

Co-designing and evaluating an Angry Birds travel service concept for Route 88 Ltd

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<p>This Bachelor's thesis was conducted for Route 88 Ltd and it concentrates on co-designing and evaluating an Angry Birds fan tour for the commissioning company. The company is a Finnish start-up destination management company targeting Chinese outbound tourists. They have been operating since 2012 and wanted to know how suitable their travel offering is for Chinese tourists.</p> <p>The objective of this thesis project was to evaluate the designed Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept and Finland as a travel destination. To support the main project objectives, further project tasks were set and executed. These project tasks included finding out how the Angry Birds fan tour and Finland as a travel destination are viewed by travel professionals and Chinese tourists and what expectations Chinese tourists have toward their holidays. Finally, the last objective was to identify reasons for the failure of the concept, as there were no customers to purchase the travel service.</p> <p>The project tasks included steps from determining the need and expectations for the project, benchmarking inbound travel agencies and Chinese tourists' travel habits, designing the fan tour and finally evaluating the travel concept based on a qualitative research, workshops and benchmarking. For the research, four travel professionals and China experts were interviewed in the autumn of 2013 and the project manager participated in two China travel training sessions in Porvoo. In addition, benchmarking results on Chinese tourists' travel habits were consulted in analysing the results and evaluating the travel concept.</p> <p>Based on the research, the travel concept was successfully designed and seemed to meet the needs and expectations of Chinese tourists. The reasons for the failure were found elsewhere in the commissioning company's lacking and unmotivated partner network, communication with partners and prospects, but most of all in the desirability of Finland as a travel destination in Chinese tourists' eyes.</p>	
<p>Keywords Service design, travel package concept, Angry Birds, Chinese tourist, tourism customer needs and expectations</p>	

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1 Introduction

The tourism market is passing through a great change worldwide; demand for new types of tourism products has occurred, some older established forms of tourism have undergone a rejuvenation, and ways of purchasing tourism products have evolved and changed dramatically. In addition to these changes also outbound tourism from countries traditionally known to have generated only few international visitors has increased in the past decade. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 201.)

In this thesis project the focus is on the emerging outbound tourism from the Asian market. Traditionally the only country in Asia generating outbound tourism has been Japan. Nowadays, however, with the rapid-growing economies China and India pose a new market segment for the international tourism. Especially in China the growth of a capitalistic economy has and will create a new class wanting to travel further abroad for pleasure. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 209.)

China has huge market potential in outbound tourism with a population of almost 1 350 million people and arising middle and upper class. Finland's portion of Chinese tourists coming to the Nordic countries was 21.9 per cent (excluding Hong Kong) in 2012 with a slight decrease from 22.8 per cent in 2011. There were altogether 113 000 registered Chinese tourists' overnights including Hong Kong in 2012 counting 1.9 per cent of the total foreign overnights in Finland. Ever since the downturn in 2009 the absolute share of the Chinese tourists' overnights has been increasing constantly. More than two thirds of the Chinese tourists visited Finland for the first time. (MEK 2013a.)

1.1 Background for the project

The seasonal division for Chinese tourists' holidays spent in Finland in 2012 reveals that 66 per cent of all the travelling was done during the summer. The top three months for Chinese tourists overnights in Finland were August (14 per cent), June (14 per cent) and July (12 per cent). The Border Interview Survey 2012 by Statistics Finland in association with the Finnish Tourist Board calculated altogether 116 000 travelers from China visiting Finland, and almost half of them, 42 per cent, were on leisure

holiday. During their stay in Finland Chinese tourists spent 74 euros per day on average, most of which on shopping (38 per cent). Quite a large share of the total expenditure was used in restaurants and cafes (18 per cent). (MEK 2012a.)

Route 88 Ltd is interested in attracting the emerging Chinese outbound tourists to Finland and the Nordic countries. The commissioning company was looking for an appealing travel package to be offered to Chinese tourists especially during the summer season. An opportunity revealed itself in form of cooperation with Rovio Entertainment Ltd. The two companies saw potential in uniting forces and developing a travel service concept that would attract Angry Bird fans from China to the home of the famous birds.

Angry Birds (愤怒的小鸟 in Chinese) created by Rovio Entertainment Ltd took their first steps in the Chinese market in autumn 2011 with the Moon Festival game and moon cakes. Back then, the CEO Mr Vesterbacka saw great growth potential in China and was looking forward to build a creative special franchise that would be exciting for Chinese Angry Birds fans (CNN Travel 2011). In late 2012 the Chinese market had overtaken the US in terms of daily usage and there were more Angry Birds fans and players in China than ever (Butcher 2012).



Figure 1. Angry Birds Moon Festival theme (Martin 2011)

1.2 Project objectives

The objective for this thesis process was to co-design an Angry Birds fan tour travel service concept and analyse its success. In the end, when evaluating the travel concept, the aim was to understand whether Chinese tourists are interested in such concept and how they view Finland as a travel destination.

Thus, the main project objective is to evaluate the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour travel concept and Finland as a travel destination.

From the project objective further project steps were created. These can be stated as objectives of the study. The objectives are:

- To find out how the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept is viewed by travel professionals and China experts
- To find out how Finland is viewed as a travel destination by Chinese tourists
- To find out Chinese tourists' expectations from their holidays
- To identify main reasons for the failure of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour

The benefits for the end customers of Route 88 Ltd, mainly Chinese tourists, include the value proposition of the company and the travel package concept. The tourists have a possibility to travel together with Angry Birds and learn how and where they were inspired and created. In addition to these elements of the concept, the tourists can experience the clean, pure nature, get an insight of the Finnish culture, as well as the other Nordic countries, and most of all enjoy their holidays. From the outcome of this project, the commissioning company will have an Angry Birds fan tour in their service offering and gain further insight on their target customers' habits, needs and expectations. In addition to these, the commissioning company will also benefit from the evaluation of the fan tour and company operations.

The research in this project was divided into two separate parts: benchmarking as secondary data collection and primary data collection. The benchmarking focused on tour

operators and travel agencies located in the capital region of Finland and targeting Chinese tourists. Two main competitors were chosen for a closer analysis and altogether 34 agencies and operators were studied (Attachments 4 and 5). Other travel agencies were excluded from this project due to the specific target group and extent of the project. Benchmarking was also conducted on Chinese tourists' travel habits and expectations to gain a thorough understanding of the target group.

The international aspect of this thesis project is justified with the Chinese target group. The end product of the project, the travel package concept, is designed to meet the needs and expectations of Chinese tourists. Hence, the different cultural background needs to be taken into consideration both in the concept design and its evaluation.

1.3 Demarcation

The focus of this thesis topic is in co-designing an Angry Birds fan tour travel package concept and its evaluation. The target group of the travel concept consists of Chinese Angry Birds fans, mostly families, coming to Finland and the Nordic countries on their holidays. The commissioning company, Route 88 Ltd, decided to focus on families travelling with children excited about Angry Birds. This focus was taken because of the new Angry Birds activity and amusement parks in Finland, designed especially for children. The targeted tourists are willing to spend on high quality services and special experiences organized with care. In other words, these tourists are wealthy and can be identified as Chinese luxury travellers.

This thesis project will concentrate in co-creating and evaluating the Finland part of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour. The decision to demarcate the tour was done due to the extent of the project and co-operation with Nordic tour operators in Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

1.4 Case company introduction

Route 88 Ltd is an inbound tour operator and destination management company targeting mainly Chinese tourists coming to Finland and other Scandinavian countries.

The company organizes and offers premium travel services to its customers in Finland and the Nordic countries. The core of the business is to offer travel services in forms of carefully designed and concepted packages. This enables Route 88's customers an easy way to purchase the services. All of the offered packages can be modified according to each customer need. Route 88 organizes the travel services from designing service entities to marketing and selling them. Qualified and exclusive partners are used in the implementation of their travel services. Customers of Route 88 consist of tourist groups, business and government delegations coming to Finland. (Liiketoimintasuunnitelma Route 88 2012; Route 88 Ltd 2012.)



Figure 2. Route 88 Ltd brand and message to the markets (Liiketoimintasuunnitelma Route 88 2012)

The value proposition and promise of Route 88 is to offer to the guests coming to Finland and the Nordic countries a unique experience that is based on:

- high quality services
- carefully thought service entities designed in forehand
- personal service that considers personal needs and interests of each group member as well as possible

- ‘one stop’-principle: Route 88 takes care of all the arrangements for the customer in Finland, the Nordic countries and if necessary elsewhere in Europe

The partner network of Route 88 covers Finland and the Nordic countries. In Sweden, Norway and Denmark the company cooperates with, for example, Haman Group. In China Route 88 has a distribution contract with CITS (China International Travel Service) which is one the oldest and biggest travel agencies in the country. Their sales network covers all of China. Currently Route 88 is looking for new partners in China to increase sales and awareness of the company overseas. Since the beginning of 2013 Finpro Shanghai has been assisting Route 88 in the partner search and selection.

1.5 Key concepts

The following key concepts related to tourism and service design are considered in the thesis project.

Package tour (Travel package)

The concept can also be understood as package travel or package holidays. A package tour combines a number of tourism products which can be purchased as a single entity by the traveller. A package tour is charged one single price usually resulting cheaper than an aggregated price of purchasing each item separately. Package tours usually include accommodation and transport. Furthermore, they may also cover meals, coach tours, and admission tickets to various events or other products of interest to the customer. (Statistics Finland 2013.)

Tour operator

The above mentioned package tours are usually sold to travel agencies and tourists by tour operators that assemble holiday packages from several components provided by other sectors. Usually these package tours are sold to tourists through travel agents. However, the tour operators can be in direct contact with the tourists and provide them services without involving any third parties. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007.)

Chinese luxury traveller

The Hurun report (2012) on Chinese luxury travellers states that, according to their research, there are 7500 people in China with RMB one billion or more in total assets.

The amount of the rich people has increased with 3500 billionaires from 2011. In the report, the millionaires surveyed spend an average of RMB 1.76 million a year, equivalent to USD 277 000. The three main areas of the wealthy Chinese consumer spending include travel, education of children, and daily luxuries. Among these three, travel is the biggest area of consumption for the Chinese millionaires.

2 Theoretical framework

In order to understand the service design concept it is important to be clear about what we consider as a service. Among many service definitions, the one provided by Lovelock and Wirtz (2004, 9) explains the phenomena in a manner also easily understood in tourism services. According to them, a service is simply “an act or performance offered by one party to another”. They point out that even though a physical product may be tied to the service offered, the actual performance is intangible and transitory, and usually does not “result in ownership of any of the factors of production”.

Tourism has been defined as an “activity in which people spend a short period away from home for leisure or business” (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 415). Hence, a tourism service could be understood as an intangible performance by tourism service provider to a customer. This performance could take place before, during and/or after the customer is involved with the tourism activity away from home. The figure below presents tourism characteristics that lay understanding on the field in which the service design should be adapted.

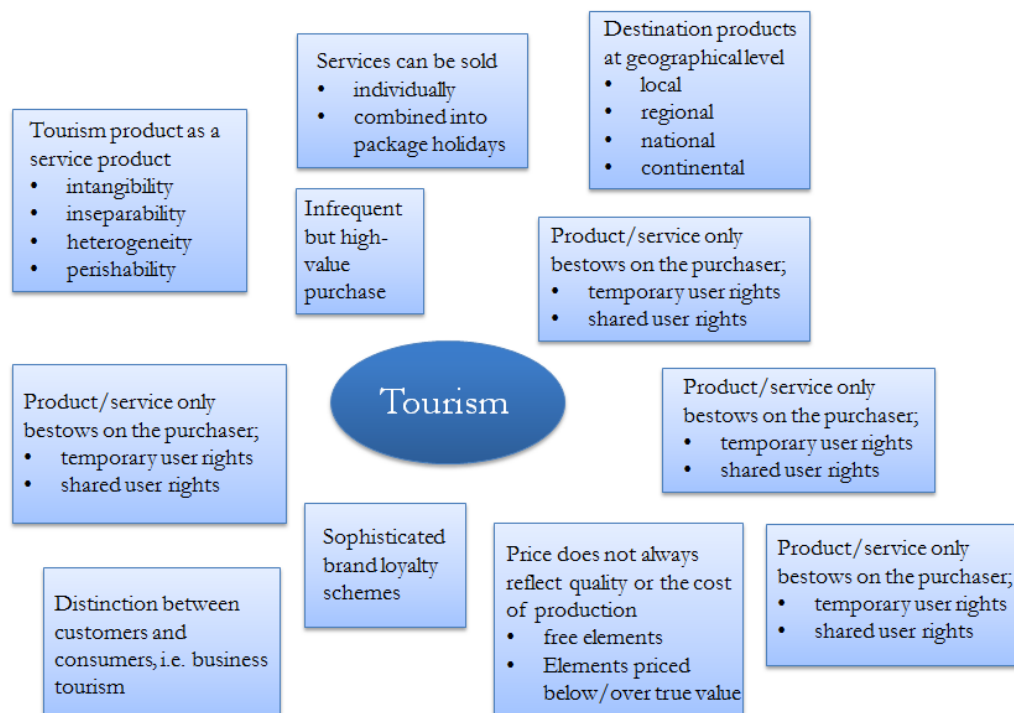


Figure 3. Characteristics of tourism (Modified from Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 48)

2.1 Service design

In the few recent years the service design has taken space from the conventional, traditional service development. The service design approach encourages users of services to participate in the development process. Customers are challenged to share their service experiences and gather information on their own. At the same time researchers follow and observe the actions of the users and providers of the service. (Miettinen 2011, 21.)

Hence, the purpose of the service design is to develop a service experience that is compatible to the needs and wishes of the customers. In this approach, not only the customer's, but also the service provider's points of view are taken into consideration with the aim of creating an entity of a service that is both attractive to the customer and efficient and recognizable to the service provider. The customer should perceive that the service offered has an attractive added value. (Koivisto 2009 in Miettinen 2011, 31; Edvarsson & Olsson 1996, 141.)

Tuulaniemi (2011, 103) describes this kind of cooperation between the customer and the service provider as the symbiosis of customer understanding and business goals. The figure below depicts the symbiosis that includes important aspects from both of the service participants required for a successful service.

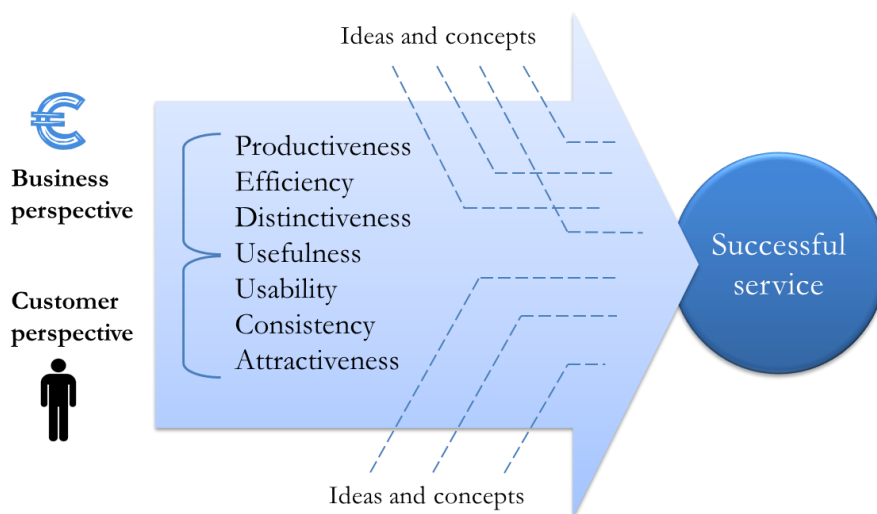


Figure 4. Symbiosis of customer understanding and business goals (Modified from Tuulaniemi 2011, 103)

Therefore, the theoretical framework for this thesis project is built around service design. This design process has been considered as a path guiding the process from the initial planning phase to finally evaluating the service concept. The criteria in evaluating the service concept are based on tourism customer behaviour and satisfaction whereas the service concept itself is built regarding the target groups' needs and expectations as well as the value proposition of the commissioning company.

Moritz (2005, 150) explains the service design with an overview model presenting the two active actors; the organization and the client, each closely connected to the service design. The view Moritz provides is similar to the symbiosis pictured by Tuulaniemi. It can be stated that without the knowledge of real customer needs and the ability to provide quality experiences for them, an organization is unable to create a service that is useful, usable and desirable for the targeted customers.

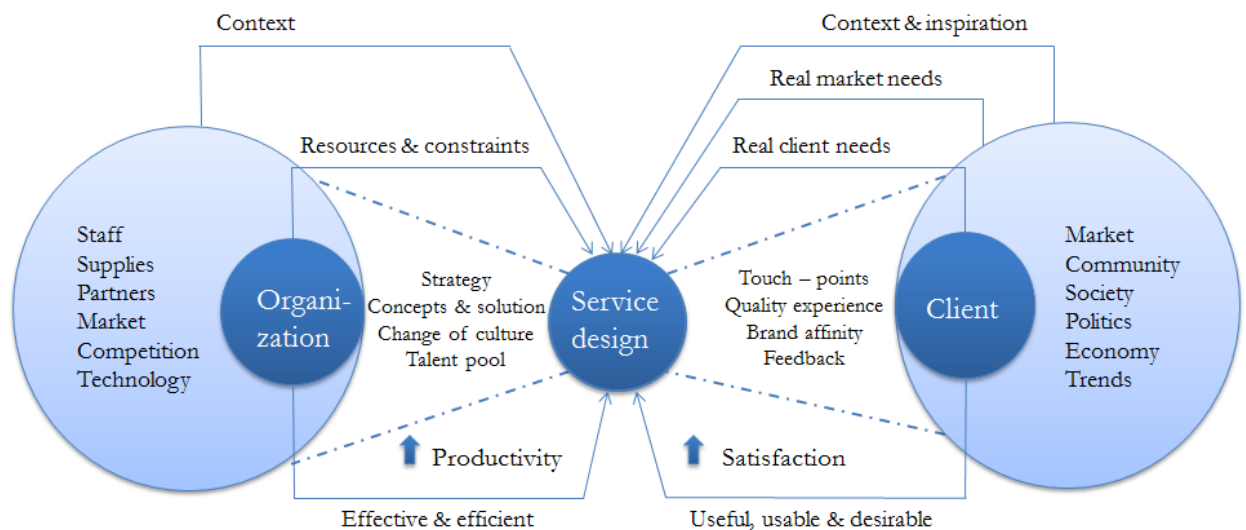


Figure 5. Service design overview model (Modified from Moritz 2005)

2.1.1 Design phases

Tuulaniemi (2011) among others provides a framework for a service design process presented in Figure 6. He divides the process in five different elements further referenced as the steps of the design process.

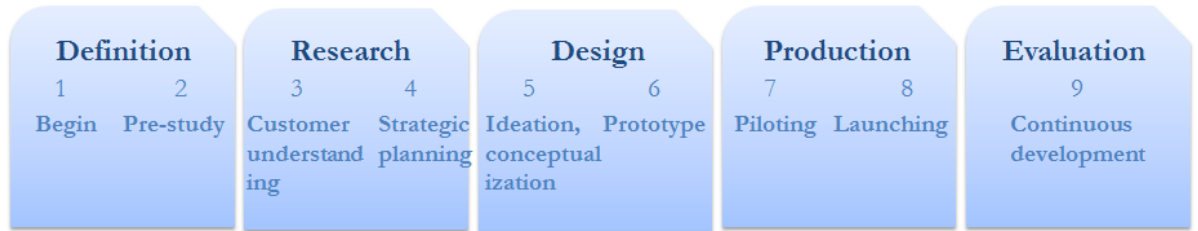


Figure 6. Service design process (Modified from Tuulaniemi 2011, 130-131)

In comparison to the service design process by Tuulaniemi, the presentation of Moritz (2005, 156) suggests six different ‘Service Design’ steps to be taken during the process. Despite the diverse presentations of the design process, both Tuulaniemi and Moritz follow the same path from understanding the need for the service both from business and customer perspective to generating service concepts and testing them in a chosen market. Finally both of them suggest ongoing development in cooperation with the end customers of the service. The following chapters are designed based on the steps defined by Tuulaniemi but also take into consideration the view provided by Moritz. The decision to base the framework on Tuulaniemi’s model was done due to its better suitability and adaptability to this thesis project.

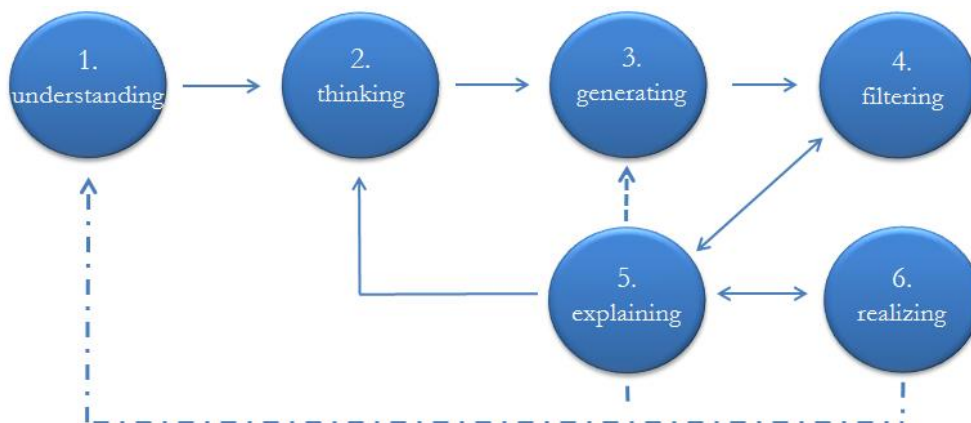


Figure 7. Service design process (Modified from Moritz 2005)

2.1.2 Determination of the need and expectations

In the beginning of every development and planning process project goals are defined and set. A service design process begins with defining a service idea story. The purpose of the story is to clarify what kind of benefits the service provides to the customers and to the organization providing the service. Usually the story will be written into a brief

where the goals of the design process are defined. The brief can consist of information such as who are the thought target groups, to which customer need the organization is aiming to respond, and what are the business and/or other goals of the service provider. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 132; Moritz 2005, 125.)

The aim of the brief is to clarify the project both for the service organization and the various parties involved in the service. It is created by the owner of the service idea and used to communicate the goals of the design process and the background information to the service designers and other parties involved in the process. A comprehensive design brief includes the following aspects:

- goal of the design process
- primary and secondary target groups of the service
- available information of the target groups
- business goals of the service
- portfolio provided by the organization
- mission, vision and business strategy of the organization
- information on similar services and organizations in the market
- extend, schedule and phases of the project
- budget of the project
- background information to the project

(Tuulaniemi 2011, 133.)

Pre-study should be conducted in order to understand the organization providing the service, especially if the design process is outsourced to a third party. Before engaging in the other phases of the process, the design team needs to have a thorough perception of the strategic and operational goals of the organization in general and linked to the service to be designed. If the service fits with the strategic goals of the organization and the customers according to estimates and customer researches are willing to pay an appropriate price for the service, it can be stated that the service is in line with the business goals. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 138.)

Organizations use benchmarking as a tool to learn from others and to develop their own operations. It is essential for the service provider and the project team to know both the organization itself and the market they operate in if they expect the service to succeed in the market. Benchmarking helps organizations to compare the strategic choices, products, services and operational patterns of the businesses in a certain field. One can also learn from the best practices and avoid making same the mistakes as one's competitors. Other tools like market segmentation or context analysis could also be used to gain service design thinking and defining the need and expectations for the project. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 138; Moritz 2005, 127.)

2.1.3 Customer understanding through research

One of the most critical phases of the design process is gaining customer understanding. The aim of the phase is to conduct a research on the target group's expectations, needs and goals. The focus of this phase is in collecting and analysing customer information that guides the design process. All services are created to match with the customers' needs and wished. Therefore it is crucial to notice and identify the end users' real needs and motives. According to Tuulaniemi (2011, 142) this is the only way a service can respond to the users' needs and succeed in the market.

For the service design it is typical to involve the end users in various manners in the different phases of the process. Observing the motives and needs in the end customers' everyday life helps the project team to create customer understanding. The service design regards customer research as a mean of gaining purposeful knowledge from the target groups. This knowledge can then be directly used in guiding and inspiring the design process. Acquiring well analysed information on the customers' behaviour and what creates value for them enables creating service concepts that the customers are willing to pay for. Such service concepts create potential value to the end customers and can be estimated with a profit expectation for the organization. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 143.)

Gaining customer understanding begins with analysing already existing and available data. The organization might have useful background data in possession from previous

market researches or customer satisfaction surveys, for example. It is useful to process the data in order to see if there is information on the customers that benefits the design process. Usually in a design process organization's 'silent knowledge' is more beneficial compared to quantitative knowledge. Silent knowledge can be gathered, for example, by interviewing the organization's personnel, surveys or workshops. Due to the nature of services and the importance of human interactions it is crucial to understand also the needs and expectations of the service provider's personnel regarding the service. With the personnel's full commitment one can secure a successful production of the service to customers. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 145.)

For collecting customer data Tuulaniemi (2011, 146) suggests the following methods to be used:

- available background information on customers
- interviews and various surveys
- observation both passive and interactive
- target group's involvement in planning and designing
- self-documentation methods
- online ethnographic researches
- customer profiles

2.1.4 Design

The actual design process begins with an ideation where the aim is to develop as many solution propositions to the targeted problem as possible. The initial focus in the problem should be in the big picture and the problem should be reached without too much criticism. Throughout the ideation process, the target of the ideation will be further detailed and focused. The nature of the ideation process can be either increasing (divergence) or decreasing (convergence). Usually the project team comes up with a great number of ideas first and after that some of the ideas will be "shot down" and / or combined with each other. The more ideas pop up, the more likely there are bits and pieces significant to the problem solving. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 182; Moritz 2005, 133.)

Once the ideation process is over, it is time to build the big picture of the service, the concept. In contrast to the ideation phase, the purpose of a service concept is to present an entire story of the service. The story contains greater entities instead of separate ideas concerning the service. A service concept is usually done with the help of a service journey map where the various touch points and service moments are presented. The aim of the service journey is to create a common understanding among the design team and the organization providing the service. The service journey should include aspects of the service revealing the nature of the service, how it will be produced, what is the customer need behind the service, and what does it require from the service provider. Not only is the service concept a bigger picture of the service but it also provides an opportunity to further develop it. The service concept can be considered as a map that leads the way where smaller details can be changed and modified. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 191.)

With the help of the story of the service, the service concept, the designers are able to create a prototype of the service. Prototyping is usually used for testing the service and finding out whether the developed service concepts function as expected. The aim of the prototype is to gain more understanding of the developed service and the aspects that are successful but also to notice those not suitable for it. Prototyping is an essential part of the service design and it is utilized throughout the service development phases. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 196.)

2.1.5 Production

After prototyping, a service should be taken into the market to be tested by the consumers and end customers. This phase of the service design is piloting, another mean to gain customer understanding on the developed service. During the piloting phase the service providers should obtain measurable results from the testers in order to understand possible bottle necks in the service production, make necessary changes in the training of the service personnel, and the service environment. Tuulaniemi (2011, 233-234) suggests the use of service pilots in tourism services. Tourism service pilots could be offered a limited time for a specific customer group in order to gain valuable feedback and development suggestions for the service.

Once the service concept has been tested in the market and the process improved based on the feedback received, the service process should be illustrated, the environments and contact points finalized, and finally the service is ready for launching. Essential in launching a service is that it is introduced to the target audience in a suitable environment, and in a way that is characteristic for them. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 240.)

2.1.6 Evaluation

When a service has been launched to the market it is time to evaluate the service design project and its results. The service providers should understand that the service and the service design are ongoing processes that need constant development and upgrading. It is crucial to examine the changing markets, consumer behaviour, and strong and weak signals in order to be able to answer to the customers' current and future needs. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 243.)

It could be challenging to calculate the profit of the invested capital due to the versatile and immaterial nature of the service. Measuring could be done if the key performance indicators (KPIs) have been planned well in advance to support and reflect the business challenges, such as the number of potential customers or sales, for example. (Tuulaniemi 2011, 243.)

2.2 Tourism customer behaviour

Due to the distinctive differences of the tourism products and services compared to other services, consumer behaviour in tourism differs a lot from other service fields (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 45). A model invented by Middleton and Clark (2001 in Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 46) attempts to explain the stimulus – response model of buying behaviour in tourism. In the model motivators and determinants of consumer buying behaviour are separated but it also emphasizes the role organizations can have in the consumer buying process. By this, Middleton and Clark regard effective use of communications channels.

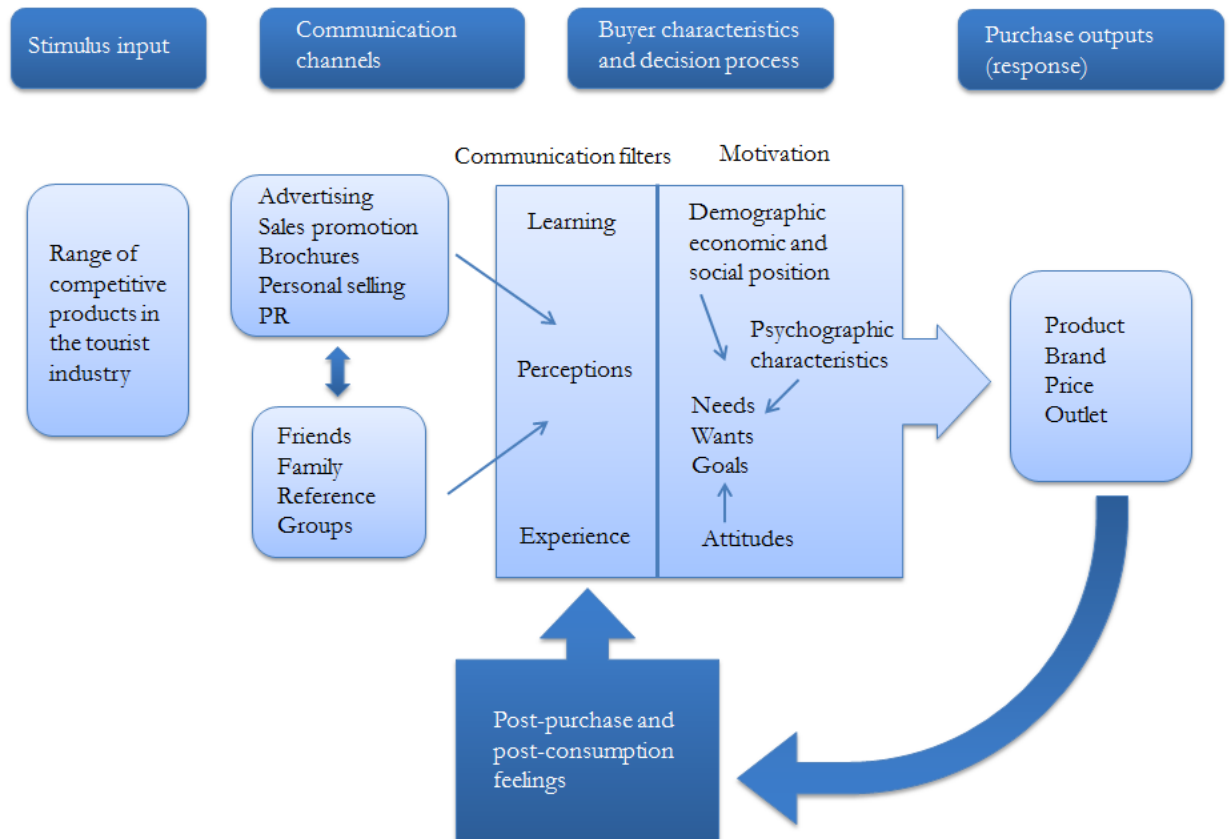


Figure 8. A stimulus-response model of tourism buying behaviour (Modified from Middleton & Clark 2001 in Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 46)

The figure above presents a situation with a wide range of competitive products and services in the tourism field. In order to stand out, a travel operator, travel agency or other tourism service provider needs to have a clear positioning and choose the most beneficial communication channels in order to reach a specific customer segment. Travel organizers should understand that correct positioning of the business and its services help the potential consumers to distinct them from competitors' offering. In tourism services provided are often quite similar; hotels offer a place to stay overnight, airlines take you from one place to another, and tour operators provide travel packages in the same destinations with the same sights. The difference can be found in the unique, intangible elements associated with the services provided by a travel organizer. These are the elements differentiating one organization from another. However, before any organization is able to correctly position their services in relation to the ones offered by their competitors, they need to have a good understanding of their customers' needs and wants. Firstly, the travel organizations should understand the importance of market segmentation, and study the segments they are interested in. Understanding the

market requires not only customer study but the organizations should also research competition and possible subsidy services. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 162.)

Travel organizations can also use positioning maps helping them to spot an opportunity in a specific marketplace. An example of a positioning map from the UK hospitality industry can be examined below. The positioning map was created right before the budget hotels market was developed.

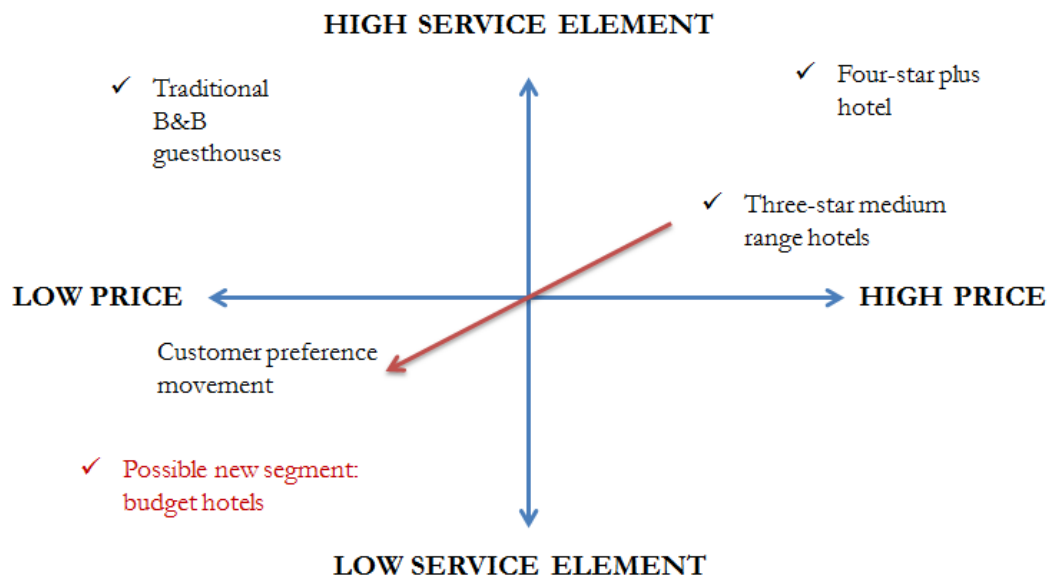


Figure 9. Positioning map of hospitality industry (Modified from Horner & Swarbrooke 1996 in Swarbrooke & Horner 2007)

Marketing both in tourism and other fields lies heavily on market segmentation. The traditional marketing theorists regard the following four criteria influencing on the market segmentation:

1. Demographic; age, sex, race
2. Geographical; where home is
3. Psychographic; personality and lifestyle
4. Behaviouristic; relationship with the product and/or service

Of these four criteria, the psychographic segmentation is the most influential in tourism purchase decisions. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 79.) Understanding one's segment and choosing appropriate, well timed messages in the most suitable communication channels could trigger the motivation in the potential customers.

2.3 Tourism customer satisfaction

In the tourism and service fields the key to achieve customer satisfaction is providing quality experiences. Gummerrsson (1988 in Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 211) divided quality definitions into two types depending on the nature of the quality provided. In his view there are technology-driven and product-oriented definitions, and on the other hand fitness-for-purpose definitions for quality. The fitness-for-purpose definitions are more customer oriented and market driven and therefore have a more specific focus on customer satisfaction and utility. Due to the customer oriented nature of the tourism services it can be stated that the fitness-for-purpose definition for quality is more appropriate for tourism.

It is crucial to keep in mind an important issue at the heart of quality in service businesses. As the fitness-for-purpose definitions stated, services are customer oriented. This brings us to examine the customers closer, and especially in tourism, every customer is different; each experiencing quality from their own perspective. Hence, it can be stated that quality is a perception in the minds of the customers. According to Swarbrooke & Horner (2007, 212) whether a tourist perceives a service as quality depends on the following factors:

- individual attitudes, expectations and previous experiences
- expected benefits from the purchase

These factors representing the needs and desires of the tourists are highly related to the motivators and determinants driving individuals to choose from one travel operator or destination, for example. In terms of a holiday, the expected benefits could include gaining status with a rather particular holiday or relaxation in a different ambient than home, for example. Individual desires and attitudes play a significant role in purchasing

tourism services; one might be looking for meeting the local people and experiencing “the real deal” of the destination while others seek for comfort, safe and security. In most cases what makes providing quality and satisfying customers difficult for the tourism service providers is that many tourists are seeking more benefits from their holidays, and their expectations could be conflicting or in extreme cases contradictory. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 212.)

Due to the complex nature of tourism and the various and even conflicting expectations and desires of tourists, a tourism product, for example a family holiday can be illustrated as a jigsaw. This kind of illustration explains well the complexity in providing quality and satisfying the tourism customers. In the quality jigsaw below all pieces represent service and product encounters that a family faces during a resort vacation. The pieces are sized differently but are all equally important and need to fit perfectly together in order to satisfy the family during their holiday. (Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 213.)

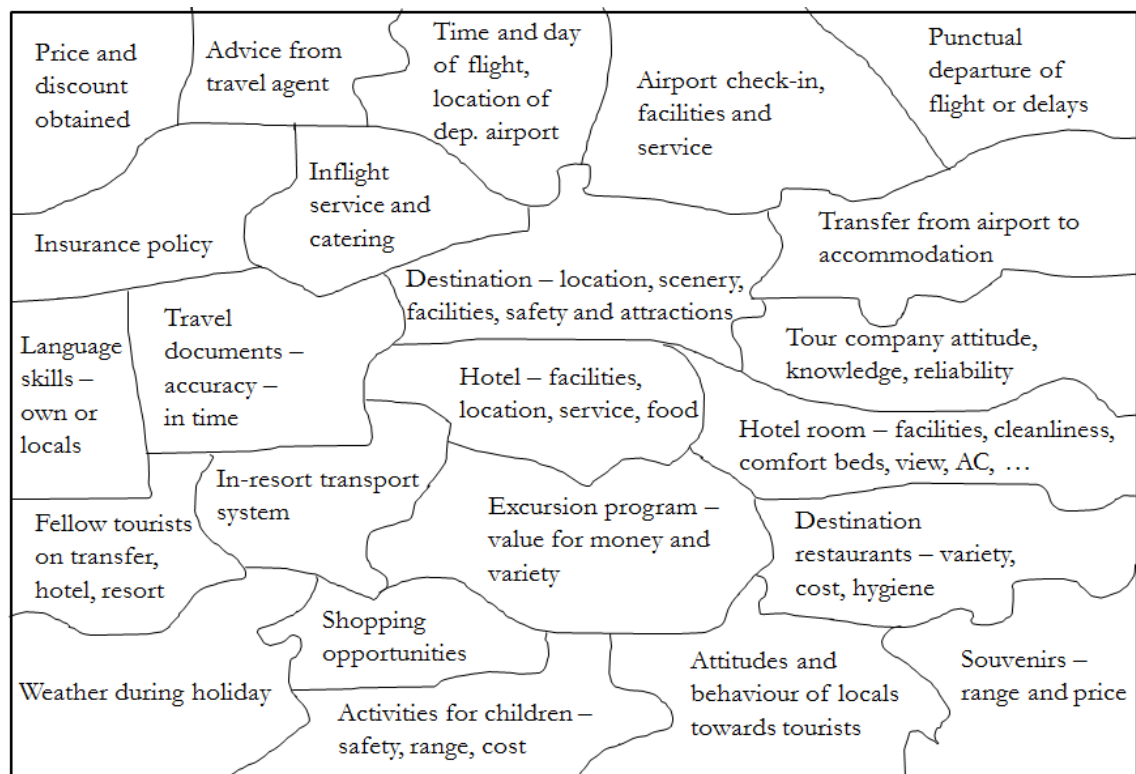


Figure 10. Quality jigsaw for a family vacation (Modified from Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 213)

As illustrated in the jigsaw (Figure 10), a tourism product has both tangible and intangible elements. Even though travel agencies and tour operators offer their customers services and intangible experiences, they are basically always connected with the tangible elements such as a bed at a hotel, a meal at a restaurant and so forth. These elements together with the role and participation of intermediaries and agents form a tourism product.

For the tourist there are several satisfaction factors determining the outcome of the process. The factors presented in the quality jigsaw concentrate in the experiences and expectations of the tourist during the holiday in a destination. However, the satisfaction process begins already from the first encounter with the tourism service provider. The first impression and service received from the tourism provider weigh a great deal at least in the purchasing process in case there are optional providers available. Apart from the expectations and attitudes of the tourists, also uncontrollable factors such as weather and strikes, for example, play a significant role in the satisfaction process.

Quality of the service received can be critical in the customer assessment of a hybrid service such as a tourism product that combines both tangible and intangible elements (Zeithaml et al. 2009, 111). Grönroos (2000, 81) describes the following seven criteria (Table 1) that define customer satisfaction of perceived service quality.

Table 1. Quality criteria for good perceived service quality (Modified from Grönroos 2000, 81)

Target of quality	Quality criterion
Professionalism and skills	Service provider has required skills to satisfy the customer
Attitudes and behaviour	Service employees are able to make the customer feel that they are interested in their needs
Accessibility and flexibility	Service provider is flexible to respond to customer demands and is available

Reliability and trustworthiness	Service provider is trusted and performs for customer's best interest
Service recovery	Service provider takes immediate action if something goes wrong and takes necessary action to make sure it will not happen again in the future
Serviscape	Physical environment and surroundings of the service support customer's positive experience
Reputation and credibility	Service provider stands for good values and performance

All fields of businesses are aiming to satisfy their customers. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 213-214) present three main reasons for the tourism service providers to provide quality and satisfy their customers:

1. Satisfied customers generate positive word of mouth and recommend the service to their friends and family – resulting in possible new customers
2. By satisfying customers the first time, service providers can create repeat customers that bring a steady income with no need for extra marketing expenditure
3. Complaints are expensive, time consuming, and bad for any organization's reputation

There are many models and techniques used in service industries to measure quality and customer satisfaction. Quite a few of them have been applied to tourism as well by various authors. Below figure 11 presents a simplified view of the process determining whether a tourist is satisfied or not.

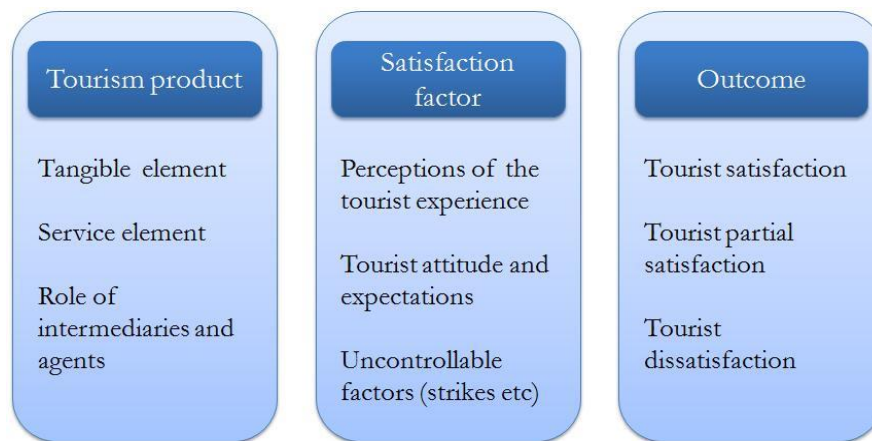


Figure 11. The tourist satisfaction process (Modified from Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 214)

Finally the outcome of the process is either tourist satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Swarbrooke and Horner (2007, 214) point out, however, that it is rather rare for all the pieces of the puzzle to fit perfectly together leading into totally satisfied customers. Therefore, it can be stated that the most common outcome of customer satisfaction in tourism is partial tourist satisfaction. Partial tourist satisfaction does not necessary mean that the tourism service provider has failed to satisfy the needs and wishes of the tourist customer but simply implies to the complexity of the tourism product. The uncontrollable factors such as weather, for example, are often beyond the power of the service provider. The service provider can, however, try and find solutions to overcome these uncontrollable situations in order to gain customer trust and hence improve the perception of service quality.

3 Methods

Throughout the project service design model has been used as a guideline for the tasks and steps taken during the process implementation. A combination of the two service design models provided by Tuulaniemi (2011) and Moritz (2005) has been adapted to suit the specific needs and purpose of this thesis project. Due to the advanced conceptualization state of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour in the beginning of this project, the suggested customer research as an initial step in the service design process was carried out after launching the pilot version of the service. Hence, this research was conducted to evaluate the service concept. The aim of the research was to collect feedback of the current service concept and gain more in-depth customer understanding for possible future development of the service.

In more detail, the aim of the research was to find out and analyse how the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour and Finland as a travel destination are perceived by Chinese tourists. To accomplish this, it was negotiated together with the commissioning company that the empirical research should be carried out from a qualitative viewpoint. Conducting qualitative interviews was regarded as the most suitable method to gain understanding of the target group and their expectations. Four China experts were interviewed based on their expertise and recommendations by the case company.

In addition to the qualitative interviews, part of the research was carried out in Porvoo, where the researcher participated in China training workshops organized for tourism professionals. The training workshops were organized by Culminatum Oy in cooperation with Finpro. Lectures during the training were held by China and travel professionals working for Finpro Asia. In each workshop there were altogether 15 participants from various tourism sectors including travel agencies, hotels and regional tourism offices.

The secondary data collection focused on Chinese tourists' travel habits and needs. In addition to gathering data about the target group, benchmarking was used to gain in-

formation about Route 88’s competitors in Finland. Figure 12 depicts the research design used in this thesis project. The data used to evaluate the concept was gathered from the benchmarking, qualitative interviews and China training workshops.

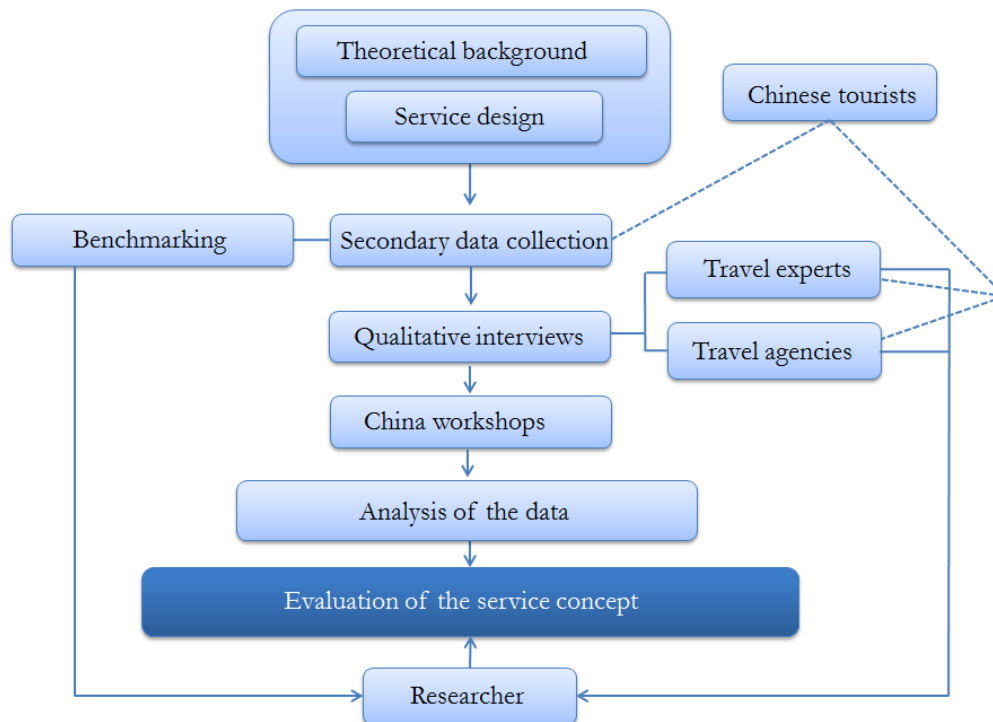


Figure 12. Research design

3.1 Secondary data

Secondary data consists of all the information collected and gathered by others for some other primary purpose. It can be used in a current project as a secondary function; existing data can be useful to find information that helps solve the research problem but also to better understand and explain the problem. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 91.) Bryman & Bell (2003, 212) refer to the secondary analysis as a technique to use other researchers’ previously collected data for one’s own research purposes. They point out the use of official statistics as one of the possible data sources for the secondary analysis. Using the official statistics may not be based solely on small samples but provide a more complete picture of the researched area.

Using secondary data naturally has advantages and disadvantages; the first and most significant advantage is saving time and money. Secondary data also provides a comparison instrument with which the primary data can be better understood. In many cases the research questions are best answered by combining secondary and primary data. However, every researcher should be careful with secondary data; it is often collected for another purpose, and therefore does not perfectly fit to each problem. Another important factor is to remember that the researcher is responsible for providing accurate information. Therefore, it is recommendable to collect secondary data only from qualitative and trustworthy sources. (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2005, 97-100.)

In this thesis project secondary data was used for building up the theoretical part of the process as well as understanding the current situation in Finland in terms of Chinese tourists. Benchmarking of the local travel agencies, agents and tour operators was conducted by using secondary data collected from online tourism information banks such as MEK.fi and Smal Afta. Altogether 34 competitors were examined and analysed (Attachments 4 and 5). Two of the main competitors, Kylin Travel Oy and Unitours Oy, are discussed in more detail in chapter 4.3. Also some of the decisions made by Route 88 in the early steps of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour design were justified and supported by the secondary data found in various information sources concerning Chinese tourists' travel habits and preferences.

3.2 Primary data

Primary data collection was carried out by interviewing professionals in the tourism field and participating in the China training workshops organized by Culminatum Oy Ltd in cooperation with Finpro. It was agreed together with the commissioning company that travel operators and China experts were the best source of relevant information considering this project. This especially because it was not possible to interview Chinese tourists themselves. Altogether four interviews were conducted with travel professionals and China experts. The selected interviewees were:

- Mr Jari Makkonen, Head of Trade Center China from Finpro
- Mrs Katri Dewald, former employee of Route 88 and China expert

- Mrs Li Xia, Market Analyst Finpro Shanghai
- Mr Markku Lindroos, owner of Traveller Oy and Asia expert

The interviewees have different backgrounds and positions in the tourism field as well as special China expertise. Hence, they represent a comprehensive and versatile sample providing different points of view to the project. It would have also been beneficial to interview tour operators and travel agencies operating in China. However, the researcher believes that especially the insights on the topic received from Mrs. Li Xia somewhat compensate this need.

3.2.1 Informants

Primary data was collected to better understand the target audience and to find out why there was no interest in the tourism service offered.

The group for the interviews was chosen based on the contact list of Chinese travel agencies of the commissioning company as well as their connections with travel professionals experienced in collaboration with Chinese tourists and agencies. This group of informants was chosen because travel agencies and tour operators are in close contact with tourists and presumably are aware of their travel needs and expectations; they are the party fulfilling tourists' needs and wishes by offering them various services and promoting travel destinations. The researcher also wanted to include in the informant group China experts familiar with the target audience of the Angry Birds Fan Tour: Chinese tourists and especially families.

An invitation to participate in the research was sent via ZOHO Campaigns to the professional contacts of the commissioning company (see Attachment 1) on August 15th 2013. The invitation contained specific information about the study and resources needed for it. It clarified the target group for the interviews, travel agencies and experts with knowledge and experience of Chinese tourists, and explained the interview process. Altogether 392 emails were sent via ZOHO Campaigns with 387 delivered and 129 uniquely opened (33.3 per cent). One phone interview was scheduled as a result to the invitation letter email. Due to the limited number of the responses, the researcher

sent personalized emails to 19 selected Chinese tour operator contacts received from cooperation with Finpro China.

Again lack of interest and commitment in participating in the research from China constrained the researcher to go through the local contacts and propose interviews with them. Because of this, verifying the suitability of the respondents for the study was very efficient; the choices could be discussed with the commissioning company while selecting contacts for possible interviews. Five more personalized emails were sent to selected local contacts and two interviews scheduled for mid-September and early October. Finally, also an interview with the market analyst from Finpro Shanghai, Mrs Li Xia, was scheduled for early October as the researcher was informed of her brief work related stay in Finland. Out of the four interviews, one was carried out as a phone conversation whereas the other interviewees were met in person. All the interviews except for the one with Mrs. Li Xia were carried out in Finnish due to the respondents' nationality and preferences.

3.2.2 Qualitative interviews

Bingham and Moore (1959 in Daymon & Holloway 2002, 167) define qualitative interviewing with the term “conversation with purpose” where the researcher and the informant become “conversational partners”. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2007, 78) explain the conversational nature of qualitative interviews by stating that the distinction between the interviewed and the interviewee is not necessary evident. However, there is always a purpose for the interview and depending on the interview type, usually some form of structure as well. According to Daymon and Holloway (2002, 166) qualitative interviews should “at their best, be conducted in a collaborative fashion so that the interviewees are able to articulate in the topics”.

The possibility to gain perspective from informants with control over the interview is one of the advantages of semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured interviews are usually conducted with an interview guide focusing on the issues and / or topic areas to be covered. The sequence of the questions and the process of each interview may

vary quite a bit depending on the responses of the informants. The aim of the interview guide is to ensure the collection of similar data from all interviewees. (Daymon & Holloway 2002, 171.)

The interview process began with careful planning; an interview guide with ten questions was created to support the semi-structured interviews and to ensure covering relevant topics when meeting with the interviewees. Special attention was paid to the project objectives: interview themes were created around the objectives to secure achieving the research goals. A pilot version of the interview guide was evaluated and commented by the commissioning company which resulted in adjusting and specifying some of the questions to improve the level and depth of responses. Finally, under some themes probing in-depth questions were added to the interview guide (see Attachment 2) in case any of the conversations needed to be boosted or led to a another direction. Although the structured interview guide was created, the aim was to carry out open conversations where all ideas and opinions are welcomed and appreciated. Before meeting or calling the interviewees, the interview guide was sent to them via email with a link to the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour on Route 88's web site. The researcher encouraged the interviewees to take a moment to familiarize themselves with the travel service if they had no prior knowledge of it.

One of the four interviews was carried out as a 40 minutes phone conversation on 22nd August with Mr. Jari Makkonen from Finpro. The rest of the interviews were scheduled for September 11th, 30th and October 3rd. They took place in the centre of Helsinki, two of them in cafés and one in Traveller Oy's office in Kasarmikatu 26. The researcher spent from 40 minutes to an hour and a half with the interviewees and actively took notes during the discussions. There was no need to record the interviews because of the nature of the meetings and the active participation of the interviewees. All of them encouraged the researcher to contact them in case something was unclear or new ideas or questions came up.

3.2.3 China workshops

In addition to the interviews, the researcher was encouraged to participate in China training workshops for tourism professionals by the commissioning company. These workshops were organized in Porvoo, on 29th August and 5th October by Culminatum Oy Ltd in cooperation with Finpro among other organizations. The workshops were a part of the European Union funded TouNet project focusing on tourism development in co-operation in southern Finland and the Baltic region. The aim of the China workshops was to provide companies with knowledge and expertise of Chinese outbound tourism; the needs, expectations and habits of Chinese tourists as well as to help Finnish travel related companies to market and sell their products and services to Chinese customers. Tourism professionals from different sectors took part in the workshops; in both workshops there were 15 representatives of travel agencies, hotels and local tourism offices.

In the first workshop the focus was on the Chinese culture and customer understanding. Mrs. Eija Tynkkynen and Mrs. Maarit Ahola from Finpro shared their experiences and knowledge about China and Chinese tourists. For the second workshop all the participants had prepared a product card to be presented to the others during the session. This was extremely useful for this thesis project as it enabled the researcher to receive comments and ideas on the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour from the tourism professionals participating as well as the organizing party of the workshops. Due to personal matters, the researcher was not able to take part in the third workshop about sales channels, partnering and marketing for Chinese customers. However, materials of this session were provided and used for this project. The third session was partly held by Mrs. Li Xia from Shanghai with whom the researcher met for an interview later on and thus questions regarding the training material could be discussed.

3.3 Data analysis

A data analysis model providing a basic guide for the content analysis process by Taylor-Powell & Renner (2003) was used to analyse the collected data. Their model can be adapted to different kind of researches and purposes and therefore was suitable for this

thesis project. The analysis process contains five steps (see Figure 13). First of all, a good understanding of the data needs to be gained. This was obtained by going through the interview notes over and over again. First impressions of the data were written down during this phase of the analysis process. The next step dealt with focusing on the analysis; at this stage the purpose of the evaluation and the research goal were reviewed. As suggested by in the data analysis model, a few key questions that the analysis should answer to were identified. At this stage the analysis was focused both on individual and question approaches. This way the interview data was viewed both as one group of responses to a specific question and as separate individual cases with no linkages to other.

After reviewing the focus, the data was categorized by identifying the themes created in the interview planning phase. The themes, as mentioned before, derived from the project objectives of this thesis process:

- Perceived view of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept
- Finland as a travel destination
- Chinese tourists expectations from holidays
- Reasons for the failure of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour
- Suggestions and recommendations

In the light of the data gathered from the interviews and workshops, Chinese tourists' expectations from holidays were considered from a wider view than planned. This was also because there was no way to tell what they would expect especially from the Angry Birds fan tour. Suggestions and recommendations were also categorized into a separate theme as there were quite a few of them. At this stage of the analysis ideas, concepts, behaviours, interactions, phrases used etc. were coded and organized into coherent categories which summarize and bring meaning to the transcript notes.

After the categorization the fourth step was to identify patterns and connections within and between categories. During this phase, the researcher assessed the relative im-

portance of the different themes and variations in the categories and tried to find relationships between the categories. Finally, the fifth step concerned the interpretation of the data and bringing it all together. The researcher developed a list of key points and important findings from the interviews and compared them with the information received from the China workshops and benchmarking. From all the data gathered, conclusions and final interpretations were made to answer the project objectives.

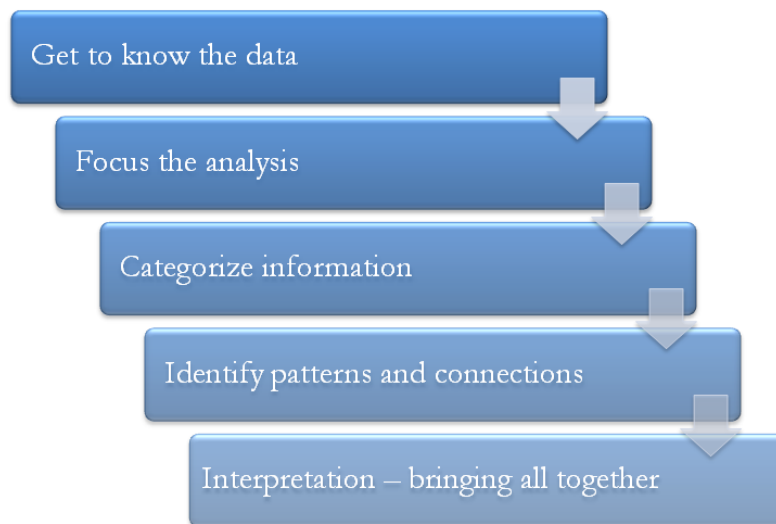


Figure 13. Qualitative data analysis (Modified from Taylor-Powell & Renner 2003)

3.4 Limitations

The number of interviews poses a limitation to the study. The researcher was expecting and hoping for more responses for the invitation letters, especially from Chinese travel agencies and tour operators. It must be noted, that the results of this research are experiences and opinions of China and travel experts, not Chinese tourists themselves and therefore should be regarded as such. It would have been beneficial to gain first-hand information from the target group of the travel service. However, the sources of information are considered trustworthy and reliable and the commissioning company has high respect for their expertise. All this taken into consideration, the final results of the study should be considered indicative rather than conclusive.

4 Project description

In this chapter this thesis project is described and discussed in more detail. In the beginning the project manager's role in the service design project is explained and the various project participants named. Furthermore, the timing of the project is opened up and finally the chapter presents actions taken during the project, adapted to the service design model. The final outcome of the design process, the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour is presented in the end of this chapter followed by the concept evaluation.

4.1 Project overview

The project manager's role in the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour project began in April 2013 as an assistant for the partner and service planner of Route 88, Piia Tiilikainen. The commissioning company and Rovio Entertainment Ltd had negotiated an agreement on an Angry Birds Fan Tour concept in Finland and the Nordic countries. Route 88 had created an outline for the concept and negotiated with partners in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark for their cooperation in the implementation of this tourism service.

The project manager stepped into the design process right before launching the pilot of the service. At that stage, the Angry Birds fan tour was a concept needed to be put into a story in order to attract the target audience. This was done in cooperation with Piia Tiilikainen. In addition to the co-creation of the final concept, the project manager was responsible for creating marketing material for the travel package. To clarify the project manager's role and tasks during the project, Figure 14 below represents the process of this thesis project.

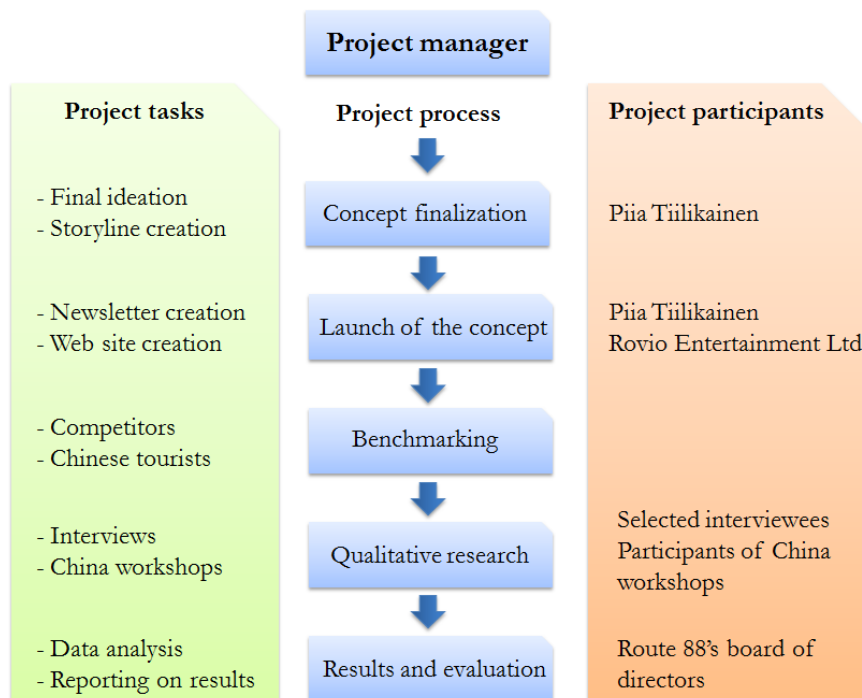


Figure 14. Process flow with project tasks and participants

Due to the advanced stage of the service design process at the beginning of the cooperation with Route 88, in this thesis project the project manager examines the steps taken at the early stage of developing the Angry Birds fan tour concept through the service design model by Tuulaniemi (2011). The main task of the project manager was to evaluate the co-created travel concept.

This project was executed in cooperation with Piiia Tiilikainen from Route 88. She provided the project manager with expertise, knowledge and support. The project manager was also in touch with Yiming Hu from Route 88 and Nadja Ripatti from Traveller Oy who provided translations in Chinese and Russian languages. Rovio Entertainment Ltd approved the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept with the storyline as well as the marketing material.

At the planning stage of this project, the researcher aimed to include Chinese tourists as project participants. They were hoped to take part voluntarily and actively during an Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour. The target group was expected to engage with the project in terms of openness towards the study and the presence of the researcher during the journey.

As the initial plan for the research was dismissed, the project needed new participants for the evaluation of the concept. Travel agencies and China experts both in Finland and China experienced in cooperation with Chinese tourists were invited to participate in the project and the research.

The travel package, the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour was launched in early May, right in time for the summer season 2013. The estimated time for the research was expected to take some time due to the uncertainty of Chinese tourists purchasing the service and the willingness of the tourists to participate in this project. Lack of tourist participation in the service postponed the research to the end of August until the beginning of October.

In mid-August the project manager was also presented with an opportunity to participate in a China training in the end of August and beginning of September. The timeline of the project together with the project steps and tasks is presented in the project schedule (see Attachment 3).

The following project tasks were executed by examining the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour travel concept and comparing its evolvement to the service design process. The five main elements of service design described by Tuulaniemi (2011, 130-131) are referenced in this project and further named as tasks of the process.

Definition		Research		Design		Production		Evaluation
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Begin	Pre-study	Customer understand ing	Strategic planning	Ideation, conceptual ization	Prototype	Piloting	Launching	Continuous development
Understanding & Modeling: end customers, market, business, implementation		Designing solutions:		Demarcation and development- testing – development phases		Defining service and implementation: development in stages & further improvements		
Defining need and goal for the process	Current stage and goals, analysis of the market	Customers' needs and wishes; conscious and unconscious	Defining strategic positioning, designing business and earning models	Based on collected data ideation of solutions, co-creation with stakeholders	Testing service concepts, identifying critical elements, channel strategies	Pilots in market, development of service acc. to feedback	Implementation to market, Launching the service	Development of service based on received feedback, from development phase to production
Justification and description of the design challenge	Benchmarking competitors in Finland	Benchmarking Chinese tourists' habits and needs	Specifying org.'s strategic goals	Development of the service concept, story to the concept and creation of marketing materials		Launch of the pilot service in the market, conducting research on the piloting version		Evaluation of the service concept Future recommendations and suggestions

Figure 15. Service design process and conducted tasks (Modified from Tuulaniemi 2011, 130-131)

The figure above presenting the service design process was partly introduced in Chapter 2 (Design phases). The sections in the bottom of the picture represent the work done during this thesis project. To clarify the chronological sequence of the tasks, the actual steps taken during the project are presented with two colours; orange and green. As discussed before, this thesis project began with the late concept development and launching the pilot version of the service. The work starting from this point is presented in the green boxes. However, the project manager was engaged with the earlier tasks of the service design (presented in orange) in terms of benchmarking the competitors and Chinese tourists' travel habits and needs. The following chapters explain each task in more detail.

4.2 Determination of the need and expectations

The number of Chinese tourists in Finland has been constantly increasing the last few years (MEK 2013a). Route 88 Ltd is a start-up destination management company

providing premium travel services for this increasing tourist population. The need for a fan tour tourism service came from the lack of similar service offering in Finland. The theme for the fan tour was found in the increasing popularity of Angry Birds game and subsidiary products in China.

The goal of the service design process was to develop an Angry Birds Fan Tour concept during spring 2013 and provide it in Route 88's tour offering. The primary target group of the service are Chinese tourists, especially families. Russian and tourists from other nationalities are considered the secondary target groups of the service. The aim of the new service was to attract tourists from abroad to Finland and the Nordic countries with Route 88. The commissioning company expected to awake interest with this travel concept and benefit from it business wise.

4.3 Benchmarking travel agencies

In this thesis project a secondary research was conducted in form of benchmarking to help evaluate the travel package concept. The benchmarking will focus on two aspects: travel agencies in Finland targeting Chinese tourists and Chinese tourists in general. By examining other travel agencies and operators serving Chinese customers the researcher aimed to understand the competitive field Route 88 is operating in. Information on Chinese tourists on the other hand is extremely valuable for the evaluation of the concept and providing further recommendations and suggestions to the commissioning company.

In contrary to what Route 88 thought when starting the business, there are quite a few operators in the tourism field targeting Chinese customers in Finland, both small and larger scale organizations. Especially the number of small Chinese operators in the capital region was surprisingly high. Many of them operate in other fields of business and provide tourism services next to the core business. Hence, such travel agencies and tour operators are not well known among Finnish tour operators. They, however, take advantage of their networks and connections in China and thus are considered trustworthy operators among Chinese tourists. This chapter will have a closer look on two of Route 88's major competitors: Kylin Travel International Oy and Unitours Oy.

More in-depth and detailed competitor information can be found in the Attachments. Attachment 4 depicts an analysis of destination management companies in Finland marketing their services in China (Smal Afta) whereas Attachment 5 includes a few more competitors, with a special focus on small Chinese travel agencies operating in the capital region (MEK 2013c). Competitors already presented in the Smal Afta analysis are excluded from the analysis found in Attachment 5.

Kylin Travel International Oy is a Helsinki-based travel agency focusing on the outbound Chinese mainland government officials, business executives and private groups. Their promise is to provide high degree credibility, dedicated services and professional, quality Nordic tours for their Chinese customers. They claim their advantages to be experience, professional quality, flexible operations, and high level of commitment in terms of contact with their customers. Same as Route 88, Kylin travel aims to be a one-stop service provider that takes care of the entire holiday once the customer lands in Finland. (Kylin Travel a.)

All in all, Kylin Travel is very similar to Route 88 both in their value proposition and travel packages. In fact, some of their package tours are almost alike when compared with the tours selection of Route 88. Both companies offer tours covering the Nordic countries, Finland and Lapland but also have started to focus on the Baltic countries. With the new special focus of Route 88 in theme travel, such as the Angry Birds fan tour and health travel, for example, the company can gain competitive advantage over Kylin Travel that concentrates on the more traditional, secure tours and rely on their existing network. (Kylin Travel b.)

Unitours Oy is a private owned Finnish corporation operating both in Finland and in Beijing and Shanghai in China. They claim to have comprehensive experience in tourism field which has helped them to acquire a good understanding of different cultures. The company offers handling services in the Nordic countries and the Baltic region, similar to Route 88 and Kylin Travel. Unitours' main market sectors include China, Finland, the Baltic countries, Russia and the Nordic countries. In addition to organiz-

ing group and individual travel packages, Unitours arranges customer meetings, seminars, and other events to, for example, provide networking possibilities for their customers. As a competitive advantage when compared to Route 88, Unitours has managed to create a wide network in China ensuring the company incoming customers. Also their presence in China with Chinese personnel able to react to every customer question and need needs to be considered as a strength. (Unitours 2013.)

4.4 Understanding Chinese tourists

In recent years China has become one of the leading countries in outbound tourism. There is an opportunity also for Route 88 to gain a share of this travel boom. There are some issues travel service providers should consider when aiming to attract and satisfy tourists from China. MEK (2013b) provides following essential points associated with Chinese tourists' needs and wishes.

Needs and motives

Chinese people see travelling as an opportunity to get away from stressful work life associated with a strong social pressure to succeed. Chinese tourists coming from crowded and polluted cities experience the European cities spacious and clean. Blue sky is regarded as a symbol for fresh air and clean environment. The peace and clean nature in Finland are attributes worth highlighting for Chinese. (MEK 2013b.)

Trips to foreign countries are often indications of success and wealth for others. Chinese aim to gain respect from friends and relatives by visiting well-known travel destinations. For those travelling to Europe especially for the first time status and recognition are powerful motivators. Chinese expect unforgettable experiences and thus long lasting memories is considered a requirement for a successful travel. (MEK 2013b.)

Chinese people are effective also on holidays; they usually choose destinations that are easily combined with others or that satisfy the various needs of the travel; such as nature, history, culture, and modern life. The travel program should be versatile and contain elements that bring them respect. Even though Chinese appreciate peace and quiet, they do not want to get bored. (MEK 2013b.)

Safety and stability are also important criteria in choosing a travel destination. Chinese are often worried about possible drawbacks, such as strikes and thefts that could happen during the travel. (MEK 2013b.)

Considerations for services

Hospitality is an important part of Chinese culture and it is expected of the chosen travel destination too. Chinese are used to having their wishes fulfilled and habits known in their home country. It is good to keep in mind that the Chinese culture prefers indirect communication and conflicts are avoided to the very last in order to offer everybody the possibility to ‘maintain their faces’. Negative feelings should not be shown and avoid political conversations. Natural and friendly behaviour is a key to success, especially in customer service. (MEK 2013b.)

Flexibility and quickness is expected from travel destinations and services because for Chinese it is normal to change plans even in the last minute. However, they do not appreciate waiting. Customer service in restaurants and hotels should run fast and smoothly. It is recommendable that the travel organizers have precise information on the reception capacity of restaurants and hotels. Chinese tourists want to be treated equally and therefore it is crucial to perform openly. (MEK 2013b.)

Accommodation is chosen in a pragmatic manner: price must be right and location suitable for planned activities. Chinese are price sensitive also to other services besides accommodation; information is shared actively in social media. Therefore, together with service details travel organizers are advised to inform service pricing as well. Chinese tourists, however, are willing to pay well for a program that brings significant added value. (MEK 2013b.)

Chinese tourists are open and curious to try western food delicacies and dishes. The curiosity usually ends with tasting and they prefer to eat Chinese food during their travel. The need to retreat to their own culture stays independent on age or social group. Cultural needs besides food preferences should be taken into consideration also

in hotels; hot water and tea could be served with meals and a cooking possibility provided in hotel rooms. (MEK 2013b.)

Chinese tourists tend to have limited English skills which makes them rather observers of the European way of living. They should be provided at least with a guide including maps and main sightseeing spots translated into good Chinese. Usually Chinese tourists are seeking for a well-trained Chinese speaking travel guide who is able to give tips for free time activities. (MEK 2013b.)

Interesting activities

Chinese people love to take part in activities in groups. Even though individuality is being emphasized more and more in China, the needs for individuality are not referring to the western way of understanding individualism. Chinese tourists want their travel services and activities to be tailored especially for the needs of the group. Taking photos is an essential part of travelling for Chinese tourists. They like to photograph scenery, tourist attractions, themselves and friends for the fun of it but also to share their experience in social media. Social media and internet are used a lot for planning the travel but also during it; hotels are expected to have a free Wi-Fi. Another essential activity for Chinese during holidays is shopping. Taxation on luxury products and brands is lower in Europe than in China, and also the certainty of authentic products attracts Chinese to shop. They also like to buy local products as souvenirs, especially if the product comes with a story; for example how it is produced and used in Finland and how it is related to the Finnish culture. (MEK 2013b.)

Chinese tourists also appreciate culture and history, together with a Chinese speaking travel guide trips could be organized to the Finnish nature or to get to know Finnish traditions. Chinese rarely want to try physically challenging activities; they rather take part in adventure experiences such as reindeer and husky safaris, lake cruises and other activities organized in smaller groups. Newest trends among Chinese tourists are hunting, camping, boating and other light sports activities that can be organized for groups. (MEK 2013b.)

Marketing for Chinese tourists

Tell a story; Chinese tourists are interested in culture, history and local traditions. Providing them with stories about destinations open up the local lifestyle and awake interest. They are very interested in the Finnish way of living and expect the travel guide to tell funny local stories that make the visit unforgettable. (MEK 2013b.)

Growth in fan travel; many Chinese tourists choose their holiday destination based on a famous person or idol. In fan travel the footsteps of, for example, well-known people from high or popular culture are followed. Locations or brands connected with popular Chinese are also of interest for Chinese tourists. (MEK 2013b.)

Products and services should be named in Chinese and that has a nice tone and awakes their interest. Pictures and videos could also be used to ease communication. Chinese tourists but also travel organizers love to search and share picture in the internet. They can be regarded as one of the most important selling material for travel organizers. Recommendations from other Chinese tourists are also important when marketing a destination. (MEK 2013b.)

Emphasize romanticism; idyllic small cities and beautiful lake side view are perfect stages for romantic moments that Chinese tourists love to commemorate with pictures. Honeymoon packages for young couples and tailored anniversary packages for longer married couples are considered interesting special services. A well planned and themed travel program is always attractive. (MEK 2013b.)

4.5 Designing the travel package concept

As discussed in the beginning of the chapter, the initial travel package concept had been designed by the commissioning company as the project manager hopped on board. The concept consisted of a 13 days Angry Birds fan tour in the four Nordic countries; starting with five days in Finland, two days in Sweden followed by four days in Norway and finally two days in Denmark. An itinerary for the tour had been designed with Angry Birds surprises and details throughout the journey; upon order, for example, all customers would receive an Angry Birds email welcoming them with a

“we are excited you are coming” message. The travel package included transportation during the tour, excluding flights from and to China, three to four star accommodations with breakfast, a Chinese speaking guide during the entire tour, entrance tickets and sightseeing tours in all destinations and Angry Birds gifts and giveaways. The initial concept and itinerary can be found in Attachment 6.

The project manager’s task was to bring the concept alive by creating a story of the tour to be published in the company’s web site and Chinese newsletter. The story writing process began from examining the initial concept and itinerary. From here the project manager began to familiarize herself with the tour destinations and tried to find interesting facts and attractive ways to present them to the target audience. It was important to keep in mind what kind of activities and attractions would be interesting for Chinese tourists, especially families travelling with children. The Angry Birds theme needed to be included also in the parts of the tour abroad where Angry Birds presence might not be as noticeable as in Finland.

Finally, the fan tour needed a name and an appealing headline. The project manager had a few suggestions which were discussed with the commissioning company. After tasting different options, the travel package was named the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour. Together with the name, also the ingress for the storyline highlighted the Nordic countries as destinations of the tour; “Experience the exciting northern route with Angry Birds!” Once the story writing process was finished, the outcome revised and approved by the commissioning company, the project manager sent the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour storyline (see Attachment 7) to be translated into Chinese and Russian.

The next steps included creating marketing material in form of a newsletter to be sent to Route 88’s contacts and publishing the tour in the company’s website. For this task, the project manager received a password for the picture bank of Rovio Entertainment Ltd and began to scan through the vast selection of Angry Birds graphics. Picture banks of Visit Finland, Visit Sweden, Visit Norway and Visit Denmark were also exam-

ined and considered during the process of selecting proper pictures for the tour. Before releasing the material in public, the content and layout were approved by Rovio Entertainment Ltd. This part of the design process resulted in an email campaign (see Attachment 8) sent out on May 3rd to Route 88's partners and contacts via ZOHO Campaigns and launching the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour in Route 88's website (Figure 16) and promoting it on the company's Facebook page (Figure 18).

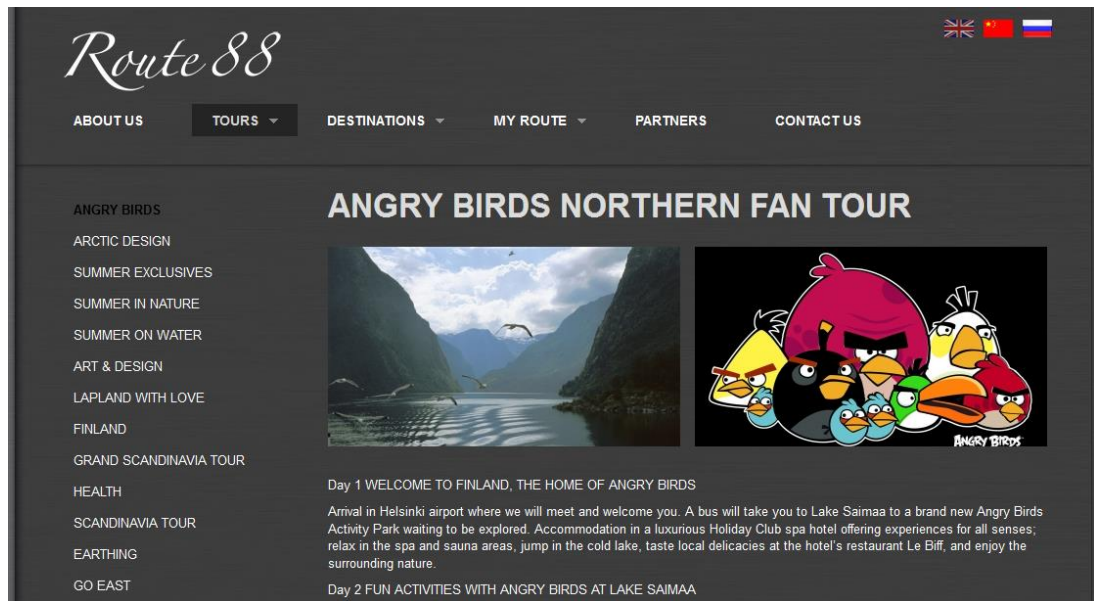


Figure 16. Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour view on Route 88's web site

Route 88 has made it possible to share tours with friends on Facebook from their web site. The figure below (Figure 17) presents the introduction of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour when sharing and posting it on one's Facebook wall.

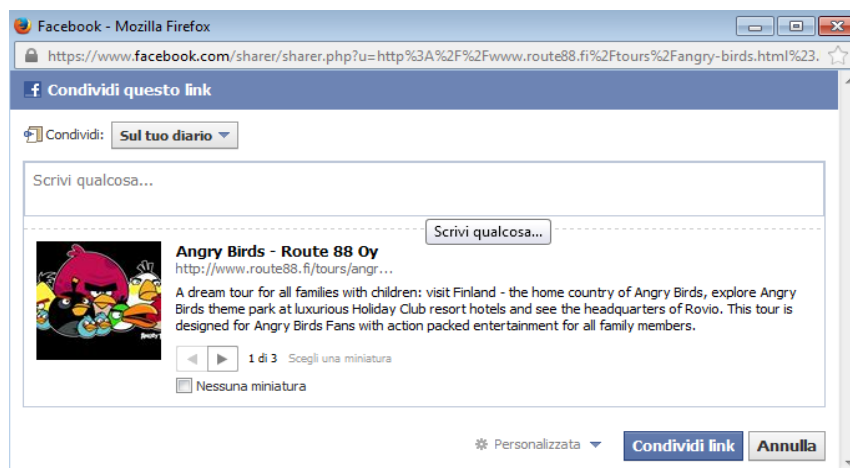


Figure 17. View to the Facebook share link on Route 88's web site



Figure 18. Promotional material on Route 88's Facebook page

4.6 Evaluation of the concept

The final step of service design and this thesis project is the evaluation of the travel concept. The evaluation of the concept is combined with the research task usually included at an earlier stage in service design (customer understanding through research, chapter 2.1.3). Since no customer research was conducted before creating the service concept, benchmarking the target group's needs and expectations was used as one criteria in the concept evaluation.

The research conducted aimed to find out and analyse how Chinese tourists perceive Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour and Finland as a travel destination. Objectives to support achieving this aim were set as described in chapter 3 (Methods). Due to the lack of Chinese tourists participating in the fan tour, as well as other tours provided by the commissioning company, the research results partly answer to possible reasons of

overall failure in obtaining customers. These results are discussed in the discussion part of the report (Chapter 5) and a SWOT analysis for the company can be found in Attachment 9 as the evaluation focuses on the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept. The research focused on the big picture of the fan tour concept and Finland as a travel destination due to the extent of the journey. In order to examine the concept, the results and evaluation of the concept are presented according to the project objectives. Suggestions and recommendations for future development are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.6.1 Perceptions of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour

In theory, the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour could have been a successful travel package. As it was proved by the secondary research on Chinese tourists' travel habits and expectations, there is a growing market for fan travel as Chinese tourists are eager to see the origin of their idolized persons or products. Services provided for them should be named in Chinese in order to awake interest and to maintain that excitement a good way to promote one's offering is telling a story about the destinations, local lifestyle and other aspects of the service. Taking these notes into consideration, the initial concept launched was designed according to the target groups possible wishes and expectations. (MEK 2013b.)

Thoughts and ideas gathered from the interviews and workshops, however, were somewhat controversial. Of course, it must be noted that these are opinions of individual persons and hence should be regarded as such to some extent. For example, according to one interviewee the concept seems to be "made up, artificial and forced" and that person does not see any future for it. Reason for such reaction could be rather personal as two of the interviewees declared that "personally do not find the theme interesting". It was mentioned though that as an adventure journey there are "enough activities and happening for the Chinese taste". According to one interviewee "the product is not known in China and therefore people do not know what to experience, and hence might be sceptical". In contrast to these thoughts, the travel concept received positive feedback in the China training workshops where the initial reaction to the fan tour was very optimistic: "great product! Meets the demand". From all the comments

received about the theme it can be stated that people have different opinions and different tastes. That, however, should not affect too much on current or future service design processes as they are designed for a specific target audience somewhat different from the interviewees in terms of cultural background and personal interests.

The target audience of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour was questioned by one interviewee. It was discussed whether instead of targeting families Route 88 should focus on promoting this travel package to students and young adults who are playing and interacting with Angry Birds. The interviewee believes that children in China do not have time for Angry Birds from all the hobbies and school, and was questioning if they are even that excited about Angry Birds. Children's power over the "tiger parents" to pursue them to travel to Finland was also questioned during the discussion.

The itinerary and destinations of the travel package concept were seen in a more positive light all in all. The destinations were altogether seen interesting, as "there are enough of them". Some of the interviewees suggested that there could be even more of them. It was noted, as relieved also in the benchmarking and learned during the China training, that having many activities and places to visit is a positive feature, especially because these experiences can be shared in real time with friends and family in social media.

Some of the interviewees thought, however, that the destinations and attractions of the fan tour were "too small". The Angry Birds Activity Park in Saimaa and Särkänniemi amusement park, for example, are "nothing compared to the Disneyland in Paris or in the US". It was questioned whether Chinese families would "travel all the way to Finland to see a small park where parents have nothing to do".

The promotional material was considered quite nice, explaining well the course of the journey and giving insight on what was going to happen during the fan tour. Nevertheless, one of the interviewees thought that Route 88 should focus on well-known brands in China instead of promoting Moomins or Marimekko due to the unfamiliarity of these brands abroad. It was also mentioned that there could be more pictures in the

web site, as it “was nice to see children interacting with Angry Birds and the activities in the pictures present in the newsletter”. Pictures would also “lighten the heavy text part of the web site” and it “would be easier for people to understand what kind of experiences can be expected from the fan tour”.

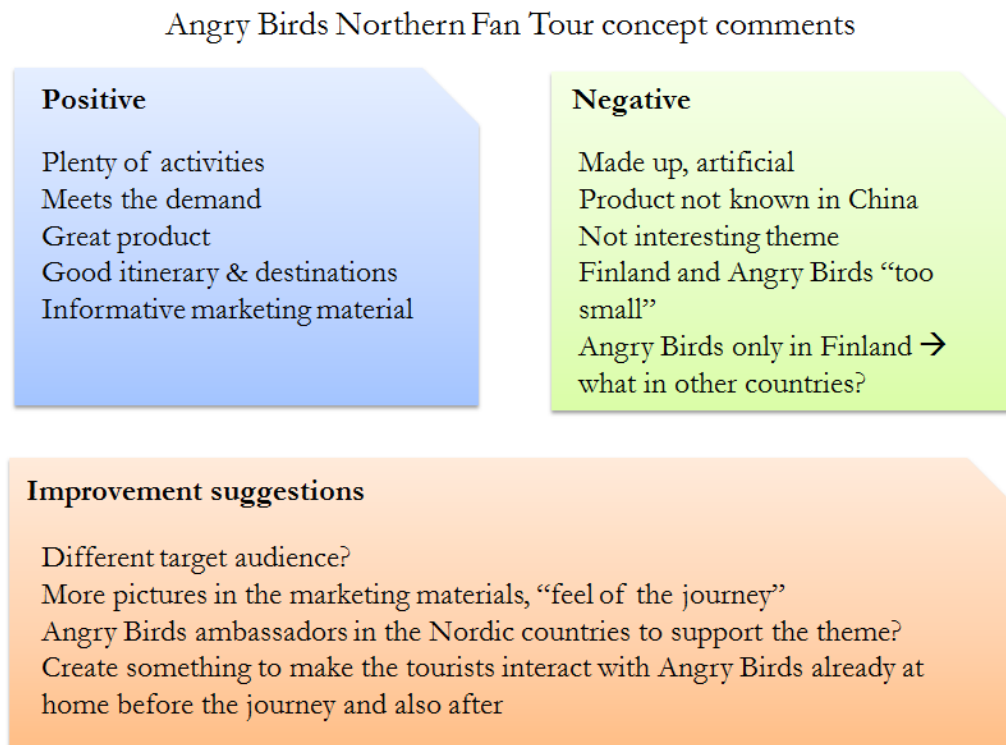


Figure 19. Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept comments summarized.

4.6.2 Finland as a travel destination

Responses to this subject were, if possible, even more controversial. Depending on with whom the researcher was discussing this theme, thoughts varied from “Finland is not known at all in China” to “Chinese people love the peace and quiet of Finland”. Here, again, it must be noted, that each individual interviewed has a different approach to Chinese tourists in Finland and Finnish inbound tourism. Hence, the focus here is on experiences and thoughts of Chinese people about Finland in general and Finland as a travel destination, somewhat excluding Finnish interviewees personal opinions about Finland. These thoughts were gathered both from the interviewees and China training workshops.

Finpro China conducted a tour operator interview study in 2012. The organization interviewed altogether 200 Chinese tour operators about their perceptions and experiences of Finland as a country and travel destination. As a result, Finpro depicted the most common ideas and thoughts into the following picture (Figure 20). It was no surprise that attributes such as natural, coldness, quiet, clean and safe popped up. Similar ideas and themes were discussed also with the interviewees of this project study. Also the effort Lapland as a travel region has made in promoting Santa Claus, North Pole and northern lights can be seen in the picture. These ideas seemed to be the same when discussing about Chinese people that have visited Finland. The difference was noticeable when same questions were asked from those never been to Finland. (Tynkkynen, E. 22 Aug 2013.)



Figure 20. Finpro China Tour Operator interview study 2012 (Tynkkynen, E. 22 Aug 2013)

As the destinations of Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour in Finland are located in the capital region and southern Finland, comments and thoughts concerning these areas are discussed here.

Chinese tour operators that have been to the Helsinki were of the opinion that one to two days are “absolutely enough” in the capital, because Helsinki is a “small city and there are not enough shopping places”. The city is rather seen as a “stop-over city of Nordic countries travel package”. Helsinki-Vantaa airport also received criticism as it is “getting more and more crowded” and it was considered “time consuming for immi-

gration check and tax refund”. The tour operators think that there is not enough tourism marketing material available in the Helsinki-Vantaa airport and contact with MEK (Matkailun Edistämiskeskus – Finland Convention Bureau) is too “little and seldom”. Updates from Finnish tourism organizations were all in all criticized heavily; Finland has a poor country image and brand as a travel destination and there is not enough contact from Finland to China to enhance it. This was discussed and confirmed during all of the interviews resulting in understanding that this matter is somewhat out of Route 88’s potency.

It was extremely interesting to find out that according to one Chinese tour operator Chinese people do not know that Angry Birds come from Finland. He thought that the entire area should be promoted more in China and that especially Espoo could be fun for families and children during summertime. At the moment, people in China are not aware of this region and therefore Chinese tour operators find it hard to sell it to their customers. (China Travel training workshop 28 Aug 2013.)

Tour operators that have never been to Finland said to be “interested in traveling in Finland, but not so strong desire compared to other competitive travel destinations as Norway, France, Switzerland”. They did know that Nokia and Santa Claus are from Finland but were of the same opinion with those tour operators familiar with Finland that there is not enough reachable marketing material about Finland and that contact with MEK and other tourism organizations is not regular. (China Travel training workshop 28 Aug 2013.)

Below in table 2 expressions and thoughts of Chinese tourists and tour operators about Finland have been gathered both from positive and negative point of view.

Table 2. Voices of Chinese tourists and tour operators about Finland as a travel destination

Positive feelings	Negative feelings
Exotic, unique destination	No real knowledge of Finland

Winter and Lapland (activities, snow...)	Little promotion on other areas than Lapland
Natural, green, fresh water and air	Time consuming and expensive to travel to Lapland
Nice people	Helsinki is too small, limited shopping possibilities
Lakeland and archipelago	Other Nordic countries more interesting
Smoky sauna and other special experiences	No contact of updates from Finnish tourism organizations

A Chinese tour operator’s comment about Finland sums nicely the overall idea resulting from this part of the research:

As a destination, Finland is more interesting in the winter time. This is because Lapland has been promoted for a long time and I am aware of that. The other areas in Finland are less interesting because I do not have enough information and there has been little marketing.

4.6.3 Chinese tourists’ expectations from holidays

This aspect was also examined from a wider viewpoint, concentrating on Chinese tourists’ overall expectations from holidays. Insight gathered from the interviews correlate well with the benchmarking analysis. There were, however, some trends to be noticed when compared to the traditional Chinese tourist travelling abroad.

It was mentioned that gaining status and recognition are powerful motivators for those travelling to Europe and “exotic destinations such as Finland”. As learned from the benchmarking, Chinese tourists are expecting unforgettable experiences and long lasting memories from an action packed holiday. Elements considered to bring the tourists respect are highly valued. Such elements beside activities and destinations can be, for example, accommodation, which is expected to have an appropriate price and suitable location considering the travel itinerary. (MEK 2013b.)

Shopping plays an important role in Chinese tourist’s holiday, as revealed when examining Finland as a travel destination. It was mentioned by Mrs. Tynkkynen (22 Aug 2013) that because of the recent history, Chinese tourists often choose to “sleep cheap, shop expensive”. Purchasing luxury items from brands such as Louis Vuitton, Dolce & Gabbana, and Rolex among others is considered a must when travelling. Interesting souvenirs, especially if they carry a story of the destination, are bought for the whole family back in China.

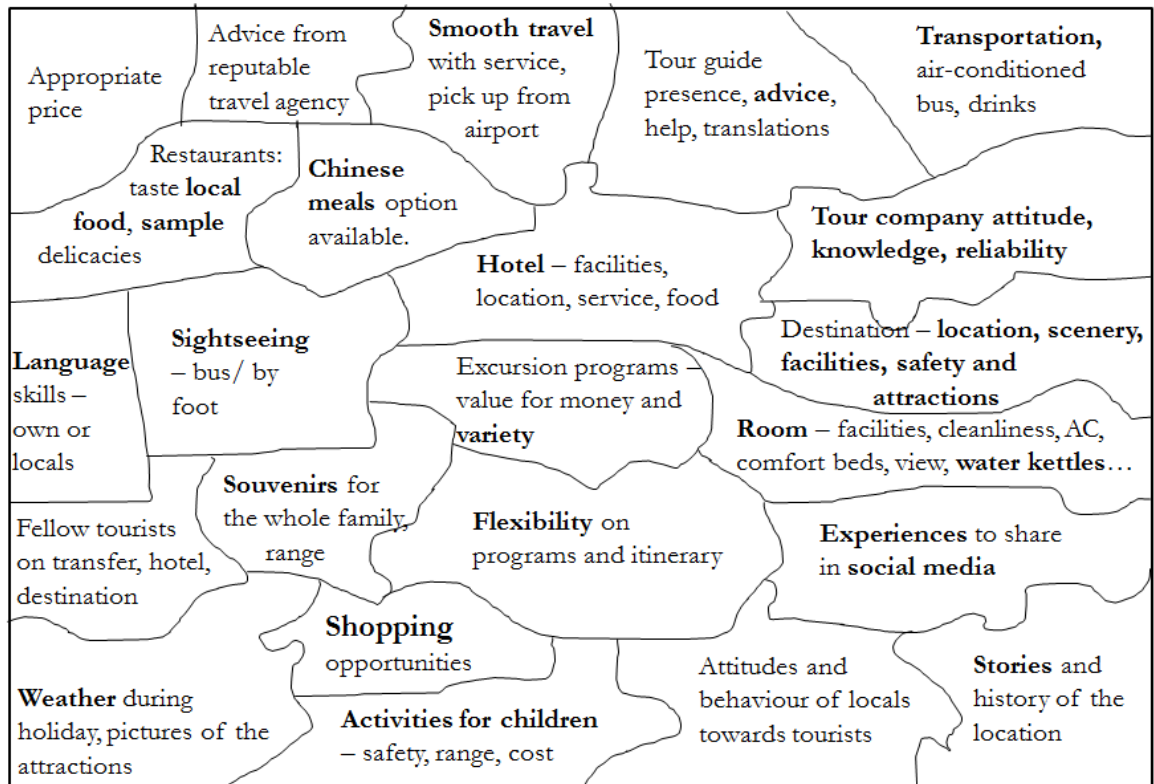


Figure 21. Quality jigsaw for Chinese tourists (Modified from Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 213)

The figure above is modified to reflect the results of the project research on Chinese tourist travel expectations leading towards quality services and satisfied travellers. Elements and aspects considered most important are highlighted, for example, Chinese tourists might seek to sample local food but expect to have a Chinese meal option throughout the travel. Flexibility on programs and travel itineraries as well as gaining as many unforgettable memories as possible to share in the social media are considered musts during holidays.

In contrast to the quality jigsaw above, figure 22 below depicts a different view to the expected elements from holidays. In the figure both elements considered traditional wants of Chinese tourists and recently noticed trends, some already occurring in Chinese outbound tourism, are presented. Positive news for Route 88 are the elements showing growing interest in China; especially special tours, individual tourism, and experiencing the “real deal” as these form the core of the company’s service offering. A change in shifting from group to individual travel is already taking place among young travelers; especially “young, well-educated women with good language skills are eager to see more exotic places and get to know the culture and ‘real deal’ of the destination alone or together with a friend” as one of the interviewees pointed out.



Figure 22. Chinese tourists’ expectations from travelling

Regardless of the trends, it is important to understand the different customer segments. For example elderly people have their own expectations, and they are more likely to travel in the “traditional way”, in groups, “taking photos of all the important landmarks and sights” whereas the younger generation wants to “experience the local life and live like locals” reminded one of the interviewees. According to that person, there should be a clear distinction between these interest groups as business people, for example, have their own standards and rich people could be “looking for the most expensive and exclusive attractions, shops and so on”.

All in all, Chinese tourists usually have quite a clear idea of the destination or area where they want to go on holidays. It was pointed out that this aspect is usually “examined and researched at home on a computer” before heading to a tour operator or travel agency to book the holiday. Expectations on a specific location are already set at this stage of planning the holiday.

4.6.4 Reasons for the failure of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour concept

Possible reasons for the failure of the fan tour concept were examined from a few viewpoints: the fan tour concept on its own, overall interest in Finland as a travel destination, and Route 88’s travel offering and operations.

As justified before, the travel concept seemed to meet the needs and expectations of the target audience with the compelling, action-packed itinerary and targeted messages in Chinese. However, some of the interviewees believed that “the Angry Birds theme is not strong enough for the whole journey” because of the destinations in Sweden, Norway and Denmark. The concept was suggested to be changed into a “Fairy tale journey” where in each destination a fairy tale character from that country would be presented as a guide and attraction for the tourists. It was also questioned if the travel package is too long, especially because the highlights of the fan tour, the Angry Birds Activity Park, Rovio headquarter visit, and Särkänniemi amusement park are at the very beginning of the journey: “Is the rest of the package interesting if the expected and long waited Angry Birds have been experienced during the first few days?”.

Also reasons such as losing the touch with Rovio, especially in the Chinese market, in further developing and marketing the travel service was seen as drawbacks. One of the interviewees suggested that “if the Angry Birds fan tour could be linked to Angry Birds China’s web site and sold directly from there it most likely would have gotten more clicks and views resulting in sales”. The Angry Birds theme parks in Finland were also regarded as “too small, not attracting enough”, and further suggestions were given: “a waterpark would have been better, something for the whole family as parents must watch after their kids anyway and now they have no activities while doing that”. Another interview somewhat confirmed the lack of interest in the Angry Birds theme

parks in Finland as “it is cheaper to go to the local theme parks that have been launched or are currently under construction in China”. The latest to open on October 1st, is the first official licenced Angry Birds theme park in Haining, in Zhejiang Province (Figure 23). The interviewee did, however see potential in Finland and Angry Birds fan tour for niche groups who are “interested in the origin of the service and product”.



Figure 23. Angry Birds theme park in Haining, China (Jou 7 Oct 2013)

Finland as a destination for an Angry Birds or any other fan tour “could be considered a land too far away for such experiences because Santa Claus and other theme parks can be visited home too” pointed out one interviewee. Other reasons for tour operators finding it hard to sell Finland in China were partly mentioned before. During the research it became clear that the lack of interest in Finland as a travel destination is because of the poor country brand and image. Finnish Convention Bureau was blamed for not advertising “like, for example Australia that has very dynamic advertising videos shown on TV in China”, lack of communication towards China and not updating country and travel information on their website frequently.

Company specific reasons for not attracting Chinese tourists to participate in the Angry Birds Northern fan tour were also examined and discussed during the interviews. It was acknowledged in several occasions that because Route 88 is a start-up company

without a long reference list “gaining trust takes time, especially in China”. The company is new, not well known and established in China which according to one interviewee is a challenge:

Chinese tour operators have their existing partners and customers, why would they change to work with Route 88 when they have no references and there is a risk of losing their existing customers?

Building networks in China is very important and personal relationships with tour operators and travel agencies are highly valued. These relationships “should be considered as precious assets and taken care of regularly”. Understanding this, Route 88’s current communication with possible and current partners was seen rather effortless.

It was also mentioned that reasons behind failures could be seen within a company: “often companies lack in resources and knowledge. It could be the sales channels, with whom, in which channels and so forth”. In Route 88’s case, lack of Chinese language knowledge could be an obstacle in communicating with Chinese partners and taking care of the relationships. One interviewee stressed the importance of communication especially in case of a start-up company in China:

Companies wanting to operate in China should keep in touch with their partners as they may not have time for it. They should, so to say, push their services and willingness to work together because the Chinese tour operators do not necessarily have time to look for new customers. Finnish companies need to be proactive in this sense, let the Chinese partners know who you are targeting and where your market segments are.

Route 88’s travel package offering was considered very interesting and most of the interviewed believed that there is potential for such services among Chinese tourists. Only the company’s services price competitiveness was questioned. On the other hand the travel packages Route 88 offers are not designed for mass tourism but for a rather niche market segment that is willing to pay for quality services and exclusivity. This target was suggested to “be kept clear” and focus only on high end customers instead of “even thinking about trying to be something for everybody”.

5 Discussion

In this chapter key findings of the project research are discussed followed by Route 88's feedback received based on a discussion of the results. The second part of this chapter contains development suggestions and finally an overall self-evaluation of the thesis project by the project manager is presented.

5.1 Key findings

The project research showed as presented in chapter 4.6.1 Perceptions of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour, that the concept could be a profitable travel package for Route 88. This in terms of the concept's appeal among the Chinese target audience, travel destinations and attractions. It seems that the travel service concept had been designed to meet with the expectations and needs of Chinese Angry Birds fans looking for a theme travel in an exotic destination. The concept was successfully turned into a story translated into Chinese with an appealing Chinese name. Despite the successful conceptualization of the fan tour, some of the informants did not find the theme attractive and were of the opinion that Finland and Angry Birds are not interesting for a Chinese tourist.

Finland as a travel destination among the informants and Chinese tour operators was not seen as attractive as many other countries in the world, partly due to lack of marketing and poor country brand (chapter 4.6.2 Finland as a travel destination). However, Chinese tourists who have been to Finland were excited about Lapland and winter activities, the Lakeland, clean nature and blue sky. Helsinki, though, was considered too small and not as interesting as the other Nordic capitals, especially when considering shopping. It was stated that there is not enough marketing material available in China and the communication between Finnish and Chinese travel organizations is not as frequent as the Chinese agencies and operators would hope.

The results for the first two project objectives somewhat reflect expectations Chinese tourists have from their holidays (chapter 4.6.3). Chinese people travel to escape the busy routines and work; they are looking for unforgettable experiences that can be

shared with friends and family. The aim is to gain recognition, and especially those who have been to the 'must-go' sites want to travel to a unique, exotic destination such as Europe and Finland. Shopping during holidays plays a significant role, thus the travel itinerary should include visits to luxury brand stores and market places. The itineraries should also be flexible as changes in plans are often made last minute. In comparison to the traditional group holidays there is an increase in the individual outbound travel in China. The new generation travelling alone or with a few friends is looking for experiencing the local way of living and is more open to even weird experiences.

Reasons for the failure in selling the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour to Chinese customers were found elsewhere than the concept itself. It can be stated that all the project objectives were met; the fan tour concept was evaluated based on the objectives set in the beginning of the thesis project. Research results regarding the evaluation of the concept were shortly presented above and discussed in more detail in the previous chapter evaluation of the concept (4.6). From here on the focus is on presenting possible reasons for the failure of the fan tour and attracting Chinese tourists (chapter 4.6.4), which was also the last project objective set.

Firstly, it was discovered that Chinese tourists usually do quite comprehensive self-study on possible travel destinations before consulting any tour operators. They are well aware of at least the area where they would like to travel prior to taking the next step, booking the holiday. This could be posing rather big challenges for Route 88 and other inbound travel agencies in Finland because according to the study, Finland is not very appealing to Chinese tourists who have self never been to Finland or do not know anyone that would have been. It was stated that Finland does not have a strong country brand as a travel destination and that Chinese tourists' knowledge about Finland was rather scarce. There is not much Route 88 could do to change that except maybe try to interact with potential customers through friends and family in social media. The research showed that Chinese people are extremely active in social media, exiting experiences and happenings are shared immediately to friends and acquaintances in various platforms. The model by Middleton and Clark (2001 in Swarbrooke & Horner 2007,

46) presented earlier in chapter 2.2 emphasized organizations' role in tourism consumer buying process and more specific effective use of communication channels.

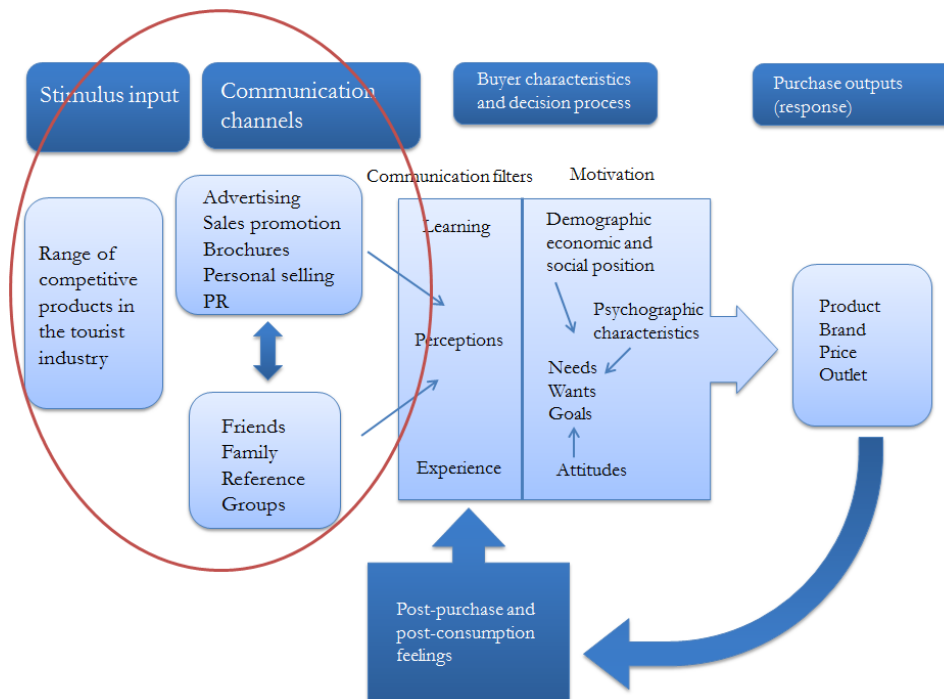


Figure 24. Areas of improvement in a stimulus-response model (Modified from Middleton & Clark 2001 in Swarbrooke & Horner 2007, 46)

The use of communication channels and communication processes overall were another key development point according to the research. Because Route 88 is fairly unknown in China, the company does not have a wide partner network nor references to show when pursuing to partner with new prospects. This was seen as an obstacle for making both the company and the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour visible among Chinese tour operators and travel agencies. Also communication with current partners has been restricted to the newsletters sent once a month or every second month.

As there were a lot of important points and elements discussed during the interviews and China travel training workshops, the project manager decided to gather the insight into a Business Model Canvas that can also be used as a strategic planning and designing tool (Tuulaniemi 2001, 177-179). The nine segments depicted in the figure below (25) answer and present some of the essential questions for strategic purposes.

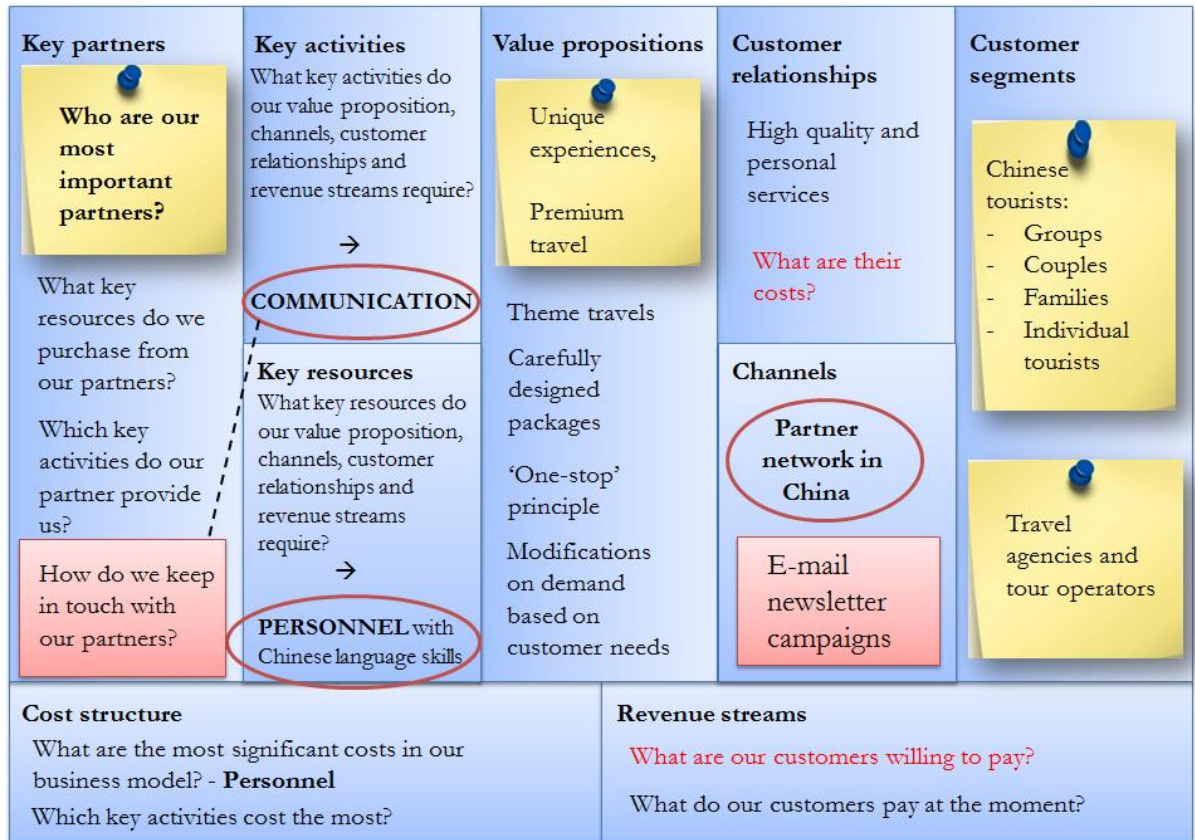


Figure 25. Research results and food for thought in Business Model Canvas for Route 88 Ltd (Modified from Tuulaniemi 2011, 181)

Route 88 seems to have a clear idea of the customer segments they want to serve as well as what kind of customer relationships they want to establish with the customer segments, both regarding Chinese tourists and Chinese travel agencies and tour operators. What seems to be causing challenges is allocating enough resources to the key activities which at this stage should be communication with current partners and prospects. To better accomplish this, the company should have Chinese speaking personnel taking care of the communication with the partner network in China. Lack of communication and Chinese language skills could be hindering the creation of profitable relationships in with Chinese travel agencies and tour operators.

5.2 Feedback from Route 88

The project manager presented the results of the research to the board of directors of Route 88 on 18th October. It was requested by the commissioning company that the

presentation would focus on a broader view of Route 88's operations and offering. Insight given during the presentation is discussed in the key findings and development suggestions parts of this chapter as well as presented in Attachment 9.

The commissioning company was pleased with the research done and suggestions given. The board of directors agreed on the need for Chinese speaking personnel to take care of the communication with current and future partners and allocating more resources for those activities. Suggestions given on the use of social media were received with controversy as the company is not sure it would enhance their visibility or bring profit to the company, especially because at the moment they do not have the resources to do it.

5.3 Development suggestions

First, development suggestions regarding the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour are expressed and discussed followed by overall development suggestions for the commissioning company. A few of the recommendations are fruits of the research whereas most of them are conclusions drawn by the project manager based on the project research done.

The Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour as a concept is quite good. However, as it was expressed during the research, the theme might not be supported enough throughout the journey. Angry Birds fans could, for example, be some kind of 'Angry Birds ambassadors' with a mission in Sweden, Norway and Denmark where there are no Angry Birds related activities. There could also be a way to interact and involve the fans before the fan tour, for example, let them know about the mission they are about to have during their journey in the Nordic countries.

Even though Route 88's expertise and focus is on Finland, there could be new opportunities in the Baltic countries and Russia. If possible, the company could explore their possibilities in these countries as not so many tour operators targeting Chinese tourists in Finland do so. Finland and the Nordic countries should not be forgotten though.

Route 88's current travel service offering is very creative and comprehensive. The company should keep on the creative path ideating and designing new attractive packages time to time in order to awake interest in the Chinese partners, also potential, but also because novelties tempt experience seeking tourists. The focus in marketing these packages should be kept in storytelling as it is such an important part of the Chinese culture, as it was said: "every stone in China has a story".

Route 88 should keep in touch with China. The suggestion is to contact partners frequently and try to build new relationships even if it is time consuming. Due to language differences and cultural barriers, it would be advisable to have a Chinese speaking person to take care of communication in the company. This would ease publishing new travel packages too, as the story transcripts and other material could be translated in-house. Not having Chinese speaking personnel is also a disadvantage Route 88 has when compared to the competitors, especially Kylin Travel and Unitours.

Time and effort could and should also be invested in social media as it plays an important role in the everyday life in China. Social media could also be a great channel to become known in the partner network. Reminders of the company and Finland could be sent with less effort and faster to an unlimited audience. As it was discovered, the Finnish country brand is not strong in China and Route 88 cannot build it but this does not mean that the company could not try to interact with the Chinese consumers. With social media it is also all about keeping up with the latest trends and the platform Route 88 is currently using, Facebook, is not relevant in China. The company could investigate the most relevant social media platforms in China, the project manager recommends WeChat or Weibo, and start creating content on those. The content, if possible, should be in Chinese. However, as there are currently no resources to do this, it would be better to be active on those platforms in English than not to be at all. Social media would be an excellent channel for spreading appealing pictures of Finland and destinations the company offers. Such messages would also be more appealing for the potential Chinese tourist than long written introductions.

Social media could be used in many ways, one of them with bloggers. It would be good to have people talking about Route 88 and Finland in WeChat and other social media on their own, without the company's visible promoting perspective. Route 88 could, for example, bring some Chinese bloggers to Finland to an Angry Birds fan tour or other selected tour travel and in return the bloggers could write about their experiences, both positive and negative, in social media or in their blog.

Videos are also considered very appealing in China and since Route 88 is selling experiences that are 'untouchable' for the Chinese tourists, one way to awake their interest and make them understand how unique the country and Route 88's tours are would be to make them see it. The company could, for example, add a video link to their web site where a Chinese woman or man is walking in the woods, feeling the nature, trying the Finnish sauna, swimming in a lake and so on. These videos could also be posted on social media (WeChat) where people can comment on them as well as share ideas and experiences.

5.4 Further research

Based on the learning from this thesis project, some topics and ideas came up for further research. First of all, as there was no possibility to observe or interview Chinese tourists about their opinions on the fan tour concept designed, it could be beneficial for the commissioning company to research the tourist point of view more in-depth. If possible, an observational study carried out during a fan tour or other package tour offered by Route 88 could be a way to gain valuable information on Chinese tourists' preferences, needs and motives behind travelling to Finland.

Another topic for a research could be finding out how to convince Chinese travel agencies and tour operators to cooperate with a Finnish start-up company. It would be beneficial for Route 88 and other similar companies to receive practical advice on how to communicate and negotiate with Chinese companies. Related to this topic and the research results, it could also be interesting to investigate how Finland should be promoted in China to enhance the country brand as a travel destination. Such information

would be appreciated by the Finnish Convention Bureau and smaller tourism companies.

Finally taking into consideration the development suggestions given by the project manager, Route 88 could employ a media student to carry out a project resulting in creating a promotional video about Finland for the commissioning company.

5.5 Self-evaluation of the process

The thesis project has been evolving throughout the entire process and the end product, evaluation of the travel package concept and Route 88's operations, needed to be adapted to the situation at hand that time. It was challenging to find new solutions for conducting the research in the project as the initial plans could not be carried out. However, despite the obstacles faced during the process, as a project manager I believe that including the various view points of travel and China professionals provided the project with valuable insight. The project was also executed in several different stages, the steps of the service design, that were carefully planned and followed. Even though some of the steps were taken afterwards, for example the customer research had been omitted in the beginning of the service design process by the commissioning company, they supported the project as a whole. Benchmarking on Chinese tourists' needs and expectations was very accurate and spot on which could also be seen in the research results. All the steps taken during the design and evaluation process were discussed and elaborated together with the commissioning company to ensure reliable, justified and useful outcome for the project.

As an author of this thesis and the project manager I am delighted to have had the possibility to take part in such an interesting thesis project and internship. I have been working as an intern for the company from the beginning of April when the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour service design was in the conceptualization phase. As explained in the chapter 4.1 my task was to productize the concept and create various marketing material for it. I was granted the possibility to work on my thesis project as a part of my internship with coaching from the commissioning company. I believe that the concept turned out well, of course based on the feedback received from the

interviews and China travel training workshops there is always something to add or adjust, and if I was about to further develop the concept I would take note of those suggestions. The research conducted during the thesis project managed to respond the project objectives set in the beginning of the process. There was, however, no possibility to investigate Chinese tourists' perception or expectations and needs of the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour exactly and only, which can be stated as a drawback for the project. Nevertheless, I trust that the benchmarking and research on Chinese tourists can be exploited and targeted to this fan tour concept as well as other travel packages offered by Route 88. The interviews carried out were in my opinion successful and gave insight to the topic from several angles. However, the interviews alone would not have reached necessary depth for the process and therefore I was satisfied to participate in the China travel training sessions in Porvoo. Together with the different research methods (interviews, workshops, benchmarking), I believe to have managed to scratch the surface of this enormous topic and understand some of the influencers behind Chinese tourists' travel habits. If there was a possibility to go back, I would have pressured more on having Chinese travel agencies to participate in the research to enhance the reliability and to receive first-hand information from them instead of working on already elaborated data from Finpro.

During the thesis process and my internship at Route 88 I have learned a lot about the tourism industry and Finland. As a marketing assistant for the service planner and partner of Route 88, I have been given an opportunity to take part in developing new services and productizing them. These tasks have come with responsibility that has taught me the importance of time management. I have also been practising my learnings from Haaga-Helia marketing specialization studies when creating promotional material for the travel packages.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Research invitation letter to Route 88's contacts

Route 88 is looking for your feedback



This spring Route 88 launched the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour. We were excited to see how it would be welcomed in our partner network and among travelers especially from China. Now that the summer season is ending and our focus is in the upcoming autumn and winter we would love to hear your opinion and thoughts about our summer offering!



An international business student, Minna Nykänen, from Haaga-Helia University of Applied Sciences is working on a thesis project on Chinese tourists in Finland.

As a part of the project she is conducting a study about the Angry Birds Fan Tour located in Finland. She would like to invite travel agents and China experts to participate in the research carried out as skype interviews. The conversations would take approximately half an hour and you can schedule an appropriate time for you with Minna.

The research is carried out in English and Minna will provide you with some questions in forehand. Your thoughts and opinions will be handled anonymously and in confidence.

To schedule a time for a chat with Minna and further questions please contact her at: minna.nykanen@myy.haaga-helia.fi or via skype: [m.e.nykanen](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/m/e/nykanen)

As a thank you for your time you will receive a small gift from Finland!

Your participation will be highly appreciated!



Interview guide for conversations with travel agencies and Chinese travel experts

1. How well do you know the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour travel package?
 - a. Have you received the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour newsletter?
 - b. Have you visited Route 88 website?
 - c. Some other source you have heard from it?
 - d. I have not heard about it.

2. In your opinion, how attractive is the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour?
 - a. Destinations?
 - b. Program?
 - c. Theme?
 - d. What do you think of the marketing material (newsletter, website)?

3. Considering Chinese tourists, how do you view the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour as a travel package?
 - a. What activities do you think interest Chinese tourists in this package, if any?
 - b. In your opinion what could or should be added / removed / changed in the travel program?
 - c. In your opinion what kind of fan tours are Chinese people interested in, if any?

4. Describe how Chinese people choose holiday destinations and purchase travel packages?
 - a. What influences their choices?
 - b. What attracts them when choosing a destination?

5. Describe what kind of expectation and wishes Chinese tourists have from their holidays in terms of

- a. Tour operator and guides
 - b. Location
 - c. Accommodation
 - d. Activities
 - e. Catering
 - f. Transportation
 - g. Price
 - h. Other?
6. Based on your experience and opinion, describe what attracts Chinese tourists to travel to Finland?
7. Based on your experience, what is the significance of the following holiday attributes for Chinese outbound tourists?
- a. Peace and quiet
 - b. Clean nature
 - c. Shopping
 - d. Sightseeing
 - e. Other organized activities
8. Based on your experience and opinion, why would Chinese tourists choose another travel destination than Finland?
- a. Price?
 - b. Location/distance?
 - c. Attractions?
 - d. Country image?
 - e. Other?
9. In your opinion, why do you think Chinese tourists have not been interested in the Angry Birds Northern Fan Tour?
- a. Unawareness of the product? Unawareness of where to buy?
 - b. Price?

- c. Not an interesting product?
- d. Lack of interest in Angry Birds & the Northern countries?
- e. Lack of promotional marketing?
- f. Lack of travel agency partner networks in China?
- g. Similar tours are available in China / closer to China?

10. If you have any suggestions, recommendations, comments or further questions, feel free to share your ideas.

Attachment 3. Project schedule

Project schedule											
#	Project task	#	Sub tasks	Project participant	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
1.	Negotiation of the project	1.1.	Setting goals and expectations								
2.	Concept finalization	2.1.	Final ideation of the concept	Route 88 Ltd/ Pia Tiilikainen							
		2.2.	Creation of the storyline	Pia Tiilikainen							
3.	Launch of the travel concept	3.1.	Creation of newsletter	Route 88 Ltd/ Pia Tiilikainen							
		3.2.	Creation of web site content	Pia Tiilikainen							
4.	Benchmarking	4.1.	Route 88's competitors in Finland								
		4.2.	Chinese tourists								
5.	Qualitative research	5.1.	Interviews with selected China experts	Selected interviewees							
		5.2.	Participation in Travel China workshops	Fimpro/Culminatum/ workshop participants							
6.	Results and evaluation	5.3.	Data analysis and conclusions								
		5.4.	Reporting on the results	Route 88's board of directors							

Attachment 4. DMC Competitor analysis table (Smal Afta)

INCOMING DESTINATION MANAGEMENT COMPANIES										
Name	Web site	Founded	Location	Incoming staff	Marketing areas	Providing services in	Expertise	Groups	FIT*	Business
Kylin Travel	www.kylintravel.com	2010 (?)	Helsinki	2 (?)	Mainland China	Finland, Nordic countries	Chinese language, Tailor-made tours, Connections	×	×	×
Unitours Oy	www.unitours.fi	?	Helsinki, Beijing, Shanghai	4	Mainland China	China, Finland, Baltic countries, Russia, Nordic countries	Chinese connections, presence in the market,	×	×	×
China Tekway Oy Ltd	www.chinatekway.com	1994	Helsinki	1	Great China area, Japan, Korea, Southeast Asia	Finland Scandinavia	Technical visits, business seminars, Chinese language	×	×	×
Forssa Travel Agency Ltd	www.fmtours.fi	1977	Forssa	3	Europe, Asia, America	Finland, Scandinavia, Baltic countries	Tailor-made groups/ incentives study tours	×	×	
Helsinki expert	www.helsinkiexpert.com	1940	Helsinki	17	Worldwide	Southern Finland Lapland Estonia, Russia Sweden	Guide services in 26 languages, transportation options	×	×	×
Next travel Ltd	www.nexttravel.fi	1990	Helsinki	5	Europe, USA, Far East	Finland, Baltic countries, Russia	Tailor-made groups/ incentives, meeting	×	×	×
The travel experience	www.travel-experience.net	1998	Helsinki	5	Worldwide	Finland, Baltic countries, Russia, Scandinavia	Tailor-made groups, special interest	×	×	×
Viada Oy Ltd	www.viada.fi	1993	Helsinki	3	South Europe, Latin America	Finland, Baltic countries, St.Petersburg	Incentive-special interest, Lapland	×	×	
North Village	www.saanselka.com	1987	Saanselkä	7	Worldwide	Lapland	Online booking, outdoor activities, transfers	×	×	×
Lapland hotels & Safaris	www.laplandsafaris.fi	2006	Rovaniemi	3	Worldwide	Lapland	Meetings, conventions, Christmas package	×	×	×
Freely Travel Oy	Rastilantie 23 D 8, 00980 HKI	-	Helsinki	?	China?	Finland	?	?	?	?
Oulv-International	www.oulv.fi	2004	Helsinki	?	Focus on China	Finland, Nordic countries	Competitive price, services in Chinese	×	×	×
Nordic Trip Oy Ltd	www.nordictrip.com	2003	Turku	?	Worldwide	Nordic countries	Outdated web sites	×	×	×
Citigate Helsinki Ltd Oy	www.citigate.fi	1996	Helsinki	?	China	Nordic countries	Chinese language, office also in Beijing, poor web site	×	×	×

*FIT= Fully Independent Tourist

Attachment 5. ADS Competitor analysis table (MEK 2013c)

Approved Destination Status travel agencies and tour operators in the capital area						
Company name	Contact person	Email	Web site	Location	Expertise	Other
Aamu Mestari Oy	Dong Liu	aamumestari@gmail.com	-	Vantaa	Alimentary store	Tourism side business
Able International Oy Ltd	Ms. Rong Guo	able@kolumbus.fi	-	Helsinki	Tour operator	Booking services Guide services
Astroshiny Investment Oy	Ms. Faqi Chen	chenfaqi5487@gmail.com	www.astroshiny.com	Espoo	Consulting	Tourism services in Finland and Nordic countries
Blue Sea Travel Service	Ms. Weijuan Zhang	sini.zhang@gmail.com	-	Espoo	Travel agency	Part of a Chinese chain from Beijing (?)
China Tower Oy / Tornibussit	Mr. Fu Min	chinatower@chinatower.fi	www.chinatower.fi	Vantaa	Transportation	-
Circles Oy (Nordic Cast Sourcing Oy)	Mr. Frank Wang	sari.lammensalo@circles.fi	www.circles.fi	Helsinki	East-west consulting	Travel trade consulting
D & K Travel Group Oy	Mr. Yu Xiang	yuxiang@dkbus.fi	www.dkbus.fi	Espoo	Transportation	Possible partner for Route
Finland Society Travel Ltd.	Mr. Bo Yu, Ms. Annika Eerola	china@finsocietytravel.fi	www.finsocietytravel.fi	Helsinki	Travel agency	Experienced
Freely Travel Oy	Mr. Georgio Ma	freelytravel@gmail.com	-	Helsinki	Tour operator	-
Futurist Oy	Mr. Petri Novitsky	gateway@futurist.fi	www.futurist.fi	Helsinki	Travel agency	Package tours to Russia and Baltic countries
Helci Oy	Mr. Yu Hong-gu	hoyu40@hotmail.com	-	Helsinki	Alimentary store	Tourism side business
LuoMa Holiday	Mr. Georgio Ma	luomaholiday@gmail.com	-	Helsinki	Alimentary store	Tourism side business
Nordic Info Service Oy	Mr. Zheng Xiaojing	xzheng@nordicinfo.fi	-	Espoo	Travel agency	'Personal travel assistance'
Nordic JD Oy	Ms. Jianlin Tao	jd.nordic@welho.com	-	Espoo	Clothing	Tourism side business
Oriental Nordic Oy	Ms. Linda Jun Chen	oriental@kolumbus.fi	-	Espoo	Travel agency	Finland and the Nordic countries
Orientalinfo	Mr. Zhang Mingsheng	zhangmingsheng@orientalinfo.fi	www.orientalinfo.fi	Helsinki	Travel agency	Finland and the Nordic countries
Scandinavian Travel Service Group	Ms. Wendy Zhang	zziyan@msn.com	www.scanway.com.cn	Helsinki	Travel agency	web site not working
Travel agency Day & Day	Ms. Rebecca Ying Liu	dd.travel@elisanet.fi	-	Espoo	Travel agency	-
Travel Agency Nordic Sightseeing	Mr. Benny Liu	inonordicsightseeing@hotmail.com	-	Espoo	Travel agency	-
Yboom International Oy Ltd	Ms. Joyce Lee	-	-	Helsinki	?	?

Attachmnet 6. Initial Angry Birds fan tour concept and itinerary

ANGRY BIRDS FAN TOUR	
DAY 1	FINLAND
Arrival in Helsinki	
Pickup from airport, transfer to Lpr	
Holiday Club Saimaa	
Guide	
DAY 2	FINLAND
Angry Birds activity park	
Holiday Club Saimaa	
Transfers	
Saimaa evening cruise	
Guide	
DAY 3	FINLAND
Bus transfer to Tampere	
Särkänniemi	
Transfer to Helsinki	
Hotel Hanasaari	
Guide	
DAY 4	FINLAND
Helsinki sightseeing + Suomenlinna	
Transportation	
Haltia visit	
Hotel Hanasaari	
Guide	
DAY 5	FINLAND - SWEDEN
Espoo sightseeing, Rovio HQ visit	
Guide	
Transfer	
Ferry to Stockholm	
DAY 6	SWEDEN
Stockholm sightseeing (1/2 day)	
Transport	
Scandic Hotel Täby Stockholm	
DAY 7	SWEDEN - NORWAY
Bus transit to Oslo	
Thon Hotel Oslo Airport	
DAY 8	NORWAY
Bus transfer: Oslo - Hardanger - Bergen	
Thon Hotel Bergen Airport	
DAY 9	NORWAY
Bergen half day sightseeing	
Bus transfer: Bergen - Flåm	
Myrkdalen Hotel	
DAY 10	NORWAY
World heritage cruise Flåm - Gudvangen	
Bus transfer: Gudvangen - Oslo	
Thon Hotel Oslo Airport	
DAY 11	NORWAY
Oslo sightseeing half day	
Ferry Oslo - Copenhagen	
Accommodation on board	
DAY 12	DENMARK
Arrival Copenhagen	
Copenhagen sightseeing half day	
Copenhagen Tivoli	
Hotel Lautruppark	
DAY 13	DENMARK
Airport transfer	
Flight back to China	

Day 1 WELCOME TO FINLAND, THE HOME OF ANGRY BIRDS

Arrival in Helsinki airport where Angry Birds will meet and welcome you. A bus will take you to Lake Saimaa to a brand new Angry Birds Activity Park waiting to be explored. Accommodation in a luxurious Holiday Club spa hotel offering experiences for all senses; relax in the spa and sauna areas, jump in the cold lake, taste local delicacies at the hotel's restaurant Le Biff, and enjoy the surrounding nature.

Day 2 FUN ACTIVITIES WITH ANGRY BIRDS AT LAKE SAIMAA

Spend the day at the Angry Birds Activity Park by Lake Saimaa; here you are the one moving the rides together with Angry Birds. The park attracts the whole family; you can try climbing, balancing, flying, and a lot more. While the children enjoy the Angry Birds Activity Park, Holiday Club spa hotel offers various treatments for adults in the Harmony Spa, a golf course in the hotel premises, bowling and other activities.

In the evening a bus will take you to Lappeenranta, where a marvelous cruise on the beautiful Lake Saimaa departs. Lake Saimaa is the biggest lake in Finland and home to the rare and endangered Saimaa ringed seal. Accommodation in Holiday Club Spa Hotel.

Day 3 ANGRY BIRDS LAND AT TAMPERE

In the morning after breakfast, a bus will take you to Tampere, where the world's first Angry Birds Land is located! Try the Angry Birds Ride and let the red birds bounce you to a fun afternoon. Get the latest Angry Birds items from the theme stores and have a snack at the Mighty Eagle Snacks kiosk. The dessert will be served at the Red Bird Sweets shop of course!

After the fun afternoon in Tampere, you will be taken to the peace of the picturesque archipelago in front of Helsinki, Hanasaari. Accommodation in Hotel Hanasaari, a private island hotel surrounded by the Baltic Sea and only five minutes away from the city center.

Day 4 THE BEST OF HELSINKI AND ESPOO

Visit the best of Helsinki with the Angry Birds tour; a sightseeing tour of the most famous landmarks of Helsinki such as the Senate square with the magnificent white 'Tuomiokirkko' church, Russian Orthodox 'Uspenski' Cathedral, Temppeliaukio underground 'rock church' and the Jean Sibelius monument and many more. You can also go shopping in Aleksanterinkatu with the famous brand stores such as Louis Vuitton, Marimekko, Longchamp and Iittala.

After the must see sights, a ferry will take you to visit the old fortress island of Suomenlinna located in front of Helsinki. The fortress island Suomenlinna is one of the UNESCO world heritage sites where you can see the real angry birds of Finland, the sea gulls. They are famous for stealing food from tourists, so watch out for your ice cream!

In the afternoon you have a chance to experience the unique nature of Finland in the Finnish Nature Centre Haltia in Espoo. The Haltia centre presents the best of Finland's natural wonders. Take a small hiking tour in wild forest and enjoy the forest smells; flowers, fresh air, and trees. Accommodation in Hotel Hanasaari.

Day 5 ANGRY BIRDS NEST VIP VISIT

See where the birds come to life and who is behind the virtual characters! Visit Rovio, the company behind the Angry Birds characters, headquarters in Espoo where our guides introduce you into the world where Angry Birds are created. After the visit to Rovio, a short sightseeing tour in Espoo located by the sea with the view to the spectacular archipelago.

In the afternoon the Angry Birds fans will take a ferry from Helsinki to Stockholm. During the cruise you can choose from a great variety of fun activities; visit the games halls, sing karaoke, and enjoy a sea dinner at the cruise liner's buffet. For the smaller Angry Birds fans fun kids program is provided. The cruise liner offers you suites with own bathroom and shower.

Day 6 THE BEST OF STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

In the morning arrival in Stockholm. A sightseeing tour of Stockholm for the Angry Birds fans including highlights such as the Royal Palace, Djurgården and Drottningholm. The Old Town (Gamla Stan) is filled with little shops selling Swedish fashion, design and souvenirs. In Östermalm you can find Swedish and international design boutiques with luxury brands such as Guess, Gucci, Armani, Peak, and J Lindberg. In between shopping and sightseeing take a moment to relax in some of Stockholm's finest cafés celebrated by the Stockholmers; Vetekatten and Tössebageriet among others are the traditional favorites of the locals.

In the evening you can enjoy local delicacies in the city's vast restaurant offering. You might also want to stop at a street kitchen to taste strömming, a local version of herring from the Baltic Sea. Accommodation in Scandic Hotel Täby Stockholm.

Day 7 SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRYSIDE BEAUTY

In the morning departure from Stockholm to Oslo in a modern, air conditioned bus. Enjoy the bus travel to Oslo with beautiful Scandinavian countryside view. During the ride you can discover the versatile landscape; from flat farmland to majestic mountains reaching to the clouds. You have time to recover from your game addiction and destroy the piggies during the bus ride.

Arrival in Oslo in the afternoon. After the bus ride you might want to take a few steps in the famous Vigelandsparken Sculpture Park. In the park 212 bronze statues by Gustav Vigeland present you everyday life; mothers playing with their children, young couples in love and many more. Take a picture with the most known statue boy, Sinntaggen and relax in the unique surrounding. Accommodation in Thon Hotel Oslo Airport.

Day 8 OSLO - HARDANGER - BERGEN, NORWAY

In the morning bus travel from Oslo via Hardanger to Bergen, the popular tourist destination. The bus travel will take you to the western part of Norway famous for its fjords and steep mountains. In the afternoon we will stop in the Hardanger area which

is known for the Hardangerfjord and one of Europe's largest mountain plateaus, the wonderful Hardangervidda. The plateau is also home to the largest stock of reindeer in Northern Europe. In the northwest of the mountain plateau one of Norway's largest glaciers, Hardangerjøkulen, can be seen peaking at 1,690 meters.

In the evening arrival in Bergen, the second largest city in Norway. The city is known for its exciting history, architecture and culture among the surrounding mountains and fjords. Accommodation in Thon Hotel Bergen Airport.

Day 9 BERGEN, THE FJORD CAPITAL OF NORWAY

After breakfast a half-day sightseeing tour in Bergen. Visit the must sights of the Norwegian fjord capital; the Bryggen Hanseatic Wharf, one of the best known medieval city blocks in Norway also featuring at the UNESCO'S World Heritage List, the hustle of the local Fish Market, and the Fløibanen funicular ride to the Fløyen mountain.

In the afternoon bus transfer to Flåm (Sognefjorden), famed for its fjords, long and narrow inlets from the sea and typically surrounded by high cliffs. The Sognefjord is the longest fjord of Norway and one of its arms, the Nærøyfjord, is on the UNESCO's World Heritage List. The area combines altogether three national parks, two UNESCO sites, scenic routes and a lot more. Accommodation in Myrkdalen Hotel, Vossestrand.

Day 10 WORLD HERITAGE CRUISE FROM FLÅM TO GUDVANGEN

In the morning an exclusive cruise from Flåm to Gudvangen. Savor the landscape during a world heritage cruise in the Sognefjord area. The cruise presents the perfect image of impressive Norwegian nature with steep cliffs and waterfalls. From the cruise you can admire the stunning Nærøyfjord, the narrowest fjord in the world. See if you can spot the Norwegian angry bird, the puffin!

With the cruise we arrive in Gudvangen, an ancient Viking village, where you can imagine the robust, blond seafaring northerners walking down the same alleys and smell the fireplaces and tar covered walls in the streets. In the afternoon we will take a

bus back to Oslo from Gudvangen. During the bus travel you still have a chance to glance the landscape with the impressive fjords. Accommodation in Thon Hotel Oslo Airport.

Day 11 THE BEST OF OSLO, NORWAY

After breakfast an Oslo sightseeing tour with the best of the city: the Holmenkollen Ski Park with world's oldest Ski Museum, Opera house with glamorous architecture, and many more. The smaller Angry Birds fans (and the older as well) can be amazed by the Viking ships from the 9th century at the Viking Ship Museum. In the afternoon we will board DFDS ferry from Oslo to Copenhagen in Denmark. In the ferry you are welcomed to use the fantastic onboard facilities including jacuzzis, games rooms, bars and restaurants. Accommodation in comfortable en-suite cabins with own bathroom and shower.

Day 12 THE BEST OF COPENHAGEN, DENMARK AND TIVOLI AMUSEMENT PARK

In the morning we will arrive in Copenhagen, Denmark. In the day program we have sightseeing in the 'Mermaid City' with Kongens Nytorv and Amalienborg Royal Palace - winter residence of the Danish royal family. See the Rundetårn observatory, 'round tower', where stars have been watched since 1642, and the home to Denmark's greatest cultural treasures - the Rosenborg Castle.

In the afternoon we will enjoy the rides of Tivoli Gardens, a must place for children and all those who like to play! Among the rides Tivoli attracts the whole family with great restaurants, live music and concerts. Visit the Shadowland in Tivoli - an innovative performance for all the senses with dance, shadow play, acrobatics and a lot more. Accommodation in a four star full-service Hotel Lautruppark.

Day 13 BYE BYE BIRDS

After breakfast, it is time to say thank you and goodbye, and for the adventurous Angry Birds fans to leave for Copenhagen International Airport for your flight to China. At the airport enjoy last minute bargains and tax free shopping before your flight back home.

愤怒小鸟粉丝北方之旅



与愤怒小鸟一起经历令人兴奋的北部线路之旅



第一天 欢迎来到芬兰，愤怒小鸟的故乡，赫尔辛基-

抵达赫尔辛基，在这里愤怒小鸟将迎接和欢迎您的到来。大巴将带您去Saimaa湖,开始一段愤怒小鸟主题乐园的探索之旅。

下榻在豪华的假日俱乐部温泉酒店，这里向您们提供多方面的体验；您可以在水浴和桑拿区尽情放松，跳入冰冷的湖中，在酒店的餐厅享用当地美食，或是在周围的大自然中漫步。

第二天 与愤怒小鸟在Saimaa湖边开始有趣的活动

在塞马湖畔的愤怒小鸟主题乐园里度过愉快的一天；在这里您可以与愤怒小鸟一起游玩娱乐设施。公园足以吸引所有家庭成员，您可以尝试攀岩、平衡木、滑翔和其他很多娱乐活动。

当孩子们沉浸在愤怒小鸟主题公园中，假日俱乐部酒店可以提供给家长们和谐的水浴服务，酒店还有高尔夫球、保龄球和其他活动。

Attachment 9. Research results on Finland and Route 88's overall performance

Personas created from Finpro interviews about Finland



SAVANNAH

25 years old, never been to Finland

- Finland is in Europe, it is cold in there
- As a travel destination: Flights are expensive, Finland could be combined with other European countries into a travel package
- During holidays wants to: do sightseeing, maybe in a bus, do shopping, especially special offers



HELEN

Business, delegation travel, has been to Finland many times

- Impression: Natural, green, high air and water quality
- Helsinki is interesting for shopping, cafes, ice cream (a must!), during the summertime she especially enjoyed sweet cherries and berries, food and the views. Smoky Sauna was great!
- Likes to eat: smoked salmon, dark bread, raw fish (not really raw but cold), Lapland restaurants with mystique and Lappish specialties (reindeer, moose)
- Does not like soups, especially fish soups. as a main dish she thinks those are a no-no



LIN

Agent in a travel agency from Shanghai bringing 27 000 Chinese to Europe, expected to increase to 35 000 this year

Experiences from Finland and Helsinki:

- city, for shopping
- not the most attractive destination in the entire itinerary
- Northern Finland considered more interesting, however, people prefer to go to Norway for the landscape

Expectations:

- city, for shopping
- big, American style hotels, 3-4 stars, big lobby, big rooms, water boilers...
- For nature people want to go to Norway and Lapland
- For shopping, rather choose Sweden or Denmark because the atmosphere is better
- He recommends that the whole area should be made better known in China to raise awareness and interest in the tourists, it would be a lot easier to sell

SWOT analysis for Route 88 Ltd

Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities	Threats
<p>Attractive products presented in an appealing way (strong material)</p> <p>Trusted partners in Finland</p> <p>New ideas and concepts</p>	<p>New in the market - references</p> <p>Lack of profitable partners in China – networks and channels</p> <p>Lack of Chinese language skills</p>	<p>Differentiation in 'special' travel</p> <p>→ Future tourists looking for more uniqueness!</p> <p>Mastering in social media – example WeChat</p>	<p>Competition both in China and Finland ('copycats') – pricing strategy</p> <p>Lack of communication (in Chinese) hinders relationships</p> <p>Lack of customers → no motivation</p>