological. The only slight disadvantage is that the straight flight is only operated by Finnair, which gives to the company a possibility to keep higher prices. On the other hand Finnair has a very good reputation, and it is known that there are some people who are so superstitious and prejudiced concerning flight operators that the only option for them to fly somewhere is with Finnair, because it is a Finnish company and has a good and safe reputation.

Environmentally Switzerland is a perfect place to travel to. In the co-operation of Yale University, Columbia University, World Economic Forum and Joint Research Center of

European Commission, an Environmental Performance Index has been developed. It measures and evaluates the condition of nature, ecosystem and human actions towards better nature. In 2012 rankings Switzerland was the greenest country in the world reaching 76.69 points out of 100. This means that Switzerland really cares about its nature and wants to sustain the possibilities for skiing in the future as well. In these days of global warming it is very important and can be used also as a marketing asset. Of course, tourists have their own responsibility to respect the target country as well, and by flying out there is always a question of polluting. But if you have to fly somewhere, in the authors' opinion it is better to choose the destination where you know they care about their nature. (<http://epi.yale.edu/epi2012/rankings>, read 05.11.2012.)

Legally there are no obstacles for setting up this business as long as the company follows the laws of Finland and Switzerland, such as Act on the Travel Agency 19.12.2008/939 and The Package Travel Act 28.11.1994/1079. Although Switzerland is not part of the European Union, the country has many contracts with EU that gives it basically the same rights for free economical trade and movement that EU members have. It means that doing business there is not a problem. (<http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1994/19941079>, read 05.11.2012)

5.2.2 Market and Customer Analysis

Switzerland seems to be a good destination for the business. The amount of sold ready-made holiday packages from Finland to Switzerland increased from 1787 in year 2010 to 2336 in year 2011. The amount of packages are not that high yet when comparing for example to Austria (12 386), but what is noticeable, is that in percentages the amount of holidays to Switzerland has grown 30,7% whereas the amount of holidays to Austria has decreased 10,2% from the amount of holidays made year before. It is always dangerous to make assumptions, but it is possible that Austria has become too well-known and familiar for many people and Switzerland still has interesting, hidden potential to be used among Finns. (<http://www.smal.fi/file.php?577>, read 06.11.2012)

According to Suomen Hiihtokeskusyhdistys Ry there were 1,2 million downhill skiers or snowboarders in Finland in the year 2011. 82% of them were active at the moment,

which means about 990 000 of them have been skiing or snowboarding during the season 2010-2011. This means that there are a lot of potential customers. In the season 2010-2011 of the active downhill skiers approximately 15%/150 000 went abroad to find bigger slopes; were there on average 6 skiing days and spent for that holiday 935 € on average. It also seems that skiers are pretty loyal to their hobby. 72% of those who were abroad last year thought that they will do a skiing trip also in the next year. 12% would even make more trips and 16% thought they decrease the amount of holidays abroad. Probably the economic recession affects to the amount of trips to abroad, and as the research shows, 29% of the active skiers will increase the skiing days inside Finland instead of going abroad. What we can see from this, is that those who have been bitten by a skiing fly, will not stop doing it no matter how the economic situation turns out to be, so the potential customer base seems to be pretty solid.

What really should be considered is also to target the marketing to the cross country skiers as well. According to the research, there are 1,5 million of them in Finland. Most of them are probably just doing it occasionally and are pretty happy for the tracks in the nearby forest. The authors' opinion as the writers and as active skiers is that the reputation of the Alps is based just on fantastic downhill skiing conditions and people in Finland don't even know about the fantastic cross country skiing options at the Alps and in Switzerland. In Switzerland they have put also a lot of effort to serve cross country skiers' needs. Just a quick glance of the internet, for example myswitzerland.com, tells the story of absolutely fantastic tracks for cross country skiers as well. Even if you are not willing to enjoy the downhill activities, you could still have your share of the amazing views, fresh air and great "Stimmung" in after ski. Also when you look the web pages and brochures of the competitors, it is (if not impossible) really hard to find any kind of marketing for cross country skiers. The competitors are overlooking a huge customer base, and Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd should not do the same mistake as the competitors have done.

(http://www.ski.fi/files/skifi/Tiedotus/SHKY__Perusraportti_2011FINAL_netti.pdf,
<http://www.myswitzerland.com/en/cross-country-skiing.html>, Read 06.11.2012.)

As the authors heard during the meeting with the representative of Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd, the company is targeting the new product for the age group between 30 and 65. It is a wide age group, but this can be narrowed down by getting more detailed information

on their interests. When the product is a skiing trip to Switzerland, we can assume that the customers should be interested in skiing or snowboarding; or cross country skiing, which is getting back into fashion here in Finland, but also becoming more popular in Switzerland, so the amount of tracks is increasing in the holiday destinations. The possible customers are also willing to leave home during their possible winter holiday and invest a noticeable amount of money in going abroad to reach higher mountains and better skiing conditions and of course a different country with a different language, culture and people. Switzerland is an easy country to travel for a Finn, because the level of service in Switzerland is worldwide known of its quality, the mentality of the people is quite similar to Finns and things, such as transport and service, really work like the famous Swiss cuckoo clock. Nevertheless it takes some courage and language skills to be able to enjoy the holiday in a foreign country. Also the image of Switzerland as a really expensive country might scare potential customers, even though for the Finns, the price level is nothing unusual or something we haven't experienced before. It is actually quite the same as we have in Lapland. If you get four times bigger altitude with the same amount of money, there shouldn't be any hesitation when choosing the destination.

So the target group is healthy, wealthy, active, open-minded, travel oriented, winter spirited Finnish people in the age group from 30 to 65.

5.2.3 Competition Analysis

In many cases the biggest competitors can be found in the domestic markets. In times like these when the recession is still on, people are more willing to stay in their home country and support local businesses. So the first battle will be between domestic and international destinations. The first thing to do is to win customers' trust and make them to choose a destination abroad. In this case Switzerland via Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd. But because we live in a quite free market economy, there are other actors, too, competing of the customers. The authors will concentrate on actors that organize somewhat same services as Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd will be doing in the future, which is holiday packages to the Alps.

Aurinkomatkat:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The oldest and biggest: 360 000 customers in 2011 • Huge customer base, a lot of regulars • Best known brand in Finland • Good, safe reputation • Subsidiary of Finnair gives it the advantage in flights • 35% share of package tours sold in Finland 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As the name says Aurinkomatkat – Suntuours is better known for beach holidays • Image is old and boring • A big company, slow changes • Too saturated for its current status?
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You Travel:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alpine and active holiday specialist • A totally Finnish company • A lot of skiing destinations, also in North and South America • Have noticed the cross country skiers as well • Have some special services like train tickets to Switzerland, car rentals and chalet/villa reservations 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller company, smaller resources • Most of the destinations without a guide • The web pages look exactly the same as the web page of STS Alppimatkat
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STS Alppimatkat:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The biggest Alpine tour operator in the Nordic countries • Lots of destinations • A big customer base • Over 36 years of experience • Almost 50 000 passengers last year • Own hotels • Gives good discounts for families 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A big company, slow changes • The web pages look exactly the same as the ones of YouTravel.
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Elämymatkat:

<p>Strengths:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized destinations • Chances for extreme skiing all around the world • Very experienced and skillful guides • Special, demanding trips for skillful skiers • Tailor made tours if needed • Special tours for companies 	<p>Weaknesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not for masses, the customer needs to be an experienced skier • Even a too extreme image? • Prices
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5.2.4 Company Analysis

Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd has just turned its plans into action. The kick start was in the beginning of November 2012, when the company launched its brand new websites and had a stand in Ski & Board Expo in Helsinki. The company has also started a co-operation campaign with the downhill brand Head and the Intersport chain. The idea of the campaign is that if you buy a Head's ski package from Intersport, you will get a 200 euro discount voucher to Ski Unlimited trips. The authors went to look if the campaign already was on 07.11.2012, and even though Intersport did not yet sell skis or snowboards in that specific store because of the limited space and modest demand, there were a lot of posters of Ski Unlimited and the campaign offer. So the campaign was truly on, and easily drew the attention towards the Ski Unlimited in a positive way.

This following analyze is based on authors' own opinions and thoughts when first visiting the websites on 07.11.2012. The first impression was that the websites are fresh, energetic, yet simple sites to use. The second thought was, are these even too bright-colored and young minded, if the target group is way beyond young adulthood? Do these sites inspire confidence and trust towards Ski Unlimited? The authors think it is still better to be energetic and inspirational than boring and dull. Well, these are the authors' personal thoughts and time will tell the truth. But there were some things on the website that actually need to be fixed immediately. The booking system didn't work at all. It threw some errors all the time when trying to book a trip. It said "No result was found, please search again." No matter what destination or time of departure was tried to be booked, and even though in the Ski Unlimited's web page it showed that there were places available on that time to the destination. In the long run that will have a really negative impact on sales.

Another noticeable thing was that on the websites of the Ski Unlimited the company markets its all inclusive package to be the cheapest and easiest way to experience the Swiss Alps and if you compare the all inclusive –package price to prices that you would have to pay when buying separately the parts that are included in the package, you will save pure money. But there are not any price examples given. The only example is the readers' trip of the magazine Skimbaaja, but it is a special case and not even an all inclusive –package. So if they want to use the price as a competitive edge, there should be some example prices shown.

What the authors do respect on the pages are the good energetic looks (It worked for the authors, but they are not part of the wanted segment) and really clear and easy to use structure of the pages. What was really nice and gave more credibility to the company was the fact that there was the background information provided, which tells that the company has been doing trips for a long time and that behind the company can be found the Sunborn Group, which is a steady back to lean on. The authors think this will increase the level of trust among the consumers to the “newborn” company.

5.2.5 SWOT

Strengths

The destinations, as the competitors do not offer all the same destinations. Most of the competing tours are self-service tours, without local guides or all inclusive packages. Switzerland is also considered as a quality destination, with good services, punctuality and functionality.

Straight flights, operated by Finnair. You can reach the destinations simply and without the fear of losing luggage in flight transfers. Finnair has also a positive influence on the Finnish customers, as it is considered as a trustworthy and a good quality airline.

Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd itself has a long tradition and experience in organizing skiing trips. With 15 years of experience, the company has faced many problematic situations and learned from those, therefore many problem situations can be foreseen and avoided. This is an advantage a “new” tour operator usually does not have. For the domestic customers, being a completely Finnish company is a great advantage and gives a positive glow for Ski Unlimited. Being part of the Sunborn Group gives the company a stable background for operation and credibility. Also the new look and new marketing of the company is fresh and gives the tour operator a fresh attractive look.

Co-operation with other sport and skiing oriented brands and companies is a great strength. Co-operation with for example Intersport and Skimbaaja create a very good and credible image to Ski Unlimited. All this type of co-operation should be valued.

Weaknesses

In this specific target market, Ski Unlimited is new and a small, relatively unfamiliar company. Taking Finnish culture into consideration, everything new and unfamiliar is considered to be somehow scary and threatening. In business point-of-view, the company does not have a steady and regular customer base to rely on.

The air connections by Finnair are also a weakness. As at the moment Finnair is the only airline company operating with direct flights to Switzerland, Ski Unlimited is completely reliable on Finnair, and in case the airline stops the direct flights to Zürich, the company loses one of its best assets.

Switzerland as a destination has its weaknesses. It is considered as a very expensive destination and somehow posh. This might hinder the decision making in the purchasing process of the customer. In reality, the destination is not so expensive as the reputation, the price level does not differ much from the Finnish skiing destinations. Though, compared to the other destinations in the Alps it is at the expensive end.

Opportunities

Travel traffic has been increasing in the past decades, quite radically in the past years (http://stat.fi/til/smat/2012/14/smat_2012_14_2012-10-03_tie_001_fi.html). Traveling abroad and ski trips to new destinations have a good potential. Switzerland being still a relatively unfamiliar destination for the Finns, it has a somehow mysterious image, yet safe and reliable, and attracts new potential travelers waiting to solve the mysteries.

There are different ski destinations Ski Unlimited offers for its customers. As most of the destinations the company has, are not sold by other competing companies in Finland, Ski Unlimited has a good potential to gain new customers. There are many other opportunities to be developed in other destinations in Switzerland, and also in the other Alpine countries.

Cross-country skiers are a very good opportunity as a business market. There are only a few companies offering tours for cross-country skiers, and those who offer do have a

minimal focus on it. In Ski Unlimited's target market there is a huge amount of potential customers and they should not be overlooked.

In the current economic situation, being out of European Union and Economic Monetary Union offers an opportunity and strength; it gives Switzerland a solid and stable base as a tourism destination. The country is not dependent on other countries and in case of the instability in other parts of Europe, Switzerland remains stable.

Threats

The competing companies in the ski touring business create a threat for Ski Unlimited. For example STS Alptravels have a long and credible history as an Alp tour provider. It is difficult for a new company to come and take a share on the customers going for ski trips abroad.

Reflecting on the competing companies, a huge threat is Aurinkomatkat who also arranges trips to Alps, and is a subsidiary of Finnair. In case the business in Switzerland starts flourishing and Finnair is still the only airline operating to Switzerland from Finland, Aurinkomatkat may try to enter the market with own ski trips to the country. In that case they have the advantage and privilege of pre-emption rights to Finnair flights.

The economic situation in the world affects the tourism business quite strongly. In this continuing unstable situation, people are more willing to do domestic travel instead of investing their money on international travels. This creates an unstable situation for all the entrepreneurs in the tourism business for the moment being.

5.3 Marketing Strategy and Programmes

5.3.1 Marketing Objectives

The main point of marketing in this specific case is to simply rise profit. As Ski Unlimited is a new operator in this specific market, it does not have existing problems or image to change or adjust.

The only somehow problematic aspect for the company is the image of one of the branch, Hupellus, as Hupellus operates in a completely different segment and target market. Connecting it with Ski Unlimited's new branch may create controversy. Therefore it is very important to keep these two branches as two completely separate units.

5.3.2 Positioning

Positioning is the act of designing the company's market offering and image to occupy a distinctive place in the minds of the target market (Kotler & Keller & Brady & Goodman & Hansen 2012, 396).

Ski Unlimited is positioning itself as a new quality service offering all inclusive tours, and as an energetic and fresh company, who is passionate about skiing and the life around snow.

The business idea is simple; the company wants to offer high quality destinations, sunny downhills and all that at a reasonable price.

5.3.3 Marketing Mix

Products/Services

Ski Unlimited offers tours to four different ski destinations in Switzerland; Davos, Laax, Engelberg and Saas-Fee. The trips are either all inclusive or only including flights, transfer and accommodation.

Pricing

This part of the thesis is left out due to an agreement with Ski Unlimited. Pricing and money related sections are not included in the marketing plan.

Distribution channels

Ski Unlimited is using a variety of different distribution channels; Internet, social media, fairs and exhibitions, co-operated marketing with brands and companies (Head, Intersport, Skimbaaja), posters, newspapers and magazines. One of the most important distribution channels is word of mouth, but this is a method that cannot be officially influenced on. Many of them are part of marketing communications mix, too.

Marketing communications

As marketing communications pays a big role in the thesis, the authors decided to approach it in its own chapter. See chapter 6 **MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS**.

5.3.4 Budgeting

Due to an agreement with Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd, the authors will not have any focus on the budget aspects in the marketing plan.

6 MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 E-Marketing & Direct Advertising

In the world today, the first thing to do is to create a proper homepage for the company. It will be the first thing a customer will view and search when considering buying a holiday. The web pages should include all the possible information a customer needs to know, when interested in the holiday packages of Ski Unlimited. There should be the different products offered with clear details; prices and what is included and excluded, guarantees, company contact information, history, listed partnerships and insurances. Easy product purchase via the internet should be designed.

Electronic customer relationship management should be considered as an addition to the home page, easy contact and feedback channels should be added, in order to improve customer satisfaction and get direct feedback for future developments.

Direct advertising should be considered as one of the main marketing channels. Contacting the customers via email or post should be considered. Offering them a discount or extra benefits when using a special voucher number, while purchasing the product, always catches ones attention. The existing contact database Ski Unlimited has should be used, especially targeting the customers that took part in Hupellus trips in the beginning of 2000's. As now the old customers are most likely to have a suitable situation in life to fit the target market.

Using existing customer information from Sunborn should be used if possible. Contacts from public databases should be used as well, to reach new customers that are most likely unfamiliar with the company.

Online display advertisements should be considered carefully, as they are often considered by the public to be junk and not to be trusted in. In the right place it can give a good visibility and even attract new customers. Internet sites connected to sports in general or active holidays, would be the best options.

Social media, such as Facebook and Twitter should not be forgotten. Nowadays they play a huge role in search for information, contacting and connecting. The best part in the social media is the expenses, or more directly the lack of them. Social media are good channels to gain completely new customer contacts, even for this target market, as it has become a concept where age and social status do not make a difference.

Listing into and paying a search engine for prominent placement among listings in search engines whenever a potential customer enters a relevant search term is a good option for direct marketing. As the customer starts planning a trip, it is most likely that the first thing he/she does, is searching different internet sites with for example Google, and enters terms like “ski holiday” and different results appear. Being visible in the first result page always gives a good impression and clearly widens the reach for new potential customers. (Smith & Taylor 2004, 587-593.)

6.2 Magazines, Newspapers & Public Relations

Printed advertisement has a strong influence when it comes to the credibility of a company. People put much value on the printed word, it is considered to be more trustworthy than the information you gain via internet or word of mouth. So in order to create a trustworthy and serious image for Ski Unlimited, printed information and advertisement should be found. Therefore at least different travel magazines should be viewed as possible marketing channels. Possibilities to get an article about the company published would give the future customers a good insight on the company. Printed advertisements on widely read travel magazines, like *Matkaopas* or *Mondo* are good channels in Finland. *Matkaopas* reaches approximately 114 000 readers per month (<http://www.aikakauslehdet.fi/Etusivu/Media--Mainonta/Mediakortti/Mediakortit/?id=457&vuosi=2012>) and *Mondo* approximately 121 000 readers per month (<http://www.aikakauslehdet.fi/Etusivu/Media--Mainonta/Mediakortti/Mediakortit/?id=706&vuosi=2012>.)

Skiers’ own magazine *Skimbaaja* is also a good option for marketing communications. *Skimbaaja*’s readers belong almost completely to Ski Unlimited’s potential customers. Though, quite many of the readers are so called “hard-core skiers” and prefer skiing

destinations outside tourist areas and usually arrange their trips themselves. Therefore advertising in Skimbaaja is very risky.

Possible advertising in newspapers should be considered as well. In the first years of marketing, when focusing mainly on the residents of southern Finland, the main newspapers in the area would be the better options – Helsingin Sanomat, Turun Sanomat and Aamulehti. These papers are read also outside their main circulation zones, therefore the reach is clearly wider. For example Helsingin Sanomat has over 900 000 readers and hs.fi has more than 1,5 million different visitors per week. (<http://ilmoittajapalvelu.hs.fi/Ajankohtaiset/Hesarin+mediaperheen+lukijam%25C3%25A4%25C3%25A4r%25C3%25A4t>). Aamulehti and aamulehti.fi reaches 76 % of Tampere's market area. (http://www.aamulehti.fi/mediamynti/Tutk_tuoteperhe?). Advertising via these channels can be expensive, but most likely will have a clear impact on the company's publicity and definitely it will have an influence on the trustworthiness.

6.3 Co-operated Marketing

As Ski Unlimited is partly owned by the Sunborn Saga Oy, a Finnish conglomerate, the already existing channels Sunborn has should be considered as an asset. Also, the fact that Sunborn is a credible corporation, adds the credibility of Ski Unlimited. As the segmented customer group is consisting of 30-65 year old, individual and group tourists, the customer base of Naantali Spa & Ruissalo Spa, includes very potential customers and should be approached. Advertising at the locations like Naantali Spa and Ruissalo Spa, is a reachable and cheap way to market to the right segment. Other co-operating companies and marketing channels of Sunborn should be considered for marketing co-operation purposes for Ski Unlimited as well.

As during the season 12/13 Ski Unlimited is having co-operation with Head, more advantage should be taken of this partnership. Marketing through Head in the different events, like test ski days, would be a good option. Giving out flyers (requires staff), or discount voucher for a trip by Ski Unlimited for every tester of Head skis could work.

Marketing in ski centers around southern Finland is also a good option in the first years of operation. Just as simple as putting up posters on announcement boards, gives visibility and reaches right-minded people. Posters/advertisements should also be placed in golf clubs especially during autumn, to reach potential customers.

This season there is a co-operation between Ski Unlimited and Skimbaaja. Ski Unlimited arranges the readers' trip of Skimbaaja to Laax, Switzerland in March 2013. This co-operation between the companies this season is a very good way to get credibility and visibility. Similar co-operations should be favored in the future as well.

6.4 Trade Fairs, Exhibitions & Events

Gaining publicity via different tourism trade fairs is favorable for direct personal contact with potential customers and possible co-operating companies. In Finland the biggest trade fair in tourism is Matkamessut, arranged in the beginning of the year, usually in January. It is where thousands of people visit to get inspiration for their next travels and where business people in the tourism industry come to meet prospect alliances for the future.

Another trade fair in Finland that has a potential customer base for Ski Unlimited is Ski & Board Expo, arranged usually in November in the beginning of the ski season. Thousands of potential ski tourists are visiting these exhibitions, and visibility there would most likely create a spike in interested customers.

Trade fairs and exhibitions are good ways to market the company especially after a couple of years of action. Then enough know how and experience is gained to convince the prospectors visiting the stand/booth of the company.

7 CONCLUSION

This thesis contains the marketing plan for Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd. The marketing plan has been made with the focus on a long term plan, for the next few years to come, instead of making a plan for one year period. The aim of the thesis has been to make a credible and feasible marketing plan to Ski Unlimited for the next years to come. The authors were given the option to write the marketing plan for the company either in English or Finnish – they chose English, as the language of study during the university of applied sciences has been English and it seemed to be more logical.

Ski Unlimited Oy Ltd has launched a new branch, under the name Ski Unlimited. The company has a long history in arranging skiing trips to different parts of Europe. Before the company had segmented to a different target market underneath the two other branches; Hupellus and TaivasHupellus. Now with a completely new target market and style of arranged tours, the authors have focused in the marketing plan for this new segment of customers.

During the writing process the authors have used a variety of different sources for the conclusions made. In the beginning of the thesis, the background information and used theoretical framework are introduced. A thorough examination of the competition situation has been made, by investigating the internet pages and brochures of the main competing companies in this market. Different statistical information has been investigated in order to get information about winter tourists and travel movement in general.

In the chapter of marketing communications, the authors have given their own ideas on how to develop the marketing communications. The different examples suggested are focused on long term marketing strategies. The main thing when considering the different options for marketing communications, was to keep in mind the main segment - how to reach the prospect customer best. In the changing communication environment, it is important to keep in mind the ever changing methods and credibility of the channels. Concerning the target market it is important to keep in mind also all the traditional methods in order to reach the older end of the segment, while keeping in

mind the younger end that is most easily reached by the new electronic and social media.

All of the actions and thoughts described in this marketing plan are made for the current situation. In the future it is important to keep in mind that the marketing environment keeps on changing and different actions might be needed in order to stay competitive in the market.

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