Developing the Membership of a B-to-B Youth Travel Organization: case WYSE Travel Confederation

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ABSTRACT

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WYSE Travel Confederation is a non-profit youth travel organization aiming to enhance youth travel. The organization has a vast member base of 550+ member organizations, which work in different areas of youth travel. The organization has a complicated organizational structure, as the organization provides its customers expertise in all areas of youth travel, operated via its 9 Sector Associations. However, the organization has faced a difficult financial situation and hasn't achieved its goals set for its marketing. Also, there has been some confusion of the member benefits, and dissatisfied and resigning customers.

This thesis is done to develop and understand the membership of WYSE Travel Confederation. The thesis aims to answer to questions why members join WYSE Travel Confederation or its Sector Associations, and to grasp their expectations towards the organization. The thesis also aims to understand what kind of value the WYSE Travel Confederation members receive from the organization, and what would they like to improve in it.

The research is done by using mainly a qualitative research method. The thesis uses a judgment-based sampling method to select the most productive research sample of the organization. Thereafter, 68 selected members of the organization are sent an email questionnaire, varying depending on their membership category and status. Service marketing and business-to-business marketing are studied for the theoretical framework of this thesis.

Based on the research, WYSE Travel Confederation offers its members services, which correspond with the expectations from the organization. However, it can be noted that some of the organization's members are very satisfied to the organization whilst others are not. Therefore, the organization needs to focus on its core services as well as strengthen its relationships to better communicate with its members.

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Key words:
service marketing, marketing research, business-to-business, memberships

CONTENTS

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FIYTO	Federation of International Youth Travel Organizations
IAPA	International Au Pair Association
IASIS	International Association for Student Insurance Services
ISIC	International Student Identification Card
ISTC	International Student Travel Association
OECD	Organisation for Economical Co-operation and Development
SATA	Student Air Travel Association
STAY WYSE	Association for Youth Travel Accommodation
Study WYSE	Study Wyse Association
UNESCO	United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNWTO	United Nations' World Tourism Organization
WETM-IAC	World Experience Travel Market – IAPA Annual Conference
WTTC	World Travel & Tourism Council
WWA	WYSE Work Abroad Association
WYSETC	World Youth Student & Educational Travel Confederation, WYSE Travel Confederation
WYSTC	World Youth Student Travel Conference

1   INTRODUCTION

1.1   Service Sector and the Travel and Tourism Industry

The service sector produces intangible goods, such as education, health, tourism, business services and information. According to OECD (2008, 3), "the service sector makes an important contribution to GDP in most countries, providing jobs, inputs and public services for the economy". Furthermore, the service sector can be seen to support businesses, and therefore, to provide societies much more than an increase in GDP. For years, the service sector has also accounted for more than 70% of employment in all OECD economies (OECD, 2005, 2).

According to UNWTO (2011), the exports from tourism in 2011 came close to 6% of the world's exports of goods and services. Today, young travellers "represent one of the fastest growing segments of the travel industry accounting for 20% of all international arrivals" and generate "a global market worth US$173 billion a year" (WYSE Travel Confederation). In the future, World Travel and Tourism Council (2012, 3) expects that the travel and tourism industry will face 4% growth annually.

1.2   Description of the Receiving Organization

World Youth Student & Educational (WYSE) Travel Confederation is a nonprofit organization aiming to enhance youth travel. The organization provides value to its member organizations by conducting research of the industry and providing its members expertise in specific areas of youth travel. The organization also holds two annual youth travel industry conferences. The two conferences serve as its core services, linking the whole youth travel industry together. WYSE Travel Confederation's operations are also endorsed by United Nations youth and tourism organizations UNESCO and UNWTO.

WYSE Travel Confederation's members vary from small au pair companies to booking engines and worldwide language travel operators. Currently, the organ-

ization has 550+ members. The specific youth travel industries are supported via the organization's 9 Sector Associations, focusing on specific niches of youth travel. The organization employs around 15 employees, with additional interns changing from time to time.

WYSE Travel Confederation was first founded by two different organizations right after World War II to promote world peace and safe youth travel. Since then, the youth travel industry has changed a lot and the organization has had to adapt to the changing situation in order to meet the demands of the industry and its members. In 2006, the organization came into its current form as its two predecessor organizations, International Student Travel Confederation (ISTC) and Federation of Youth Travel Organizations (FYOTO) joined together. During 2007, 5 Sector Associations were created to further meet the changes in the industry.

Later on, other Sector Associations has been created and the organization has had to change significantly in order to maintain its position as the world's largest network of youth travel operators. The most recent changes to the organization have been investments to industry research and to a new webinar programme, introduced in 2011. In the beginning of 2012, one of the long-standing Sector Associations, product-based ISIC International Student Identification Card, left from under the company holding WYSE Travel Confederation, yet remaining as one of its Sector Associations.

PICTURE 1. WYSE Travel Confederation logo. (WYSE Travel Confederation)

1.3   Thesis Background

During spring term of 2012, I completed a 6-month internship by working as a Marketing and Communications Intern at WYSE Travel Confederation. During that period, the organization faced several organizational problems: resigning members, dissatisfaction of customers, financial problems, high employee turn-over and difficulties with achieving goals set for organization's marketing. Additionally, the organization received poor response rate to its Membership Survey 2012 (n=32), sent to all members, which included one quantitative research question asking what member benefits the members actively use. No other marketing research had been done in the organization about its members.

It was clear that the organization needed better response to its marketing, which focused on traditional, external marketing efforts. In order to do this, it needs to gain better understanding of its member organizations, and what their wants and needs are towards the Confederation. Over the years, the organization has gone through a lot of changes making it hard to understand its vast member base and its complicated organizational structure. Members of WYSE Travel Confederation can be part of only WYSE Travel Confederation, only one or more of its Sector Associations, or both.

Research also needed to be done to understand the behaviour and the opinions of WYSE Travel Confederation's members. One of these on-going issues is the behaviour of some members, who do not join the Confederation, but only its Sector Association(s) whilst claiming to receive more value. Since most of the products and services offered in the membership package of WYSE Travel Confederation are exclusive to members of the mother company, the behavior of these members has caused confusion in the organization.

New changes were made to the constitution of WYSE Travel Confederation in its industry event WYSTC (World Youth Student Travel Conference), held mid-September 2012 in San Diego. In the conference, the changes were also intro-duced to its members, along with the financial situation of the organization and this year's disaffiliated members.

As a conclusion, it can be said that WYSE Travel Confederation needs to understand its members better and to search for development in its organization in order to create a better service for its customers to be able to support them in enhancing youth travel.

1.4 Thesis Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is developing and understanding the membership of WYSE Travel Confederation.

The thesis aims to provide WYSE Travel Confederation with better understanding of its members and to gain insight on customers' opinions about the mother company and its Sector Associations. It aims to find out the reasons why organizations join or resign from the Confederation and to grasp their expectations and value received from the membership.

As the organization's mission is to enhance youth travel, it needs to develop itself as the industry expert and to meet the needs of its member organizations. Therefore, the thesis will also make suggestions of improvements based on the customer research and the theoretical framework. The improvement ideas can be found at the end of this document, in the Chapter 6 - Suggestions.

1.5 Research Methodology

This thesis was done by using mainly qualitative marketing research methods. 68 selected members of WYSE Travel Confederation were sent an email questionnaire with 4-6 open-ended questions about their opinions of the membership. The study included both current and past members of WYSE Travel Confederation. For the past members, both disaffiliated and resigned members were contacted.

Judgment based sampling method was used to include different types of organizations in the research, such as new and old members and small and large

organizations. This judgment was made in an interview with the Confederation Manager Ami Wilkinson at the end of June 2012 and detailed with an interview with the Director General Espen Falkenhaug in October 2012. Finally, to ensure the range of opinions, the members were divided by their member categories (Appendix 1), including their memberships to possible Sector Association(s).

5 different types of questionnaires were sent to the members based on their current membership status (Appendix 2). In the questionnaires, some profound and important questions were asked from the sample organizations. Especially, the last question was aimed to provide ideas to develop WYSE Travel Confederation: what would the members want to improve in the organization?

For the theoretical frame of this research, service marketing and management and relationship marketing theories were studied to give the organization better understanding of the different types of marketing they could take advantage of. The special characteristics of services make it necessary to broaden the traditional marketing mix and to study which factors have an effect on how customers perceive value. It is also important to understand the service perspective and the possible threats in service business management caused by the service characteristics.

As the organization operates in business-to-business market, the special characteristics of b-to-b markets were also studied. Good customer relationship management and maintaining profitable relationships with the customers propose the key to operating successfully in the business-to-business market. Finally, qualitative marketing research theory was studied to assist in the research. Marshall's qualitative research sampling theory gave framework to the sampling of this research.

2   THEORETICAL FRAME

2.1   Service Marketing and Management

2.1.1 Special Characteristics of Services

Marketing services differentiates from traditional product and manufacturing based marketing. This is due to the special attributes of services: its lack of ownership, intangibility, perishability, inseparability and heterogeneity (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005, 429-436). Services are intangible goods, which are often consumed simultaneously when produced, but vary greatly. Most of the times, services cannot be displayed to the customer to examine as physical products, nor be stored in warehouses. Therefore, the most profound feature of services is the lack of ownership, which does not change from the seller to the buyer during the purchasing process (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 16).

2.1.2 Service Perspective

In order to succeed in the service business, it is important to understand the service perspective as an approach to marketing and management. Service perspective means that the company understands the meaning of hidden and unhidden services, and the way their customers perceive value, and uses these components in customer relationships as a strategic approach (Grönroos, 2001, 4-6).

When choosing the service perspective, a company provides its customers an overall package with a large variety of services in addition to its core product or service and uses it as a competitive advantage (Grönroos, 2001, 6). The overall package is called the total, on going service offering (Grönroos, 2001, 28) and includes a large variety of services, including hidden and unhidden services.

The unhidden, and billable services are the service elements, which can be invoiced and calculated as a part to the total turnover of an organization (Grönroos, 2001, 2). The unhidden services often include all the core products and services of the organization. However, these elements only a part of the service offered to the customers.

The hidden services (Grönroos, 2001, 2-3) include the non-billable attributes of services, which contribute to the creation of the total service offering. The hidden services are not calculated as a part of the turnover of a company, but have an effect on how customers perceive the company and its services. The hidden services affect how the customer perceives the service of the organization, such as complaints handling, customer training, and paying attention to customer, promptness of answering to emails and many more service elements, depending on the business (Grönroos, 2001, 2-3). These hidden services play a crucial role in the service business on how customers perceive value, but are often neglected by the management as mainly administrative routines.

2.1.3 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

According to Grönroos (2001, 62-63), in service business, what counts is quality, as customers perceive it. Service cannot be separated from the equation besides the core product, due to the fact that customers subjectively perceive what is delivered (Grönroos, 2001, 62-63). Therefore, the service perspective also emphasizes the customers' need for good quality; which may come from other elements as the company's core product or service. Grönroos (2001, 28) states, that the core product is less often the reason for dissatisfaction than the elements surrounding the core.

Therefore, it is crucial for the organization to understand the meaning of hidden services it provides to its customers, and its meaning to customer satisfaction. In service business, the company needs to provide its customers a better total service offering than its competitors, including its core product or service and the additional services, such as information, training and delivering (Grönroos,

2001,28). Grönroos states, that the key requirement of this is that the organization knows the long-term needs and desires of its customers.

2.1.4 The Service Marketing Mix

When marketing services, the marketer must take into consideration the special attributes of services. The traditional marketing mix consists of four elements, the 4Ps, which represent: Price, Place, Promotion and the Product (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005, 436). These four marketing elements cover where the product is sold, how much it cost, its brand, packaging and promotion, and more. Therefore, the 4Ps are also a part of marketing services (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 34).

The service marketing mix includes 7Ps (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005, 436). On top of the traditional 4Ps, the service marketing mix includes 3 additional Ps, which refer to the special characteristics of services mentioned earlier in this chapter. The 3Ps are: People, Processes and Physical Evidence (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005, 436). The 3Ps emphasize the meaning of all the elements the customer sees and feels when purchasing and consuming a service.

The first P, People, represents the efficiency and availability of the service, as well as customer interaction and internal marketing (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005, 436). The key to this P is Human Resources Management and the human capital of the organization: recruiting, education, motivation and rewarding (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 30). The people P is also very important when considering interactive marketing and internal marketing, which are discussed later in this chapter.

The second P, Physical evidence, on the other hand refers to the premises where the service takes place, the equipment the customer sees, business cards, letters and all other physical evidence of the service (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 30). The physical evidence has an effect on customer's image of the business, the service and its quality.

The third P, Processes, refers to the process, which the customer goes through when acquiring and using the service (Pettitt & Brassington, 2005, 430-436). The common processes of todays' service business are information search, ordering, paying and other related processes. During the processes the customer goes through, she or he creates an image of the service, even before the actual service has occurred.

Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2010, 29) argue, that the service marketing mix can also have one additional P: Productivity and Quality. These two elements can be seen as the two siders of a flip coin: when increasing productivity in the service business, it is often done with the cost of quality. It is important to find a balance between these two sides in order to achieve customer satisfaction by managing the available resources. Therefore, it is also important to aim to develop such operative ways, which can simultaneously increase both the quality and the productivity of the service (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 29).

2.1.5 The Service Marketing Triangle

According to Grönroos (2001, 55), the service marketing consists of three important elements. The figure 1, the service marketing triangle, explains the need for three types of marketing needed in service business.
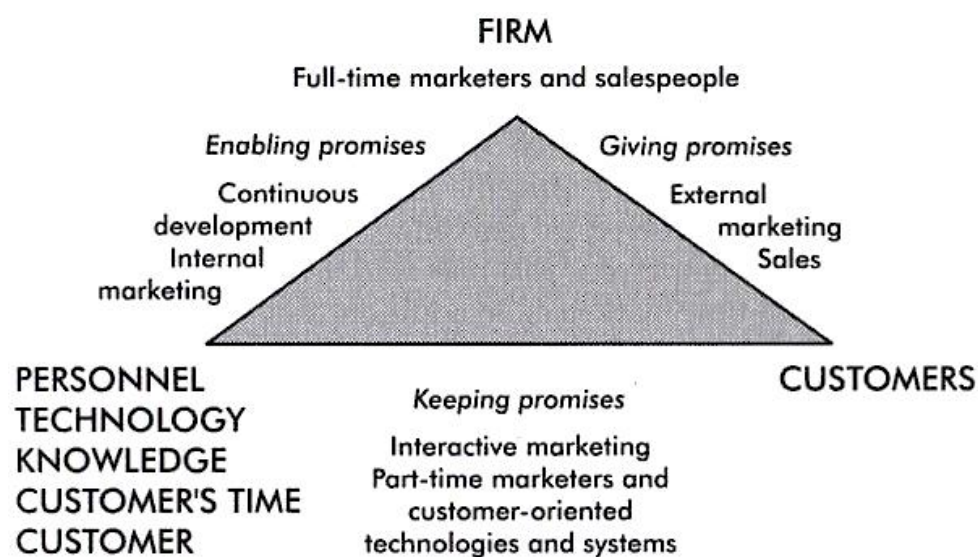

FIGURE 1. The service marketing triangle (Grönroos, 2001, 55)

Giving Promises: External Marketing and Sales

According to Grönroos (2001, 55), the traditional marketing efforts of the company give customers promises, which should correspond with their needs, wants and expectations. Therefore, traditional, external marketing is used, such as marketing campaigns, public relations and email marketing to give customers and potential customers promises about the service (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 32).

These external marketing efforts represent the original 4Ps of a marketing mix, explained earlier in the chapter. The external marketing and sales are usually done by full-time marketers, which include the marketing and sales personnel of an organization, who consider marketing as a major element in their job description (Grönroos, 2001, 310).

Enabling Promises: Internal Marketing and Continuous Development

Internal marketing, on the other hand, enables these promises given to the customer. Internal marketing can be described as "all the actions inside the organization that help to enable the promises" (Brassington & Pettit, 2005, 461). Therefore, the promises are fulfilled through the use of all types of resources the organization has (Grönroos, 2001, 56).

In service business, one of these most important resources is the 3Ps People of the service marketing mix. The internal marketing includes staffing, training, and employee motivation (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010,32) as well as employees abilities, empowerment and supporting systems (Grönroos, 2010, 374). These factors enable that good service is produced for the customer. Human Resources management and long-term planning play a crucial role in internal marketing.

Continuous development in the service business on the other hand refers to resources development (Grönroos, 2001, 56). Grönroos explains, that the tradi-

tional product development is not enough in service business, but continuous development is needed to increase the organization's competences and the resource structure.

Keeping Promises: Interactive Marketing

The promises given by an organization in service business are kept by practicing interactive marketing (Grönroos, 2001,55). In addition to full-time marketing staff, companies in service business employ a number of part-time marketers, such as sales and administrative personnel, who are called part-time marketers. The part-time marketing employees do not consider marketing as their main job in the organization, but do it when in contact with the customer (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 28). They have to operate in such a manner, that the customer wants to do business with the selling company also in the future (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 28).

In interactive marketing, part-time marketers play a crucial role of what the customers perceive the value to be (Grönroos, 2001, 28). Therefore, when evaluating satisfaction and value, customer sees the part-time marketers in action. These moments, where service occurs and it is used at the same time it is produced, are called moments of truth (Grönroos, 2001, 240) or service encounters (Brassington & Pettitt, 2005, 443). During the moments of truth, the service is delivered to the customer (Brassington, Pettitt, 2005, 443). Ojasalo & Ojasalo argue, that products need to be delivered to the customer "at the right time" and "to the right place", but in services it also needs to be done with "the right way" (2010, 26). However, good quality is also determined by the image of the organization as well as customer relationships (Grönroos, 2001, 375).

Interactive marketing is an important aspect of service marketing, due to the fact that it brings together the service marketing mix explained earlier in the chapter, and highly determines the quality as the customer sees it. In these moments, customer satisfaction is created and maintained (Grönroos, 2010, 375). According to Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2010, 32), the interactive marketing is the most important part of service marketing.

2.1.6 The Strategic Management Trap of Service Management

Grönroos (2001, 182) states that the external efficiency of an organization is how customers perceive the operations and the output of a firm. When companies face financial problems or increasing competition, often cuts are made to improve the internal efficiency of the organization, hence its productivity. These means of increasing productivity are often adopted from the manufacturing business, and propose a possible threat to a company operating in the service business (Grönroos, 2001, 182).

Grönroos explains (2001, 182) that improving internal efficiency of a service organization by cutting costs in traditional means adopted from the manufacturing business usually does not improve external efficiency or the profitability of the company, but on the contrary, can cause losses. Furthermore, it can lead to a strategic management trap, which can occur if the special characteristics of the service are not fully understood (Grönroos, 2001, 185).
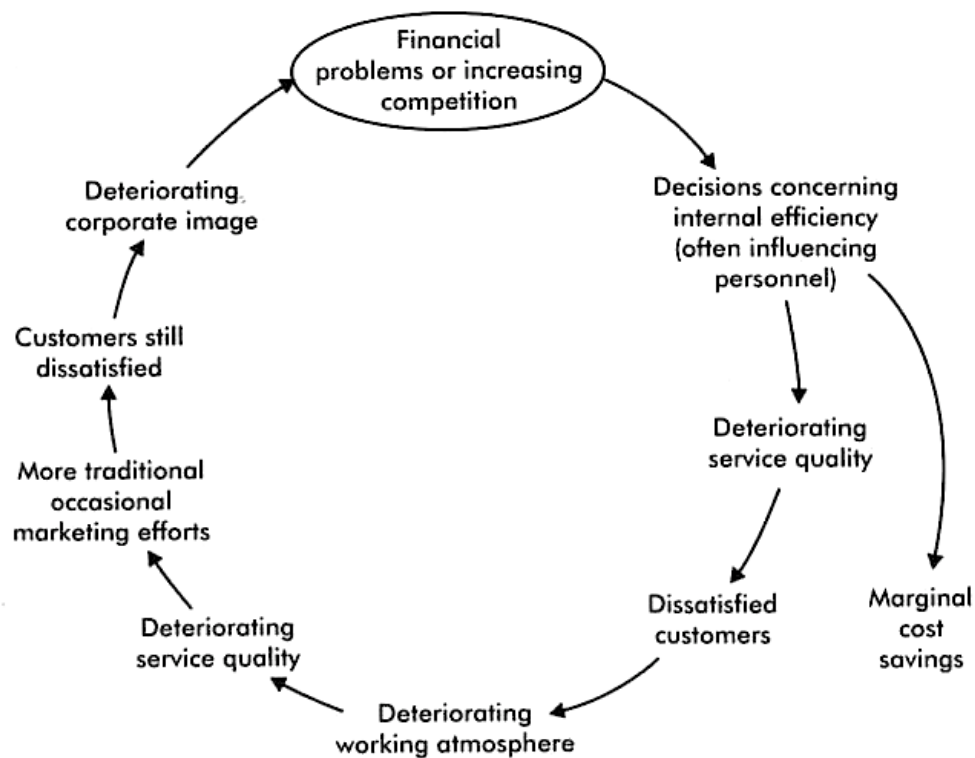

FIGURE 2. The Strategic Management Trap (Grönroos, 2001, 183)

The strategic management trap in figure 2 explains a vicious cycle, which can occur when making wrong decisions in service-based marketing and management (Grönroos, 2001, 183). Often when cutting costs, companies take into consideration the internal efficiency of the organization. Based on the strategy, cuts are made, which often considers the staff of the organization, due to the labor intensity of the service business. Due to the cuts, the service quality is harmed, which can lead to dissatisfied customers.

Often, dissatisfied customers complain to the service staff of the organization, which can harmfully affect the working atmosphere in the organization, and furthermore decrease the service quality and the external efficiency of the service organization (Grönroos, 2001, 183). In the attempt to save the situation, organizations make investments to marketing campaigns, focusing on the traditional marketing efforts and giving promises, the one side of the service marketing triangle mentioned earlier in the chapter. However, as we have examined the service marketing triangle and the service marketing mix, it is easy to understand that the company is giving even more promises to the customers, with the cost of keeping those promises. Since cuts have been made, the organization has fewer resources to handle the promises, which can cause to more dissatisfaction by customers and harmfully affect the image of the organization (Grönroos, 2001,183). This can lead to a negative word-of-mouth and more financial losses, taking the organization in the vicious cycle.

As a conclusion, Grönroos' strategic management trap (2010, 183) explains that adding more traditional marketing does not always work on service businesses especially in a situation where organization has to cut costs. Giving customers more promises can give the service business a temporary boost, but will lead to long-term losses, if the promises cannot be kept. The strategic management refers also to the one P Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2010, 29) argued to be included in the service marketing mix, the productivity and quality. If the productivity of the organization needs to be increased, it needs to be done so that it does not harm the service quality. By and large, Kotler (2000, 449) explains that each of the special service characteristics poses challenges to the management, requiring certain strategies, such as to increase the productivity of the service providers and to increase the service quality.

The Service-oriented Strategy

In addition to the vicious cycle of strategic management trap introduced, a favourable cycle in the service business can occur if a service-oriented strategy is followed as seen in figure 3 (Grönroos, 2001,190). Grönroos explains, that in this service-oriented strategy the external efficiency and the service quality are the top priority in strategic decision-making. In this strategy, the focus lies on the interaction with the customers and customer relationships. However, cost control is taken into action, which often includes the back offices, and the features, which the customer cannot see. Often, this also involves increasing technical features of the service. The technical features can be used in creation of such operative manners, which increase the productivity and the quality at the same time, as Ojasalo & Ojasalo have stated (2010, 29).
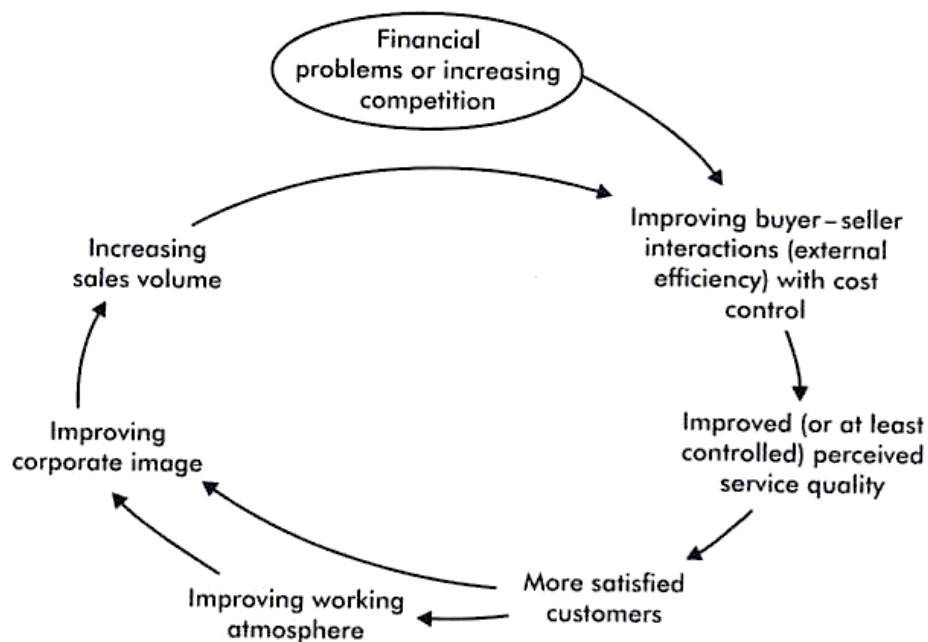
FIGURE 3. The Service-oriented approach (Grönroos, 2001, 191)

According to Grönroos (2001, 190), in the cycle improved quality is acquired with improved byer-seller interactions. Thereafter, better customer satisfaction follows. This is then noticed by the employees, whose motivation towards work improves and the working atmosphere of the organization is improved. This

causes better service, which furthermore increases customer satisfaction and better corporate image, which will increase the sales volume and the profitability of the organization. On top of this, a favorable word-of-mouth can increase the organization's profitability and image furthermore (Grönroos, 2001,190).

As a conclusion, it can be said that when cutting costs in a service business, the management of an organization needs to understand the special characteristics of the service business and the roles of different types of marketing needed in service business. As the quality of the service is anything fully determined by the customer by the ongoing service offering, the organization operating in the service business needs to understand all the factors, which have an affect on the customer's perception of good quality. Cuts can be made with cost control or improved operative ways, but not with the cost of the quality of the service.

2.2 Business-to-business Marketing

When an organization is operating in the business-to-business market, it needs a special focus on its marketing due to the nature of its customers. The customers in business-to-business markets are other organizations, where buying is a more complicated, professional action (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 26), often involving a large number of individuals, so-called buying center (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 35). The products or services are also not bough for personal use, but as resources to produce goods and services then to be sold for end consumers (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 24). The purchases tend also to be larger in money-terms than in business-to-consumer markets.

Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2010, 25) explain that the customers in business-to-business markets tend to be bigger in size, and to hold a larger proportion of the customer base of an organization. Therefore, the customers are offered tailored solutions, where the relationships between the buyer and the seller are important. The customers also often compete with each other. The product or service is often bough straight from the producer, and therefore, the emphasis of the business-to-business marketing is in personal selling and exchanging information (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 26).

Relationship Marketing in Business-to-business Markets

The buyer-seller relationships are important in every service business, due to the fact that services are relationship-oriented and interactions between the customer and the service provider occur (Grönroos, 2010, 376). However, in business-to-business markets, the customer relationships are even more important than in the traditional business, where the customers are businesses instead of end consumers. By and large, long-term relationships between the buyer and the seller courage to loyalty, which is crucial in business-to-business markets (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 121).

The key to b-to-b relationships marketing is creating, maintaining and developing profitable relationships (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 121). Relationships marketing is about fulfilling the promises given to the customer, as well as developing and strengthening the relationships over time (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010,121). The meaning of Customer Relations Management, CRM, is also emphasized in business-to-business relationships.

Customer Relationship Management is not just a system, but also a strategy and a perspective to marketing (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 122). It includes factors, such as information control, integration, value creation, strategy and evaluation of performance. Ojasalo and Ojasalo (2010, 122) explain, that when CRM is understood as a strategy, it aims to provide value for all the participants in the relationship and to look for value co-creation, where both parties provide value to each other.

One prerequisite for good relationships management is a good an updated Customer Relationship Management information technology system. With the CRM system, a company can manage and store the information gained from its customer to a database, and acquire it from there when needed (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 124). Therefore, the information is stored and will not leave a company, even when employees might change. Also, it is possible to date the information back from time and make decisions based on the history.

From company's overall vision, current trends and competitive advantage, the company can create a base to its customer strategy (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 123). The customer strategy can be used to strengthen the customer relationships. An organization can also segment and categorize its customers to maintain loyalty. Creating customer strategies also include such procedures, which help to identify the reasons for losing customers. The main idea of this is to get rid of customer losses by identifying the reasons behind it (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 123).

In the evaluation of performance, the company evaluates if it is creating value for its stakeholders: its customers, owners and employees (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 124). Also, in the performance evaluation, the organization evaluates whether its marketing and productivity goals are met. These include customer loyalty and satisfaction. Last, the organization evaluates the leading of the relationships marketing itself, and whether the organization has adopted right strategies and is the value created for the customer.

For value creation, a company must define its total service offering, as mentioned in the service perspective chapter in the theoretical framework. The value received is examined from both the viewpoint of the customer as and the organization, since the value is co-created with the customer and by its relationship (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 123).

In integration, the organization is in contact with the customer via multiple channels (Ojasalo & Ojasalo, 2010, 123). This means that the organization can use different channels to meet and to interact with its customers, for example face-to-face, electronically or via phone calls. Using a mixture of these methods, a right and tailored way of communicating with the customer can be found.

Ojasalo & Ojasalo (2010, 21) also argue that when the value co-creation together with the customer is emphasized due to the service b-to-b business, a more accurate term of business-to-business could be business-with-business. According to the service perspective, this term could be more accurate and help to better understand the nature of the business and how value is created with the customer.

3 MARKETING RESEARCH

3.1 Qualitative Marketing Research Method

As the aim of this thesis was to understand the insights and behaviour of the member organizations, a qualitative research method was chosen. A qualitative research method is more often used when aiming to gain understanding of human behaviour and complex issues (Marshall, 1996, 522), than to make a generalization of a population. The qualitative research method for the thesis was determined by the research questions, which aim to answer to questions why and how (Marshall, 1996, 522). It is important to understand why members join the Confederation and how do they find the membership in order to create a better understanding of the membership.

In order to gain a better understanding of the members' opinions, the questions asked in this research needed to focus on the actual reasons behind their behaviour. Therefore, the questions were chosen to be simple, open-ended questions, allowing the respondents to answer freely to the given questions. The aim of choosing the qualitative method was to be able gain detailed insight on the different opinions of the members and what their beliefs towards the organization and its benefits to the members are.

One reason for choosing the qualitative research method was that the members of the organization differ greatly in size, history and purpose. Also, the members can choose freely their membership, whether they belong to WYSE Travel Confederation, its Sector Associations or both. From 9 Sector Associations, the organizations can also choose to which ones to belong to. However, it is noted that some Sector Associations require the membership to WYSE Travel Confederation. Therefore, the opinions of the membership and joining reasons could vary a lot between the members and member categories.

3.1.1 Sampling

For sampling of the research, a judgement based sampling method was chosen. The judgement based sampling method aims to select the most productive, a purposeful sample of a research (Marshall, 1996, 523). On the interview session with Ami Wilkinson, the Confederation Manager, on July 2012, the judgment to the sample was made. She used her expertise to select the most productive sample to the research, hence organizations with different kinds of attributes. The judgement was detailed with an interview with Director General Espen Falkenhaug on 4.10.2012, combining his expertise of the organization and its members in order to succeed in selecting the most productive sample.

The judgement sampling method used in this thesis was a mixture of maximum variations sample and the critical case sample. The members were categorized by their membership status, to include the widest range of options possible. To select the most purposeful sample, the history, known issues and the activity levels of the customers were taken into consideration as the critical case sample. The judgement aimed to reach members from both ends of all these selective variations.

The full list of different member categories included 16 different categories, which can be found at Appendix 1. The simplified sample categories and their sizes were as follows:

1. Only WYSE Travel Confederation members (7 sample members).
2. Only Sector Association members, of all the Sector Associations, where joining without WYSE Travel Confederation membership was possible (18 sample members).
3. WYSE Travel Confederation and Sector Association(s) members, including all the possible Sector Associations (27 sample members).

The past members included two sub-categories:
1. Resigned members, (7 sample members).
2. Disaffiliated members, (9 sample members).

The aim of the research based on the categories was to gain at least 2 answers from each category. The total sample included 68 members, minimum of 7 of each category and two of every sub-category (every Sector Association).

3.1.2 The Questionnaire

Based on the previous experience of research in the organization, taking part of the research and answering to the questionnaire was chosen to be as easy as possible. Therefore, the questionnaire was sent to the sample by email, where the respondents could reply, without following external ink to the questionnaire. The research questions were also kept to the minimum. In the email questionnaire, the members were asked 4-6 questions depending on the membership status.

In the foreword of the research, the goal of the thesis was explained to the respondents. The thesis aims to develop the membership of WYSE Travel Confederation, which could increase the willingness of the members to answer to the questionnaire, as they could benefit from it. Also, the anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed by indicating that all the responses will be handled with full anonymity.

The first 1-2 questions aimed to answer to the questions why members have joined WYSE Travel Confederation. For the members of only Sector Association(s), the question asked why they are not members of WYSE Travel Confederation, but only the Sector Association, aiming to find out if there are some clear reasons why these members are not part of the Confederation as the mother company, offering the main member benefits.

For the current members of WYSE Travel Confederation, their expectations towards the organization were inquired. For the members of only a Sector Association, a question was raised that if they would join the WYSE Travel Confederation as well, what would their expectations be like.

From all the current members of WYSE Travel Confederation, the respondents were asked what kind of value they receive from the organization.

For resigned members, the question asked why did the members resign from the organization. All of the past members were asked what type of value they did receive, and what more they would have wanted to receive to furthermore find more development ideas for the organization.

From disaffiliated members, the 2 following questions aimed to find out if the members know that they have been disaffiliated, and what the reasons behind it were.

The last question of the questionnaire for the current members of the organization always remained the same: what would the members want to improve in the organization.

All the different variations of the questionnaire can be found in appendix 2 and the email messages on appendix 3. An example of the questionnaire for only WYSE Travel Confederation members can be seen below:

Members of WYSE Travel Confederation only:

1. Why did you join the Confederation?
2. What are your expectations from the Confederation?
3. What kind of value does WYSE Travel Confederation offer to you?
4. What would you like to improve in the Confederation?

3.1.3 Sending the Questionnaire

The contact details of the members were taken from WYSE Travel Confederation's Customer Relationship Management system Vtiger, by using the search

function to find the corresponding person of each sample organization. The aim of selecting the person was to send the email questionnaire to the main contact of the member organization. The aim was to email all members to their personal email address. The email was also personalised by including the first and last name of the contact person to the beginning of the email.

The emails were sent using the company email address (sari.hietamaki@wysetc.org) and Windows Word Mail Merge function. The research included 3 rounds, one email and two reminder emails.

3.1.4 The Research

On 15th October, the email questionnaires were sent to all 68 members chosen to the research sample. After the first two weeks, 9 respondents had answered to the email. 4 email addresses were incorrect and therefore, the questionnaires did not reach the respondents. After the first week, the response rate was 13,23 % and the undeliverable rate was 5,88%.

On 30th October, a reminder was sent to the remaining sample of the research. In addition to the previously incorrect email addresses, one more was found, counting to total of 5 undeliverable messages. After the first reminder round, 5 respondents had answered the questionnaire, accounting for total of 20,59% response rate. The rate of non-deliverable messages was 7,35%.

On 7th November, the second and last reminder was sent to the remaining sample. At the end of the round, on 15th November, the research was closed. 5 more respondents had responded to the questionnaire, accounting for a total 27,9% on the whole research. On the last time, one more incorrect email address was found, counting to total 6 undeliverable email addresses (8,82%). Since 4 of the emails were incorrect on all 3 rounds, it can be assumed that the emails are permanently out of order and need to be updated to the CRM system.

Out of 68 members, 19 answered to the research, making the response rate 27,9%. Of the categories, highest response rates were on only WYSE Travel Confederation members 71,43% (5/7), then on resigned members 28,57% (2/7) and WYSE Travel Confederation and Sector Association members 25,93% (7/27). The lowest response rate was on only Sector Associations 16,67% (3/18) and disaffiliated members 22,22% (2/9). The undeliverable emails were 5,88% on the first round, 7,35% and then 8,82%.

One respondent, respondent H, answered to the questionnaire in Spanish and therefore, the answer needed to be translated. The translation was done by Luis Gonzalez Martos.

4 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The responses in this section have been listed as how many times they were mentioned in the answers to the open-ended questions. The answers have been analysed as entities, due to the fact that the respondents were given a free way of answering to the research, and therefore the forms of the responses varied a lot.

To retain the anonymity of the respondents, each respondent has been given a random letter between A-S to be referred to.

4.1 Joining WYSE Travel Confederation

The aim of the questions about joining the Confederation was to create an image of the reasons why the members of WYSE Travel Confederation have joined the organization. The resigned and disaffiliated members of WYSE Travel Confederation were asked only in general why they joined either or the WYSE Travel Confederation or its Sector Association(s) to make the questionnaire shorter. These answers have also been included into why joined due to the fact that they did not mention Sector Associations, but the organization as a whole.

Question: Why did you join the Confederation? N=10 and,
Question: Why did you join WYSE Travel Confederation and/or its Sector Association(s)? N=3.

Total N=13.

Response	Times mentioned
To connect with the industry and the community	7
For the networking opportunities	1
For business opportunities	2
To belong to professional organization of youth travel, global tourism organization	4
To receive discount for WYSTC Conference	3

Joined after the merge with ISTC and FYOTO, were members before	2
To be more reliable in business, creditability to customers	2
For research	1
For industry integrity	1
To give support to the industry	1
To bid on WYSTC (WYSTC to be held on a specific country)	1
It was mandatory to be part of a Sector Association	2
No alternative (mandatory, not specified why)	1
To be represented	1
To gain expertise, to learn	1

FIGURE 5. Joining reasons for WYSE Travel Confederation.

Based on the answers shown in figure 5, the main reason for joining WYSE Travel Confederation is to connect with the industry and the community, which was mentioned 7 times in the responses. The second most popular answer was to part of the global, professional youth travel organization with 4 mentions.

Members also mentioned to have joined for the discount of the WYSTC conference (3) and joined after the merge between ISTC and FYOTO (2), hence being members of either one of the founding organizations. In the responses, the respondents also mentioned the reason for joining to be more reliable and creditable to their customers (2) and due the fact it was mandatory to be part of a certain Sector Association (1). Other reasons mentioned once in the responses were research, industry integrity, gain expertise and learn, to develop and to be represented via the organization.

The respondent S summarizes their joining reasons, as "we wanted to be part of WYSE community and to be represented by WYSE as a member". On the other hand, the respondent H has a completely different joining reason, as the respondent explains that their organization wants to develop the trade in the youth travel industry hence, to give support to the whole industry. The respondent C details that after the merge between ISTC and FYOTO they "kind of end up in WYSE Travel Confederation".

4.1.1 Reasons for not joining WYSE Travel Confederation

The members of WYSE Travel Confederation, who are only part of a Sector Association(s), were asked why they are not a member of WYSE Travel Confederation. To make the questionnaire clear, the following question asked why they are members of the Sector Association, to better communicate the difference between the members.

Question: Why aren't you a member of WYSE Travel Confederation? N=3

Response	Times mentioned
Member of a Sector Association for the core business	2
No idea how being a member could help	1
No idea of costs of being a member	1

FIGURE 6. Reasons for not joining WYSE Travel Confederation.

As shown in figure 6, the respondents answered that they have joined a Sector due to their core business (2), indicating that they want expertise on the special area of their business. Also, the respondents mentioned that they had no knowledge about how being a member of WYSE Travel Confederation could help (1) or how much it costs (1).

The respondent I comments on not being a member of WYSE Travel Confederation that "I hope soon", whereas at the moment they are members of a Sector Association due to their specialization in their business. Therefore, it can be said that the respondent I is aiming to upgrade their membership in the future.

4.1.2 Joining Sector Association(s)

The members who are not members of WYSE Travel Confederation, but only a Sector Association(s) were also asked why they are members of the Sector As-

sociation(s). In two responses to the question why members joined both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association, the respondents listed reasons why they had joined the Sector Association. Therefore, those responses have been calculated as part of this section, and as reasons why they joined Sector Associations.

Question: Why did you join the Sector Association(s)? N=3
Question: Why did you join both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s)? N=2.

Response	Times mentioned
Getting closer to similar organizations and the special business	4
Lobby group	1
To receive help from the Sector Association in order to create a better service	1
Best practices	1
Bonding	1
New contacts	1
Developing the special industry	1
Knowing competitors	1

FIGURE 7. Joining reasons for Sector Association(s).

The figure 7 explains that the main reason for joining a Sector Association is to get closer to similar organizations, the special business and the niche of youth travel industry, which was mentioned 4 times in the open-ended responses. All the other responses were mentioned once, such as being part of a lobby group, and to bond and get new contacts. Once was also mentioned to knowing one's competitors and to receive help from the Sector Association to create a better service. On top of this, in one mention best practices were written, indicating the same. Lastly, one respondent mentioned that they are members due to the fact that they can develop their special industry.

The respondent J names that they joined the Sector Association to get closer to the similar organizations and to be part of the lobby group the Sector forms for

the special industry. The respondent G summarizes the benefits of joining the Sector Association(s) to share best practices, reach out to the competitors in a friendly way, new contacts, to share experience and form bonds, which help them to develop new programs. The respondent G adds: "we also keep each other up to date in what is chancing in our market". The respondent E states that "we intend to provide a very good service – and the Sector Association can help me".

4.1.3 Joining both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s)

The members of both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s) were asked to name the reasons behind joining both the mother company and its special niches.

Question: Why did you join both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s)? N=5.

Response	Times mentioned
No answer	2
Were together	1
Reach out for the best representatives of the special group	1
Special interest group inside the organization	1

FIGURE 8. Joining reasons for both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s)

Based on the answers in figure 8, the members who have joined both WYSE Travel Confederation and one or more of its Sector Association(s), have joined to the organization for similar reasons. The Sector Association enables them to reach out for the special interest group (1-2), and to seek for the best practices in it (1). Also, once it was mentioned that "it was together", indicating that when

joining the Sector Association it was mandatory to join WYSE Travel Confederation as well.

4.2 Expectations from the Membership

All the members of WYSE Travel Confederation were asked what are their expectations towards the Confederation. From resigned and disaffiliated members, they were asked what were their expectations from the Confederation. Also these answers have been listed as the above.

Question: What are your expectations from WYSE Travel Confederation? N=9
Question: What were your expectations from the Confederation? N=3

Total N=12.

Response	Times mentioned
Representing the industry as a whole	3
Representing members interests	3
Meeting place to members	3
Leadership	3
Facilitating industry conferences and workshops	2
Business contacts, networking	2
Lobbying	2
Assists on making moves in future	2
Business opportunities	2
Sign of good product and service (members pass filters)	1
Statistics	1
Research	1
Stable organization	1
Dynamic	1
Exchanges between members in other conferences as well	1
Education of the industry	1
Facilitation	1
Member Benefits (not specified which)	1
To Host WYSTC (as a member in a country)	1

FIGURE 9. Members' expectations from the organization.

The responses to members' expectations from the membership varied a lot, as seen in the figure 9. The main reasons were being represented as the industry (3) and that the members' interests are being represented (3). Also, the respondents answered that they expect a meeting place to all members (3), and to have leadership (3).

The respondent L mentioned that they expect the organization to provide statistics can assist in making decisions concerning the future, corresponding with the expectations with leadership and representing the industry as a whole. The respondent C summarizes their expectations: "be a leader in the sector, to have benefits to its members, to know and lead where we are going".

On the other hand, the respondent O mentions a completely different attribute, that there are a lot of contacts and a large business network, which you can meet during a single WYSETC event. The respondent O further explains that they wanted to learn more about the travel business and the organization gives good opportunities for that. Finally, the respondent K joined the organization to do "networking around the world and to widen our business opportunities" and states that "we definitely expect more networking exchanges between the members" and suggests as places of these the other travel and tourism conferences ITB and WTM.

4.3   Expectations if joining WYSE Travel Confederation

If the members were not a member of WYSE Travel Confederation, but only a Sector Association, why would they expect from the Confederation if they were to join.

Question: What would you expect from the Confederation? N=3

Response	Times mentioned
New contacts and partners	2

Business opportunities	1
Greater alliance	1
Support	1
Information about the regulations in the industry	1

FIGURE 10. Expectations from the WYSE Travel Confederation, if member of Sector Association(s) were to join.

The responses in figure 10 show that as WYSE Travel Confederation is a larger entity than its Sector Associations, as the respondents would expect to receive new contacts and partners (2), business opportunities (1), greater alliance (1), support (1) and information of the regulations in the industry (1). The respondents refer to the size and larger community of the organization, but do not mention any specific member benefits that they would receive if they would join WYSE Travel Confederation.

4.4   Value Received from the Membership

The members of WYSE Travel Confederation were asked to name the value that being a member of WYSE Travel Confederation gives them.

Question: What kind of value does WYSE Travel Confederation offer to you? N=9

Response	Times mentioned
Studies, research	2
No value at the moment	2
Not much in previous years	1
Questionable if any	1
WYSETC relationship with UNWTO	1
Assist in lobbying	1
Leadership	1
Facilitation	1
History	1
Know-how and skill to motivate the youth travel industry to buyer-seller exchanges	1
Community	1
Business contacts	1

Friendships	1
Better to be in than out	1
Knowledge on negative issues inside	1
No answer	1
Image, brand	1
Career	1
Safety	1
Negotiations	1

FIGURE 11. Value received from WYSE Travel Confederation membership.

Based on the answers in figure 11, the members of WYSE Travel Confederation receive studies and research (2), assist in lobbying (1) and the relationship between WYSE Travel Confederation and UNWTO (1). Other value mentioned was leadership, history, know-how, community and friendships (all 1 response). However, total 4 mentions indicated that at the moment there is no value (2), not much in previous years (1) and questionable if any (1) and one answer stated "better to be in than out".

The respondent H states that the membership is expensive, but thinks that it is "better to be in than out", due to the fact that then one "at least knows who is making all the noise" referring to the politics inside the organization, and that even though it is "unintelligible and nonsensical". The respondent Q mentions their organization has not received much value in the past, but it has somewhat chanced: "not much in previous years, but recently the relationship which has been created with UNWTO is invaluable", the respondent states. On the other hand, respondent F mentioned as their expectations "leadership, facilitation and research" and states as the value received "all of the above". Finally, the respondent K states, "WYSE Travel Confederation is an old organization and has the know-how to motivate all sides (sellers and buyers) in a productive exchange".

4.5 Value not received

The resigned and disaffiliated members were asked about their expectations, which were not satisfied.

Question: What would you have expected more from the organization?

Response	Times mentioned
Much more	2
Without ISIC organization does not have much to say	1
Value of the membership was not delivered	1
Guidance to members	1
Personal approach	1
Interest towards new members or new members of staff in organizations, a personal contact person	1
Clear and understandable objective	1
Clear and understandable organization structure (who does what etc.)	1

FIGURE 12. Expectations not satisfied, if members had resigned or been disaffiliated from the organization.

As the mentions in figure 12 shows that two respondents would have expected much more from the membership, but other reasons indicate to the same direction, such as value of the membership was not delivered (1) and without ISIC WYSE Travel Confederation does not have much to say (1). Other one mentioned guidance to members, personal approach and interest towards new members or new entrants to the industry. Finally two responses indicated to the same direction, to have a clear and understandable objective and to have a clear and understandable organization structure.

The respondent O mentions that it is important to understand that people change all the time inside the business and therefore, the new members or new personnel entrants need a guide. Therefore, the organization should have a

clear structure and objective and to show interest and personal approach for these new entrants to the industry.

4.6 Reasons for Resignation

Resigned members of WYSE Travel Confederation were asked the reason for their resignation, to find out the reasons behind leaving the organization.

Question: Why did you resign from the Confederation? N=2

Response	Times mentioned
Natural reason, closing the business	1
No point of being a member, no member benefits	1

FIGURE 13. Reasons for resigning from WYSE Travel Confederation.

As figure 13 indicates, only two resigned members replied to the questionnaire. The other mentioned their reason to be resigned to be closing the business and not offering travel services any longer. Therefore, it can be said that the need to be part of WYSE Travel Confederation had disappeared, due to the chance in the member's own business. The other resigned member, respondent C, replied that their organization did not see the point of being a member, since they believe that they are no member benefits. The respondent C explains that they resigned due to the fact that they "did not see the point or convenience" in belonging to the organization and that "there are no benefits from being a member".

On top of the resigned members, two respondents mentioned in their replies that they are about to resign from WYSE Travel Confederation.

The respondent P mentioned that they are going to resign from the organization. The respondent explains that they feel disappointed, due to the fact that they did not receive the value from the membership. The respondent details that

they expected that the membership is a sign of good product and service and that the members have to pass filters to join. However, the member states that there are actually no real barriers, and mentioned having problems with some other members of the organization. The respondent details that the membership is "too expensive", and that there are other cheaper ways to get the contacts.

Respondent S mentioned that their organization are going to resign due to the fact that WYSE Travel Confederation did not resolve a major issue they had between a Sector Association. The respondent stated that that is "the sad reality of today's WYSE Travel Confederation" and that "we were left alone with a real problem".

4.7   Knowledge about Disaffiliation

The disaffiliated members of WYSE Travel Confederation were asked that did they know about their disaffiliation and about their awareness of the reasons behind the disaffiliation.

Question: Did you know that you were disaffiliated from the organization? N=2

Response	Times mentioned
Did know about disaffiliation	1
Did not know about disaffiliation	1

FIGURE 14. Knowing about been disaffiliated from the organization.

Out of the two respondents mentioned in figure 14, one member did know about their disaffiliation and one did not. Respondent D did not know about their disaffiliation, saying that it was "news to them". The other respondent did know about the disaffiliation as it was a decision made inside the organization of not to renew their membership.

4.8 Reasons for Disaffiliation

The disaffiliated members of the research were also asked the reasons why do they think that they were disaffiliated from the organization.

Question: Why do you think you were disaffiliated from the Confederation? N=1

Response	Times mentioned
Did know, decided not to renew membership	1

FIGURE 15. Known reasons being disaffiliated from WYSE Travel Confederation.

As shown in figure 15, the reason for disaffiliation was the member decided not to renew their membership. It is to be noted that if exiting the organization was an informed decision inside the member organization, they also have the possibility to resign.

4.9 Improvements

All the current members of WYSE Travel Confederation or its Sector Associations were asked what would they improve in the organization.

Question: What would you improve in the Confederation? N=12

Response	Times mentioned
Financial stability	2
Solving internal conflicts, less politics	2
More action, stop living in the past	2
Decisiveness	1
Work together for a stronger future	1
Leave the current debates behind	1
Less infighting and bickering	1
Too many egos and opinions	1

Better outreach to members	1
Value to members understood and communicated	1
Transparency in actions	1
Inclusivity to members	1
Leaner operations	1
Less bureaucracy	1
Less convoluted set-up	1
Unleashing the potential of SA (which now cannot happen)	1
Focus on achieving external strategic goals, operating as the voice of the industry	1
Focus on core priorities, such as conferences	1
More networking opportunities (major European tourism shows, WTM, ITB)	1
Lower cost for more participation of fairs	1
Easier application process	1
Country or regional focus groups	1
Mentor program	1
No answer	1
Nothing (answered to improvements of a Sector Association)	1

FIGURE 16. Member's improvements to WYSE Travel Confederation.

As seen on the figure 16, the responses to this question vary a lot but point out to same directions. The members want WYSE Travel Confederation to achieve better financial stability (2) and to solve its internal problems (2-4) and to move forward (2). The members replied that they would like the organization to be more transparent (1) and to have a clear objective (1) and structure (1) and to focus on core priorities (1), such as its conferences.

The members also mentioned more networking opportunities (1) and discounts to the industry events (1), as well as a mentoring program (1) and country-based focus groups (1) of the industry.

The respondent B mentions, "either a country or regional focus group could drill down the issues and tasks that require action and cooperation", the respondent continues "a mentor program would be beneficial for the young professionals entering the industry".

The respondent Q states "less politics! Stop living in the past and work together on a stronger future". The respondent J summarizes: "leaner, less bureaucracy

and less consulted in its set-up, and continues "the Sector Associations cannot unleash their full potential and the organization is spending too much time sorting out internal conflicts than focusing on achieving the external strategic goals".

4.10 Knowledge about the membership itself

There were 3 members in total who did not agree to the current member status, or did not understand the membership itself. The respondent R mentions that they are not currently a member; although the CRM system they are member and they were grouped as WYSE Travel Confederation and Sector Association(s) member. The respondent A however replied to the questionnaire "I didn't attend to the WYSTC Conference and that's why I won't reply to the survey", although the questionnaire was about the membership of WYSE Travel Confederation and even the close acronym WYSETC was not used in the questionnaire. Also, one of the disaffiliated members replied that they did not know about their disaffiliation. The respondents were contacted again for details, but they did not reply.

5   DISCUSSION

5.1   General Implications of the Research

Based on the research, members join WYSE Travel Confederation for the community, to connect with the global industry, and to be part of the professional youth travel organization. Members also have joined to receive the discount for the WYSTC Conference and due to the merge between ISTC and FYOTO in 2007. Members also named research, being more creditable to their own customers and lobbying as reasons why they have joined the organization.

The Sector Association members and members who are members of both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Associations have joined the Sector(s) due to their core business. The members who are part of both named that the Sector Association is a special interest group inside the organization, and a way to reach out for the best businesses in that special niche of the youth travel industry. Other reasons for joining the Sector Association(s) can be seen that it serves a lobby group and a way to attain best practices, new contacts and support given by the Sector Association itself.

Some respondents also named their core business as a response to why they are not members of WYSE Travel Confederation, which might indicate that they want to belong to the Sector only due to the fact that it straight refers to their core business. If the Sector Associations were to join WYSE Travel Confederation, they would expect a greater alliance, support and new business partners.

The current members of the organization clearly expect that the organization both represents the youth travel industry as a whole and them as members. Members want to receive statistics, research, help in their business and to meet and connect with the industry in conferences and workshops. The members want WYSE Travel Confederation to assist them to make moves for the future and to show leadership, whilst lobbying and developing the relationship with UNWTO.

At the moment, the value received from the Confederation is controversial. Many respondents say that they do not receive anything and that there are no member benefits, whereas some respondents receive a lot of value, or even all of their named expectations. Therefore, it can be said that some of the WYSE Travel Confederation members are very satisfied to the membership and claim to receive value, whereas some ponder if the membership benefits actually exists.

In general, members seem to want to get rid of the politics and fighting inside the organization and that the organization achieves financial stability. The members also want the organization to have a clear organization structure, leaner bureaucracy and clear member benefits, and the actions of the organization to be more transparent to its members. The members would like to meet the industry and network in WYSTC and many other travel and tourism industry conferences.

Some members also suggested starting a mentoring program to new members or new entrants to the industry, country or regional focus groups to the organization and more discounts to the other travel and tourism industry events, such as ITB and WTM. Some members also want easier joining process, whilst one member who is about to resign said that this is due to the fact that the joining is too easy, and that no real barriers to enter the organization exist.

In addition to the resigned members contacted for the research, two current members of WYSE Travel Confederation indicated in their answers that they are about to resign. Most of the resigned members, members who state that they are about to resign and one respondent who knew about the disaffiliation claim that they are not receiving member benefits. They clearly state that for them, the membership has no value, whilst for some the membership is also too expensive. Some members also had other issues with other members of the organization or a Sector Association.

There was also some unclarification and false knowledge about members current membership status. One disaffiliated member did not know about their disaffiliation, as well as one current member of both WYSE Travel Confederation

and its Sector Association(s) claimed that they do not belong to WYSE Travel Confederation at all. One respondent misunderstood WYSE Travel Confederation for WYSTC Conference, answering that she or he did not participate to the event and therefore, will not answer to the questionnaire. These respondents were also contacted for further information, but did not reply afterwards.

As a conclusion, it can be said that the members want to see a leader in the youth travel industry, striving for future and to be greatly represented in the tourism and travel industry. The organization according to its members should do lobbying and enhance the relationship with UNWTO. The organization should be clear and transparent, and to have clear member benefits to its members. The members also suggest a better outreach to them.

5.2   Response Activity

Based on the response rates, it was clear that the most responsive group to the research was the only WYSE Travel Confederation members, accounting for a very high total response rate of 71,43% (5/7). The only Sector Association members were the least active category to respond to the research with 16,67% (3/18) response rate. WYSE Travel Confederation and Sector Association members 25,93% (7/27), resigned 28,57% (2/7) and disaffiliated 22,22% (2/9) members had very similar response rates.

The members who did not have the correct information about their current membership status and the members, who confused WYSTC conference to WYSE Travel Confederation, were not also willing to respond to further inquiries sent to them after their failure to answer to the given questions.

Willingness not to answer to further questioning and the low response rate indicate that the members are not very keen on answering to the research or inquiries about their membership. However, some members thanked and wished luck for the research.

5.3 Limitations of the Research

There are some limitations for the research. It can be argued, that the response rate of the research could have been higher if there would have been enough resources to personally call people of the reminder. This would have been the next step and the final reach to the members to answer to the questionnaire. Also, the entire research sample was not reached due to the incorrect emails taken from the CRM system.

The email message was also detailed after the first email round to include more information of the researcher, since it had raised some questions. The email was however, attempted to keep as short as possible, to make it easy and simple to answer to the questionnaire and to take part of the research.

Finally, the qualitative research method also sets some limitations of the accuracy of the research. The researcher's role in analysing the results is emphasized, and no mediums can be drawn from the statistics. As the questionnaire was sent to the sample by email, asking them to reply freely to the given questions, the answering ways varied a lot. Some members answered in one, essay-type of answer whereas some replied under the given questions. Therefore, the role of the researcher as an indicator of the results is emphasized.

When members were part of both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association, they were asked to name why they have joined WYSE Travel Confederation and why they are members of both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s). The members only respondent as why they are members of Sector Association, not indicating specifically why they have joined both. Only 3 responses related to belonging to both of the organizations. Therefore, the second question could have been made simpler and to only ask why they are members of the Sector Association(s).

6 SUGGESTIONS

Based on the research, it can be said that WYSE Travel Confederation is most-ly offering the right products and services to its customers. The members' expectations from the organization, such as the conferences, lobbying and the youth travel industry research correspond with the organization's service offering. The membership is seen as a meeting point, where organizations can gain expertise by learning from each other. Therefore, the strength of the organization lies in its community, which was indicated clearly from the research as it was named as the joining reason in most of the responses. Generally, it can be said, that the member organizations want what the organization aims to provide them.

Due to the fact that the organization is operating in the business-to-business service market, their customers are organizations, which buy the services to produce products and services to their own customers, to the end consumers of the youth travel industry. They also compete with each other, which can be seen as an opportunity to WYSE Travel Confederation: the members want to get to know each other's and to learn from their competitors, which can be reached trough joining the organization. Therefore, it should be emphasized that the members join the organization to find solutions to their own problems, and to enhance their own businesses.

However, as WYSE Travel Confederation mostly offers intangible goods and services to its customers, the business should be relationship oriented, and requires interaction and communication between the seller and the buyer. The service marketing mix and the service marketing triangle in chapter 2 explain in detail why and what different kind of marketing the organization needs in services business. Customers in service business also subjectively perceive whether the value is provided to them or not. The value is created on service encounters based on the ongoing service offering of the organization, including the hidden services and part-time marketers of the organization. Relationships are also the key to successful business-to-business marketing, as mentioned in chapter 2.

Some respondents of the research are very satisfied and receive all the factors that they named as their expectations from the organization. It can be argued, if these are the active members, which are in close connection with the organization. Furthermore, some members are deeply unsatisfied and claim not to receive any value from the membership, or that the value of the membership is questionable, even despite the fact that the organization aims to provide them service, which correspond with the members' expectations. Some members also naturally exit the organization, like member O, due to the fact their business has changed significantly.

The service characteristics mean that the inactive customers, if left with poor communication only receive the few product elements of WYSE Travel Confederations on-going service offering, hence the conferences if the members decide to attend and the youth travel industry research. The rest of the organization's offering includes only service elements, which requires good interaction and communication. As Ojasalo and Ojasalo explain (2010, 26) in service business, the product or service need to be given to the customer "at the right time" and "in the right place", but most importantly "in the right way". The interactive marketing part of the service marketing triangle and the integration of relationship marketing therefore should be emphasized.

When tackling the financial loses and problem with dissatisfied customers and resigning members, WYSE Travel Confederation has had to make cuts to its organization, yet increased its external marketing. The external marketing can be seen to have given the organization's members even more promises of the service, but due to the small staff and the vast member base, these promises cannot be kept to all of its customers, which can then be seen as the dissatisfaction of some members. Currently, the organization has 550+ business members, whereas the organization only as 15 staff members. When making a simple calculation, all of the employees of the organization would need to handle around 37 business customers if equally divided between the personnel.

In service business, one should find operative ways of increasing the productivity and the service quality at the same. One these ways that the organization is

doing was mentioned in the b-to-b theory: categorization and segmentation. The organization has 550+ members, which all work on youth travel, but on different areas. Therefore, WYSE Travel Confederation's Sector Associations categorize and segment the members in their own focus groups. Based on the research, members join the Sector Association(s) due to the fact that they straight relate to their core business. However, all of the members do not belong to a Sector Association, but have not been further categorized.

The organization should aim to develop this kind of operative ways, which would increase the productivity and the quality at the same time, and to manage the available resources as well as possible. It is advised, that the organization should focus on the relationship management, internal marketing and interactive marketing instead of external marketing, detailed in chapter 2. By understanding the business-to-business and service marketing characteristics, the customer satisfaction could be returned and the organization could enter the service perspective cycle introduced at the end of the chapter 2.

It is suggested that the organization should focus on its core services, such as being a meeting point to its members and offering them training, facilitation, leadership, conferences and research. Respondent J even summarized that organization "should focus on its core business". Some respondents also mention transparency, clear organization structure and better outreach to members. For the improvements of the membership, it was clear that most of all the members want to get rid of the politics inside the organization, to achieve financial stability and to look forward to the future.

Some members also suggested of starting a mentoring program to new members or new entrants to the industry, country or regional focus groups to the organization and more discounts to the other travel and tourism industry events, such as ITB and WTM. These new features what the members named all account to the integration in business-to-business marketing, as the communication mix the organization provides its customers. The outreach should be done in a way, which the customer sees that the value is delivered. The respondent G mentions, "the members value should be communicated".

Some respondents were unaware of their membership status and the difference between WYSTC conference and WYSE Travel Confederation as the organization. Also, the research included some undeliverable emails, although they were by name and taken from the CRM system. Therefore, the communication should be better between these to parties and the organization should see the CRM system as an asset, and to use it to continuously storage updated information about its members.

Indeed, it seems that the organization is providing the right product to the right customers. The organization also uses segmenting and offers the members expertise on the specific niches to youth travel. Its much easier for the staff expert in the organization to manage more business customers in the field of travel insurance, or au pairs and to focus on that niche on the youth travel and therefore, to give the customers value.

The only new products or services the respondents mentioned they would want were minor, such as a mentoring program and country or regional focus groups. Therefore, it can be stated that the organization needs better communication and interaction with its customers to better communicate their existing service offering. WYSE Travel Confederation should communicate clear membership benefits to its customers, as well as what is received when joining a Sector Association, what when joining only WYSE Travel Confederation. With focusing on internal and interactive marketing, the organization could enable and deliver these promises it gives to its customers, and return the customer satisfaction to all of its members.

7 CONCLUSION

The service characteristics and the business-to-business industry propose certain challenges to the organization. The service business is interactive and relationship-oriented, while the service marketing is more complicated and consists of more elements than traditional marketing in the manufacturing business. The organization needs good communication and interaction with its vast member base, as the members of WYSE Travel Confederation want to enhance their own businesses.

It can be said that some members of WYSE Travel Confederation are very satisfied to their membership, whilst others are not. The members generally expect the services, which the organization offers, but some members claim that they don't receive the member benefits at all. There is a clear gap between these two parties, although their expectations from the organization remain the same.

The organization needs to improve its customer relationships and communication to better deliver the services to its customers. The organization should aim for a clear organizational structure and objective, while trying to achieve financial and organizational stability and to maintain the focus on its core services. By focusing on enabling and keeping the promises given to its customers, the customer satisfaction could be improved.

Finally, as the organization operates in a service market, financial cuts to the organization should be done with care and the organization should aim to find ways of improving its service quality and productivity at the same time. The organization should aim to avoid the strategic management trap, but aim to enhance the relationships between its members rather than investing to external marketing.

After this thesis, it is recommended that the organization should start doing research annually of its members and about their opinions. It can be said that the members can also benefit from having a platform to indicate their opinions towards the organization anonymously.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. The research sample.

The members' categories of the research sample:

1. Only WYSE Travel Confederation members
2. WYSE Travel Confederation + Sector Association members:
    a. WYSE Travel Confederation + IAPA members
    b. WYSE Travel Confederation + IASIS members
    c. WYSE Travel Confederation + WYSE Work Abroad members
    d. WYSE Travel Confederation + STAY WYSE members
    e. WYSE Travel Confederation + Study WYSE members
    f. WYSE Travel Confederation + SATA members
    g. WYSE Travel Confederation + ISIC members
    h. WYSE Travel Confederation + ISTC members
3. Only Sector Association members
    a. Only WYSE Work Abroad members
    b. Only ISIC members
    c. Only SATA members
    d. Only ISTC members
    e. Only IAPA members
4. Resigned members
5. Disaffiliated members

Appendix 2. The questions.

Members of WYSE Travel Confederation only:

1. Why did you join the Confederation?

2. What are your expectations from the Confederation?

3. What kind of value does WYSE Travel Confederation offer to you?

4. What would you like to improve in the Confederation?

Members of WYSE Travel Confederation and Sector Association(s):

1. Why did you join the Confederation?

2. Why did you join both WYSE Travel Confederation and its Sector Association(s)?

3. What are your expectations from the Confederation?

4. What kind of value does WYSE Travel Confederation offer to you?

5. What would you like to improve in the Confederation?

Only Sector Association(s) members:

1. Why aren't you member of WYSE Travel Confederation?

2. Why did you join the Sector Association(s)?

3. If you would join the Confederation, what would your expectations be?

4. What would you like to improve in the Confederation?

Resigned members:

1. Why did you join WYSE Travel Confederation, and/or its Sector Association(s)?

2. Why did you resign from WYSE Travel Confederation?

3. What were your expectations from the Confederation?

4. What would you have expected more from the organization?

Disaffiliated members:

1. Why did you join WYSE Travel Confederation, and/or its Sector Association(s)?

2. Do you know that you were disaffiliated from the WYSE Travel Confederation?

3. Why do you think you were disaffiliated from WYSE Travel Confederation?

4. What were your expectations from the Confederation?

5. What would you have expected more from the organization?

Appendix 3. The email questionnaires.

The email questionnaire 1.

Title: WYSE Travel Confederation Research

Dear Name at Organization,

In order to develop the membership of WYSE Travel Confederation, I am compiling a research about members' opinions towards the organization.

I would highly appreciate your time on answering the below-mentioned questions freely as a reply to this email. The research will serve as the final thesis of my studies and all the answers will be handled anonymously.

1. Why did you join WYSE Travel Confederation, and/or its Sector Association(s)?
2. Do you know that you were disaffiliated from the WYSE Travel Confederation?
3. Why do you think you were disaffiliated from WYSE Travel Confederation?
4. What were your expectations from the Confederation?
5. What would you have expected more from the organization?

Thank you very much for your time.

Yours sincerely,

Sari Hietamäki
Tampere University of Applied Sciences

The email questionnaires 2 and 3, the research reminders.

Title: WYSE Travel Confederation Research – (Second) Reminder

Dear Name at Organization,

In order to develop the membership of WYSE Travel Confederation, I am compiling a research about members' opinions towards the organization.

I would highly appreciate your time on answering the below-mentioned questions freely as a reply to this email. The research will serve as the final thesis of my studies and all the answers will be handled anonymously.

1. Why did you join WYSE Travel Confederation, and/or its Sector Association(s)?
2. Do you know that you were disaffiliated from the WYSE Travel Confederation?
3. Why do you think you were disaffiliated from WYSE Travel Confederation?
4. What were your expectations from the Confederation?
5. What would you have expected more from the organization?

Thank you very much for your time. If you have any questions concerning the research, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Sari Hietamäki
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Bachelor's thesis for WYSE Travel Confederation
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